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Elementary education in Caernarvonshire 1839-1902

Williams, H. G.

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ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN CAERNARVONSHIRE

1839-1902

H. G. Williams

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ABBREVIATIONS

BFSS Ann. Rep(s).	British and Foreign Schools Society Annual Report(s).
GRO	Gwynedd Record Office
MCC	Minutes of the Committee of Council
Nat. Soc. Ann. Rep(s).	National Society Annual Report(s)
Nat. Soc. Schl. Fs.	National Society School Files
PRO	Public Record Office
TCHS	Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society.

A B S T R A C T

An attempt is made in this thesis to assess the impact of religious, political, economic and social factors on the development of elementary education in nineteenth century Caernarvonshire. At the same time educational developments are assessed in a wider context; the growth of education in the county is related to national policy evolution. In particular, educational impulses locally are related to national policy generators. Only thus can the distinctive features of elementary education in the county be fully appreciated.

Chapters one and two give the economic, social and religious background of the county, and analyse its educational patterns up to 1840. Chapter three examines the impulses to educational action nationally and locally in the crucial 1840s and their impact on educational progress to 1870. Chapters four and six outline policies nationally and locally to provide a system of schools and enforce attendance. Chapter five shows the vital significance of the 1870 Act and school board controversies in the county's educational politics. Finally, Chapters seven and eight discuss teacher training, and the school curriculum from the 1840s to 1902 as mirrors of national policy and local practice. The thesis ends with a concluding summary.

The thesis shows that the growth of elementary education in the county was extraordinarily complex, involving the interweaving of religious, social and political aspirations, and the complication of linguistic distinctiveness. It also shows the impossibility of satisfactorily assessing national policy without reference to variations in local practice both in policy-making and administration, and in the classroom.

CHAPTER ONE

CAERNARVONSHIRE: THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND
RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

1. A Socio-Economic Survey of Caernarvonshire

In nineteenth century Britain there was an unprecedented economic and demographic growth in which Caernarvonshire was fully involved. At the beginning of the century Caernarvonshire was predominantly rural and agricultural, with a population of little more than 41,000¹. By the close of the century, its population had almost trebled to 119,000, and many of its localities had experienced some industrial development². The county's percentage population growth was 290 per cent. Of the thirteen counties in Wales, only Glamorgan and Monmouth had more rapid rates of population growth than Caernarvonshire, and in the course of some decades and years as, for example, the late 1860s to the early 1880s, population growth rate in Caernarvonshire was among the steepest in the United Kingdom³.

This growth, however, was not spread evenly over the county, and did not occur everywhere at the same rate. It was concentrated largely in areas of mineral exploitation and industrial activity, notably in the slate quarrying, and somewhat later, in the granite quarrying areas, and in the small towns and ports, many of which became outlets for slate exports and centres of services for nearby quarrying communities. Some of these areas experienced, not just a doubling and trebling, but a quadrupling and quintupling of their population: in some cases this took place in twenty or thirty years, sometimes following, and in some cases also preceding a period of more gradual growth, or relative population stability. In other areas the growth was more evenly sustained for a longer period. Different patterns of population growth had clear implications for educational building and provision, for the siting of schools, and

2.

for educational finance and administration, so that these became topics of discussion within the county, especially as elementary education became a political issue in the course of the century. Other areas of the county, notably its agricultural parishes, nearly all of which experienced relative population declines up to the 1840s, ended up with absolute population falls, and suffered particularly steep falls during two periods: first, after the 1840s, when population mobility within the county was at its greatest, and second in the 1880s and 90s, when they felt the effects of the great agricultural depression⁴. It is clear that with such patterns of population decline the educational needs of rural areas were bound to be seen in a somewhat different light from those of the expanding slate quarrying and urban areas of the county.

The expansion of the slate industry was undoubtedly the basis of the county's economic and industrial growth. After 1830, the United Kingdom's large and thriving building trades, particularly those in the great urban industrial centres, the new foci of the country's economic life, exerted a heavy and continuous demand on the slate resources of Gwynedd. This pressure was intensified by the opening of the slate export trade, first to the United States in the 1830s, then in growing volume to Australia in the 1850s, and finally to Europe and especially to Germany in the 1860s. By the 1880s, North Wales produced ninety three per cent of all the slate quarried and mined in the United Kingdom, and by far the greatest bulk of this production was quarried in Caernarvonshire⁵.

The effects of these developments on the county's economic, demographic and social patterns were dramatic. Within a few years barren and sparsely populated upland areas were transformed by

industrialisation. There were variations in the timing of this process in each quarrying area, but it was virtually complete in all of them by the 1870s. As a result, all the county's quarrying areas came to be relatively densely populated by a new kind of industrial working class. However, one of the characteristic features of quarrying settlements was that they were nearly all semi-rural. As each slate quarry was opened, a small and straggling industrial village grew in its vicinity, usually focused on a Nonconformist chapel and surrounded by wide stretches of enclosed moorland and mountainside. Each village was marked by a patchwork of irregular fields bounded by grey dry-stone walls. The fields were attached to a large number of smallholdings. Practically all these were occupied by slate quarrying tenants of great quarry proprietors who took advantage of the Enclosure Acts before 1845 to acquire the land in the vicinity of their quarries⁶. The result was twofold: first, a considerable proportion of the new slate quarrying families retained a particular connection with the land, and second, they found themselves completely controlled by their slate quarrying employers who also had a hold over them as landlords.

Though nearly all Caernarvonshire's slate quarrying areas retained an outwardly rural aspect, their economies were rapidly dominated by quarrying. The development of slate quarrying as a highly skilled industrial craft with the manufacture and 'dressing' of roofing slates, carried on under quasi-factory conditions within the quarries themselves, gave the slate quarrymen their industrial and social identity. First, it consolidated the quarrymen's self esteem as competent industrial workers, and second, it helped shape their political and social outlook. With virtually the whole of the

workforce of the villages employed in the quarries, a one-class society, with a well developed sense of class solidarity was created, though quarrying society was strongly aware of status differentials between skilled and unskilled men. Thus strong status gradations existed within the one-class slate quarrying communities, with skilled craftsmen esteemed not only as a labour aristocracy but as leaders of social and community life⁷.

The county's slate quarrying activities were concentrated in three main complexes, each located towards the centre of the county: the Penrhyn quarries at Bethesda, the Dinorwic quarries near Llanberis, and the Dyffryn Nantlle quarries complex centred on the village of Talysarn. The Penrhyn slate quarries located in Llanllechid and Llandygai in the Ogwen valley, had been opened up by the Pennant family in the 1780s⁸. Within a decade the Pennants had revolutionised the production of slate, built roads from the quarries to the sea and developed their own port. By the 1820s the Penrhyn quarries employed 900 men, and, by the middle of the century, almost 2,000 men were employed there - most of them living in the village of Bethesda and its satellite settlements⁹. By 1862, these quarries employed between three and four thousand men, and had an annual output of 130,000 tons shipped all over the world, from the specially constructed Port Penrhyn - connected to the quarries by a narrow gauge railway¹⁰. The Dinorwic slate quarries in the three parishes of Llanddeiniolen, Llanberis and Llanrug, were owned by the Asshetton-Smith family of Vaynol. They were quick to grasp the implications of the profit making activities of the Pennant family, though there were important differences between the two slate owning families: the Pennants were audacious entrepreneurs, examples of a 'modern class'

whose wealth and experience were based on trade and manufacture, while the Asshetton-Smiths were traditional, unsophisticated landowners, yet not so unsophisticated as to be blind to the profits of slate¹¹. By the 1860s, the annual production of the Dinorwic quarries was over 100,000 tons, and much of their slate, like that of Penrhyn was also exported - this time from the specially built Port Dinorwic, which was again linked to the quarries by narrow gauge railway¹². By the middle of the 1870s the Dinorwic labour force was nearly three thousand, living in a spread of quarrying villages such as Llanberis, Llanrug, Cwmyglo, Bethel and Deiniolen, and in smaller settlements on the sides of hills and mountains such as Fachwen, Dinorwic, Gallt y Foel and Clegir, in all of which the smallholding tradition was strong¹³. The third slate quarrying complex, in the Nantlle Valley, spilling over onto the slopes of the neighbouring hills and mountains, was in one respect different from Penrhyn and Dinorwic; its quarries were not controlled by a single great proprietor, but by a number of independent companies, owned or part owned by local businessmen and entrepreneurs who had accumulated their capital in shipping and other business ventures¹⁴. In other respects they were similar to the other two areas. By 1889, nearly 2,000 men were employed in the slate quarries of Dyffryn Nantlle, and the annual value of their output was £160,000¹⁵. The largest single quarry in the Dyffryn Nantlle complex - the Dorothea slate quarry - employed 550 men in the 1880s, and other quarries such as the Penyrorsedd, Cilgwyn, Talysarn and Alexandra quarries, each had a workforce at one time or another, of more than 300¹⁶. Much of their slate, like that of the Penrhyn and Dinorwic quarries was exported, in their case from the slate quay at Caernarfon, linked by railway early in the century to the Dyffryn

Nantlle quarries¹⁷. Settlement patterns exemplified by villages like Talysarn, Nebo, Nantlle, Cesarea, Rhostryfan and Penygroes, in the parishes of Llanwnda, Llandwrog, and Llanllyfni, were typical of those found in slate quarrying districts throughout the county.

Though these were the main slate quarrying areas in Caernarvonshire, slate deposits were exploited elsewhere in the county, and there were clusters of smaller quarries in other localities such as Rhyd Ddu, in the parish of Beddgelert, and in the isolated Pennant and Ystradllyn valleys, in the two parishes of Llanfihangel-y-Pennant and Dolbermaen, both of which were specially linked by railway to Porthmadog in the south of the county - a port whose main business lay in exporting the slates of the extensive Blaenau Ffestiniog (Merioneth) quarries¹⁸. In addition, there were smaller slate quarries in some of the county's remote south eastern parishes such as Penmachno and Dolwyddelen in the upper Conwy and Lledr valleys¹⁹.

Though a number of other mineral exploiting ventures, - the minerals ranged from copper and lead to manganese - had also been attempted as part of the speculative boom of the nineteenth century, they were overshadowed by slate quarrying and, in the late nineteenth century by the rise of granite quarrying. This came to be concentrated in two main centres, one not far from the town of Nefyn at Llithfaen in the south of the county, and the other at Penmaenmawr in the north. Indeed the Penmaenmawr quarries employed nearly a thousand men in the 1890s²⁰. In granite, as in slate, there were smaller workings dotted around elsewhere, particularly in some of the parishes of the Llŷn peninsula.

In the course of the century most parishes with slate quarries experienced substantial population growth, though in crude numbers

their population was never very great. But with all the quarrying areas concentrated in the middle of the county, the impact of their population growth was strengthened, and the fact that their total population was smaller than the population of other industrial areas in the country should not be overemphasised. The largest percentage population growth in Caernarvonshire occurred in the parish of Llanrug in the Dinorwic slate quarrying complex, whose population rose from 316 to 3,075, a rise of 973 per cent in eighty years from 1801 to 1881²¹. But the population of other slate quarrying parishes such as Llanllechid, Llanddeiniolen, Llanberis and Llanllyfni, also grew six fold in the same period, - Llanllechid from 1,322 to 8,291, Llanddeiniolen from 1,039 to 6,886, Llanberis from 464 to 3,033, and Llanllyfni from 872 to 5,520²². The population more than trebled in Llandwrog - from 1,175 to 4,136, - and almost trebled in Llandygai and Llanwnda whose populations went up from 1,280 to 3,587 and from 826 to 2,185²³. It almost doubled in relatively peripheral slate quarrying areas such as Beddgelert, where it grew from 690 to 1,330, and at Llanfihangel-y-Pennant and Dolbenmaen where it grew from 427 to 711, and 266 to 471²⁴.

The scale of their population growth was such that natural increases alone could never have accounted for it. Clearly they were affected by substantial degrees of in-migration. This has been confirmed by demographic studies of the place of origin of heads of household, in a sample of Caernarvonshire's slate quarrying areas, in 1871²⁵. They showed, first, that the great bulk of their population growth was due to population in-migration at various times during the first seventy years of the century and second, that the population movement which fed this in-migration was spatially small scale, taking place within the county between its older agricultural districts and

newer slate quarrying areas. Not surprisingly, the slate quarrying communities retained many rural customs and traditions, though they also forged newer working class traditions from their industrial experience. But in their language and culture, the slate quarrying communities remained the most thoroughly Welsh of the Principality's industrial communities. To all intents they were monoglot communities in which relatively few people had any grasp of the English language: they lived in an entirely Welsh language culture at work, in prayer, at home and in their friendships²⁶. Only in their day schools, and even then on a substantial scale later in the century, did they come into contact with the English language. This fact, in itself, highlights the largely alien character of the day schools founded during the mid and late Victorian period.

A significant later feature of the demography of the slate quarrying areas was the levelling off which occurred in their population from the 1880s onwards, with the beginning of the waning of the slate industry. Even before the end of the nineteenth century these areas had passed the peak of their prosperity, though few realized it at the time. The growth of their population, its timing, and its social class character had a significant influence in determining the extent of their educational needs, as well as the character and quality of the provision eventually made to meet them. To some extent, the type and quality of the educational provision, were facets of the liberating effects of economic and demographic change.

Above all, the nineteenth century was an age of urban expansion, and Caernarvonshire's small towns shared in the urban growth of the period. But the dynamics of their growth differed from town

to town. Three of the county's towns - Caernarfon, Bangor and the 'new' port of Porthmadog - owed their rapid, if comparatively small-scale growth to the development of the slate economy: they served as outlets for slate exports, locations for the manufacture of ancillary slate products, and centres for the offices of slate companies and slate exporting shipping firms. In addition, they were servicing and marketing centres for slate producing communities nearby. In contrast Pwllheli was a traditional marketing centre for a large rural hinterland and, in the course of the century, strengthened its position as the 'metropolis' of the Llŷn peninsula²⁷. Llandudno and Conwy in the north of the county, owed their development to the growth of tourism after the 1850s, - a growth determined by the development of better communications by rail and sea, especially the completion of the London to Holyhead railway in 1850²⁸. The greater wealth and leisure of the Victorian middle classes led greater numbers to take holidays by the sea, and this greatly encouraged the development of both towns, especially Llandudno. Gricieth and Nefyn, in the south of the county, grew as small urban foci for restricted rural areas and, to some extent, both towns, and more particularly Gricieth, shared in the tourist boom of the late Victorian period.

Caernarfon and Bangor, - the first serving the Dinorwic and Nantlle slate quarrying complexes, and the other the Penrhyn complex, - were the most bouyant towns in the county. They were only nine miles apart, and for most of the century competed to become the county's most important urban centre.

Caernarfon, an old Edwardian garrison borough renowned for its great castle, was easily the county's most populated town at the beginning of the century; as its administrative and social centre it had a population of 3,626 in 1801²⁹. Only twelve other towns

throughout Wales had over 3,000 inhabitants, and few could rival Caernarfon's traditional importance³⁰. The ancient city of Bangor, was the recognised Anglican centre of North West Wales, with its impressive collection of church buildings consisting of the Cathedral, Deanery and three parish churches, but its population of 1,770 was only half that of Caernarfon³¹. The nineteenth century growth of the two towns, however, had a common economic basis, as both developed an export trade in roofing slates, and other slate products which were manufactured in small workshops in the towns themselves. Caernarfon and Bangor were also the two centres in the United Kingdom for the production of school writing slates and pencils, for which there was a ready market both at home and overseas³². Other small scale 'works', mills and foundries, were built near their docks and wharves; in Caernarfon the largest of these was the de Winton iron foundry employing more than 250 men in the 1880s, in the production of slate and granite quarrying machinery, narrow gauge steam locomotives, air compressors, cooling tanks and other industrial equipment³³. In Bangor, the London to Holyhead railway became a major employer of labour in the 1850s, and, because of its geographical position, the city became a busy communications centre. Later, this promoted its development as a centre of education with the establishment of the Bangor Normal College in 1858, the University College of North Wales in 1884, and the St. Mary's Church Training College transferred to Bangor from Caernarfon in 1894, whose acquisition was a powerful boost to the city at the expense of its old rival³⁴. Both towns became newspaper publishing centres: Caernarfon had a particularly lively English and Welsh medium press, with as many as twelve weekly newspapers in the 1870s and 80s, some of which were circulated throughout North Wales³⁵. Most of these

were Radical in politics though none were working class papers. Bangor's newspapers were mostly Tory, the presses of both towns reflecting important political differences between them.

Not surprisingly, the population of both towns grew in the course of the century and became far more diversified occupationally and socially. To begin with, both towns offered a range of working class employments for mechanics and foundrymen, dockers, wharfingers and sailors, and for all kinds of craftsmen, ranging from those employed in specialised trades such as printing and boilermaking to carpenters, joiners and shoemakers. In addition, both towns provided more genteel lower middle class employments in shops and offices. Clerking became attractive to working class families who had aspirations for something better than manual labour for their children. Clerks were needed in all but the smallest businesses and concerns; there were openings for them on the railways, in banks and the offices of solicitors and auctioneers, in government establishments such as the Post Office and, towards the end of the nineteenth century, in the branches of a developing local government. The growing demand for office workers of all kinds exercised a significant influence on working class education during the century.

At the same time a locally influential middle class came into existence, but its composition was almost as varied as that of the urban working class: its members ranging from small and medium scale merchants and shopkeepers and small workshop owners, to professional men such as doctors, solicitors, bankers and accountants. It also included Nonconformist ministers, the most able of whom were attracted to the wealthier and more important town chapels. Together these groups formed an urban elite. With slight compositional

differences from town to town, they established their social and political hegemony throughout the county. They played a dominant role in urban politics, of which educational politics formed an important branch during the middle and later years of the century.

The population statistics for Caernarfon and Bangor indicate the extent and rate of their growth during this period. By 1851 Caernarfon's population was over ten thousand, and that of Bangor only a few hundreds lower, having grown from 1,770 to 9,564, in fifty years³⁶. Though Caernarfon's population had grown by 272 per cent, that of Bangor had grown at double that rate. Indeed, Bangor's population had more than doubled during the first two twenty years of the century, and had risen again by a further third, in the decade after 1841³⁷. This rapid growth exacerbated long standing social problems, and presented newer ones. These were problems of sanitation and water supply, public health and disease, housing and overcrowding, and increasingly also the problem of education, which was beginning to be perceived as a potential social 'good'. Both towns found difficulty in meeting their problems, and a Government Inspector described the state of Bangor, in the 1850s, as 'far worse than anything I have seen in crowded cities'³⁸. By the 1870s, however, both Caernarfon and Bangor had taken steps to improve themselves, under the impetus of a reluctantly interventionist central government. Twenty years later, by the 1890s, Caernarfon had passed its population zenith of 11,000, which it reached in 1871-81, when Worrall's Directory described it as 'the most flourishing town in North Wales'³⁹. Bangor's population continued to grow, till the end of the century and beyond, although at a much slower rate than before. By the 1890s, Bangor's local government had also been improved and democratised following the city's

incorporation which had taken place in 1883, and which then enabled it to deal 'municipally' and far more effectively with its outstanding problems⁴⁰. By that time, both towns were also profoundly conscious of their growth, and especially of their 'progress' as urban centres, in an age of strong provincial and local loyalties.

By 1849, 32,000 tons of slate were being exported annually through Porthmadog, and by 1856 this tonnage had grown to 52,000⁴¹. By that time Porthmadog had also developed an important shipbuilding industry, and in the thirty years to 1878, 146 sailing vessels had been built there, many of them owned or part owned by syndicates of local business entrepreneurs, and mastered and crewed by local men⁴². Inevitably, the growth of population from 525 to 5,506 in the eighty years from 1801 to 1881, was accompanied by the development of a small but vigorous urban society, although this never acquired the diversity of Caernarfon and Bangor⁴³. By 1890, Porthmadog had acquired the external attributes of a town, - a town which provided the focus for a wide area in the south of the county, and the north of Merioneth. Although its shipbuilding and shipping industry had declined by the eighteen nineties, it was connected with both north and south by rail, and this enabled its slate trade to continue to flourish beyond the end of the century.

The market town of Pwllheli had always acted as the natural urban focus for the Llŷn peninsula since its establishment as an Edwardian borough in the fourteenth century⁴⁴. It entered the nineteenth century, serviced by a good network of eighteenth century roads, which linked it with its natural hinterland for a radius of twenty-five miles⁴⁵. Although remote, the town possessed a considerable local and regional importance. It had a well established and strong corporate sense, reinforced at an early stage in the nineteenth century by the

formation of a town council under the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. Its markets on Wednesdays and Saturdays drew large crowds, so that it was often bustling with life, while its hiring fairs in May and September, which served farms throughout the Llŷn peninsula, were important regional events⁴⁶. It had a small shipbuilding industry, which serviced its export trade in agricultural goods, while the exploitation of lead and granite in nearby small mines and quarries, helped to consolidate its economy. The arrival of the railway in the 1860s broke down its geographical isolation, and confident forecasts were made, that Pwllheli would develop into 'a second Llandudno'⁴⁷. Although its population did not rise as dramatically as that of the slate towns, it grew steadily from 1,166 to 3,675, in the hundred years from 1801⁴⁸. This was an overall growth rate of 315 per cent, and by 1901, Pwllheli like Caernarfon and Bangor, was conscious of its commercial prosperity and local importance.

Llandudno had originally developed as a copper mining village during the 1820s but, under the farseeing planning and direction of the Mostyn family of Gloddaeth, it experienced a metamorphosis between 1850 and 1870, when Worrall's Directory referred to it as 'a market town with the beach, its greatest attraction, admirably adapted for sea bathing'⁴⁹. The next twenty years witnessed its most important phase of growth, with 'the erection of handsome blocks of buildings, fine hotels, and shops which cannot be surpassed in the Principality'⁵⁰. Its population rose from 318 to 1,034, in the first sixty years of the century, and then more rapidly from 1,034 to 7,739, between 1861 and 1901⁵¹. During the summer months it was said to double, to more than 14,000⁵². Its most distinguishing cultural characteristic was its relatively anglicised character from the 1860s onwards. In a sample

study of the 1871 Census Enumeration Returns, no fewer than thirty eight per cent of its household heads, had been born outside Wales⁵³. Fewer than this, only thirty three per cent, had been born in Llandudno, or neighbouring parishes⁵⁴. Llandudno was far more of an English town than any other in the county, and a higher proportion of its inhabitants also belonged to a genteel middle class, many retired or 'living off the income of dividends'.

Despite its older history as an Edwardian borough, the nineteenth century development of Conwy was overshadowed by its newer and more buoyant neighbour. Its population rose during the century (1801-1901), from 889 to 2,504, so that it was still only a substantial village in crude size of population, though its growth rate was 282 per cent⁵⁵. It had a small fishing industry, and acted as entrepôt port for small amounts of mineral deposits extracted from the upper Conwy and Lledr Valleys⁵⁶. But it was to its attractions as a holiday resort conveniently situated on the London to Holyhead railway line, with its medieval castle and Telford Suspension bridge, and up-river trips to fashionable watering places such as Trefriw and Betws-y-Coed, that it owed its nineteenth century prosperity.

It appears even more anomalous to refer to Nefyn and Cricieth as urban settlements at the beginning of the nineteenth century, so integrated were they to the life of the surrounding countryside, and so small was their population. Bingley's North Wales referred to Nefyn in 1814, with its 1,028 inhabitants, as 'a small and insignificant borough town appearing altogether separated from the world'⁵⁷. It was a maritime community, situated on the northern coast of the Llŷn peninsula and largely untouched by nineteenth century developments in communications. Its population growth, to 1,755 by 1901 - a rise of

71 per cent in a hundred years, - was the smallest urban growth in the county⁵⁸. By contrast, Cricieth, which only had 396 inhabitants in 1801, and was the smallest and most insignificant of the county's boroughs, grew at a much faster rate, but still only to 1,406⁵⁹. Its growth was due, almost entirely, to its geographical position on Caernarvonshire's south facing coast, and its railway link with other parts of the country, which enabled it to develop a small tourist industry. By 1890, Sutton's Directory noted that Cricieth was 'rapidly rising to a position of a first class watering place'⁶⁰. As a town it remained very small and non-industrial, its population, like that of Nefyn, Conwy and Llandudno, had no elements which could be described as industrial working class, though at the end of the century a few granite quarriers who found work in the Llithfaen quarries established a small settlement in Nefyn.

By 1901, the county's eight small towns had an aggregate population of 42,534, compared with 9,718 in 1801⁶¹. Their population growth rate had certainly outstripped that of the county as a whole. That had grown by 290 per cent but theirs had grown by 460 per cent. While the towns had 23.7 per cent of the county's population in 1801, they had over 39.1 per cent in 1901. In common with the rest of the country, therefore, Caernarvonshire's population had become more urban although, as we have noted, serious doubts surround the definition of that term as applied to the small towns of Cricieth, Nefyn and Conwy. Even the largest town was small by comparison with the industrial and urban centres of South Wales and England. None exceeded a population of twelve to thirteen thousand, and the smallest were more akin to large villages. Yet their small size and population should not be over-emphasized: they should not be allowed to belie their vitality,

or importance as urban foci, in a county whose economy was a mix of the urban and industrial within a rural context. Nor should it detract from the reality of their social problems, which in some respects were as intensive as those of the larger centres elsewhere.

At the same time the many differences which existed between them should always be borne in mind. They differed not just in the scale and timing of their growth, but also in the age structure construction of their population, that is to say, in relative numbers belonging to each age cohort among their inhabitants. Clearly this and all the other demographic factors, had significant implications for the development of education. Even more important were the economic determinants of their growth, and their primary economic functions. Caernarvonshire's towns presented an even less unified picture in this respect than in their demographic patterns. The economic functions served by Caernarfon, Bangor and Porthmadog were quite different from those of Llandudno and Conwy, and different again from those of Pwllheli, Nefyn and Cricieth. As a consequence, all the towns differed to a greater or lesser extent in their social class composition. Each town offered different permutations of employment opportunities, and each acted as bases for different coteries of urban elites, so that their class composition was complex and lacking in coherence. But in none of them was working class consciousness strongly developed. Nevertheless it was somewhat more evident in some, such as Caernarfon and Bangor, than in others such as Llandudno or Pwllheli, though subservient to a totally different class hegemony in each.

Each town, therefore, presented different socio-economic patterns, underlined by their cultural, religious and linguistic differences. None had anything like the monoglot Welsh life of the

slate quarrying districts and some were quite heavily anglicised. In addition, some were far more Nonconformist in their religious allegiances. The distinctiveness of each town was therefore based on a large number of factors: primarily economic, social and cultural, but also historical and geographical.

All these factors exercised determining influences on educational developments; they were to influence each urban society's perceptions of its educational needs. They had a powerful effect on the nature of the demand for public elementary, and other forms of education, and on the educational provision eventually made. In this respect, the virtually one-class society of the quarrying areas voiced somewhat different educational demands. Such communities also responded to the expansion of educational opportunities - as after 1870 - in ways largely determined by their social outlooks which were the creation of the interaction of their socio-economic structures and cultural milieu. That is to say, the social composition of each community - whether or not it was a quarrying or town community - determined not only the form of their perception of their educational needs, but also the way in which those needs were articulated, and the timing and effectiveness of their fulfilment. Even within the limited geographical context of Caernarvonshire, therefore, there were many social complexities and ambiguities, and a marked lack of social coherence. Yet the county's towns at least served in their different ways as foci of the complex changes taking place at the time in society.

Beyond the county's towns and slate quarrying areas, Caernarvonshire retained an agricultural economy which sustained a widespread rural society. This was divided into three social layers.

First, there were the great landed proprietors who, though few in number, owned most of the land in the county. Then came the farmers who held farms of various sizes, usually as tenants of the great landed estates. Finally, came the rest of the rural population as smallholders, cottagers and agricultural labourers⁶².

Among Caernarvonshire's greatest landowning families were the Ancasters of Gwydir in the Conwy valley, the Pennants of Penrhyn, and the Asshetton-Smiths of Vaynol. These families consolidated their positions as great owners of land during the nineteenth century. By 1869 the Asshetton-Smith family of Vaynol, for example, owned 30,000 acres in various parts of the county, which brought them an annual rental of £42,000⁶³. Other important county landowners included the Wynnes of Glynllifon and the Edwards of Nanhoron. Their number was augmented by medium scale landowning families such as the Evans of Broom Hall near Pwllheli, the Nanneys of Plas Nanney near Cricieth, the Jones-Parrys of Madryn near Nefyn, and the Thomas of Coed Helen near Caernarfon

Such was the hold of the landowning class on Caernarvonshire's land that by 1887 only 4.6 per cent of it was actually owned by its occupiers⁶⁴. By the 1880s Caernarvonshire had the lowest percentage of owner occupation of the Welsh counties. The massive concentration of landownership in the hands of a small and socially exclusive landowning class created a wide gap between the great landowners and the rest of the county's rural population. The fact that the landowning class was also anglicised in language and Anglican in religion, while the mass of the rural population was almost monoglot Welsh in language and Nonconformist in religion, widened the social and cultural gap still further.

As for the other social groups, they too constituted

separate classes within rural society, though the differences between them were less pronounced than between the landowners and the rest of rural society. Unlike the great landowners the subordinate social groups shared a wide community of interests and experiences. Nearly all their members lived ~~their~~ lives in the parish where they were born or in nearby parishes, were nearly all connected with agriculture and familiar with farm work, nearly all Welsh speaking, and practically all of them were Nonconformists. In Caernarvonshire the majority became Calvinistic Methodists at a relatively early stage in the century. As a result, in certain contexts, a two rather than three fold division of Caernarvonshire's rural society has more significance for the historian. This division might also have been more meaningful to contemporaries, at least within the cluster of contexts mentioned above. Contemporaries often emphasised that a characteristic feature of the Welsh farming system was the absence of pronounced class divisions between tenant farmers and their labourers⁶⁵.

Yet, in some contexts, the distinction between farmers and the rest of the rural population was very real. At root, it was based on their economic and social relationships. However non-pronounced the class cleavage may have appeared to contemporaries, the farmer-cottager relationship was that of employer and worker within an old established productive system. The distinction was also based on differentials in landholding, wealth, and income. Their economic distinctiveness was emphasised by status differentials within rural society. These were marked by features such as the exercise of local power and authority by farmers through their tenure of parish or other local government offices such as Poor Law guardianship. The exercise of authority must have affected their broad social relationships with the rest of the rural population. It was also marked by their

assumption of leadership roles within organic social institutions such as Nonconformist chapels in which they served as deacons and elders. By virtue of such offices they became definers and guardians of particular moral codes and social mores.

The economic and social relationships between farmers and the rest of the rural population played a particularly important part in the history and development of schools and elementary education in Caernarvonshire's rural areas. As the economic and social hegemony in their immediate localities, farmers had their own perceptions of their neighbourhood's educational needs, and of their relationship to other needs both economic and social. The simple fact that they paid the rates was an important factor. Their perceptions often differed from those of other groups in rural society. Most striking of all was the way in which their educational perceptions differed from those expressed in different types of socio-economic communities in other parts of the county.

At the same time, it should be borne in mind that just as there were differences within Caernarvonshire's urban context, so there were important variations between certain types of agricultural areas within the county. Some areas were far richer and more productive than others, for example, the broad belt of agricultural parishes in the Llŷn peninsula, many of which had large and productive farms and which looked to the town of Pwllheli as their natural focus, and those in the Conwy valley in the north of the county, which looked to the towns of Conwy, or Llanrwst in Denbighshire, as their natural marketing centres. Other agricultural areas in the central uplands of the county were poor, with little productive potential, often consisting of rough grazing land or mountain pasture. Nothing more than near subsistence farming

or sheep raising was ever possible in such places. Other areas, although predominantly agricultural, acquired an 'adventitious' population, many of whose members worked in neighbouring towns and quarries though living in an agricultural parish. This was so in the parish of Clynnog, about eight miles to the south of Caernarfon, which in the course of the century, acquired a population of slate quarriers employed in the Dyffryn Nantlle quarries.⁶⁶

As we have noted, nearly all the agricultural parishes of the county shared in the rising population trends of the first forty years of the nineteenth century, though relative to the towns and slate quarrying areas, they were already in decline. But it was during and after the eighteen forties that these parishes experienced absolute population declines, as their economies proved incapable of sustaining their hitherto growing populations, and as the attractions of higher wages and more regular employment in the newer slate quarrying areas and the towns became stronger. Over the next fifty years all Caernarvonshire's rural parishes lost population. The disastrous agricultural depression, which gathered speed from the 1880s, helped intensify population movement out of the county's rural areas. Agricultural parishes in the relatively rich Llŷn and Eifionydd for, example, lost about a quarter of their 1841 population by 1900, although some parishes lost more than this, as did Ceidio (1841 population 160, 1901 population 88), Llandudwen (1841 population 119, 1901 population 45), and Boduan (1841 population 418, 1901 population 268)⁶⁷. Perhaps the most striking single loss of population was in the remote parish of Eidda on the Denbighshire-Merioneth border, whose population fell from 429 in 1851 to 233 in 1901⁶⁸.

Such sharp falls were to have an important bearing on the

development of educational provision. They had a particularly strong bearing on the calculation and forecast of school 'needs', the creation of rational school catchment areas, the location and siting of schools, and the formation of financially viable administrative units. At the same time, population migration, and its geographical redistribution within the county, meant that logistical problems faced in districts which were losing population were counter-balanced by others in population receiving districts. The educational implications of demographic change in the rural parishes were complicated by the socio-economic relationships of the three main groups in rural society, particularly by the cultural alienation of the land-owning class from the rest of the rural population, and by the economic relationship of rural society's subordinate social groups.

The following summary, based on the county's census returns for 1801 and 1901, gives a broad overall view of the changes which occurred in Caernarvonshire's demographic patterns in the course of the nineteenth century. In 1801 the eight most productive slate quarrying parishes, Llandygai, Llanllechid, Llanberis, Llanddeiniolen, Llanrug, Llanwnda and Llanllyfni had accounted for 17.8 per cent of the county's total population⁶⁹. By 1901 no less than 30.6 per cent of the population was concentrated in these parishes, and this was 30.6 per cent of a population which was itself much greater⁷⁰. We have already noted that the population of Caernarvonshire's towns, Caernarfon, Bangor, Porthmadog, Pwllheli, Llandudno, Conwy, Nefyn and Cricieth grew from 23.7 per cent to 39.1 per cent of the county's population. In contrast, the population of the rest of the county fell from 58.5 per cent to 30.3 per cent⁷¹. This meant that there had been a fundamental redistribution of population, itself based on a structural

change in the county's economy. Its total 'rural' or agricultural population had fallen by over a half, so that it constituted less than a third by 1901. In reality, the proportion was even smaller, as several parishes not included among leading slate quarrying parishes had peripheral slate quarrying interests, while others, such as Penmaenmawr, Llanaelhaearn (Trefor) and Pistyll (Llithfaen), had developed as centres of the granite quarrying industry. Even so, the population of the leading slate quarrying parishes and the towns was greater in 1901 than the population of the whole of the rest of the county.

The scale of the socio-economic transformation which had taken place during the century becomes apparent when comparing the results of two surveys of the county's occupational patterns made in 1831 and 1871, as part of the information which was collected in the population censuses of those years. However incomplete the information they presented, particularly for 1831, statistical comparisons based upon them throw light on the profound economic changes which occurred between the 1820s and the 1870s.

In the very limited information collected in 1821, it was shown that 4,968 or 58.3 per cent of Caernarvonshire's 'families' were engaged in some form of agricultural work, and that 1,863 families, or 21.8 per cent were occupied in a range of 'callings' termed 'manufacture, trade and handicrafts', with many, if not most, having a direct connection with agriculture⁷². Another 1,690 families, or 19.8 per cent of the total, were employed in other occupations which, though generally unspecified, included slate quarrying⁷³.

It appears, therefore, that in 1831 the number of families directly involved in agricultural work easily outnumbered those

engaged in other kinds of employment. As we have seen, very few of these families were likely to have been ^{owner} occupiers, and even the exceptional owner occupiers were likely to have been men of modest means, especially if their land consisted of barren mountain pasture. But most of the county's agricultural families in the 1820s were smallholders, cottagers, country craftsmen and agricultural labourers. If the county's farmers were relatively poor, - and small profit margins were the fundamental characteristic of Welsh farming throughout the century, - then the lowest layer of rural society was much poorer.

Their poverty was confirmed by sample studies of pauper returns for seven agricultural parishes in the Llŷn peninsula, derived from the census enumeration of 1851⁷⁴. These revealed an average pauper return of 15.7 per cent, that is to say, they showed that between 1 in 6 and 1 in 7 of the population was receiving out-relief under the Poor Law. But the figure varied from parish to parish, from a 'low' of 10.5 per cent (or 1 in 10 of the population) in Ederne, to a 'high' 22.1 per cent (between 1 in 4 and 1 in 5 of the population) in Bryncreos⁷⁵. Although the reliability of these figures is questionable and their precise meaning problematical, they imply a level of social deprivation among large sections of Caernarvonshire's rural families in mid-century, and suggest why many rural people migrated to the county's industrialised areas between the 1830s and the 1870s.

The deep poverty of many rural families was confirmed by a survey of Welsh specimen districts made in 1859 by John Jenkins, the Newcastle Commission's Assistant Commissioner for Wales. He showed that the poverty of the countryside was such that many of the Principality's 'aboriginal peasantry' as he called them, lived on starvation wages: according to one witness, about one shilling and

sixpence a day in summer, and on less than this, about one shilling a day, in winter⁷⁶. It was customary for many to eke out their primitive existence by selling their own excreta to neighbouring farmers as manure. By comparison, wages earned in Caernarvonshire's slate quarries were higher; slate quarrying was also much more regular and offered the challenge of skill and craft. Though living conditions in the slate quarrying villages were hard, they were better than those in the countryside where dwellings were 'ruinous' or 'broken down', often consisting of a single earth floor room, without a grate for a fire, and with no sanitation or water supply⁷⁷. Very few country cottages even had a garden so that the rural family's diet was extremely meagre and lacking in nutrients.

When the drastically ill paid labouring of the rural areas, much of it back-breaking drudgery and dependent on seasonal and other fortuitous factors, was juxtaposed against the attractions of better paid, more regular and satisfying work in the slate quarries; when the primitive living conditions of isolated cottages and rural hamlets were pitched against the prospects of a more tolerable life style in the socially vigorous and lively slate quarrying villages, it was hardly surprising that major changes occurred in the county's occupational patterns by 1871.

The more detailed occupational analysis of the 1871 census showed that a far greater diversity of employments had come into being. The growth of industry, most strikingly slate quarrying and slate ancillary work, was reflected in the 23,165 adult males, - or 60.2 per cent of the county's male workforce, - returned as employed in 'industrial occupations'⁷⁸. Agriculture accounted for only 9,292

adult males or 24.1 per cent of the male workforce with 4,602 (11.9 per cent) classified as agricultural labourers, and 4,203 (10.4 per cent) as farmers and their male relations⁷⁹. The return made no distinction between freehold farmers, tenant farmers and smallholders. As might be expected, the bulk of the industrial workforce (22.6 per cent) was employed in slate quarrying, but substantial numbers were employed in mechanical trades of one kind or another (8.2 per cent), and in the expanding building trades (8.1 per cent)⁸⁰. Six hundred and sixty eight men (1.82 per cent) were employed on the railways, and 261 (0.6 per cent) in the specialised printing trades⁸¹. In addition, 1,459 (3.8 per cent) worked at sea, most of them as ordinary seamen. Their numbers reflected the continued importance of seafaring⁸² in the economy of the county, and in the lives of many of its families.

A new working class had thus come into existence, but it was full of gradations: its members can hardly have thought of themselves as a coherent social group. Only in the slate areas was anything like a class solidarity developed, and, even here, it was patchy and partial.

The 1871 occupational survey also stressed one of the most important social developments of the time: the growth of a professional middle class concentrated in the county's urban communities. This class accounted for 5.0 per cent of the county's male workforce in 1871, consisting of 622 clerics and full time Nonconformist ministers, 131 doctors, 122 solicitors, and 277 schoolmasters⁸³. In addition, there were the growing ranks of the shopocracy and small workshop owners, as well as other businessmen, many of whom, as entrepreneurs, were not included in the official ranks of the 'professional' middle classes. As we have noted, most men of 'middle rank' lived in the towns, so that the term 'urban middle class' is justified. There would only

have been a few bourgeois elements outside the towns, - just the Anglican clerics and Nonconformist ministers and a few doctors and country solicitors, although the doubtfully middle class elementary schoolmasters were scattered fairly generally and, no doubt, provided a kind of aspiring middle class leaven everywhere. It was in the towns, however, that the so called 'middle ranks' became an economic and socio-political force to be reckoned with.

Although the middle ranks were found in all Caernarvonshire's towns, they had a stronger and more deeply rooted base in its old corporate boroughs, Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Conwy. Indeed, as early as 1828, Pigot's Directory listed 296 names in sixty six different occupations in Caernarfon, including ten attorneys, six surgeons and a hundred and forty four retailers and shopkeepers of various kinds⁸⁴. In 1842, the burgesses of Pwllheli claimed 132 out of the 909 votes in the Caernarfon boroughs Parliamentary constituency: Pwllheli's burgesses therefore had 14.5 per cent of the constituency's votes, though the borough had only 10.5 per cent of its population⁸⁵. Five point six per cent of its inhabitants were enfranchised, compared with 2.5 per cent in Bangor, which was experiencing a much more meteoric, nineteenth century growth⁸⁶. By 1871, however, the new middle classes were well established in all the county's towns, although its component elements varied from town to town, and there were many gradations within their ranks. But included were solicitors, bankers, doctors, Anglican clergy and Nonconformist ministers, industrialists and businessmen, shopkeepers and workshop owners, accountants, auctioneers, hoteliers, civil engineers, a few classical school schoolmasters and, on the insistence of the census classification, elementary schoolteachers.

By the 1870s the solid middle class within each town lived

in well delineated and instantly recognisable middle class zones: in Caernarfon, they lived in the 'North road' district, and in Bangor, in 'the new town of Upper Bangor'⁸⁷. By the last quarter of the century, keeping domestic servants had also become an indicator of middle class status. The genteel tourist resort of Llandudno had the highest domestic servant-household ratio in the county, with 0.62 domestic servants per household in 1871, but it was above 0.30 in all the county's towns⁸⁸. By contrast, in the quarrying areas the domestic servant-household ratio was negligible at well under 0.10 per household⁸⁹. These figures illustrate both the concentration of the middle classes in the towns and their relative absence from slate quarrying areas. Indeed, it was the quarrying areas that supplied servants for the county's middle class households.

The strength of the county's middle classes by the last quarter of the century was postulated by the Rev. E. Sneyd Kynnersley, the government's H.M. Inspector of Returns under the Forster Act, in 1871. He reported that no fewer than 23.9 per cent of Caernarfon's population belonged to the 'middling classes' - that is to say, to social classes not requiring the public provision of elementary schooling⁹⁰. However subjective his figures, - and Sneyd Kynnersley had his reasons for exaggerating them, - his estimates certainly explain the large number of private day and boarding schools for boys and girls found in the vicinity of Caernarfon. According to a return for Bangor, 200 out of the city's 1,800 children attended private schools in 1871⁹¹. The existence of private schools, and the relatively large number of children who attended them, showed, not only that there was a sizeable urban middle class in the county, but also that its members had 'thoroughly English' middle class educational aspirations.

In the case of their sons, they emphasised the importance of a sound utilitarian education. They, therefore, sent them to private schools where they could be trained to take a range of examinations, to give them easier access to middle class careers in commerce, the public service and the professions. Among examinations for which boys private schools trained their pupils in Caernarvonshire were the following: the Civil Service examinations, - selection by open competitive examinations being fully adopted from the 1870s onwards, - Public schools entrance examinations; Legal, Medical and Pharmaceutical preliminary examinations; Entrance examinations to naval and military colleges, the Matriculation examinations of London University, and the Oxford and Cambridge 'middle class' examinations (launched in 1857-8). Several middle class schools in the county were only preparatory, training boys up to eleven or twelve years of age so that they were then sent to schools elsewhere to complete their education. But in all their schools, the stress was on useful learning. Some schools stated their utilitarian aims quite explicitly in their prospectuses; 'Youths' stated one of them, 'are fitted for the offices of Architects, Surveyors, Builders, Engineers, Merchants and Manufacturers'⁹². Private middle class schools for boys thus stressed two features: first, a commercial (as opposed to a classical) education, and second, competitive examinations, which in the 1850s, '60s, and '70s, became a middle class cult resting on the optimistic belief in economic progress, social class consolidation and personal improvement.

For their daughters the middle class sought, not so much a utilitarian training, as an upbringing in social graces. The Ladies seminaries which flourished from the 1850s onwards, laid particular

stress on elocution in English, modern languages, and 'female accomplishments' such as painting, needlework, singing and playing the pianoforte or some other musical instrument. The general ethos of such an education was conveyed by the motto of a well patronised Bangor seminary - 'Be not weary in doing good'⁹³.

Any seminary unable to offer a 'thoroughly English', 'completely English' or 'superior English' education would soon have been out of business with the county's middle class. French, German and Italian were accorded high status especially if taught by genuine foreigners. In Bangor and Caernarfon, Herren Becher and Schelling, Monsieur Ernest Jacquet and Signior Lansard D'Elbene were fully occupied trying to teach languages to the daughters of socially aspiring middle class parents⁹⁴. Perhaps the insistence on genuine foreigners as language teachers, only indicated the dearth of native born Britishers able to speak languages other than English. The vogue for German governesses had gripped the most socially aspiring of the county's middle class, and a number of governesses were returned in the 1871 census as having been 'born in Prussia'⁹⁵. At the same time, a number of self styled Professors of Music, such as Professor Henry Hulse, who operated from the Magasin de Musique in Upper Bangor, were in demand⁹⁶. He circulated around the seminaries as 'visiting master' to give training in voice, and a range of instruments from the pianoforte to the flute, but even he was not able to rival Miss Isabel Hewitt's credentials for teaching the violin: her genteel 'notices' proclaimed her 'a pupil of a pupil of the renowned Joachim'⁹⁷. Clearly the county's Victorian middle class did not expect its daughters to enter gainful employment. They were trained to lead a respectable and refined life exercising a kindly but firm authority over domestic

servants, doing 'good works' among the 'deserving poor,' and entertaining local 'society' in fashionable soirees and musical evenings. Seminaries serving these ends drew testimonials expressing the satisfaction of prestigious clients. Testimonials from Nonconformist ministers carried particular social weight in Caernarvonshire and were regularly published in the press. Such testimonials were important because each school was a speculative venture whose survival depended on the establishment of a sound 'scholastic' and 'social' reputation.

This middle class elite dominated the county's political life from the 1870s onwards: it became the ruling urban hegemony and, through its pervasive social influence succeeded in socialising other groups to its own moral norms. With the exception of Llandudno, culturally and linguistically this elite was Welsh in origin. Fewer than 10 per cent of the county's urban population had been born in England - only 3 per cent in Pwllheli, and fewer than 2 per cent in Cricieth and Nefyn, - so that in origin the bulk of the county's middle classes were unquestionably Welsh⁹⁸. Though born Welsh, their greatest socio-cultural ambition, from mid-century if not earlier, was to be anglicised. They wanted to speak English and to speak it with the proper accent. This was regarded as an indicator of status and respectability to both of which they were extremely sensitive. But their social aspirations were often contradictorally combined with an attachment to Nonconformity whose language was Welsh, and which marked their alienation from the Anglican religious establishment and its political allies. Although some of the Welsh middle classes joined the fashionable 'English cause' chapels (the 'Inglis CÔs'), founded in a number of towns in the 1870s, especially by Calvinistic Methodists,

most retained their membership of Welsh language chapels (even though they often spoke English to each other on their way out of the services)⁹⁹. The conjuncture of their adherence, at one and the same time, to conformist petty bourgeois socio-cultural aspirations, and to Nonconformist religio-political values generated a tension in their socio-political outlook which released a remarkable output of group energy. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, this was directed to the fulfilment of strongly held social and political objectives, especially within urban communities. Education in one form or another figured prominently as one of the issues about which they felt most deeply and agitated most strongly.

Before completing this rather complex introductory section it should be stated that two further aspects of nineteenth century demographic patterns bore a particular relevance to the development of elementary education in Caernarvonshire. These were the continued high level of birth rates, and the steadily falling child mortality rates, both of which emphasised the comparatively youthful age structure of the population. According to the 1841 census summary for Caernarvonshire, no fewer than 25.9 per cent of the population was under ten years of age, 36.6 per cent was under fifteen years of age, and just under half the population, - 46.6 per cent, - was under the age of twenty¹⁰⁰. This remarkable preponderance of children and young people in the population meant that social questions relating to children attracted considerable public attention, especially as the importance of providing a national system of elementary schooling was gradually conceded from the 1840s onwards. By 1851, education was already an issue of sufficient interest to cause a special educational census to be made. It showed that about 23 per cent of the country's population was between three

and thirteen years of age, the two parameters already fairly widely acknowledged among interested parties as the legitimate limits of a child's school life¹⁰¹. After due allowance for 'practical impediments', which was Horace Mann's rather nice description of the difficulties in the way of satisfactory school attendance rates,¹⁰² it was felt that a general school attendance ratio of 1:8 of the country's population should be aimed for, that is to say, an attendance at school on any one day of about half the children in the country, between the ages of three and thirteen¹⁰³. Twenty years later in 1871, as part of its assessment of the country's need for school places, in preparation for the implementation of the 1870 Education Act, the government worked on the somewhat tighter assumption that 1:6 of the population were children who ought to be in school, although the 1871 census returns showed that the actual proportion of children between the ages of three and thirteen was nearer 1:4¹⁰⁴. Twenty years later in 1891, after changes in attitudes towards compulsory school attendance, it was stated officially that 'educational authorities' should 'assume that 24 per cent of the population are children who should, according to the law, be in receipt of education'¹⁰⁵. By that time, the number of children and young people in the population was somewhat higher again, and was marginally higher still in Caernarvonshire, which in 1881, was one of only eleven counties in England and Wales, whose population growth in the preceding ten years was in excess of natural growth, boosted, therefore, by substantial population in-migration.¹⁰⁶ The only other Welsh county in the list was Glamorgan, so that the educational 'needs' of Caernarvonshire were still growing in the 1880s and '90s, and exercising a continuing demand for attention in the localities. Yet within the county, as we have seen, there were

demographic variations of all kinds between one district and another, which were intensified, not only by complexities in the timing and distribution of population growth, but also by social class ambiguities of all kinds. By the 1890s also, elementary education was accepted as a legitimate concern of government, and its increasing claim on the resources of the State was widely, though not universally conceded. The sheer size of the country's child population and its ratio to the general population played an important part in legitimating that concern.

Summing up this section briefly, we can say that there had been a structural change in Caernarvonshire's economy in the course of the nineteenth century. Nothing less than an economic transformation had taken place, with the growth of industry and mineral exploitation, particularly the large scale development of slate quarrying, the slate export trade, and of ancillary works based upon it. This led to the growth of industrial quarrying areas, and the expansion of a number of the county's towns. All the other towns in the county had also grown, but its agricultural districts had experienced first a slow, then after the 1840s, a rapid decline which became worse after the onset of the agricultural depression in the 1880s. Demographically, the county's population nearly trebled. It was also redistributed by migration, in response to changing economic patterns and employment opportunities. Socially also, it became far more diversified with the growth and consolidation of new social classes, each consisting of several gradations and each with its own socio-political attitudes and aspirations. Under these conditions, its society, like wider society, became more class conscious, though it is difficult to gauge the development of class identity among the elements

making up the county's social strata. On the whole, it appears to have been stronger among the county's middle class than among its working classes, and to have been expressed, in part, through their aspirations for a socially exclusive 'middle class' education, both for their sons and daughters. Finally, the county's population had become youthful, with a large proportion of children under thirteen years of age, so that questions affecting them were bound to claim a large measure of contemporary interest. Such was the scale and complexity of the economic and social changes which had affected the county, and such was the further complication added to them by newly emerging religious patterns, that the development of elementary education and the response of different localities and communities to new educational opportunities, was bound to be a complex and many sided issue.

2. Emerging Nineteenth century Religious Patterns in Caernarvonshire

In the eighteenth century the religious impulse had been the most important determinant of charitable educational effort for 'the lower orders', and in this respect, educational enterprise in Caernarvonshire had been in the mainstream. In the course of the nineteenth century, the county's evolving patterns of religious allegiance, interacting with new patterns of society, were to influence the nature and significance of the religious factor in education. The concern for education ceased to be 'religious' in the eighteenth century sense, as the growing impact of Nonconformity and its increasing politicisation created a powerful synthesis of religion and politics. By the 1860s, the synthesis was far advanced and reflected the growing socio-political

aspirations of Welsh Nonconformity's assertive middle class leadership.

By the eighteen forties, Caernarvonshire had already changed its allegiance from the Established Church to Nonconformity, and particularly to Calvinistic Methodism. In his studies of the 1851 Religious Census, Professor Ieuan Gwynedd Jones shows that in two of Caernarvonshire's Poor Law districts, Pwllheli and Llanrwst, the various religious bodies had reached the point of supplying more chapel seating accommodation than required for their entire population¹⁰⁷. The Llanrwst Union included most parishes in the Conwy valley, while the Pwllheli Union encompassed an extensive stretch of parishes in the Llŷn peninsula. In the county's remaining Poor Law Unions, Conwy, Bangor and Beaumaris, and Caernarfon, religious bodies, had supplied accommodation for 87.9 per cent, 81.6 per cent and 77.3 per cent of the population respectively¹⁰⁸. These figures reflected the remarkable energy which the Nonconformists had directed to building their places of worship since 1800, when there had only been thirty Nonconformist chapels in the whole of Caernarvonshire. By 1851, there were as many as 221 chapels, and several more were in the process of being built, rebuilt or extended¹⁰⁹. At the same time, the number of Anglican churches hardly increased: only three Anglican churches were built in Caernarvonshire in fifty years after 1800; their number went up from sixty four to sixty seven¹¹⁰. While the number of Nonconformist chapels had grown by 637 per cent, the number of Anglican churches went up by one half of one per cent. The Anglican church provided virtually the same numerical seating accommodation in 1851 as in 1801, even though the county's population had doubled. At the beginning of the century, it was able to accommodate 43 per cent of the county's population; by 1851 this had dwindled to 23 per cent¹¹¹. The

religious geography of the county was thus transformed, but more important for the educational historian were the social and political implications of Nonconformity's enormous growth. Socially, the great bulk of the indigenous Welsh speaking population, belonging to the middle and lower ranks of society, had become Nonconformists. The Anglican church retained the loyalty of a small residual minority of these groups. They were led, however, by the landowning aristocracy and gentry, often anglicised, and unrepresentative of the general population. Its members still regarded themselves as leaders of Welsh society. Indeed, the challenge which the rising middle class posed to the assumptions of the landowning class about its rights of political and social precedence was one of the central political issues of the century in Wales.

By far the strongest of the Nonconformist denominations in Caernarvonshire were the Calvinistic Methodists, who for the first forty years of the century were under the influence, first of Thomas Charles of Bala, and then of John Elias of Anglesey. This Calvinistic Methodist predominance was a significant factor for the development of education in the county, as the distinction between the Calvinistic Methodists and the older denominations of Nonconformity was of great importance in the nineteenth century history of education in Wales. The divergent attitudes of the Calvinistic Methodists and Old Dissent on a number of educational issues, particularly their perceptions of the State and its role in education, were rooted in their very different histories. While the old Dissenters, - in Caernarvonshire, the Independents and Baptists as minority Nonconformist denominations, - could trace their origins to the seventeenth century, and had a history of resistance to State repression, the Calvinistic Methodists

were a far more contemporary denomination: they had been formed in the eighteenth century and for much of their existence regarded themselves as members of the Established Church. Not until 1811 had they broken away from the Church, and were then reluctantly driven to Nonconformity by official repression. Even afterwards, under John Elias's cautious leadership, they remained politically quiescent and conservative. They held themselves aloof from Old Dissent and often gave the impression of being withdrawn from the secular world; of being inward looking, defensive and deferent¹¹².

By 1851 the extent of their growth as a religious denomination within Caernarvonshire was astonishing. The census showed that they now dominated the county's denominational structure. No less than 104, or slightly over a third of all Caernarvonshire's 296 places of worship, were Calvinistic Methodist chapels¹¹³. Of the county's Nonconformist chapel accommodation, they supplied 47 per cent. Their chapels, widely distributed throughout the county, could already seat over 42 per cent of its entire population¹¹⁴. To this should be added the extra seating which they provided in their vestries and schoolrooms ('Ysgoldai'), - a term redolent of the denomination's 'educational' mission strongly associated with Thomas Charles¹¹⁵. The second Nonconformist denomination were the Independents with 58 chapels, though their rate of growth in a few places had been higher than that of the Calvinistic Methodists¹¹⁶. Then came the Wesleyan Methodists and the Baptists with 35 and 27 chapels respectively¹¹⁷. The denominational fragmentation of the county's Nonconformists, though clearly enervating under some circumstances, was not necessarily so, and at this time was regarded as a sign of vitality and enthusiasm.

Though Nonconformity had established itself across the whole

county, one of its striking features was the way it had established itself as an overwhelming presence in Caernarvonshire's new slate quarrying communities, where Calvinistic Methodism had grown up with the new industrial working class. The conjunction of class consciousness and Nonconformity drew these communities into the orbit of a kind of Nonconformist populism, which, later in the century, fell under the influence of a respectable liberal consensus, though the slate quarrying communities were never wholly absorbed by this consensus, retaining something, at least, of their own spiritual norms.

As an example of the concurrent growth of working class communities and Nonconformity in Caernarvonshire, we may take the Ogwen valley quarrying communities in the Penrhyn slate quarry complex, centred on the village of Bethesda (in the two parishes of Llandygai and Llanllechid), where nineteen Nonconformist chapels, seven of them Calvinistic Methodist, were built in the first fifty years of the century, when the population of the area grew from 2,602 to 9,346¹¹⁸. A few miles to the south in Llanddeiniolen, one of the parishes of the Dinorwic slate quarries complex, thirteen Nonconformist chapels, five of them Calvinistic Methodist, were built in the same period, to coincide with a population growth from 1,039 in 1801 to 4,894 in 1851¹¹⁹. In contrast, the Anglican church held itself aloof; by 1851 the Anglican churches in Llandygai, Llanllechid and Llanddeiniolen were hopelessly inconveniently sited for their new population. In all the county's newly industrialised areas, Anglican parish churches remained in ancient pre-industrial locations, better suited to a sparse population with an economy based on poor subsistence farming. The Anglican church made no effort to open church missions nearer the centres of the new communities. Not only had the Church lacked zeal

and warmth; it also suffered a total lack of vision, and this in a diocese which was financially strong¹²⁰. The Church was also socially, and at its upper hierarchical levels, linguistically alienated from the new slate quarrying working class, although at parish level Welsh was the language of its services¹²¹. In contrast, Nonconformist chapels were community chapels. They were self-governing, and democratic, with a fraternal sense of equality, Welsh in language, and used as centres for a variety of shared religious experiences, and increasingly, for a number of communal activities involving the whole range of age groups in the population. Without popular community effort, none of the Nonconformist chapels would have been built. Such community effort took several forms, from neighbourhood collections - ha'penny collections (casgliadau dimai), - to volunteer work in building the chapels.

The social and culturally formative influence of Nonconformity was far from limited to the slate quarrying communities. One of the features of Nonconformity's growth in Caernarvonshire was its uniformity throughout the county. Calvinistic Methodism was an early and strong influence in the rural areas. Though by 1851 chapel provision had been made for 88.25 per cent of the population in Caernarvonshire as a whole, there was surplus provision, as we have seen, in the Pwllheli and Llanrwst Unions, with accommodation rates of 104.5 per cent and 108.1 per cent respectively¹²². These Unions consisted of deeply rural parishes, with economies occasionally diversified by small mining villages. It was here that Calvinistic Methodism made its first impact in Caernarvonshire, so that initially, at least, Calvinistic Methodism was a rural movement. The greatest period of expansion for Calvinistic Methodism in the Llŷn peninsula occurred earlier than in

the county's industrial parishes, between 1811 and 1830, whereas the greatest Nonconformist energy showed in the slate quarrying areas between the 1830s and 1850¹²³. Chapel building in the county's rural areas was virtually over by the 1840s when enough chapels were built to accommodate a larger population than actually existed. In the parish of Aberdaron, six Nonconformist chapels, three of them Calvinistic Methodist, were already built by 1830, by which time its population had grown from 1,141 to 1,389 (1831), and when it was about to lose population to the county's industrialising areas¹²⁴. In another Llŷn rural parish, Llaniestyn, four Nonconformist chapels, three of them Calvinistic Methodist, were erected by 1830 when its population had risen from 1,067 to 1,115 (1831), and when it, too, was about to lose population¹²⁵. The rural parishes thus reached saturation point at about the same time as industrialisation in the county's slate quarrying communities began to attract their surplus population into the industrialising parishes. Professor Ieuan Gwynedd Jones maintains that rural migrants within the county took their religion with them, and that, by so doing, created that increased demand which was typical of the quarrying townships in the 1830s and 1840s¹²⁶. This would explain why Calvinistic Methodism in its new milieu succeeded in maintaining the predominance it had enjoyed in its original rural setting. Yet there were a number of differences worth noting: first, the other Dissenting denominations were weaker in rural areas than in slate quarrying communities (or the county's towns). Put another way, Calvinistic Methodism was even more dominant in the countryside than in other areas. Secondly, Calvinistic Methodism in the countryside was unlikely to be influenced by the social norms of a one-class industrial community, so that its own spiritual norms varied

from place to place and congregation to congregation. Yet the religious and social links, formed by population migration from rural to slate quarrying areas, forged a much greater sense of unity than might have been expected between societies living by different modes of economic production. The organisational structure of Calvinistic Methodism, with its modified form of presbyterian establishment and its mobile and perambulating ministry, also gave collective coherence to the socially disparate elements which composed the county's Calvinistic Methodist constituency.

The espousal of Nonconformity, in particular Calvinistic Methodism, by the middle classes of the towns added another, and all-important, dimension to the county's Calvinistic Methodist ethos. Calvinistic Methodism, and Nonconformity in general, might have been expected to appeal to this class in Caernarvonshire's urban society, as Calvinist theology, with its stress on personal responsibility and discipline, appeared to sanctify, not only their intense individualism, but also their economic enterprise and drive for personal improvement and success. Calvinist theology transformed their economic activities and socio-political aspirations into the loftiest of religious and moral virtues, to which were enjoined those of diligence, sobriety, frugality and thrift. In addition, their membership of a Nonconformist milieu gave them a group solidarity, a sense of belonging to a group holding common values which were 'progressive', as opposed to those of the landowning class characterised by idleness, failure to pursue a calling, socially useless privilege and personal irresponsibility. Just as the reactionary landowning class appeared to find spiritual justification in the Anglican church, so the urban middle class was strengthened by its adherence to Nonconformity and its Calvinist ethics.

The social and political tensions which persisted throughout the century between the adherents of the Established church and those who belonged to the conglomerate of dissenting churches outside the establishment, tintured public and political controversies with religious conflict. No political controversy was affected more strongly than that which accompanied the development of elementary education; educational politics at all levels were thoroughly imbued with religious and sectarian antagonism, often taken to extraordinary lengths. It was taken further in Wales than elsewhere because of the numerical and social strength of Nonconformity, and because of the unique character of the Welsh Anglican establishment.

To an extent, therefore, Calvinistic Methodism was a shared religious and cultural experience throughout Caernarvonshire, so that aspects of the social outlook of communities and social classes and groups which differed quite fundamentally in their economic interests, and in their place in the social scale, were deeply rooted in a common intellectual and spiritual soil. By the middle of the nineteenth century Caernarvonshire's landscape was already dotted with scores of Nonconformist chapels, nearly half of them Calvinistic Methodist. The chapels were already centres of a new kind of culture, with its distinctive moral system and its ideals of individual and social behaviour¹²⁷. The implications of this religious change for education were momentous during a century which saw the development of a national system of elementary schooling for the working classes.

Thus far, I have sought to show how the changes consequent upon the growth of population, and the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation, affected economic and social patterns in Caernarvonshire.

The ripple effect of the industrialisation process was very widely felt in the county, and hardly a parish remained totally unaffected by the entrepreneurial spirit. The county's economic life presented a microcosm of the economic growth and expansion which affected the country as a whole. I have also noted the changing religious and denominational allegiances of the county, and the growing adherence of the great majority of its middle and working classes to Nonconformity, and above all, to Calvinistic Methodism.

Many social changes were intimately connected with economic and industrial growth. The opening up of the slate quarries created new types of working class communities, while a looser and more fluid class structure came into being in the small, but vigorous, towns. Local variations were still important and added many complexities to the general pattern. There were significant differences even within the urban context. At the same time, the once isolated rural communities became less hidebound, affected by population out-migration and establishing links with different kinds of communities further afield. The development of communications and especially the coming of railways, was another factor breaking down community isolation.

Population growth and movement, the creation of new types of employment opportunities, and extended concepts of social mobility, all based on economic changes, played a major role in changing life opportunities and life perspectives in nineteenth century Caernarvonshire. The migration of population, in itself, helped to break down the 'local' mentality, a process aided by the development of communications, and the dissemination of 'news' through the printed word. This is not to say that 'localism', local loyalties, and an awareness of local distinctiveness, were not to continue to play an important part

in the consciousness of individual communities, or to exercise a powerful influence on the way men thought and acted. But the economic and other changes then taking place made them more ready to face the challenge of new currents; 'interventions' in the 'local', brought about partly by physical encroachments on community isolation, and partly by changing notions of 'government responsibility', especially later in the century, when socio-political theories were readjusted to accommodate more collectivist views of the State.

At the same time, the trend of social ideas and the quality of socio-political aspirations and ambitions, were very powerfully affected by the growth of Nonconformity. Calvinistic Methodism acted as a leaven throughout Caernarvonshire's society, and as a determinant of social and political attitudes. Its influence was to be greatly strengthened after the death of John Elias who, for twenty years after 1820, had kept the denomination politically quiescent and socially deferent. Yet socio-economic community structures became ever more important as determinants of the spiritual and social norms which Calvinistic Methodism assumed in different types of communities.

It is against this complex and fluid social background, when many important changes were taking place, - when society was being liberated from the influence of ancient constraints, - that a brief survey of the role of the State and of ^{the} provision of elementary education before the eighteen forties in Wales and in Caernarvonshire will now be attempted.

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CHAPTER TWO

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS 1800-1840

1. The Role of the State in Education before 1840

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the provision of elementary education was largely a local matter, almost always fortuitous and haphazard. The existing patchwork, much of it shrouded in obscurity, owed nearly everything to inheritance from the eighteenth century. Schools usually belonged to the eighteenth century tradition of charity schools, or were private ventures of individual schoolteachers. Each school varied in quality according to the calibre of its teacher. As yet, the State kept itself apart from school provision and the dispensation of education.

Within fifteen years, two new voluntary organisations were formed, to promote the education of the 'lower orders' nationwide. The first of these was the Royal Lancasterian Institution, which though founded in 1808 became better known after 1814 as the British and Foreign Schools Society. Its central aim was religious: its schools, based upon the monitorial system, had a limited secular curriculum built around the teaching of unsectarian religious instruction¹. The Society drew its support from the ranks of religious Nonconformity, and the liberal wing of the Anglican church. In 1811, three years after the founding of the Royal Lancasterian Institution, the National Society for the Promotion of the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church came into being. This Society, known as the National Society, was promoted and supported by Anglicans to ensure that the education of the poor was conducted according to the tenets of the Church of England. The National Society's aim was to provide the lower orders with schooling in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, based, like the British Society, on the monitorial system, but arranged around the formularies and catechisms of the Established Church². Both

Societies had, therefore, inherited the religious motives of the eighteenth century, and, initially, each saw education primarily as a means to personal salvation. The State had no connection with these societies; education was still regarded as the legitimate province of voluntary philanthropy. It was significant, however, that the two societies were set up during the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century when fundamental changes were taking place in the country's economy. That is, at a time when economic and social changes were promoting a new interest in social questions, including education and allied issues such as the work role of children, highlighted by the spread of factories, and the opening of mines and quarries.

Although the State played no part in promoting British and National schools until the eighteen thirties, there were a number of prior indications that it was beginning to take a more positive interest in working class education. In 1816, Henry Brougham and his fellow Parliamentary Radicals persuaded Parliament to establish a Select Committee, under Brougham's chairmanship, to enquire into 'the education of the lower orders in the Metropolis'³. This committee was the first of a number appointed in the eighteen twenties and thirties, to investigate conditions relating to 'the education of the people'. They produced a growing volume of reports, minutes of evidence and statistics, all revealing the patchy distribution and poor calibre of the country's schools⁴. They also presented arguments for improving the schools and extending their supply. They played an important role in pressing the possibility of State aid and in discussing forms it might take. Alongside the Parliamentary Select Committees, private investigators turned their attention to education, together with statistical

societies which were founded in many of the country's new manufacturing and industrial towns. Most important, the two voluntary societies produced an ever-increasing fund of information about schools and teachers, and about various aspects of working class life. They all suggested the extent of what the British Society called 'the ignorance of the people', condemned in 1832, as 'disgraceful to us as a Protestant nation'⁵. The accumulation of information about education was increasingly conjoined to expressions of concern about the stability of society. Real doubts were cast on society's ability to withstand the social pressures acting upon it. Side by side with evidence of 'the people's ignorance', there were graphic accounts of disturbances, riots and 'disaffection'. This kind of reportage, backed up by an increasing mass of statistical evidence, created a body of informed opinion, which became convinced that the State should play a more active role in providing schools for the working classes. This new opinion saw the need for intervention, not primarily in terms of the salvation of souls, but in those of protecting God's kingdom in the temporal world. The emergence of this view countered another opinion, strongly held in some quarters: that the State had no business to interfere with education which was the sacrosanct province of religious endeavour; that for the State to provide the working classes with schooling would do more harm than good, by 'raising the poor above their stations', and disturbing 'the natural order' of society⁶. This older view was now giving way under the impact of social investigation and unrest. On the whole, the new view was more strongly accepted by Anglicans than Nonconformists although there were suspicions even in Church circles that State

participation might lead to the secular control of schooling⁷.

But many Nonconformists remained sullenly suspicious of the motives behind the pressure for State intervention. They were afraid that State involvement would mean more power to the State Church, inevitably endangering their own religious freedom⁸.

Despite these suspicions, the gradual acceptance of the new view was reflected in the government's decision in 1833, to embark on a policy of limited State grants to the two voluntary societies⁹. This aid was to help build schools in places where they were most needed, and particularly in the growing towns and industrial areas where social agitation was most likely to occur. The reluctance of government to intervene in education was shown by the restricted sum of the original grant, (£20,000), which was only voted for one year at a time. The grant was channelled to the two voluntary societies on a strict pound for pound basis through the Treasury: no grant was approved, and no money was handed over, unless the equivalent of half the amount of the grant had been collected by voluntary effort in the locality concerned¹⁰. This regulation prevented a number of grants, which had been approved on initial information provided by the voluntary societies, from ever being paid. In addition, there was no State interference in the substantive areas of education, nor was there State supervision or inspection of schools. No means were created to ensure that minimum standards of school design were adopted, and no money was contributed to supporting the running costs of schools. Initial State intervention was thus rigidly limited to Treasury approval of small money grants to help build schools under strict reciprocal conditions. Almost certainly, the fact that the objects of the grants were limited,

made them more acceptable to the supporters of the voluntary societies.

However, the principle of State intervention had now been conceded and it was to grow throughout the eighteen thirties, as the social crisis accompanying the economic changes of the period deepened. The crisis expressed itself in outbreaks of social discontent, ranging from sporadic and disorganised rural rioting in the early 1830s, to the Anti Poor Law Movement and Chartism later in the decade. Not surprisingly, in view of the close connection between the social context and informed opinion, State intervention was further refined in 1839, with the establishment of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, which took over the administration of State grants from the Treasury. There was also a growing consensus that stronger State action might be necessary, despite the deep suspicions of many about its ultimate outcome. Despite its own doubts, the National Society, as the largest of the voluntary societies, was ready to form a Concordat with the government in 1840 by which it accepted the principle of State inspection of grant-aided schools on the proviso that it should be given a voice in the selection of members of the inspectorate¹¹. In effect, the Concordat allowed the church to select its own schools inspectorate; it was also allowed to frame the instructions to be given to the inspectors with regard to religious instruction, and to sanction the General Instruction to Inspectors drawn up initially by the new Committee of Council on Education. In one sense, therefore, the Concordat gave the Church's role in education a powerful boost. It has even been described as 'a definite victory for the National Society'¹². On the bases of this Concordat

the British Society was also allowed to choose the inspectors for its schools.

State intervention in education thus emerged during the early part of the century according to the classic Victorian pattern. First, the State was persuaded to intervene in 1833 under the pressure of arguments based on evidence obtained by empirical social investigation. Second, in 1839-40, the State took a not untypical step to strengthen its power by creating the system of inspection to help monitor the work of the grant-aided schools of the embryonic educational 'system'. Educational legislation, however, was not introduced, - apart from the educational clauses of Factory Acts, - possibly due to the prior existence of the voluntary agencies, and because the ideological climate was not ready for major educational legislation. In addition, the system of inspection, under which the voluntary agencies were given a powerful voice in the selection of the inspectorate, meant that it would not be a totally 'disinterested' body. Yet the fact that the new inspectors were, to an extent at least, independent of the State strengthened rather than weakened them¹³. During the 1840s and 50s, the inspectors were free of the powers of the 'Office,' which was built up at that time to service the new Committee of Council on Education. Though these developments were a fragile and tentative start, they meant that pre-disposing factors for the adoption of a national education 'policy' were being laid down.

2. School Provision in Caernarvonshire before 1840

i. The Charity Schools and the Private Adventure Schools

It is difficult to gauge actual school provision in Caernarvonshire at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Generally, however, few permanent schools of any kind catered for the 'lower orders'. In addition, the schools in existence were unevenly spread between one locality and another. The untidy mesh of existing schools consisted of two main types of institution. First, there were a number of charity schools, most of which had been founded in the eighteenth century. Some of them, however, were much earlier foundations, particularly those offering a watered down classical or grammar school curriculum. Secondly, there were an ever changing myriad of private venture schools, most of them run as commercial concerns by their founder-teachers who hoped to make a living from 'keeping school' (cadw ysgol). Some of the private ventures were typical dame schools, and many were very short-lived.

One way of categorising the county's eighteenth century charity schools is to group them according to their foundation dates. This categorization produces two main groups of charity schools in Caernarvonshire. The first group consists of six small foundations established in the first half of the eighteenth century, all in deeply rural parishes such as Caerhun, Pentir, Llanbedr-y-Cennin, and Penmachno¹⁴. The second includes the six somewhat larger, though still comparatively small, schools founded after 1750, and owing their origins to the inspiration of Griffith Jones's circulating schools movement¹⁵. Generally, both groups were founded in parishes which retained their rurality even after the economic and social changes of the nineteenth century. Just

as the early eighteenth century charity schools were established unevenly throughout the county, all the later charity schools were founded in the Llyn peninsula where the circulating schools had been most active. Indeed, the influence of Griffith Jones's movement is illustrated by the fact that some of the later schools continued to adhere to the circulating principle, as did the charity school established at the tip of the Llyn peninsula, under the will of Robert Evans of Bodwyddog in 1784¹⁶. This school had, since its foundation, circulated for a year at a time around the four parishes of Aberdaron, Bryn croes, Rhiw and Llanfaelrhys¹⁷.

Whatever their dates, the founders of both groups of charity schools were motivated by religion; by the impulse to provide the poor with the means to personal salvation, and to cure their souls. Though this was still central to the charity schools' *raison d'être* at the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were already signs that more interest was beginning to be taken in secular learning. In the Llyn peninsula, for example, a number of farmers began to make payments to charity school teachers for teaching additional subjects to their children¹⁸. Other schools began to teach a number of extra subjects in response to local demands, more particularly for the rudiments of English and Arithmetic, in addition to teaching the scriptures in Welsh provided for by their endowments. Within the schools these developments brought about an important organisational change. Instead of grouping all their pupils together, as before, in one class, most of the charity schools began to segregate their fee paying scholars from the rest in separate classes¹⁹. Though the fees levied for 'extra' instruction were low, they were never sufficiently low to enable

the children of the rural poor to take advantage of it.

This small but significant extension of the charity schools's curriculum showed a change in their social function under the pressure of local demand. This demand may have reflected the response of social groups within localities, to economic changes felt to be taking place. The changes also implied that the schools had teachers capable of coping with the new demand. Whether this was so is uncertain. It may be that in some parishes charity schools were the only schools available. But one or two of the schools may have had gifted teachers. The 1784 circulating charity school in the Llŷn peninsula had a teacher of quality in Evan Thomas, more widely known by his bardic name, Ieuan Llŷn²⁰. He taught at the school for several years before and after the turn of the century and enjoyed a reputation throughout the area as a teacher of considerable ability. Though self taught, he was naturally intelligent and had wide cultural interests.

It is difficult to assess the general influence of Caernarvonshire's charity schools at the beginning of the nineteenth century. As we have noted, the schools were small, so that their influence on whole communities was bound to be confined. The largest charity school in Caernarvonshire was the last one founded in the county, at Llanystumdwy, in 1819²¹. It was founded so late, however, that its inclusion with the 'eighteenth century' charity schools may be unwarranted. It had eighty four pupils when examined by the Charity Commissioners in 1834, so that its size was quite exceptional²². Most charity schools founded in the eighteenth century had fewer than forty pupils, and the six schools founded in the first half of the eighteenth century only had six or seven

'charity' pupils each²³. The collective influence of the schools must also have been affected by the fact that some of them had gone into abeyance for many years before being revived once again. Inevitably, the quality of their teachers also varied. Not all of them were Evan Thomases and some were very suspect indeed. Finally, as there were only twelve charity schools throughout the county, their impact on 'the education of the people' as a whole, must have been marginal even if in isolated localities it might have been valuable.

The condition of the county's three classical foundations also varied in 1800, but generally they had been neglected during the eighteenth century and were now in a state of serious decline. Indeed, the old grammar school foundation established in 1616 by Bishop Henry Rowlands at Botwnnog deep in the Llŷn peninsula, was little more than a superior elementary school, catering in the main for children of the region's better-off and middle class of farmers²⁴. Very few scholars actually followed a classical curriculum: most were sent to the school to learn English and Arithmetic, already identified as the most important subjects to be learned 'for life'²⁵. In addition, the Botwnnog school taught a number of other subjects felt to be practical and useful. These included the principles of Euclid and Navigation, the latter reflecting the important role of the sea and shipping in the peninsula's economy²⁶. It was many years before the school was restored to its original purpose as a classical grammar school. It did not lose its 'elementary' functions entirely until the implementation of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889 during the 1890s.

The even older classical foundation known as the Friars school, at Bangor, founded in 1557 by Geoffrey Glynne, was also in a thoroughly bad state by 1800²⁷. Like the Botwinog school, it was dispensing little more than a slightly superior brand of elementary schooling to the sons of local townsmen and neighbouring farmers. Unlike the school at Botwinog, however, Friars school fell, relatively early in the century, under the influence of an educational reformer, the Rev. J.H. Cotton. He had come to Bangor as a young cleric in the early years of the century and remained in the city for the rest of his life. He was made Vicar of Bangor in 1811, and raised to the Deanship of the Cathedral in 1838²⁸. According to the school's endowment, the Dean and Chapter were to have the dominant voice in its government, so that when Cotton became Dean he effectively secured control of the school. But even before then, Cotton had succeeded in restoring the character of 'Friars' as a classical grammar school. This, however, was not achieved without dissension, as some local people were afraid that Cotton's changes would deprive their children of the opportunity of going to Friars²⁹. Those interested in the issue formed themselves into a party composed largely of middle class Nonconformists. They were led by Dr. O.O. Roberts, a well known local physician with the reputation of a political radical³⁰. He and his party opposed Cotton's intentions on the grounds that they deprived local boys, and poor boys in particular, of the opportunity of a superior schooling in favour of fee paying boarders³². Cotton was thus attempting to pervert the founder's original intentions which were to establish a school to serve the locality and its poor. Roberts and his party were not sufficiently powerful to prevent

Cotton and the 'restorers' from achieving their aims, so that Friars school was firmly re-established as a classical and Anglican grammar school well before the 1840s³¹. Its fees were as high as forty pounds a year so that most local boys, as Roberts and his party had prophesied, were effectively excluded from the school³². To all intents, the school became a boarding school taking boys from a much wider area than Bangor and its neighbourhood. Having restored and re-established the school, Cotton also strengthened the Church's position on its governing body, thus consolidating its status as an Anglican foundation. Long before the 1840s, therefore, Friars school had ceased to be concerned with elementary schooling, or the schooling of the 'lower orders'. Yet the early nineteenth century struggle in Bangor over the future of Friars school had indicated how educational politics were to develop in the course of the century. Roberts had opposed Cotton on three grounds: first, on religious grounds that Cotton was an Anglican, secondly, on the grounds that he was depriving local boys (mainly in this respect local middle class boys) of the opportunity of a superior 'middle class' education, and thirdly, on the grounds that the school's curriculum ought to be more utilitarian. Roberts held that a curriculum reconstructed on utilitarian lines would have met the needs of the time, and especially those of the growing middle class of the area³³. The struggle also indicated that the local Nonconformist middle class already felt itself strong enough in Bangor as early as the 1820s, to challenge the Establishment's educational hegemony.

The third classical charity school in the county had been founded at Pwllheli by the Vaughan family of Corsygedol in 1695³⁴.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century its state was such that its very future was in jeopardy. Known as the Pwllheli Free Grammar school, it was neither a 'free' school, nor a 'grammar' school. But like Friars school, it became an early subject in the county's nineteenth century educational confrontation between Anglicans and Nonconformists. The timing and intensity of the educational struggle between the parties in Pwllheli reflected the early strength of Nonconformity in the town, and the vigour of its proportionately sizeable middle class. The Pwllheli 'Free Grammar' school dispute concerned the same issues as those raised in Bangor. At Pwllheli, however, they were focused on the appointment of a new head teacher in 1839-40, and on a dispute about the school's curriculum³⁵. The Anglican party wanted the appointment of a confirmed Anglican as head, who would restore the classical nature of the school, while the Nonconformist or 'town' party, had wanted either a Nonconformist, or at least a broad Anglican, who would develop the school as a utilitarian middle class academy. This last issue was given a great deal of prominence at Pwllheli, the town's new Nonconformist middle class pushing hard for the adoption of a more 'modern' and practical range of subjects, while the more traditional Church party remained anxious to retain the school's classical heritage. At base, the issue was the control of the school. The dispute raged so fiercely that neither party was prepared to compromise. Such was the impasse, that rather than come to an agreement the parties suffered the school to close in 1841, never to be reopened again³⁶. When the building was visited by the Welsh Education Commissioners in 1846, - and the fact that Commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of

'elementary' education, had included the 'Free Grammar' school in their visits was itself an eloquent comment on the school's reputed status, - they found it in utter decay and dilapidation. Torn and dog-eared books were strewn about the floor, most of its windows were broken, and in one drawer in a chest of drawers was found 'part of a human body in an advanced state of putrefaction'³⁷. The latter find makes what had been taught at the school when it was open, more doubtful still.

It is clear from this short review that Friars school, Bangor, had fallen out of the category of schools catering for 'the lower orders' quite early because of the restorative work of the Rev. J.H. Cotton; that the Free Grammar school in Pwllheli had disappeared from the reckoning after a stormy and turbulent history in the 1830s, but that the Botwnnog school continued to dispense a superior 'elementary education' to the children of local parents who could afford its fees. Although nowhere near as high as those charged at the Friars school in Bangor, they were high enough to deter most, if not all, the children of 'the lower orders'. The three schools had thus effectively fallen out of the category of institutions providing elementary education for the working classes.

Side by side with the twelve eighteenth century charity schools and the three classical foundations, there were an enormous number of private venture schools; far more than can ever be traced. Certainly the impact of these schools must have been felt more widely across the county, than that of the small number of charity schools. It is almost impossible, however, to

comment authoritatively upon them, first, because so many were obscure, second, because there was an enormous variation in their effectiveness and, thirdly because nearly all had short lives, some moving from place to place in the circulating tradition. As a result, the county's private venture school network was not only obscure but was also continually changing. Indeed, the strength of the short-stay private venture tradition, described by R.R.W. Lingen and J.C. Symons in 1846 as the 'ephemeral', 'ambulatory' or 'locomotive' tradition, was so powerful that it makes impossible any thorough assessment of the general distribution and effectiveness of the schools in Caernarvonshire³⁸.

Yet some comments can be made. Very few appear to have had any association with the Anglican church. Most were totally autonomous institutions. If anything, they appear to have been broadly Nonconformist or non-denominational in their religious orientation. Some were conducted in Nonconformist chapel vestries or schoolrooms (ysgoldai), so that in a number of places an early link was formed between Nonconformist chapels and private venture education. In several instances Nonconformist preacher-pastors themselves acted as teachers to help eke out their meagre livings. Other private venture schools, probably the great majority, had no chapel connection, being conducted in private houses, farm buildings and outhouses, as the sole responsibility of their teachers³⁹.

Yet the link between some of the schools and Nonconformist chapels in Caernarvonshire was identified quite strongly by William Hopley, the historian of Arfon Methodism, who noted that between 1792 and 1826 there were at least eight small private venture schools in the developing slate quarrying parish of Llandygai, and

that most of them had connections with early Nonconformist 'causes'⁴⁰. The eight schools he identified were only in existence for short periods at a time, so that there must have been other periods - probably extending for many years - when there were no such schools in the parish. For the same period, Hobley counted up to eight such schools in the neighbouring parish of Llanllechid, and these would also have been within reach of most places within the parish of Llandygai⁴¹. The eight schools in Llanllechid included relatively large schools connected with important Nonconformist chapels, - the Bethesda Independent chapel and the Carneddi Calvinistic Methodist chapel⁴². The first was the pioneering Nonconformist place of worship in the area; its name had been adopted by the community itself. It seems, therefore, that some kind of undefined and loose connection existed in some parts of the county between a number of private venture schools and some of the early Nonconformist chapels. In many cases the link must have been tenuous, but however transient the initial schools held in association with the Bethesda and Carneddi chapels, they provided the nuclei of thriving British schools⁴³.

Even in places where a school-chapel connection can be shown to have existed, its nature was usually discontinuous and non-formalized. There does not appear to have been any systematic link between the early Nonconformist chapels and the county's ever-changing network of private venture schools. One of the most noteworthy features of such schools was their lack of organisation, and the fact that they were not part of a system. Though some were conducted in chapel vestries, they were not integral to the chapels. On the contrary, they were independent institutions.

To all intents, their teachers relied for their living on what they could earn in school pence, unless they also had other work which a considerable number apparently had. As poverty was a distinctive characteristic of most local communities in every part of Caernarvonshire, most of the schools were in a precarious financial condition. This accounted for the need which most private venture teachers felt to circulate their schools from place to place, usually within a confined geographical radius. It appears also that attendances at these schools were at best irregular, and that many of their pupils were withdrawn and sent to work when they reached what was regarded in their neighbourhoods as a working age, or once their parents decided that their children had absorbed sufficient basic knowledge in the fundamental subjects to serve their needs. That is, when they had received sufficient education to fit them to their 'station in life'. These schools, therefore, had no permanence and no stability. Not surprisingly, it is difficult to judge their total influence within the county but, though more diffuse than that of the charity schools, it was still very limited. It would be a mistake, however, to take their transience as a sign of inevitable worthlessness. Doubtless, the great majority were of very poor quality, especially the dame schools among them. But there was probably a continuum of effectiveness among the others, ranging from the good and original at its higher end, to the weak and useless at the other. Most of the county's private venture schools were indubitably at the lower end of this continuum.

They depended on the quality of the teachers who conducted them. According to the Education Commissioners of 1846 the great

majority of private venture teachers throughout Wales were hopelessly inefficient: most were men who had turned to teaching because they 'were incapacitated by age or infirmity for manual labour'⁴⁴. The only feature they had in common, apart from their general unsuitability for teaching, was their supposed better understanding of the English language than most of their neighbours. This suggests very strongly that a basic knowledge of English was always regarded as the most important educational end to be aimed at in Wales. Many private venture teachers had been employed previously 'in some petty trade or occupation which had afforded opportunities for learning English'⁴⁵. Some of them had been assistants in grocers' or draper's shops, others had been innkeepers, drovers or excisemen. A number were old soldiers who had lost a limb in the Napoleonic wars, and a few were farmers or craftsmen who had gone down in the world. Most of the female teachers had been domestic servants or charwomen in 'English' households, or sempstresses in shops. Some of the teachers were simply old men and women who had picked up a rudimentary knowledge of English in the course of their working lives, and who wanted to keep themselves from falling on the parish in old age, or later from resorting to the Poor Law. Some had been set to keeping a school by the parochial authorities themselves, 'so that they may not become chargeable on the parish'⁴⁶. With this kind of pedigree, many were bound to appear to the 1846 Commissioners as quacks and charlatans. Their general knowledge was very scanty and their English, for all their 'experience', was practically non-existent. Their spelling was parlous and their pronunciation unintelligible. In addition, their moral influence was doubtful if not positively harmful, with the cane or birch rod

a prominent feature of their schools⁴⁷. It goes without saying that most 'private venturers' had no idea about teaching, and that their schools were totally lacking in 'method' or 'system'.

Notwithstanding the sweeping condemnation of the Commissioners, not all private venture teachers in the Principality can have been quite as ineffectual as they made out. On the contrary, among them were individuals of considerable native ability, with a natural inclination to scholarly pursuits. Whatever their skill in teaching, and even the most able may have been inadequate as teachers, especially teachers of 'elementary subjects', nevertheless, by 'keeping school' they were able to pursue their own interests in knowledge and learning, and influence a few children, at least, in similar directions. The necessity which forced itself upon them to move their schools fairly frequently from place to place showed that they were prepared to put up with all kinds of discomfort and inconvenience to try and make a living which appealed to their cultured inclinations.

Records of early nineteenth century private venture teachers in Caernarvonshire are not easy to come by; many were known only in their own localities and the Commissioners's blanket condemnation is usually accepted in toto. But obscure biographies and other fragments of evidence suggest that a few, at least, were not the charlatans and inadequates, which the Commissioners invariably portrayed. Three of Caernarvonshire's early nineteenth century private venture teachers may be mentioned briefly to illustrate this point. They were David Thomas (1759-1822), David Owen (1795-1866), and Ebenezer Thomas (1802-63).

David Thomas was better known as the poet Dafydd Ddu Eryri⁴⁸.

As a boy he had been singled out by his local curate at Llanberis for his native ability and aptitude for learning. The curate had taken him under his wing as a kind of local prodigy and given him a sound introduction to the classics and standard English works. As a young man in his twenties David Thomas then turned to teaching to earn his living. Between 1787 and his death in 1822, he conducted several typical short stay private venture schools in Caernarvonshire ranging from Llanddeiniolen, Betws Garmon, Waunfawr, Llanrug, Llanberis and Dolydd Byrion, - all within an eight mile radius of each other, - to Llanystumdwy in Eifionydd some fifteen miles away, and Pentraeth in Anglesey⁴⁹. He was also a member of the Gwyneddigion Society and a well known Eisteddfodwr. Possibly, however, he was best known for his authorship of two well known compendia of knowledge written in Welsh with two other authors, one being Evan Thomas the schoolteacher in charge of the circulating charity school at the tip of the Llŷn peninsula.

As for David Owen, he became well known throughout the Principality under his pen-name Brutus⁵¹. Before his conversion to the Church and his removal to Cardiganshire during the 1830s, he had acted as pastor-teacher, first for the Baptist denomination at Aber near Bangor, and then for the Independents at Llangian in the Llŷn peninsula, and at Bontnewydd near Caernarfon. Like David Thomas, Owen had received some kind of early education in the classics and spent a year at the Baptist seminary in Bristol. For a time he had studied medicine, and often acted as country physician in the neighbourhood of his schools. After his conversion to Anglicanism he became editor of the Welsh Church journal Yr Haul, and a well known litterateur and controversialist.

Perhaps the best known, and most able, private venture school teacher in Caernarvonshire, however, was Ebenezer Thomas, better known by his bardic name, Eben Fardd⁵². He received his early education at a number of sound private venture schools in the Llŷn peninsula early in the century. In 1822 he set up his own school at Llangybi, moving three years later to nearby Llanarmon⁵³. Two years later still he established himself at Clynnog, conducting a well reputed school until his death in 1866⁵⁴. He thus fitted less well than some of the other teachers into the circulating private venture tradition of the earlier years of the century. In 1840, Thomas had been the candidate favoured by Pwllheli's middle class Nonconformists as headmaster of the town's Free Grammar school. It was his rejection by the Anglicans that had led to the impasse which ended in the permanent closure of the Pwllheli school. Such was Thomas's reputation as a teacher and scholar that his school at Clynnog became an early training academy for candidates for the Calvinistic Methodist ministry, and the precursor of the official training academy which the denomination eventually founded at Clynnog.

These three teachers are best known today for their abilities in other directions, and it is difficult to say how many teachers of their calibre there might have been in the county during the century. But Hobley mentions a number of lesser known teachers who enjoyed sound reputations in their own localities for their knowledge and teaching skills. They included men and women such as Griffith Edwards (Gutyn Padarn), David Price, Joshua Williams, Elin Matthew, Hugh Llwyd, Elin Thomas, William Jones, Griffith Davies, Thomas Edwards, Henry Williams, William Williams (o Lŷn), R.E. Evans and

John Williams⁵⁵. Hardly anything is known about them but they were esteemed as teachers of quality wherever they established a school.

In addition to these, many young men drawn to religion as Nonconformist ministers often turned to teaching in their late teens or early twenties as a source of earnings which they could use to buy themselves a collegiate or academy education, appropriate to their life intentions. Once again their quality as teachers remains problematical. But it was probably far better than that condemned by the 1846 Commissioners. Two such young private venture teachers in Caernarvonshire during the early years of the nineteenth century were Michael Roberts and John Pritchard.

Michael Roberts who later became Calvinistic Methodist minister at Pwllheli had been taught the rudiments of English at home by his father, who was a pioneering Calvinistic Methodist worker-preacher in the then rural parish of Llanllyfni⁵⁶. As a teenager, Roberts saved as much as he could to buy himself an 'advanced' education in Chester and Liverpool. Characteristically, he earned most of this money by conducting short stay private venture schools in a number of places not far from his own home, at Pentreuchaf, Dolbermaen and Pwllheli⁵⁷. When he found that his savings were inadequate to allow him to complete his education in Liverpool, he returned to Caernarvonshire to conduct more schools before going to Liverpool a second time to resume his studies. During his second stay at Liverpool he acted as usher to Dr. Fleming who was conducting one of the best known collegiate academies in the city. In his autobiography, Michael Roberts described how he used to get up at four o'clock in the morning to read, before beginning his daily work with Fleming⁵⁸. Later, as pastor in Pwllheli, Roberts built up

one of the strongest Calvinistic Methodist congregations in Caernarvonshire.

As for John Pritchard, he was a young copper miner in Llandudno who earned some extra money by conducting a school in the village, - as Llandudno then was. He held the school every day after completing his long and exhausting 'stem' in the mines⁵⁹. Like Michael Roberts he then used his savings to buy himself an education in Liverpool. Eventually, John Pritchard became one of the most influential and active Baptist ministers in North Wales and he was, to a considerable extent, responsible for establishing a strong Baptist denomination in the Llangollen (Denbighshire) area.

Such men as Michael Roberts and John Pritchard cannot be dismissed as charlatans and fakes: both were men of considerable ability, determination, and strength of character. Once again it is impossible to say how far they were representative of other young private venture teachers in the county. Unfortunately no register of such teachers was ever compiled, but it is likely that there were several more young men in the county bound for the early Nonconformist ministry who followed the same route.

Yet the effect of private venture schools in Caernarvonshire remains obscure and impossible to assess with clarity. Nothing is known about the range and content of their curriculum or their pedagogical methods. These probably varied from school to school with the ability and general quality of their teachers. They do not appear to have adopted the monitorial system of the two main voluntary societies. This could not be expected; they had no training in the monitorial system, were dealing with fewer pupils than the voluntary schools and were in a different tradition. It

may be that the schools linked with Nonconformist chapels were somewhat better than the others, but no hard and fast rule can be drawn⁶⁰. The educational contribution of each school was therefore dependent on the quality of the teacher and on the length of each school's stay in a particular place. It is probably true that even the beneficial effects of the best of these schools was limited to their own immediate locality, and that their influence continued only for the actual period that the schools were in existence, which in most, though not all instances was short.

As for the size of the schools, most were very small, many were attended by fewer than twenty or thirty scholars. But, as we have noted, the regularity of even their attendance was suspect, especially at a time of deep poverty when a child's earnings could sometimes rescue a family from the brink of destitution. The poverty which affected whole communities also made it impossible for schools to stay long in any place. The schools may not have been able to provide a permanent livelihood even for the best teachers, who may have been compelled, in consequence, to adopt the circulating or itinerant principle, or at least retain it for a longer period than desirable.

As in the case of Caernarvonshire's charity schools, the number and quality of the private venture schools was uneven and fortuitous. Most appear to have been inadequate in one way or another. Possibly there were more and better private venture schools of a permanent or semi-permanent variety in the towns, where there was a higher standard of living, and a larger pool of children to draw from, and where more of the children lived within easy reach

of a school. Certainly these would appear to have been the implications of the Educational Returns of 1818 and 1833⁶¹.

In addition to the private venture schools discussed above, there was at least one school of a quite different calibre in Caernarvonshire at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This was conducted by the Rev. Evan Richardson, minister of the first Calvinistic Methodist chapel, established at Caernarfon in 1787⁶². Richardson, a Cardiganshire man, was educated at the old established Anglican academy at Ystradmeurig (Cardiganshire) in the 1750s. Initially, he intended to take Holy Orders in the Church, but fell under the influence of Daniel Rowland and was converted to Methodism. Before moving to Caernarfon in 1787, he conducted schools, and acted as Methodist pastor first, at Llanddewibrefi (Cardiganshire), and then, at Rhos-lan in the rural parish of Llangybi in the south of Caernarvonshire. He, therefore, symbolized that combination of teaching and preaching which characterised many early members of the Methodist ministry in Wales. His reputation as teacher and scholar preceded him to Caernarfon, so that the school he established soon won considerable renown⁶³.

It was different from the other private venture schools in that it catered almost exclusively for the early nineteenth century urban middle class of Caernarfon and for the families of neighbouring farmers. Together, these formed a locally distinctive social group whose members had a religious aversion to sending their sons to Friars school, Bangor, or the equally Anglican, Beaumaris Grammar school in Anglesey. Others with less powerful religious scruples, may not have been able to afford the fees levied at Friars school. Others again, may have preferred a different type of

education for their sons. This was certainly the implication of the educational struggle which took place at Pwllheli over the Free Grammar School. It was also the retrospective implication of the emphasis placed on utilitarian subjects and examinations in the county's later nineteenth century middle class academies.

The evidence suggests that the county's emerging Nonconformist middle class was aware early in the century of the economic and social value of education, and that they had grasped its potential as a means to personal improvement and social class consolidation. What they wanted was a form of secular education in line with their own interests, and this is what Evan Richardson's school strove to give them. First, it was non-denominational, and secondly, while not excluding the classics, it laid most emphasis on English and other utilitarian subjects. Not surprisingly, places at the school were soon in considerable demand. According to one nineteenth century writer, 'his school was much resorted to by the children of the most respectable people not only of Caernarfon but of the surrounding district'⁶⁴.

His pupils included many who became leading figures in Welsh Nonconformist circles. John Elias himself, pejoratively described by one of his Independent critics as the Pope of Calvinistic Methodism, attended the school in 1796 when he was twenty two years old⁶⁵. Michael Roberts was a pupil at Richardson's school before going to Liverpool. Griffith Davies, who became well known as an actuary in the city of London, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and leading member of Jewin Crescent Welsh Calvinistic Methodist chapel also attended Richardson's school⁶⁶. Davies became one of the most influential London Welshmen of his

day, well known for giving advice to aspiring young men from the Principality who had gone to London to 'improve' themselves.

Finally, and most important in relation to the history of education in Wales, Hugh Owen attended Richardson's school for almost eight years after 1812⁶⁷. The son of an Anglesey farmer living at Y Foel just across the Menai Strait from Caernarfon, Owen had an exceptionally long stay at Richardson's school, though not all his time was spent under Richardson himself, as he gave up teaching in 1817 to be succeeded by William Lloyd, a renegade Anglican curate, educated at Oxford⁶⁸. On leaving school, Hugh Owen entered William Bulkeley Hughes's lawyers office in London as a clerk. Bulkeley Hughes, whose home was at Plas Coch in Anglesey, only a few miles away from Y Foel, served as M.P. for Caernarvonshire for many years, and Hugh Owen remained in his employment for over a decade. With his extensive experience of legal work he was then chosen by Edwin Chadwick in 1836 to serve in the Poor Law Commission. His legal experience and steady application to work, especially the expertise he showed in dismantling the well-entrenched intricacies of the Old Poor Law, led to his rapid promotion within the Poor Law Office. In only a few years he became Chief Clerk to the Poor Law Board, acting virtually as its Permanent Secretary. As such, he was said 'to bear a confidential relationship to the chiefs of the department (Commissioners and Presidents)' and 'to represent the department at all Parliamentary Committees on Poor Law subjects'⁶⁹. In Wales, however, it is his work as architect of the Principality's nineteenth century 'educational edifice' that is best known. He certainly knew the value of education as a distributor of life chances; his own experiences at Evan Richardson's school had shown him how vitally

important it could be. It is almost certain that the growing Welsh middle class also knew its value and that Evan Richardson's school developed their educational aspirations still further.

But Richardson's school was unlike other private venture schools in the county. It was more akin to the Pwllheli Free Grammar school. Richardson's school was closed after his death in the mid-1820s though attempts appear to have been made to revive it under new teachers in the 1830s⁷⁰. The fact that the county's middle class Nonconformists no longer had their own private venture academy to serve their educational needs after the 1820s may have exacerbated the ferocity of the early Anglican-Nonconformist educational confrontation in Caernarvonshire over the future of the Pwllheli Free Grammar school and the Friars school in Bangor. After the closure of Richardson's school, the county's urban middle class had to send its sons to other 'commercial' schools in the county, or to schools outside the county, such as Dr. Fleming's school in Liverpool. The whole area of middle class education in the early decades of the nineteenth century, however, is a difficult one which has only recently begun to be explored. Even the long agitation which later occurred in Wales over the implementation of the Endowed Schools Act (1869) leading to the Aberdare Report (1880) and the passage of the Welsh Intermediate Schools Act (1889) and its implementation in the 1890s, when middle class schools supported by public funds were established some years before the passage of the Balfour Act, can be traced back to the strength with which the Welsh Nonconformist middle class had felt its educational frustrations from the earliest decades of the nineteenth century⁷¹.

ii. The Schools of the Voluntary Societies 1810-1840

In addition to the eighteenth century charity schools and the disorganised and unsystematic private venture schools, schools belonging to at least one of the voluntary societies established in the early years of the nineteenth century began to make a contribution to education in Caernarvonshire. Indeed, the initial influence of the voluntary societies in Caernarvonshire can be traced back to the second decade of the nineteenth century. There was, however, a significant difference in the impact of the societies within the county during the period up to 1840. Whereas the influence of the National Society grew rapidly, being reflected in the founding of Church schools in a number of different localities, the British Society hardly made an impact at all. There was a period of nearly thirty years from 1814 to the mid-1840s, when the British Society's contribution to elementary education in Caernarvonshire, and to Welsh education generally, was marginal.

Yet in the British Society's Annual Report for 1817, two schools were listed as having been founded in Caernarvonshire. One of these was said to be in Caernarfon and the other in Tremadog, - the new 'model' town founded by William Madocks early in the century, on the proposed route from the suggested Irish packet station at Portdinllaen near Nefyn to London⁷². Later, Tremadog became a suburb of the rapidly growing slate exporting port of Porthmadog situated about a mile away. Although the schools were founded at about the same time, their fate differed. The Caernarfon school appears to have petered out within a few years. Indeed, there is some doubt whether the school had a separate identity from that of Evan Richardson's private venture academy, which Richardson himself gave up in 1817, and which may then have

sought a British Society connection. In contrast the Tremadog school appears to have flourished throughout the 1820s and 1830s. Possibly Madock's personal patronage and continuing interest in its work made the vital difference ensuring its survival. Whatever the case, the Tremadog school was the only school in formal association with the British Society in Caernarvonshire for a period of over twenty years before the 1840s.

Just as the British Society's impact on Caernarvonshire was very slight during the first three decades of the century, its influence on the rest of the Principality was almost as tenuous. Its influence in South Wales may have been marginally stronger in the 1820s and 30s than its impact in the North. But in Wales as a whole, only fifteen British schools were said to be in existence in the eighteen twenties, and only the Tremadog school was in North Wales, although the British Society appears to have established a loose connection with a school which occasionally functioned in and around Wrexham⁷³.

In contrast to the very limited impact of the British Society, the National Society exercised a growing influence during these years. As far as Caernarvonshire was concerned, this was due to the inspiration and leadership of the Rev. J.H. Cotton, whose influence spread beyond Caernarvonshire's boundaries throughout North Wales. Cotton's connection with the Society extended back to 1812, when with Henry Majendie, Bishop of Bangor (1809-30), he appeared in the National Society's list of annual subscribers⁷⁴. Cotton's motives in supporting the Society appear to have been religious, in the eighteenth century sense of a deeply felt wish to save the souls of the poor. But over the next thirty years his

educational aims became more narrowly Anglican. He came to base his support of the National Society far more centrally on his belief that it was vital for the children of the 'lower orders' to be brought up in the tenets of the Established Church, to protect them from the doubtful religious influence of Nonconformity, many of whose leaders must have appeared to Cotton as ignorant, obscurantist, and dangerously enthusiastic. He was also strongly influenced by the social disturbances of the 1830s. Like many others, he associated 'irreligion' with 'sedition' and 'disaffection'⁷⁵. Pari passu with this, he identified Establishmentarian religion with social tranquillity and order. For Cotton the building of National schools was vitally important for two reasons: first, to protect Anglicanism against an aggressive and dangerously populist Nonconformity, - and he must have been aware of its inroads in Caernarvonshire, - second, to protect the social order against the subversion of its enemies, and he may well have counted Nonconformity as an enemy, not simply of the Established Church but of the social and political order⁷⁶.

 Holding these views, Cotton came to play a leading role in the development of Church education in Caernarvonshire. For many years he was the Bangor diocese's main correspondent with the National Society. Undoubtedly he became Caernarvonshire's leading supplicant for National Society grants, and the local clergy's chief inspiration in founding Church schools. It was he also who organized the King's Letter collections in the county during the 1820s and 30s⁷⁷. He was particularly influential in canvassing the support of local landowners and gentry, many of whom he persuaded to give grants of land for school sites, as well as donations and

annual subscriptions to maintain the running costs of schools. When the young Princess Victoria was staying with the Marquis of Anglesey at Plas Newydd, Cotton became a tireless visitor, promoting the educational needs of North Wales and its claims for financial help. He was so successful in his advocacy that Victoria wrote to the National Society, enclosing one hundred pounds for building National schools. She pressed the Society to attend to 'the difficulties experienced by the clergy in the poorer parts of Wales in establishing schools'. 'I can speak with much interest in the subject', she wrote, 'as I never heard of a greater desire than prevails there for Education'⁷⁸. Clearly Cotton's zeal in promoting Church schools had a strong effect on the young Victoria. In addition, Victoria donated sums of money to help build a number of schools in various parts of North Wales. They included three National schools founded in Caernarvonshire at Aber, Llanllechid and Caernarfon⁷⁹.

Cotton was also instrumental, in the early decades of the century, in converting a number of eighteenth century charity schools, into Church schools in full association with the National Society. It was time consuming work involving Cotton in a great deal of effort, most spent persuading 'locals' that they were not to lose their old schools, and convincing them that they should make financial contributions to help him make their schools efficient. In converting the old charity school at Llandygai, and in raising funds to make it a self-sustaining National school, Cotton claimed to have sent a letter asking for a donation, 'to every person in the parishes of Llanllechid and Llandygai above the rank of Pauper and to many persons not connected with the

parishes in any way'⁸⁰. How enthusiastically the parishioners responded to Cotton's appeal is difficult to say, as they were in the process of becoming heavily Nonconformist and industrialised.

Having established, or helped to establish, a fair number of National schools, Cotton then worked to keep them going, and ensure that they continued to give a sound elementary schooling joined to the doctrines and tenets of the Anglican church. He tried to visit all the schools every year to see that they were fulfilling the role marked out for them. In conducting examinations he often combined two or more schools to foster the competitive element, which he considered a useful lever in promoting efficiency. He soon became known as 'the unpaid Inspector' of National schools in the diocese; it was a title which Cotton was proud to acknowledge⁸¹.

In addition, Cotton recognized that the efficiency of a school depended on the quality of its teachers. He became a strong believer in the development of systematic teaching methods. He wanted them adopted and employed in all Church schools, so that they could be relied upon to carry out the educational mission he had in mind. Not surprisingly, the systematic methods he favoured were those of Dr. Bell's 'Madras' monitorial system, and Cotton converted his own school at Bangor into 'a model school' in the 1820s to show the system at work⁸². Later he received the assistance of Organizing masters sent down from the National Society's headquarters to help pioneering clerics like Cotton undertake the business of establishing the 'Madras' system in their own areas. This early form of teacher training was very rudimentary, - the training period itself lasted only a few weeks, - and later in the century it was condemned as unsatisfactory, just as the

monitorial system itself was regarded as harmful in the 1840s. Nevertheless, in the absence of any alternative system, Cotton trained a fair number of early Church school teachers at his model school in the 1820s and 30s. Between 1829 and 1834 at least fifteen schoolmasters attended his model school for short periods of training in the Madras system⁸³. These arrangements were typical of the ad hoc teacher training measures being adopted by churchmen all over the country: there was a similar training scheme in monitorial teaching methods at St. Asaph (Denbighshire) National school, and there it was under the personal supervision of the Bishop of St. Asaph, one of the Vice-Presidents of the National Society⁸⁴.

The schools at which the Cotton trained teachers taught in Caernarvonshire, had been established by Anglican clergymen fairly widely across the county. Most had been aided by National Society grants, in securing which, Cotton usually played an instrumental role. Not surprisingly, a cluster of National schools were founded in and around Bangor - the diocesan centre of North West Wales and Cotton's own headquarters. They included an early school in Bangor (1814), replaced by a purpose built National school in 1822, which Cotton established as his 'model school' later in the 1820s, to which an infants school was added ten years later (in 1832)⁸⁵. Early National schools were also built in Pentir (1818), and Vaynol (1816), both of which were within the Bangor parish, and at Llandygai (1817) and Llanllechid (1828), a few miles away, where Cotton was also vicar⁸⁶. A National school for 220 children was opened at Caernarfon in 1820, and an infants school added in 1834⁸⁷. Elsewhere in the county, National schools were founded at

Conwy (1817), Eglwysrhos (1826), Llandwrog (1822), and Llanbedrog (1818)⁸⁸. These schools, with the exception of the infants school at Caernarfon, were established before the inception of State grants in 1833, and owed their existence directly or indirectly to Cotton's influence.

Despite the doubts expressed by some Churchmen about the inception of State grants for education, Cotton and local Anglicans in Caernarvonshire responded to them enthusiastically. In fact, the National Society and most of its adherents in the country found little difficulty in accepting the State aid offered. The Established Church, by definition, had always been closely linked with the State, and the form of State aid conceived in the eighteen thirties was very limited, leaving local school promoters with untrammelled freedom to control their own schools, free of inspection or any interference with their day to day work.

By making use of the grants, Cotton and his fellow Churchmen were able to open a further spate of Church schools in Caernarvonshire and throughout the Bangor diocese in the 1830s. Among new National schools built with the assistance of State grants in Caernarvonshire from 1833 to 1839, were schools at Bangor (1834), Caernarfon (1835), Abererch (1836), Nefyn (1837), Conwy (1838), Waunfawr (1838), Llanbedr-y-Cennin (1838) and Aber (1838)⁸⁹. State grants taken up in Caernarvonshire during these years to establish or extend schools amounted to £612⁹⁰. Of this sum no less than £552, or 91 per cent, was expended by Churchmen under Cotton's leadership and direction⁹¹. In addition, Churchmen had access to National Society grants, and to local landowners who had valuable means to assist the establishment of Church schools by granting

land, making one-off donations, or heading lists of annual subscribers to school funds. As a unified and established body, the Church was better organized for educational endeavour and more open to firm leadership than the Nonconformist denominations which were fragmented, and divided. At central and local levels its members knew how to proceed in setting up schools. They had a far readier appreciation than the Nonconformists of the importance of directing the secular education of the lower orders.

In contrast to Church forces led by Cotton, Caernarvonshire's Nonconformists failed to take advantage of State grants. They only took up £61 of the moneys, which the State made over for education in Caernarvonshire, before 1839⁹². They used that grant to improve the existing British school at Tremadog. Not a single new British school was opened. In fact, nowhere in the three counties of Gwynedd had a British school been built in the quarter century after 1817.

There were many reasons for the reluctance of Nonconformists to take up grants, and act more positively. They were divided, had no parochial organization, hardly any support among wealthy landlords, far fewer members than the Church in places of authority and influence in London, little experience in dealing with government, and in some places at least, a shortage of people able to correspond in the English language.

It is also true that in many localities Nonconformist membership in the early decades of the century was rooted almost entirely in the poorer sections of the community. These may have lacked financial resources to establish and maintain schools. But as we have seen, there was already a 'polite society' among

Nonconformists: the better off and middling class of farmers throughout the country and the embryonic urban middle class in the Principality's towns. In Caernarvonshire these had already shown themselves acutely aware of the social importance of educating their own children. They had already grasped the 'ladder' concept of education; that is, education as a means to personal improvement, and social class or status group consolidation⁹³. But, at this stage, even these social elements may have lacked the know-how and self confidence to organise a network of secular day schools for the 'lower orders'. Or it may have been that primarily concerned with securing educational opportunities for their own children they had not felt the need to secure the secular schooling of the children of the poor. Unlike the Established Church, they had no tradition of promoting schools for the 'lower orders' and may have been satisfied that the myriad private venture schools and the chapel Sunday schools were sufficient to meet what they saw as their educational 'needs'. Whatever the case, polite Nonconformist society showed scant interest in working class secular education during the first forty years of the nineteenth century, and failed to see the need to press for a portion of the State grants.

A more complex reason for their aloofness involved the early social psychology of Welsh Nonconformist society. Religious and social introspection was a strong feature of it. In Caernarvonshire, it was underlined by John Elias's leadership of the Calvinistic Methodists. An unbending Tory in social and political matters he opposed the denomination's involvement in secular affairs⁹⁴. Religious introspection was fortified by

linguistic distinctiveness and a sense of being social inferiors and outsiders. Welsh Nonconformists appeared unable to conceive that any authority, least of all the State, could be well disposed towards them. Even in 1847, R.R.W. Lingen felt a strong sense of their reluctance to open themselves out to external influences, describing them as 'jealously shrinking from building any communion with classes either superior to or different to themselves'⁹⁵. As a group he saw their very inwardness as their greatest strength, 'living' as he said they did, 'in an underworld of their own'⁹⁶. His comments, typical of Lingen's condescending and cynical attitude, contained an element of truth. What Lingen failed to allow for was the growth of the new Nonconformist middle class. This class was increasingly aware of what was going on in a wider context, and quick to promote and defend its own interests. Increasingly, in the course of the century, it developed social aspirations, and was able to impose its newly found middle class respectability on the rest of Welsh Nonconformist society. As yet, however, it had not fully broken through the insulating cocoon of its own psychology.

It was on the basis of this complex mix of interacting factors that Welsh Nonconformists kept themselves apart from organised secular schooling of the 'lower orders'. They failed to respond to State grants and by the same token there was hardly any contact between Nonconformist Wales and the British and Foreign Schools Society, although, paradoxically, strong links were forged between Welsh Nonconformists and the British and Foreign Bible Society. That Society, however, was concerned with the Sunday school movement⁹⁷. The Sunday schools were a characteristically Nonconformist social institution, integral to their chapels,

totally free from State interference and organic to their cultural milieu. With the British and Foreign Schools Society things were different: that Society was concerned with secular schooling, with which the chapels had no systematic connection and in which the State was showing a growing interest. As a result, there was almost a total lack of communication between Welsh Nonconformists and the British and Foreign Schools Society for a period of nearly thirty years from 1814.

In this respect the experience of Wales was different from that of Scotland and Ireland. Within only a few years of its foundation, the British and Foreign Schools Society acknowledged the special educational difficulties of Scotland and Ireland and established two semi-autonomous associated societies to deal with them. As early as 1824, the Associated Society for the Education of the Poor in Scotland had seventy five affiliated schools, while the Associated Society for the Promotion of the Education of the Poor in Ireland had 725 schools and nearly 52,000 scholars. In both cases, the British Society recognized that the existence of the Gaelic and Erse languages posed special educational difficulties, and sanctioned the adoption of bilingual teaching by which affiliated schools consciously utilised the native language to promote the spread of English and other school subjects⁹⁹. In addition, the Society's 'Foreign' division adopted a similar approach in its overseas schools. But the lack of contact between Wales and the British Society meant that the Society remained unaware of the strength of the Welsh language and its hold upon the native population.

In contrast, the National Society had for long been aware

of the difficulties which the Welsh language posed in systematically educating 'the lower orders' in Wales. For many years before 1840, Cotton and other clergymen in Caernarvonshire adopted a simplified bilingual or 'translation' approach to teaching English in their schools, and Cotton himself claimed great success for it. He tried to learn Welsh himself, sad to say not very successfully, and his largely monoglot Welsh parishioners in Llanllechid were quite unable to follow his Welsh language sermons¹⁰⁰. Despite his failure to make himself understood in Welsh, he was strongly aware of the bilingual difficulty in education, and, with other North Wales clergy such as the Rev. Richard Newcombe of Ruthin, he pressed the National Society to publish 'duoglott books and Bibles'¹⁰¹. He wanted 'scholars to be instructed in the two languages at once' believing that 'the two languages will expound each other and mutually meet in the mind of the learners'¹⁰². By the mid 1830s the National Society was publishing a number of bilingual reading and spelling books for the use of Church schools in Wales. Their titles included 'Yr Esgwyddor yn Rheolaidd gyda'r ABC', (An introduction to the alphabet) and 'Arweinydd i'r Anllythrennog i Ddysgu Darllain: Llyfr Ysgol y Gymdeithas Deyrnasol', (literally 'An introductory reader for illiterates: the National Society's School Book), together with catechisms, prayers and spiritual works such as 'Hanes ein Hiachawdwr Bendigedig' (Our Blessed Saviour's Story), and 'Gwyrthiau ein Hiachawdwr Bendigedig' (Our Blessed Saviour's Miracles)¹⁰³. The Society does not appear to have published an Arithmetic primer, or a Teachers Handbook in Welsh. What remains clear, however, is that the National Society, once again largely under the influence of Cotton, had begun

to acknowledge some of Wales' special difficulties, while the British Society, with its very tenuous Welsh links, had been left unaware of them.

iii. The Nonconformist Sunday Schools

Despite the indifference of Welsh Nonconformists to the organised provision of secular schools, their reliance on autonomous private venture institutions, and ideological resistance to outside intervention, they were not unaware of the importance of education within their own milieu. On the contrary, they had a strongly developed consciousness of it. As we have noted, the educational needs of working class Nonconformists were met in two ways, first in private venture schools, and secondly in the Welsh Sunday schools. Although the Welsh Sunday schools were indebted to Griffith Jones's circulating schools, and the Sunday School Union of Robert Raikes, and to the British and Foreign Bible Society for their supply of Welsh language Bibles, their founder, Thomas Charles of Bala constructed his own Sunday school model. At first his model was uniquely Calvinistic Methodist, but was adopted within a few years by the other Nonconformist denominations in Wales.

The first of Thomas Charles's Sunday schools were established in Caernarvonshire before the end of the eighteenth century. But they were not founded systematically until Thomas Charles's missionary journey through the three counties of Gwynedd in 1812¹⁰⁴. The Brougham Parliamentary Returns in 1818 showed about thirty Calvinistic Methodist Sunday schools in Caernarvonshire¹⁰⁵. But the 1818 figures are by no means reliable and it is likely that there were more than thirty Sunday schools in Caernarvonshire.

Some were very small and may have been overlooked in the returns, a few circulated like the private venture schools, though usually within a more confined radius; others were held in remote farmhouses and cottages, and sometimes in barns and outhouses, and may have been missed in the count. In other cases parish clergymen hostile to the Methodists, and responsible for compiling the Returns, may have ignored their existence, or underscored their strength. Even so, some were acknowledged to be making a contribution to education in their localities. About six hundred members belonged to Nonconformist, - mainly Calvinistic Methodist, - Sunday schools in Caernarfon and about four hundred in Nefyn¹⁰⁶. About three hundred and fifty scholars attended five Nonconformist Sunday schools in the parish of Aberdaron¹⁰⁷. Another two hundred and fifty attended Sunday schools in Clynnog parish, and three hundred in the neighbouring parish of Llandwrog¹⁰⁸. In many instances the number of scholars was left unrecorded, so that a statistical estimate of the total number of Sunday school scholars in 1818 is impossible. The Return, however, stated that 2,651 'children' attended Nonconformist Sunday schools in the county¹⁰⁹.

A feature of the Welsh Sunday schools was that they were attended by men and women of all ages, as well as children. This reflected the influence of Griffith Jones's circulating schools, also attended by men, women and children. Welsh Sunday schools were organised in classes, each taught by a teacher chosen or elected by fellow class members. Each class learned to read the Bible in Welsh, then went on to discuss the precise meaning and significance of scriptural passages. Inevitably, the first task of the children's classes was to learn to read in Welsh, so that

they could then proceed to scriptural interpretation. The Sunday schools represented a collective form of self-education conducted in social institutions characterised by self government, democracy and equality. Doubtless, much of what went on was absurdly **abtruse**, especially endless discussions of the exact meaning of certain verses and words in the Bible. Rote learning was a feature of the Sunday schools involving the recitation of verses by individuals, classes, and sometimes whole schools¹¹⁰. Despite the less constructive aspects of the movement, their greatest contribution to Welsh education in the first forty years of the nineteenth century was that they produced a literate working class population in Welsh, creating a wide and ready readership for the many Welsh language periodicals and newspapers published from the middle decades of the century¹¹¹.

The next set of Educational Returns (1833) showed that the number of Nonconformist Sunday Schools in Wales had grown with Nonconformity, and the massive building and extension of chapels. There were 213 Sunday schools in Caernarvonshire by 1833 compared with 30 in 1818¹¹². There had been a rise of 183 or 710 per cent in their number in only fifteen years. In many places the Sunday school was the forerunner of the chapel, and the two words 'capel' (chapel) and 'ysgoldy' (schoolroom) were interchangeable. Some Nonconformist chapels of the 1820s and 30s were named Capel Ysgoldy, (Schoolroom Chapel), in commemoration of the original Sunday school.

By 1833 the number attending Sunday schools in Caernarfon was 2,300¹¹³. Of these, 1,500 attended Calvinistic Methodist Sunday schools. Even in Bangor, where the Anglican church was

strong, over 800 belonged to Nonconformist Sunday schools¹¹⁴. By the eighteen thirties, the Nonconformist Sunday school movement was well established in all parts of the county. There were ten Sunday schools with over 2,000 members in the slate quarrying parish of Llanllechid, where the total population was 3,075¹¹⁵. As for other slate quarrying areas, there were nine Sunday schools in Llanddeiniolen (1831 population 2,610), seven in Llandwrog (1831 population 1,923), five in Llanwnda (1831 population 1,264) and four each in Llanrug and Llanllyfni (1831 populations 1,204 and 1,571)¹¹⁶. In the mixed slate quarrying and agricultural parish of Beddgelert, 591 were Sunday school members out of a total population of 1,071¹¹⁷. As might be expected, the Sunday schools took a firm hold in the county's rural areas, with four Sunday schools in Llanengan (1831 population 1,016), four in Penmorfa (1831 population 982), four in Llanystumdwy (1831 population 1,115), four in Penmachno (1831 population 984), and four in Maenan (1831 population 352), each being rural parishes in different parts of Caernarvonshire¹¹⁸. The 1833 Return referred to groups of working men in Llanllechid pooling their money in a club to buy Bibles, as well as the works of Tyndall, Drummond and Huxley, for their Sunday schools, together with 'Esboniadau' (Biblical Interpretations) in Welsh¹¹⁹. According to the Return, in Llanberis (1831 population 725) 'nearly the whole population attend Nonconformist Sunday schools either as scholars or teachers and all the children without exception attend some school'¹²⁰. Robert Roberts, known as 'Y Sgolor Mawr', referring to the position in his native parish, in the neighbouring county of Denbigh, in the eighteen thirties, stated that 'all the learning ever acquired by the people was in

the Sunday schools,¹²¹. His comment applied equally strongly to Caernarvonshire.

Indeed, Nonconformist educational efforts in Caernarvonshire, and throughout North Wales were concentrated during this period (from the 1810s to the 1830s) on the Sunday school movement. The Sunday schools were sustained by the inwardness of Welsh Nonconformist society and in turn they helped to strengthen that inwardness further. According to the Report of the British Society for 1839, only 1:17.75 of Caernarvonshire's population attended a day school¹²². With what regularity they did so and for how long their attendance continued went unrecorded. But the bare scholar-population ratio of 1:17.75 indicates the scanty nature of the provision available in the county on the eve of the 1840s, especially in the light of estimates currently made of the under-thirteen child population. These ranged from about 1:4 to 1:6 of the population. At the same time, 1:2.75 of Caernarvonshire's population were scholars at Sunday schools¹²³. This was the highest ratio of Sunday school scholars to population in the whole of the United Kingdom, with the exception only of Merioneth, which was Thomas Charles's native county, where the ratio of Sunday school attenders was 1:2.50¹²⁴. The discrepancy between day school and Sunday school attendances was remarkable, and showed how Nonconformists had directed their energies towards Sunday schools as integral features of their causes, than to the provision of secular schools for the 'lower orders'.

The 1833 Returns reflected the cultural distinctiveness of Welsh Nonconformity. They showed that the Principality had 1,636 day schools of all kinds, attended by 61,455 children. It had 2,059 Sunday schools attended by 185,711 scholars, more than

three times the number of day school attenders¹²⁵. This was the kind of situation which the Blue Books Commissioners found in 1847. R.R.W. Lingen, despite his criticism of the Sunday schools, described their main characteristics as their 'universality', the fact that 'every man, woman and child feels comfortably at home in them', and their 'purely democratic constitution, presenting an office or some sort of title to almost every man who is able and willing to take an active part in (their) administration, without much reference to his social position'¹²⁶. Lingen captured the essential spirit of the Welsh Sunday school by describing them as 'a mixture of Worship, Discussion and Elementary Instruction which the congregation performs for itself'; they were 'real fields of mental activity' conducted 'among neighbours and equals'¹²⁷.

Jellinger Symons also wrote with some admiration of the Welsh Sunday schools: 'When it is considered that with scarcely an exception the thousands who throng these schools belong exclusively to the working classes, and that members in every chapel are surrendering the best part of their only day of rest to the office of teaching and improving their still humbler neighbours, and when I remember that in many places these working people in their Sunday schools and chapels have alone kept religion alive I must bear my cordial testimony to the services which these humble congregations have rendered to the community'¹²⁸. Henry Vaughan Johnson referred to the value of the spontaneous effort for education which the Sunday schools represented: 'It is impossible not to admire the vast number of schools which they have established, the frequency of the attendance, the number, energy and devotion of the teachers, the regularity and decorum of the proceedings, and the striking and

permanent effects which they have produced upon society'¹²⁹.

This testimony and the statistics of Sunday school scholars for 1833 and 1839, makes it difficult to accept the Registrar General's Literacy Returns for Wales in the late eighteen thirties at their face value. They showed that illiteracy was greater in North Wales than in any other part of the United Kingdom¹³⁰. While this was probably true in so far as measurement was conducted in the English language and by evidence of the ability to write, it cannot have been true for reading ability in Welsh, not admitted into the Registrar General's calculations. The 1846 Commissioners stated quite categorically, that the Welsh people's command over their own native tongue was far greater than that of working class Englishmen over theirs. The Registrar General's Literacy Returns for the eighteen thirties should therefore be treated with caution, - they referred to literacy in English, - and the bilingual caveat should be borne in mind.

Horace Mann's religious census of 1851 bore further statistical testimony to the concentration of Welsh Nonconformist endeavour on the establishment of Sunday schools. Mann's calculations of the proportion of Sunday school scholars to population throughout England and Wales, showed that the highest proportion of scholars was found in North Wales. Unfortunately, his statistics for Wales, unlike his English statistics, did not refer to each county separately. Nevertheless, they showed that the proportion of Sunday school scholars in North Wales was 32.9 per cent or 1:3 of the population¹³¹. A separate calculation for Anglesey, Caernarvonshire and Merioneth, would have returned an even higher proportion. Even so, the 1:3 return for North Wales, reflected

the energy which Welsh Nonconformists had channelled to the organization and conduct of their Sunday schools. South Wales returned the next highest proportion of scholars with 22.4 per cent, or over 1:5, of the population¹³². This was an exceptionally high return, in view of the rapid population growth taking place in the industrial counties of the south. It also showed that the older denominations of Dissent had adopted the Calvinistic Methodist Sunday school. Indeed in crude numerical terms, there were slightly more Sunday school scholars in South Wales - 136,410 - than in the North - where there were 132,967¹³³. The highest English return was in the county of Bedford with 19.8 per cent or just under 1:5 of its population returned as scholars¹³⁴. Bedford had a strong Nonconformist tradition, but the strongest Nonconformist areas in England could not match the Welsh proportions. The West Riding had 16.9 per cent or under 1:6 of its population as Sunday school scholars, as did Leeds, while Bradford returned 15.5 per cent - nearly 1:7 of its population - and Manchester 14 per cent, which was less than 1:7¹³⁵. Other parts of England returned lower figures, as did Surrey, London and Middlesex with 6.5, 6.0 and 5.9 per cent respectively¹³⁶. They indicated that only 1:17 of their population were Sunday school scholars. The Welsh returns stand out in particularly marked contrast to these, and reflect the attitudes and outlook of a culturally distinct religious and social group. At the same time, there is little doubt that Welsh middle class Nonconformists had grasped the instrumental value of a secular education for their own children both personally and socially, and for their own social class. It is, therefore, important to underline social divisions within the ranks of a culturally unified Nonconformity.

Meanwhile Anglicans in Caernarvonshire, under Cotton's leadership, continued their efforts to build National schools joined to the teachings and tenets of the Established Church. The National Society's Report for 1831 claimed that there were twenty six National and Church schools in Caernarvonshire with 1,927 children on their registers¹³⁷. The county's child population, if we take children between 3 and 13 as about a quarter of the total population, would have been about 16,612, so that even if the figures were reliable and we knew exactly what they meant, only about 11.6 per cent of them would have been attending Church schools¹³⁸. Fifteen years later, the Church Schools Inquiry Commission, claimed forty nine National schools in the county with 4,695 children in attendance¹³⁹. On the same bases of calculation, the number of children aged between 3 and 13 would have been about 20,273¹⁴⁰. The reliability of these figures, however, remains problematical. It is more difficult still, to assess the standard of instruction and the general quality of the National schools. But many were criticised severely, and some condemned outright by the Education Commissioners in the 1847 Blue Books. Yet compared with the efforts of the Church, Caernarvonshire's Nonconformists had only established one British school by the beginning of the eighteen forties, and even that had been founded by an Englishman.

Despite this, there were signs that the county's Nonconformists were beginning to stir. A number of isolated, but significant, auguries had already appeared of the conflicts which were to mar the history of school provision in the middle and later decades of the century. Prior to 1840, the chief educational disputes had involved the two 'classical' foundations at Bangor and

Pwllheli. Both saw the ranks of middle class Nonconformity trying to take control of schools with direct personal and social advantage to their own children. Their defeat built up their sense of religious discrimination and social injustice. They were thus important milestones in their political education. Elsewhere in the county, they were successful, even at this stage, in aborting a number of National or Church schools for the 'lower orders'. Projected National schools at Llandudno, Aberdaron and Llanrug, all fell through as early as the eighteen twenties, partly at least for religious reasons, although the precise details of what happened remain unclear¹⁴¹. Similarly a projected National school at Llanwnda also failed, because the inhabitants, in the words of the local vicar, 'had set their faces against us'¹⁴². His attempts to set up a Church school lasted from 1822 to 1826, when he finally gave up the scheme as hopeless. In a letter to the National Society, he complained about the way in which 'the people, tenants etc. (were) imbued with the anti Christian spirit of Gnosticism, and deeply affected with Pharasaical and Schismatical Principles'¹⁴³. He foresaw the religious conflicts of the future, even if he was not aware of their deeply socio-political significance. He was vehement in his condemnation of 'the fanatical Saints' (that is to say, the local Nonconformist leaders) 'that must lead the rising generation to misery'¹⁴⁴.

In assessing the situation in the county at the beginning of the eighteen forties, the pattern of educational growth during the past four decades had been unsystematic and unorganised, with the exception, perhaps, of Cotton's pioneering work for the National

Society. As a result, both the nature of school provision and its geographical distribution was fortuitous and uneven. Large areas of Caernarvonshire remained bereft of schools. Others continued to rely on short lived and transient private venture schools, whose quality was at best dubious, and in most instances inadequate. Already there was evidence of ideological conflict between Churchmen and Nonconformists. National schools were becoming less acceptable to the general population during the eighteen thirties, when Nonconformists developed an increasing awareness of their identity, and as education emerged as an issue of Nonconformist 'rights', both religious and civil. The adoption of Nonconformity as the creed of a social class which was seeking social and political recognition, made education a matter of deep political interest for the middle classes. The growing ranks of the industrialised working class also began to see education as an instrument of class emancipation, and pushed for wider educational opportunities from the eighteen forties and fifties. The eighteen thirties can thus be regarded as a preparatory period in many senses. It was during these years that informed opinion changed its attitude to educating the 'lower orders', under the impact of investigative surveys and inquiries, and in the disturbed social climate of the time. This change of attitude was reflected in the inception of State grants in 1833, and the establishment of new machinery to supervise their distribution in 1839. Locally also, there was a new awareness of the importance of education, and the gaps which existed in school provision. Meanwhile, religious, social and political changes were taking place in the localities which underlined the elevation of education as a religious, denominational, and political issue.

At the beginning of the eighteen forties, organised school provision in Caernarvonshire was still in the hands of the Anglican church under Cotton's leadership, though even the quality of his schools, and their teachers remained suspect. The Nonconformists still held themselves aloof and concentrated their energies on the conduct and organization of Sunday schools. Their links with the British and Foreign Schools Society were less than tenuous, and their suspicions of the State particularly strong. They appeared to be waiting for an influence which could forge a conjuncture between their undoubted religious dynamism and the socio-political aspirations of powerful groups among them.

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CHAPTER THREE

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS 1840-70

1. The historical context of the 1840s: Chartism and Education

During the 1840s the social turmoil caused by the economic and demographic changes which had taken place since the late eighteenth century, had reached a significant level. Every part of the country was affected by the disruption which economic change had wrought in long established patterns of life. Rural economies found it increasingly difficult to sustain growing populations, and large numbers were thrown into a deep and endemic poverty. As we have already noted, as many as a fifth of all household heads in Caernarvonshire's rural parishes were returned as permanent or periodic paupers in the population census of 1851¹. Equally badly affected were groups who made their living in ailing cottage industries now superseded by more mechanised processes of production. In 1841, H.S. Tremenheere's official report on the state of the handloom weavers in Norfolk, showed how disastrously their former prosperity had been eroded by the development of factory textiles in the north of England². Doubtless, domestic workers scattered through Caernarvonshire were similarly affected. The generally depressed state of the economy in the 1840s greatly exacerbated their condition. Indeed, poverty in the country was so great, that in many places it was impossible to operate the new Poor Law (1834) for fear of 'inflaming the public mind'³. As one poor law guardian in Caernarvonshire put it, many people were 'literally starving'⁴. There were anti-Poor Law disturbances in the north of England, and, though there were no such outbreaks in Caernarvonshire, such was the scale of deprivation that the guardians of the Bangor and Beaumaris Union were not only unable to terminate 'outdoor relief', but compelled

to spend appreciably more on it⁵. Their cumulative outdoor relief bills increased by over a half, from just over four thousand pounds in 1837, to nearly six and a half thousand pounds in 1844⁶. This represented a rise of more than sixty per cent and was a clear indication of the scale of distress in the county.

But if things were bad in rural areas, and in domestic industry, working people could not look for easier conditions in the newer industrial areas. As thousands of immigrants crowded into mushrooming towns in the north and midlands of England, or into London, into the South Wales valleys, or, in Caernarvonshire, into the growing slate quarrying districts, they experienced working and living conditions which, initially at least, were as harsh as any they had previously known. With their concentrations of population, these areas magnified the endemic social problems of the countryside onto a scale never previously imagined. Where lack of sanitation, bad public health, poor housing and meagre schooling had been tolerated in rural society, they now came to be seen, if only gradually, as intolerable social evils. To an extent, some of these social problems reflected the failure of urban technology to develop *pari passu* with industrial technology, and the relative lack of investment - both private and public - in the technology of social improvement. What appears incontrovertible is that, in the disturbed social and political climate of the 1840s, 'the condition of the people' debate, as Carlyle called it, tended to focus on education.

This was the decade of Chartism, with its three peaks of activity in 1839, 1842 and 1848. The Chartist movement was particularly strong in areas marked by economic and social dislocation. The apparent effectiveness of its organisation and methods, and its

evident appeal to many sections of the working classes, caused widespread unease, while its more dramatic incidents such as the march on Newport (1839), and the Pug Riots in the north of England (1842), led to fears of armed insurrection. The burgeoning provincial press carried graphic accounts of Chartist activities throughout the country and created a mood of unease and alarm. Anti-Poor Law disturbances, the Rebecca Riots in South Wales, rick burning incidents in the southern counties of England, 'Scotch Cattle' episodes in Gwent, together with rumours of rebellion in Ireland, reinforced the sense of a fragmenting society. The influx of Irish immigrants escaping from the famines of the 1840s, - what the guardians of the Bangor and Beaumaris Union called 'the Irish fever,' - further sharpened social tensions⁷. Also the descent of the navvies on quiet towns and villages during the triumphant conquest of the railway in the same decade, underlined the impression of an ordered world crumbling before the inexorable forces of change.

Almost certainly, the deep conviction of one wing of the Chartist movement about the potential of education as an instrument of social change, was responsible for the strengthening of interest in working class education during these years. The 'Knowledge Chartist' movement, saw education as the handmaiden of social and political reform: in this respect it represented a continuation of the politically radical Owenite tradition of the 1830s. Chartism succeeded better than other working class movements in articulating the connection between education and social change, as it was the most impressive and best organised workers movement in the country. William Lovett and John Collins, the leaders of 'Knowledge Chartism'

refused to regard education as simply a process of learning skills⁸. While admitting the importance of its functional role, they stressed its relevance as an instrument of social and political change. For them, education was the only means available to the working classes of creating an awareness of the injustices of capitalism. It was also their most powerful weapon in combating injustice. The blending of political and educational agitation was to be a feature of Chartist campaigning in the remotest parts of the country. Thomas Powell, one of the leaders of the Chartist movement in mid and north Wales, speaking to over a thousand people in Newtown (Montgomeryshire) in 1839, urged them, not only 'if they were called upon to fight to fight to the death', but also to fight their own 'ignorance': 'He desired them to form themselves into classes in order to circulate knowledge'⁹. It is sometimes said that it was the stress which a section of the Chartist movement laid on the need to capture men's minds, and to use education as a means to social and political ends, that had the most powerful effect in convincing 'informed opinion' of the urgent necessity to build on the start made in the twenties and thirties, and create a fully controlled and regulated system of public education for the working classes.

2. Dr. Kay-Shuttleworth and the adoption of policy: the Minutes of 1846, and the Workhouse Regulations of 1846 and 1848

Before analysing the dynamics of educational expansion in Caernarvonshire, within the Welsh context, a brief study is first made of the motivations of policy makers working under the new Committee of Council on Education, in the 1840s. In particular, an

attempt is made to understand what lay behind the thinking of Kay-Shuttleworth, the founder of the new system of elementary education launched during the decade. His ideas about education, and the assumptions which informed them, can best be grasped by a study of two seminal sets of regulations for which he was responsible. These were the Minutes of 1846, which were further explained in 1847, laying the groundwork for the development of teacher training in England and Wales, and the less well known Workhouse Regulations of the same year, which were consolidated in 1848¹⁰. In many respects, these documents constituted the keystone of State involvement in building the national system of elementary education after 1846.

What both sets of regulations showed, was that Kay-Shuttleworth had identified the creation of a totally reliable corps of teachers, as the *sine qua non* of a national system of working class education. He had long been concerned about the inadequacy of those who taught in schools for the 'poor'. His inquiries during the 1830s, first for the Manchester Statistical Society, and then for the Poor Law Commission in East Anglia, had convinced him of the 'moral' as well as intellectual incompetence of most of those who instructed the children of the 'lower orders'; a conclusion amply confirmed in Wales, by the 1847 Reports. Kay-Shuttleworth had been so profoundly disturbed by the low calibre of teachers in private venture and other schools, that, jointly with E.C. Tufnell, he had opened a Normal school to train teachers at Battersea in 1840¹¹. Although his original aim was to prepare young men to take charge of schools for Pauper children, most of Battersea's students used what they had learned to organise their own elementary schools. Kay-Shuttleworth's experience at Battersea reinforced his

long standing conviction of the need to create a centrally devised system of teacher training; only such a system could provide a credible base for a national system of education for the working classes.

His national scheme for training teachers was incorporated in the Minutes of 1846¹². Basing his ideas on his observations and experiences, he chose the idea of the Pupil Teacher as that most likely to produce recruits who would enable a teaching profession of at least minimal intellectual and moral calibre to be built up throughout the country. In operating the pupil teacher concept he hoped to establish a partnership between the State and the British and National Societies. He assumed that the two would be prepared, not only to co-operate with the State in operating the pupil teacher system, but also in establishing a network of teacher training colleges to which the pupil teacher route would lead. Although a Voluntary/State partnership was being created, what impresses the historian about Kay-Shuttleworth's scheme was the managerial control he intended to exercise. He went to some lengths in the Minutes to explain the new system's control mechanisms and the way he intended the religious societies to enter the scheme as managerial partners with the State.

The principal means of control he adopted were typically Benthamite conceptions. The first was Inspection, involving a searching inquiry at every stage of the teacher's training into his attainments and character. Kay-Shuttleworth envisaged that the training period would be divided into three stages. The first would cover five years during which boys and girls, at the age of thirteen, would serve as 'apprentices' or 'pupil teachers' in schools, whose

participation in the scheme had been approved by the Committee of Council's newly appointed Inspectorate. During this stage, the pupil teachers would learn the principles and the practice of sound school management, while pursuing their own education under their headteachers. Both the selection and the progress of the pupil teachers would be carefully monitored during the five year period. The monitoring process would be a dual one, shared between the Inspectors, as agents of the State, and the approved voluntary agencies. The second stage of training, which Kay-Shuttleworth hoped would eventually extend for three years, entailed study at a teacher training college which would be conducted by one of the approved voluntary societies. At this stage again, a close Voluntary/State partnership was planned. Entry into the colleges would be regulated by the State through its Queen's scholarship scheme, and all colleges and students would be examined by HMIs every year for evidence of satisfactory progress. The third stage of Kay-Shuttleworth's scheme involved a further five years, during which students, who had successfully completed the first two stages of their training, would be in charge of their own schools as provisionally certificated teachers. Only after this period, during which their moral and intellectual competence as acting teachers was closely assessed, would their provisional certificates be ratified. Inspection was to be conducted principally by the HMIs whose number was greatly strengthened during the next twenty years. But the work of the HMIs was to be reinforced in every respect by the religious societies working through their own appointed 'agents' and 'inspectors', and their local representatives, as 'school managers', 'visitors', training college personnel,

clergymen, or school correspondents¹³.

The second means by which Kay-Shuttleworth planned to control the new system consisted of a series of financial devices operated by the Committee of Council. A number of money grants were devised, each linked to inspection. They included annual payments to satisfactory pupil teachers, Queen's scholarships for successful training college entrants, grants in augmentation of the salaries of provisionally certificated teachers, and additional grants to fully certificated teachers who trained pupil teachers in their schools. The payment of these grants was conditional, not just upon the academic achievements and teaching ability of pupil teachers and provisionally certificated teachers, but also upon satisfactory accounts of their moral character and conduct, as observed and adjudicated by HMIs, aided by the approved networks of local agencies. The Minutes were thus designed to achieve two goals: one, the more functional goal of producing teachers who could teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy to working class children, up to standards deemed economically necessary and socially desirable, and the other, the 'moral' goal of producing a body of men and women who could be entrusted with the task of conveying a set of 'moral' values, to the children of the working classes.

Of the two goals, it has been suggested that the second was uppermost in Kay-Shuttleworth's mind; the Minutes laid greater stress on the moral, rather than the intellectual capacity of the teaching force¹⁴. In effect, the Minutes visualised the intended body of teachers as an army of strictly trained, highly disciplined, and strongly motivated mercenaries, whose social status

was to be raised a little above that of their working class pupils, from whose ranks they were to be selected themselves. In no sense were they to be regarded as part of the social elite. Social mission was the governing concept of the Minutes not social mobility: every aspect of the Minutes discouraged the assumption of unwarranted social aspirations on the part of the new teaching force. The teachers were regarded as social intermediaries intended to present the values of the Department, the training colleges, the clergy and the local elites, to those just below them in the social scale. In effect, they were to be the NCOs of the current order. No understanding of the evolution of the national system of education in the middle years of the nineteenth century, at central or local levels, would be possible, without grasping the dynamic of Kay-Shuttleworth's teacher training policies.

There is no need to examine the Workhouse Regulations so thoroughly, but the aims of both policy documents were complementary. In framing the Workhouse Regulations, Kay-Shuttleworth took the view that an obligation rested upon the State to act in a caring capacity for pauper children. As a child group, he absolved them of personal responsibility for their condition so that they became special cases justifying direct State control and supervision; the State should act in loco parentis¹⁵. Because good parents, by definition, provided their children with moral as well as physical sustenance, Kay-Shuttleworth intended the State to provide the same for workhouse children, by giving them, not only shelter and food, but also a set of moral values that would make them socially useful and responsible members of society.

Like the Minutes, the Regulations identified a sound

teaching force as the operative instrument of policy. Because prevailing social dogma insisted that a distinction be drawn between the 'independent poor' and the pauperised, the Minutes could not apply to teachers in workhouse schools. It is doubtful whether public opinion would have accepted the integration of a scheme for the provision of teachers for pauper children, with the more general scheme of the Minutes. Such an integrated scheme would have challenged the dominant ethic of 'lesser eligibility'.

Kay-Shuttleworth therefore devised a separate plan for pauper children. Under this, the State laid aside £30,000 to be used to augment the salaries of teachers employed by local boards of guardians in workhouses¹⁶. Even the arrangements made for inspection were separate from those of the Minutes. Kay-Shuttleworth appointed four special Inspectors answerable to the Committee of Council on Education, who were to examine workhouse schools. They were to assess each workhouse teacher's cash value, according to a scale laid down by the Department and within the limits of the available grant.

Although no formal scheme of teacher training was established for workhouse teachers, four qualitative grades with accompanying grant values were devised for them: these grades were known as 'Permission', 'Probation', 'Competence' and 'Efficiency'¹⁷. The cash grants were disbursed according to each teacher's assessed grade. Kay-Shuttleworth's long term aim was to work through supervision, inspection and regulation towards the general attainment of the two higher grades. The Workhouse Regulations, together with other Departmental circulars, indicated plainly how the role of the workhouse teacher was officially conceived. In the workhouse

hierarchy, his status was to be higher than that of the other officers of 'the house'; he was not to be subject to the authority of the workhouse master. His ascribed role was a kind of commissar of values; as Kay-Shuttleworth himself wrote, he was 'to eradicate the germs of Pauperism from the rising generation and to secure in the minds and morals of the people the best protection for the institutions of society'¹⁸. Workhouse teachers were thus explicitly regarded as agents of socialisation, and principals in the pursuit of social control.

Although the two teacher schemes - that of the Minutes and the Workhouse Regulations - were discrete, their genesis had much in common. Many of the leading ideas of the Minutes had been derived from Kay-Shuttleworth's inquiries on behalf of the Poor Law Commission in East Anglia and his experiences at Battersea Normal College, and its associated practising schools in Ealing Grove and Hackney Wick. Scrutinized as social policy documents, in the context of the disturbed social and political climate, the two schemes appear to have had far more of the character of social control measures than educational measures per se. What both sets of documents outlined, was a national strategy for a major piece of social engineering. For historians seeking to understand the evolution of elementary education from the 1840s onwards, they were significant declarations of intent.

Both the Minutes and the Workhouse Regulations, rested on the underlying assumption that working class culture was totally demoralized. This assumption can be found in the writings of those officially involved with working class education in the 1840s. A parallel assumption was that education provided the best

potential means of amelioration and improvement. These assumptions were the critical link in the social diagnosis of the educational policy-makers and provided them with their most powerful evangelizing arguments within their own class¹⁹. They were constantly articulating their belief that education provided the best means of changing working class life styles.

Practically no aspect of working class life escaped condemnation. Even the trivial, the sports, amusements, language, accents and 'civility' of working people, were censured. 'Demoralizing' sports were associated with sexual immorality, lack of humanity, or cruelty to animals. The moral condition of the family, and of working class children and young people in particular, caused special concern. H.S. Tremenheere in his report on Norfolk (1841) pointed out that although the incidence of drunkenness appeared to have declined among working class adults, 'juvenile depravity' had greatly increased²⁰. The condition of the young was particularly significant because they would be the parents and working people of the future, upon whom the long term prosperity of the country depended. Many observers were quoted as noting that children and young people almost everywhere showed 'a rudeness and discourtesy of manners, a want of respect towards superiors and a spirit of disobedience'²¹. The role of the working class mother, in moulding the outlook of future generations, was quickly recognized as crucial; 'the character of the female head of the family' it was said 'very frequently decides that of the husband and children'; if the mother 'be not the promoter of virtue, profligacy will very likely overrun the household, if she be not the source of domestic happiness she will become the author of discord and ruin'²². Her

potential as a socialising agent was thus identified quite plainly, reinforced by the fact that 'full half the period between infancy and manhood falls directly under her control'²³. As such, 'she is in a sense always teaching, a perpetual educator'²⁴. Not surprisingly the education of girls became a priority in the middle and later years of the century.

But the attack on working class life styles was broadly based and comprehensive. Public houses were condemned, first, because they led to drunkenness, and were the resort of those who talked obscenity and scandal, and, second, because they were recognized as the hub of working class political organisation. The most consistent official attack was directed against the political and economic beliefs of the more articulate working people. H.S. Tremenheere in his report on Norfolk, discovered that 'there was hardly a principle of religion, morals, society, trade, commerce or government, which I did not hear perverted'²⁵. For Tremenheere, for other Inspectors, and for Kay-Shuttleworth, well organised elementary schools were the only places where such tendencies could be effectively crushed. In his report on South Wales (1840), Tremenheere described the elementary school as a social institution in which sufficient training might be given 'to enable (the working classes) to combat from their own stores the fallacies that may be thrown out to mislead them', and where their tastes could be raised 'above the level of mere animal enjoyments', - so conjoining the socialising and civilizing role ascribed to schools²⁶. But it was in his report on the mining districts of Cornwall (1841), that Tremenheere most explicitly expressed his view of the socialising role of the elementary school. He wrote that, 'In binding society together

by the ties of common feelings and mutual understanding, it may be asserted that no institutions would have so much effectual influence than well devised elementary schools, by manifesting to the labouring classes an interest in their welfare and a sympathy with their wants, - by aiding them to acquire just principles, clear knowledge, undebasing enjoyments, - by giving a right direction to their good qualities and virtues, and by assisting them to obtain dominion over their vices'²⁷.

Tremenheere's reports were reinforced by those of other Inspectors such as the HMIs, Moseley, Tufnell, Symons and Cook. Others have shown how strongly they held their assumptions about working class culture, and how firm was their belief in the educative process as an instrument of social amelioration²⁸. Their assault on the working class was wholesale, indiscriminating, and couched in highly charged language, with the free use of such words as 'uncivilized', 'degraded', 'depraved', 'vicious' and 'supine'. But their general pessimism in relation to working class culture was matched by their optimism about the social and civilizing potential of a well organised system of working class schools. For them, education, - the right kind of education, - was instrumental in achieving a more meaningful form of working class emancipation.

The Minutes of 1846 and the Workhouse Regulations were at one and the same time a reflection of these ideas, and a response to them. The entry of the State into working class education on an unprecedented scale in the 1840s, was thus motivated both by the need to exercise social control in defence of society, and also to socialize and civilise the poor by the transference of approved educational skills and accepted values and social norms.

3. The impulses behind the work of the National and British Societies

i. The motives of the National Society

The reports of the voluntary societies present ample evidence of a consensus on the socialising objectives of education. The aims of social control and moral discipline were even more crudely enunciated in the National Society's Reports than in those of Kay-Shuttleworth and his Inspectors. At the height of the Chartist campaign in 1842, the National Society's Annual Report described the country's newly industrialised districts as 'townships abandoned to ignorance and barbarism, to socialism and infidelity'²⁹. Throughout the 1840s, the National Society equated working class 'ignorance' with political disaffection. The Society claimed that in alerting the public to the connection between ignorance and subversion it was creating a new and powerful stream of opinion in favour of an ameliorative education policy. Where many previously thought working class ignorance was 'the only opiate for their relief under the unavoidable drudgeries of their condition', the question now being asked was, 'what kind of education shall they receive?'³⁰. The concentration of 'Knowledge Chartism' on education as a means to political power, was a major factor in such a change of view. As the National Society's Report stated in 1841 when referring to 'the responsible Churchman's' attitude to education, 'He cannot stop the current (of working class interest in education) but may contribute to direct it into what even he would look back upon as the least dangerous channels. He cannot hinder the people from obtaining knowledge, but he can do something towards making that knowledge the safest and the best'³¹.

This was an acknowledgement of the connection between the Chartist inspired working class interest in education and the rising tide of concern for the provision of a strengthened system of elementary schools. This is not to deny that there remained a strong undercurrent of doubt. Time and again the National Society reiterated that its schools were not intended to change the natural order of society, but were supportive of its existing structure. Its Report for 1846, claimed that 'the severest scrutiny would not perhaps produce a single instance where the manual labourer has started aside from the proper employments of his situation in consequence of being brought up in a National school'³². Such a claim reflected the tenacity of the older view that education was a dangerously disturbing social force. It also showed how the Society's leaders conceptualized their educational role.

It was in 1843 that the National Society dwelt most tellingly on its view of the purposes of working class education. Following one of the peak years of Chartist agitation in 1842, its Report amounted to a passionate plea for the restoration of order, through an instrumental schooling under the aegis of the Church and its organisation in the country. The religious education of the poor 'is the only safe bulwark of the social order' it said, at a time when there were doubts 'whether the bonds of society could long be held together'³³. The Report supported this assertion by claiming that Chartism, and other forms of subversive activity, had never been a threat in districts where the tradition of Church education was strong. In such places far from being subverted, 'people cheerfully enrolled themselves as special constables kept entirely aloof from agitation and waited patiently for the

improvement of trade,³⁴. Church schools were an instrument of social solidarity, moulding children to respect their country's laws and institutions, and leading them towards an internalization of values upholding the social structure. As proof, it cited evidence of 'the late agitation', when 'those trained up as church children' had 'stopped the torrent of disorder',³⁵. This was a claim that the country had been saved at the brink of revolution, by the influence of Anglican schools. By thus singling out Church schools, the Society was implying that the schools of its chief rival, the British and Foreign Schools Society, had not contributed to the same end, although this was never stated openly. But the social implications of its Reports were clear: where the working classes had been educated under the safe and reliable direction of the Anglican church, they were receptive of leadership, deferential of authority and law-abiding. To reinforce this message, the Society noted that **Chartist** troubles had occurred in 'non-schooled parishes', where young men were 'disrespectful to their superiors and quite without any just ideas of their situation in life',³⁶. A major undertaking was needed to build National schools throughout the country, particularly in areas where the dangers were greatest. An emergency resolution to this end was passed at the Society's Annual Meeting in 1843. It called for the establishment of a Special Fund to provide resources to build schools, and to build as a priority in industrialised areas. The wording of this resolution was significant. The schools were needed to bring working class children under 'wholesome discipline and instruction', and 'discipline' was their primary task³⁷. Under their influence, children 'would daily become more orderly and obedient', and 'great

sources of peace and order, of social happiness and hope for eternity,³⁸. The National Society welcomed Kay-Shuttleworth's teacher training scheme in 1846 as eagerly as it responded to the first State grants in 1833. To the National Society, as to Kay-Shuttleworth, the schoolteacher had a crucial social role. He would be in the front line, to 'check the spirit of anarchy' and 'to ensure its ultimate repression',³⁹.

The unprecedented flow of contributions to the National Society's Special Fund during 1844-5 indicates the impact of social and political disturbances on public opinion's attitudes to education. By 1845, the fund had reached £151,985 and won the support of Queen Victoria, who headed the subscription lists with her donation of a thousand pounds⁴⁰. The Society commented that 'it is probable that so large a sum, proceeding solely from voluntary contributions, was never before provided for a benevolent object, in the same space of time in any country in the world',⁴¹. The Society attributed the scale of this response to public opinion's acceptance of the view that 'education was their best preservative against the cavils of the infidel, the seductions of the profligate, and the sophistries of the demagogue',⁴². Subscription lists, even in geographically remote counties such as Caernarvonshire, showed that landowners and gentry and country clergy, even in small and poor parishes, had contributed sums ranging from a few shillings to many hundreds of pounds. Many clergy in quiet rural parishes organised Sunday collections among their parishioners, so that the pennies of agricultural labourers were sent to build schools in the country's new industrial communities⁴³. Such a response showed how complacent

minds had been jolted by the social disturbances of the time. It also indicated the basic change which public opinion had undergone on the question of educating the working classes.

Corroborative evidence about the motives of the fund's promoters comes from a study of the disbursement of its monies. In 1844, the Society disbursed thousands of pounds to build schools in Manchester and its cotton manufacturing hinterland, regarded as the archetypal industrialised area. About £5,000 went to building Church schools in Manchester itself, about a thousand pounds went to Blackburn, while Burnley and Sheffield benefited by many hundreds of pounds each⁴⁴. Bradford received over £1,700 and Birmingham just over £1,500⁴⁵. Even small towns were aided if they had a known association with Chartist activity. Significantly, Newtown and Llanidloes, both of them small mid-Wales towns, centres of Thomas Powell's Chartist mission in Montgomeryshire, - which was Robert Owen's home county, - were given over £500 to bring their children under 'wholesome discipline and instruction'⁴⁶. These grants were not made simply in response to demographic needs, but reflected the heightened concern felt about industrial populations exposed to subversive influences. In Caernarvonshire, claims on the Society's Special Fund were made by school promoters in the county's granite, slate and copper mining parishes, such as Llanllechid, Llanberis, Llanfairfechan, Nefyn, Llanengan and Llandudno. Special pleas were submitted from some, as when the Bishop of Bangor interceded on behalf of Llandudno's 'humble and impoverished miners'⁴⁷. He wrote that their condition was such that they had 'a claim to the Special Fund of your Society'⁴⁸. At the same time the vicar of Nefyn warned

of his pressing need for money to combat 'the total absence of discipline' in his parish, while the rector of Llanengan, in making his claim on the Fund, referred to the uncertainties of local trade, 'the works (being) not always in the same flourishing condition many being thrown out (that is, made unemployed) whose children (then) have no chance of daily instruction unless it is through the medium of the National Society'⁴⁹.

ii. The Anglican response in Wales: the work of Sir Thomas Phillips and the Welsh Education Committee

The need to socialize and civilize the poor also lay behind Sir Thomas Phillips's call in the 1840s for strengthening the work of the National Society in Wales. Phillips was a prominent industrialist in South Wales, a strong lay churchman, and confidant of Kay-Shuttleworth. A letter from Kay-Shuttleworth to Phillips, advising industrialists to invest in working class education as an assurance for the safety of their property, was published in the Minutes of the Committee of Council in 1841⁵⁰. The initiative for its publication apparently came from Phillips himself. But Kay-Shuttleworth was pleased to be able to state his view that 'a comparatively small annual expenditure judiciously employed in introducing the elements of civilisation and religion would render society harmonious and secure'⁵¹. Some years later, in 1847, after acting to establish schools in Newport and the surrounding districts where he had personal interests, Phillips persuaded the National Society to establish a separate fund for the Principality⁵². This fund was the basis of the National Society's expansionary work in Wales, during the 1850s and 1860s.

Like the National Society's Special Fund, the Welsh Education Fund rested on the socialising and civilising ideals so strongly shared by the National Society, Kay-Shuttleworth and his Inspectorate.

Like Kay-Shuttleworth and his Inspectorate, Phillips diagnosed the educational problems of Wales in terms of working class demoralisation. Like them, he denied the true causes of working class poverty. He believed that the poverty which existed was avoidable, that it was due to the personal deficiencies and moral failures of the working class. Instead of attributing current outbreaks of discontent in South Wales to genuine deprivation and suffering, he attributed them to 'organised agitation acting on men undisciplined by Christian teaching, and without defence against the scoffs of the infidel or the sophistries of the demagogue'⁵³. Like Kay-Shuttleworth, Phillips thought the antidote lay in 'influencing the minds of the people' by religious training, in schools established and supervised by reliable social elements⁵⁴. Without this 'an immense army' would be needed in Wales 'to preserve anything like peace in this country'⁵⁵.

At this time the Report of the Church Schools Inquiry Commission was issued in 1846, followed in 1847 by the Report of the Commissioners appointed to investigate the 'state of education' in Wales. Together they strengthened Phillips's conviction of the urgency of the need to provide an organised system of ameliorative schooling in Wales. He wanted the resources of the National Society's special Welsh Fund to be used primarily to train teachers for a network of National or Church schools.

Phillips was instrumental in organising the Anglican

Welsh Education Committee in 1847, to administer the Welsh Education Fund, and spearhead Church educational efforts in the Principality⁵⁶. At its inception, the Welsh Education Fund amounted to £3,000⁵⁷. Most of this sum was set aside from the general funds of the National Society but a further £2,500 was promised in annual subscriptions, most from within Wales itself⁵⁸.

The first fruits of Sir Thomas Phillips's Welsh policy, an offshoot of Kay-Shuttleworth's own strategy, was the opening in 1848 of the South Wales (teacher) Training College in Carmarthen, financed by the Welsh Education Fund. There were thirty one students at the college in 1849, including a number from Caernarvonshire, awarded exhibitions from the Welsh Education Fund to go to Carmarthen until a second Welsh college was opened in the north⁵⁹. The opening of a college in North Wales - the most strongly Welsh speaking part of the Principality - was one of the Welsh Education Committee's central objectives, especially as the Church had long acknowledged the importance of 'the bilingual difficulty'. The existence of the Welsh language was offered as one of the main reasons for establishing colleges to train teachers in Wales. Even in its earliest days, the Welsh Education Committee referred to 'the impediment in the way of education resulting from the difference between the English and Welsh languages, which very frequently caused English teachers to find an insuperable difficulty in making themselves thoroughly understood by their Welsh scholars'⁶⁰. This was one of the strongest reasons why Welsh Church leaders were opposed to Welsh students attending colleges in England.

The Church's second Welsh training college was officially

opened at Caernarfon in 1855, aided by a grant of £2,600 from the Welsh Education Fund⁶¹. Prior to this, a small training 'institution' was associated with the town's National school, itself newly built in 1844 as a replacement for the original school opened in 1822⁶². But the training 'institution' was not an officially recognized Church training college in the 1840s, despite receiving a nominal annual contribution from the Welsh Education Fund. Even before this, the master of the National school - a Mr. Foster who settled in Caernarfon in 1835 - conducted some practical teacher training at the school. Though 'a self taught man formerly employed in a printing press', he was highly regarded by the Rev. Harry Longueville Jones, the HMI of Church schools in Wales, who described his teaching methods as 'good and judiciously carried out' with 'excellent demonstrations and exemplifications'⁶³. Not every one shared his high opinion of Foster, and one of his most brilliant but unorthodox students, Robert Roberts, the so called 'Wandering scholar', described him as 'something of a humbug very ignorant of book learning who had picked up a few dodges, and by unblushing cheek imposed upon the public, who thought him a wonder'⁶⁴. Roberts had a rather jaundiced view of Foster who was a frequent contributor to the learned journal Archaeologica Cambrensis, and who could not have been quite as ignorant as Roberts made out. Whatever the quality of his mind, and teaching, it was Foster who became responsible for conducting the training 'institution' launched at Caernarfon in the mid 1840s, and it was from this 'institution' that the Church's second Welsh training college evolved. The Caernarfon venture had many opponents, including the Principal of

Carmarthen training college who feared competition, and a group on the Bangor Diocesan Board, who disliked Caernarfon's evangelical brand of churchmanship - 'low and slow' - and who would have preferred the college to have been established in Bangor, the ecclesiastical centre of the diocese⁶⁵.

Because of this opposition, the Caernarfon venture had to survive as a 'training institution' for many years and its supporters sent many petitions to Phillips and the Welsh Education Committee asking for the aid which had always been promised. The appointment of the Rev. B.J. Binns, later HMI of Church schools in Wales, as Principal of the Institution in 1849, was a turning point in its history. Thereafter it had about twenty students a year until 1855, when it became an official Church training college with accommodation for twice that number of students⁶⁶. Its location in Caernarfon indicated both the importance of the town as a centre of population, and the vigour of its local Anglicans led by the vicar, the Rev. Thomas Thomas.

iii. The daily regime and ethos of the Caernarfon Training Institution

In many respects, the daily regime of the Caernarfon Institution exemplified Kay-Shuttleworth's ideas about the intended status and ascribed role of the elementary teacher. Robert Roberts, who spent some months there in 1848, has left a vivid account of his student life. To begin with, the financial allowance on which he was expected to live was extremely meagre. Because there was no residential accommodation until 1856, students had to live in lodgings in the town⁶⁷. Roberts had to make ends meet on a grant

of four shillings a week, awarded him on passing the Institution's initial entrance examination. This consisted of an oral test in Biblical Knowledge and the Prayer Book, and a test of ability in reading, and in written and spoken English. He also had to work sums in Arithmetic to the rule of three, and repeat the catechism with a fair degree of accuracy⁶⁸. This entrance test preceded the full operation of Kay-Shuttleworth's Pupil Teacher and Queens Scholarship schemes. Meanwhile, in 1848, Roberts found it difficult to manage on his tiny allowance. The diaries which he kept give a picture of his life of great frugality and hardship. As he wrote in one of his entries,

'A shilling loaf of bread, half a pound of butter and half a pound of bacon were my weekly allowances. This, with 1/6 for lodgings absorbed all the four shillings, except a few pence which went to buy a few eggs and now and then a postage stamp for a letter. Luxuries were out of the question. Beer we never tasted, books and clothes were equally out of the question. The books I borrowed out of the college library and wore what clothes I had which towards the close of six months showed woeful signs of wear and tear'.⁶⁹

In addition to a life of penury, Roberts found the course of study so superficial as to be almost worthless, yet all-consuming of time. 'Lectures' began at eight o'clock in the morning, and with only an hour's break for lunch, continued until eight-thirty in the evening. Most 'lectures' were given by Binns, the Principal, with Foster as 'master of method' giving instruction

in school management⁷⁰. Periods were also set aside for 'specimen lessons', when students were set to teach children in the model wing of the National school before their peers and instructors, who then discussed the merits of their performances. The organist of the local parish church gave instruction in music, but Roberts described his lessons as 'void of beneficial result'⁷¹.

Because of the heavy time table and the superficial nature of his work, Roberts found little joy in his studies. What the time table called 'Scripture', ranged from a shallow study of the Bible, Catechism and Prayer Book, to the barest outlines of Church History and the Geography of Palestine; a number of periods each week were set aside for 'committing passages to the memory'⁷². In addition, he was taught a 'generalized geography' of the world and 'outlines of English history', both of which were a parade of facts and dates⁷³. The 'science of mathematics' consisted of the basic arithmetical rules, with a little algebra, mensuration and mechanics as 'extras'⁷⁴. 'English' had four principal components: grammar, parsing, composition and penmanship. In addition he had to write notes of lessons, attend a weekly examination, and spend long periods in supervised private study. Every waking hour was accounted for, in a tightly scheduled time table. At the end of six months he found that he had only learned a smattering of information about a wide spread of 'subjects'. Even Longueville Jones, who was a friend of the Institution, described the list of subjects 'unnecessarily diffuse', with the result that the students were 'lacking in solid knowledge'⁷⁵.

The Institution's time table was an attempt to express the philosophy which informed Kay-Shuttleworth's teacher training

ideas. The students were kept constantly at work, and familiarized with the drudgery expected to mark their lives as teachers. According to Roberts, the local vicar viewed the students as 'a doubtful lot who required tight discipline'⁷⁶. Even their limited 'leisure periods' were carefully timed and spaced. Their only sustained break was on Saturdays from twelve noon until the beginning of a further period of private study at seven o'clock in the evening. Sundays were as fully time-tabled as weekdays, with compulsory attendances at two church services, and at Sunday school, where the students were expected to act as teachers. They were forbidden to attend Welsh language services 'it being a firm belief of the Institution's managers that attending the English service was essential to the preservation of our knowledge of the English language'⁷⁷. Despite his doubts about the time table, Longueville Jones wrote approvingly of the philosophy which informed the Institution's regime. Thrown on their own resources, and kept at work almost continually, the students would acquire those 'essential habits of self-dependence and economy' which would make them 'more likely to remain contented with that station in life unto which it hath pleased God to call them'⁷⁸. His comment enshrines the ethos of the 1846 Minutes, that social mobility was in no sense an expected outcome of the teacher training process. Upward social mobility would destroy the planned strategy under which the elementary teacher was seen as a social missionary among his own class.

Longueville Jones's support was crucial for the survival of the Caernarfon Institution in its early years. After 1855, when it received its grant from the Welsh Education Fund and purchased new buildings, which at a cost of five thousand pounds were adapted for residential purposes, its future was more assured. In addition

to the Welsh Education Fund's grant of £2,600, the Committee of Council granted £2,100 and the S.P.C.K. £400, while the Welsh Education Committee promised an annual subscription of £600, reduced to £400 in 1862, when its own resources ran down⁷⁹. The college's new status in the mid 1850s and its wider 'Welsh' appeal was signified by its change of name. From the Caernarfon Training Institution it became the North Wales Training College: its board of management was broadened to include representatives from the two North Wales dioceses, and it was allowed to take Queens scholars under Kay-Shuttleworth's Minutes⁸⁰. Unfortunately, a scheme to set up a similar training college for girls was allowed to lapse, when its prospective Principal fell ill. Nevertheless, by the 1850s Caernarvonshire had acquired its first official training college: the fact that it was an Anglican training college in an overwhelmingly Nonconformist county signified the greater readiness of Welsh Church leaders to respond to the State's new policy initiatives, and their more effective organisational network. It also indicated the continued reluctance of the Nonconformists to act positively, and their slowness in grasping the importance of training teachers within Wales for the country's schools.

iv. Concluding Assessment of the work of Sir Thomas Phillips and the Welsh Education Committee

By the early 1860s Sir Thomas Phillips's Welsh Education Committee had performed a valuable service to Church elementary education in Wales. Without the support of the Committee, it is unlikely that the Church training colleges at Carmarthen and Caernarfon would have been established. The Committee was also

instrumental in organising educational effort in the four Welsh dioceses, under diocesan boards which, in turn, helped to structure Church management of education through archdiaconal and local committees⁸¹. It also acted as an effective pressure group in London with the Committee of Council, and later the Education Department. It was claimed on its behalf, and probably rightly, that it was responsible for securing the appointment of the Rev. Longueville Jones as HMI of Church schools in the Principality. Yet, whatever its educational achievements, the motives of its founder, Sir Thomas Phillips, were primarily social not educational. When he died in 1868, the National Society's Annual Report carried an eloquent tribute to his contribution, recording his work as a member of the Welsh Education Committee, and the services he had rendered by it. Significantly his first and greatest achievement, was 'as a magistrate', when he 'had suppressed with undaunted courage and resolution, the formidable riots at Newport in 1839'⁸².

The social and political crises of the 1840s had undoubtedly spurred the Church to step up its educational work in Wales, especially to foster the training of teachers, which accorded well with Kay-Shuttleworth's emphasis on teacher training. Kay-Shuttleworth's views were apparently shared by Churchmen both in the National Society and on the Welsh Education Committee. As the National Society's Report noted in 1847, 'Education does not depend so much on the base lessons given and the instruction imparted, as upon the IDEA under which education is taken up and the SPIRIT in which it is carried on'⁸³. While not diminishing the continued relevance of the purely religious motive, still less the

denominational impulse to establish schools in Wales, there can be little doubt that one of the main ideas on which church educational efforts rested in the mid and late 1840s, was that of social cohesion, linked without difficulty to the religious impulse. It almost certainly accounted for the change of emphasis which took place in the National schools's curriculum during the 1840s from the 'religious' to the 'secular,' in the sense of a curriculum which upheld the social order⁸⁴. The aspiration of social order was put most plainly in 1846, when the Society's Annual Report stated the aim of the National schools, as ensuring that 'even if in the government of this country some abuses still exist', the poor would be taught 'the duty of submitting to such evils with that obedient spirit which makes men truly free'⁸⁵. Religion was seen as the handmaiden of this aim: it would sanction and reinforce the social order by making clear to the working classes 'that their afflictions are but for a moment and will work out for them a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory'⁸⁶. The Doctrine of the Beyond was naturally recruited to reinforce the Order of the Here and Now.

v. The motives of the British Society

Although the Reports of the British and Foreign Schools Society are less detailed, they remain sufficiently informative to enable us to probe the motives which led it to extend its activities in the 1840s. Its reports were less crudely repressive, in language and tone, than those of the National Society. Yet its social aims were unmistakably similar. A report sent to the British Society from a disturbed area of Lancashire in 1847, for

example, stressed that its first aim was to 'fit the working classes as intelligent and accountable beings to discharge usefully and honourably the duties of their station in life'⁸⁷. Social solidarity was the keynote, although the British Society laid more stress on self help than the National Society. This emphasis reflected the higher social status that many middle class Nonconformists achieved for themselves during these years. Most not only achieved a modest degree of social and financial security, but hoped to continue to rise through their own efforts. Thus the idea of a totally rigid class demarcation was not wholly appropriate to their social aspirations, and this may have accounted for the slightly greater emphasis on self help in the British Society's reports. Notwithstanding, it remains firmly the case that the British Society adhered to a restricted concept of working class education, and that in the 1840s the impulse to social control and socialisation was its leading incentive.

In 1850 a report from Swansea, taking a retrospective glance over the previous decade, wondered 'what effect day schools
 may not have had in saving us from anarchy and confusion'⁸⁸. The events of the 1840s convinced the Society's leaders that in the industrial and urban society of the nineteenth century, 'mere power' was not enough to secure social tranquillity, but that society had an interest in laying 'the foundations of authority deep in the actions of an instructed and virtuous people'⁸⁹. Having noted the undoubted importance of the 'repressive' factor, the Society placed more emphasis on the positive aspects of education. Whereas the National Society wished to create an 'educational police force'; the British Society struck a note of missionary

endeavour. Like members of the early schools Inspectorate, it was concerned with changing the 'morality' and culture of the working classes. Whereas the National Society referred to them as the 'classes dangereux', to the British Society they were misguided and wrongheaded. Although the ultimate aim of the societies was much the same, the British Society by its different emphasis reflected the positive side of the policy objectives of Kay-Shuttleworth and the Education Department.

The Society's Reports identified the socially desirable qualities schools should foster. One of the most important was thrift. Its importance stemmed directly from the conviction of the middle classes that the poor were to blame for their own condition. If only they could be convinced of the evils of indolence and waste, the level of their culture could be raised. As the British Society's report stated in 1841, 'A resolution to forgo present enjoyment for the sake of future advantage is the first step towards improvement in the physical as well as moral condition of men'⁹⁰. An attempt was made to drive this precept home, not only in formal school lessons, but also by savings schemes and 'penny banks'. One such 'penny bank' was opened at the British School in Neath, 'with the object of instilling into the minds of the children in early life the important benefits which result from saving and economical habits'⁹¹. Its founders wanted to show working people that the interest gained on savings, would provide money for the future, which they would 'otherwise most probably have spent in self-indulgence'⁹². The strength of such ideas evoked the spirit of 'lesser eligibility', and on one plane it is possible to view the education movement of the 1840s, as

auxiliary to poor law policy. At the same time, the condemnation of drunkenness and the promotion of temperance was closely associated with the assault on working class prodigality. It reflected the view that working men often squandered their wages on drink. A book of 'temperance lessons' was widely used in British schools, and the children were taught a selection of temperance songs⁹³. As the public house was identified with 'obscenity', 'scandal', and 'sedition', every successful diversion of working men to reading rooms, night classes, and later to cocoa rooms, was hailed as a moral triumph. Another of the Society's missions was 'the smoothing' of the 'prevailing rudeness and discourtesy of manners', particularly of 'a want of respect towards superiors'⁹⁴. 'Rudeness' marred the behaviour of the young in particular, - 'juvenile depravity of all kinds' it was said, in an echo of Tremeneere's report, 'has greatly increased of late'⁹⁵. Like Tremeneere, the British Society was especially concerned about the young because, like him, it supposed that if such behaviour was allowed to continue it would lead to the destruction of both the economic prosperity and moral fibre of the nation.

It was in support of this view that the Society noted in 1853 that the period immediately following childhood, that is 'adolescence', was 'the most prolific of criminals', and that a quarter of the prisoners in the country's gaols were between fifteen and twenty years old⁹⁶. Inquiries conducted among adolescent prisoners in Preston gaol revealed a massive degree of illiteracy and incomprehension of the concept of morality⁹⁷. The significance of such findings were not lost. 'In ten short years', said a British Society Report, 'the poor children of the day that is now

passing over us will be to England a protection or a pest, they will throw over her the shield of their strength or they will paralyze her by their turbulence and their crimes'⁹⁸. Not surprisingly, the Society thought 'money expended for the purposes of education is a sort of personal investment a premium paid for the insurance of property and the maintenance of tranquillity'⁹⁹.

Like Kay-Shuttleworth and the National Society, the British Society saw a dependable teaching force as the essential instrument in the task ahead. In the early 1840s the Society had raised £20,000 for building Borough Road college and its associated model school, and it had plans to extend its training facilities through a network of smaller colleges throughout the country¹⁰⁰. Like Kay-Shuttleworth, the British Society was convinced that 'all considerations are subordinate to the training of teachers all is dependent on success in this first, great, fundamental business'¹⁰¹. Strengthening Borough Road college, and recruiting students of good quality for a meaningful period of training, consonant with Kay-Shuttleworth's concept of the status and role of elementary teachers, became one of the Society's prime objectives. Its Annual Reports gave pride of place to this task. For these reasons, the British Society, like the National Society, welcomed the Minutes of 1846 as a positive contribution to the creation of a reliable and sound teaching profession.

vi. Welsh Nonconformist responses to the initiatives of the 1840s: the work and influence of Hugh Owen and the significance of the Graham Bill

The policy initiatives of the 1840s, indicating the government's fresh determination to help provide schools and teachers for the working classes, saw the British Society, for the first time, beginning to organize its activities in Wales on an appreciable scale. It was during this period that State aid first played a role in promoting non-denominational education in Wales, more particularly in Caernarvonshire and the Principality's northern counties. The timing of this change was significant: it suggested that contemporary interest in working class education was so intense that even Nonconformist Wales had been drawn into the mainstream of 'national' developments.

The British Society's intervention in Wales owed much to the effects of a Letter to the Welsh People, written by Hugh Owen in August 1843, and published in Y Drysorfa, the official Calvinistic Methodist journal, and a large number of English and Welsh language periodicals and journals in the Principality¹⁰². In his Letter, Hugh Owen called attention to the British Society's aims, and the facilities it could make available for the establishment of schools. What his Letter amounted to, was a clarion call to the growing number of Welsh Nonconformists to build and maintain non-denominational State aided British schools. Hugh Owen was aware, both of the British Society's previous lack of impact in the Principality, and the need to give detailed guidance to his fellow Nonconformist Welshmen about establishing schools. His Letter set out such guidance meticulously. He

explained first, how they should set up school committees on a local basis to organise their support, then proceed to choose school sites, and prepare school plans. He outlined the grants available and how they could qualify for them. Finally, he advised them how to select the best men as teachers; later in 1847 he was to translate the 1846 Minutes into Welsh with explanatory notes¹⁰³. Familiar with the working of government departments he offered his personal assistance to anyone in need of advice. He wrote:

'I think I am advantageously situated for rendering my fellow countrymen assistance in this matter, and I am willing to do it gratuitously to the full extent of my power. If therefore anybody, in any part of Wales, feels himself impelled to make a move in the direction of establishing a British School in his district, let him write to me and I shall be glad to place his case before the Government and to send him the necessary information to carry out his intentions'¹⁰⁴.

The response to his Letter from North Wales and Caernarvonshire was both immediate and enthusiastic. For reasons we shall examine below, the response from South Wales was not so encouraging. But in North Wales his Letter coming from him and at that time, proved to be the essential catalyst needed to release the reservoir of pent up social energy previously directed to internal Nonconformist 'causes'.

Why did Hugh Owen send his Letter to the Welsh People, at this particular juncture? In answering this question, there can be little doubt that Hugh Owen was aware of the Benthamite

view of the importance of an orderly system of education as an instrument of social cohesion and moral reform. Having been recruited personally by the Arch-Benthamite Edwin Chadwick into the service of the Poor Law Commission in the 1830s, he was inevitably influenced by Benthamite notions¹⁰⁵. Professor Finer has written of Chadwick and other leading Benthamites that, once in a position of authority, they 'naturally tended to recruit junior staff of (their) own way of thinking' and expose them once appointed 'to the force of their Benthamite personality'¹⁰⁶. He has also written that it was in the new and developing offices of government such as the Poor Law Commission that Benthamite influence was strongest¹⁰⁷. Hugh Owen was to remain with the Poor Law for forty years, rising to the position of chief clerk to the Poor Law Board - virtually its Permanent Secretary - and it is inconceivable that he was not imbued with Benthamite ideas. At the Poor Law Office in 1843, Hugh Owen must have been aware of the disturbed state of the country, of riots and outbreaks of discontent in opposition to the new Poor Law, and of current fears of subversion and insurrection. He was personally responsible for sending policy circulars and letters to Boards of Guardians throughout the country, containing the directives and recommendations of Edwin Chadwick and Kay-Shuttleworth. Though little work has been done on this aspect of Hugh Owen's career, it would be unreasonable not to assume that he was in sympathy with the aims of the policy-makers, and their ideological stance, and that it did not have an important effect on his view of education. He certainly knew and understood the rationale underlying the development of policy. It has been suggested that were it not for his

Welsh Nonconformist background, Hugh Owen might well have become a full-blown 'social engineer' of the Benthamite school¹⁰⁸.

But his commitment to Benthamite ideas was mitigated in respect to education both by his inbred hostility to the Anglican Church and his strong attachment to Nonconformity. They were to have a powerful influence on his response to the Graham Factory (Education) Bill introduced in Parliament in 1843¹⁰⁹. As we have seen in chapter two, Hugh Owen had been brought up the son of a Calvinistic Methodist farmer on the banks of the Menai Strait and had received a long and sound middle class education at the Rev. Evan Richardson's Nonconformist private venture school in association with the Calvinistic Methodist 'cause' at Caernarfon. When he had left Anglesey for London in 1825, he had joined the large and flourishing Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Chapel at Jewin Crescent, where he made the acquaintance of important Welsh Nonconformist exiles. In London, he also married Anne Wade, who was an English Congregationalist, and after their marriage, attended the English Congregationalist Chapel at Claremont in Pentonville¹¹⁰. His readiness to change denominations suggests a flexible mind, not easily tied to denominationalist orthodoxies. Claremont chapel was also associated with the British school opened at Denmark Terrace (Islington) in 1841, and Hugh Owen was secretary of the movement to launch it¹¹¹. As a Welshman, brought up in the Welsh Nonconformist milieu, educated at a Nonconformist private venture school and familiar with the running of a British school in London, he would inevitably have been affected by the Graham measure and its religio-social implications.

Sir James Graham's Factory (Education) Bill proposed

rate assistance to schools established in manufacturing and mining areas, managed by committees of seven trustees, chaired in all cases by local Anglican clergymen. The remaining trustees were to be two churchwardens and four members appointed by local J.P.s, who were almost exclusively drawn from among Anglican, Tory landowners. Ratepayers were excluded from the management of the schools. The teaching of Religious Instruction was left to the clergy, who were allowed absolute discretion in using the catechisms and formularies of the Church of England, totally free of the schools Inspectorate. The attendance of pupils at Anglican services, and Anglican Sunday schools, was compulsory. Moreover, the managers had sole rights of appointing and dismissing teachers. No one was to be employed in local factories and works unless he had attended a 'Graham' school. The only exceptions the Bill allowed were National and British schools approved by Church of England inspectors. Nonconformist schools, such as those run by Congregationalists and Baptists, and the Wesleyan Education Committee were banished. Even the possibility of 'approved' British schools was remote. In fact, in industrial areas the Church would dominate education and the role of the Nonconformists and the British Society would be emasculated. Furthermore, there were fears that if it became law the Bill's provisions would be extended to the whole country¹¹².

Not surprisingly, the education clauses of the Graham Bill met with determined Nonconformist opposition. The Central Committee of the British Society, which had always been careful to avoid comments of a partisan nature, protested against the Bill, as 'opposed to those great principles of religious equality and civil liberty on which the British and Foreign Schools Society has

always acted¹¹³ It submitted a powerful petition against the government's collusion with the Church of England to secure the Anglican domination of elementary education. It stressed the injustice of denying parents the right to choose the schools they wished their children to attend, and of denying ratepayers a voice in governing the schools they were to pay for. The petitioners expressed their concern that the Bill 'may well destroy and certainly will endanger many schools founded and hitherto sustained on the comprehensive principles of this society'¹¹⁴.

The objections of the Central Committee of the British Society were reinforced by protests from Nonconformists all over the country. The Principality was one of the main centres of opposition. The Baptist journal, Seren Gomer, offered a point by point rebuttal of the Bill's educational clauses, and warned, that should it become law, it might lead Anglicans to bring every agency of education under Church control, including even the Nonconformist Sunday schools¹¹⁵. Seren Gomer saw the Bill as the thin end of the wedge, a declaration of war against Nonconformity by the Established Church, - 'cynnig haerllug i ddinistrio ymneilltuaeth y mae yn cyhoeddi rhyfel yn erbyn holl ymneillduwyr y deyrnas' (An arrogant attempt to destroy Nonconformity: it is a declaration of war against all Nonconformists in the Kingdom)¹¹⁶. It added for good measure, describing the government, 'Rhaid eu bod allan o'u synhwyrau' (They must be out of their senses)¹¹⁹. It hailed the countrywide protests against the Bill, and urged Welshmen to submit petitions demanding the abandonment of its controversial clauses.

Significantly, in view of the denominations' previous political quietism, the Calvinistic Methodist journal Y Drysorfa joined Seren Gomer's attack, by describing the Bill as a frightening attempt to destroy religious liberty - 'cynnygiad dychrynlyd am ddinistrio rhyddid cydwybod:¹¹⁸ both Seren Gomer and Y Drysorfa linked the measure with the growing influence of the Oxford Movement in the Anglican church. They identified 'Puseyaeth' (Puseyism) as an essential element in an Anglican conspiracy to assert control of working class schools¹¹⁹. 'Un o ddyfeision Puseyaidd ydyw trwy ba un y maent am gael yr holl awdurdod iddynt eu hunain' - It is a Puseyite device by which they intend to gather all authority into their own hands¹²⁰. One of the most bitter reactions to the Bill was that of the Independent denominational journal Y Dysgedydd. It described the measure as 'cunning and spiteful' (cyfrwys a dichellgar), 'predatory and poisonous' (ysglyfaethus a gwenwynllyd) and called for united Nonconformist action to defeat it¹²¹. Both the Baptist Seren Gomer, and the Independent Dysgedydd welcomed^{the} active support of the Calvinistic and Wesleyan Methodist denominations in Wales¹²². The campaign against the Bill was probably the first in which Welsh Nonconformist denominations succeeded in putting aside their own differences, to form a united front against the Anglican enemy. All the journals printed forms of petition which they urged their congregations to submit to Parliament. That published in Y Dysgedydd read as follows,

'That your Petitioners have heard with surprise and alarm the provisions of a Bill for regulating the Employment of children and young persons in Factories

and for the better Education in Factory Districts, and of other intended measures for the Education of the Working Classes'.

'That this Bill appears to your Petitioners to involve a flagrant violation of the principles of Religious and Civil Liberty, and will if passed into a Law have the effect of breaking up Sabbath and other schools supported by voluntary contributions, and will place under the control of the clergy the Education of the operative classes, and add to the expense of the Poor Rates the cost of Sectarian Education and will unjustly and persecutingly tax all classes and denominations to extend the influence of the Church'.

'Your petitioners therefore earnestly pray your Honourable House that no such Bill or Bills may pass into law'.¹²³

Not surprisingly, in view of the county's pattern of religious allegiances, strong opposition was expressed in Caernarvonshire. Its leading mouthpiece was the Caernarfon Whig-Liberal newspaper, the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald. But even the Tory North Wales Chronicle, printed and published in Bangor, was unable to muster much enthusiasm for the Bill. Whilst acknowledging its merits, and the need for some kind of educational measure, it found the proposed 'compulsory assessment on the ratepayers' a 'very obnoxious feature'.¹²³ The North Wales Chronicle believed a Bill which roused so much antipathy amongst

the ratepaying community, could only be 'marred in its practical operation', despite its worthy motives¹²⁵. But even the grudging approval of the North Wales Chronicle paled alongside the opposition of the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald. To the Herald the Bill represented 'a re-enactment of the Test Act': it 'sanctioned a principle fatal to the entire liberties of the people',¹²⁶ Like the Nonconformist journals, it suspected the Bill's architects of wanting to extend its provisions to the whole country. Again like the journals, the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald called on the whole Nonconformist population to protest. 'Petition! then Petition!' it cried, 'You owe it to your children to bequeathe to them unimpaired, the sum total of those glorious privileges your fathers bequeathed to you',¹²⁷

The Herald's cry did not fall on deaf ears in Caernarvonshire. Nonconformist congregations belonging to every denomination responded by signing petitions against the Bill, and dispatching them post haste to London. In line with the denominational journals, the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald welcomed this practical demonstration of Nonconformist unity¹²⁸. The same spirit was shown at many public meetings called to oppose the Bill. One of the largest was held at Caernarvon Guild Hall where condemnations of the Graham Bill were broadened to include the clergy, the Church and the whole concept of Established religion¹²⁹. A local dissenting solicitor, William Lloyd Roberts, in a wide ranging attack, accused the clergy of 'wanting to model the minds of the young as to make them their slavish and unreasoning supporters',¹³⁰. Nonconformist ministers condemned 'all churches as established by law',¹³¹. The Independent minister, the Rev. William Williams, in

a rambling diatribe, set out to show that 'every church established by law is, and always has been, of a persecuting nature'¹³². As for the Church of England, it was 'a political machine, formed on Tory principles, to enable small country Esquires and others, to place the most stupid and talentless of their offspring in good livings'¹³³. Although the North Wales Chronicle poured scorn on Williams, referring to him as 'Pope William Williams the great gun of the evening like a tornado writhing in the sweat of its great agony', the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald quoted his speech with approval, and lauded the manner of its delivery¹³⁴. His proposal to send a protest petition to London was carried by 'a forest of hands'¹³⁵.

One of the leading county protagonists in the Graham Bill controversy was inevitably Dr. O.O. Roberts. During the anti-Graham Bill campaign he wrote a short but important pamphlet entitled 'An Address to the Dissenters and Nonconformists of North Wales: Facts and Motives'¹³⁶. It was a vigorous call to Welsh Nonconformist leaders to politicise their movement; to turn to politics as the best means of protecting their liberties and furthering 'the cause of education and the Bible' - the two 'causes', which by implication meant most to them¹³⁷. Roberts made a special appeal to 'quietist' Nonconformists to consider his point that 'the politics of a nation are its morals'¹³⁸ Here was an explicit statement of a view of politics, which more and more Nonconformists in Wales were coming to adopt. Just as 'Pope William Williams' had seen the Church of England as 'a Tory machine', so Roberts called on Welsh Nonconformists 'to enter the field of political strife' by 'joining the Liberal Party'¹³⁹.

To the North Wales Chronicle Roberts's pamphlet was 'balderdash', but it made a sufficient impact to bring a rejoinder from the Rev. Morris Hughes (Nicander) the Vicar of St. Ann's in Llandygai¹⁴⁰. His pamphlet entitled 'Sylwadau ar Addysg y Tlodion' (Observations on the Education of the Poor), criticised Roberts and the Nonconformists, for their 'dog in the manger' attitude to the Graham Bill¹⁴¹. He described them as piqued and surly, objecting noisily to the establishment of a national system of education, yet reluctant themselves to make an effort to secure 'the education of the people'. 'Where are the daily schools built and maintained by the Dissenters?' he asked. 'Their place is nowhere to be seen'¹⁴².

Even the most fervent Nonconformist would have found it difficult not to concede the force of Hughes's last point; after all, there was only one British school in Caernarvonshire. The Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald's claim that 'The Wesleyans and Dissenters for years led the van in the cause of education whilst the Church slumbered in the rear' was patently not true of the county nor indeed of the rest of Wales¹⁴³. In fact, a few weeks later the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald admitted 'the long and criminal neglect (which had been shown) by dissenters of different denominations of the education of the poorer portion of their congregations'¹⁴⁴. Significantly, this comment also acknowledged the social divisions within Nonconformity. This awareness of their past neglect, and of their failure to do enough to encourage a systematic network of non-denominational day schools under their management and control, was the most significant educational consequence of the Nonconformist campaign against the Graham Bill.

More than any other single factor the Bill alerted Nonconformists to the importance of elementary education as a religious and political issue, and the year 1843 marked a watershed in organised Nonconformist attempts to provide schools in Wales.

The countrywide movement against the Graham Bill was so powerful that the government eventually bowed to pressure, and withdrew its education clauses. Even some Anglicans were not unhappy at this outcome, but Nonconformists hailed it as a great deliverance, and services of thanksgiving were held in Nonconformist chapels up and down the country during the first two weeks of July 1843. The Bill's lasting importance was that it generated a new and more earnest interest in the organisation of elementary schools among influential Welsh Nonconformists.

Reverting to Hugh Owen, there is little doubt that in writing his Letter to the Welsh People he was deeply influenced by the Graham Bill. He was powerfully moved by his own reactions, and those of his fellow Nonconformists. The timing of his letter (in August 1843) was itself highly significant, while its final paragraph warned of the disaster which he believed Nonconformist Wales had so narrowly averted in June and July, a disaster which might yet befall them in the future. In it, he wrote that,

'An oppressive yoke has already been placed on the neck of several districts through the instrumentality of (Church) schools: the same yoke is being prepared for others and the only way to escape it is by creating your own schools according to the system of the British Society'¹⁴⁵.

Judging by his views in 1843, Hugh Owen's opinions were a

blend of the evangelizing Benthamite, and committed Welsh Nonconformist. As a Benthamite he believed in the possibility of organising a system of schools which would lead to personal and social 'improvement'; to the achievement of optimum personal happiness and social efficiency. Hugh Owen wanted his fellow Welshmen to adopt social values which in conjunction with Nonconformist values would bring them the greatest moral and material happiness. While defending their religious and civil rights, he wanted to end their social isolation by bringing them into the mainstream of current social thinking. He believed, and probably rightly, that the Welsh language was a barrier insulating Welshmen against new ideas, and deterring them from the successful pursuit of economic progress. To come to terms with the modern world, he was convinced that Welshmen had to familiarize themselves with English ideas, expressed in the English language. Hugh Owen thus accepted the English language as the inevitable language of secular education. Almost certainly, his own experiences influenced his views. He regarded himself, and other London Welshmen who had 'improved' themselves, as models to be emulated by younger Welshmen. Nonconformist in their upbringing and religion, fully conscious of Nonconformity's historic struggle, they owed their acceptance in the new class society of the nineteenth century to their English education. Hugh Owen, therefore, saw his educational mission as easing the way for promising Welsh boys in the future. This could only be done by an orderly system of non-denominational 'English' schools. Not surprisingly, therefore, while rejecting their attacks on Nonconformity he was ready to accept the 'educational' strictures of the 1847 Reports. They appeared to support his view that he had a worthy cause needing to be tackled urgently.

His motives in writing his Letter thus appear to have been rooted in a complex mixture of inspirations - socially and 'morally' Benthamite but also religious and in a broad sense national. Owen undoubtedly supplied the driving force, which Welsh Nonconformists required, to persuade them to act with decision in elementary education, in response to Kay-Shuttleworth's interventionist policy.

vii. The influence of Voluntaryism in South Wales and the tensions between the Voluntaryists and the State Aiders

Initially, Hugh Owen's influence was limited to North Wales. Under the influence of his Letter, the Calvinistic Methodists were persuaded to support limited State intervention in education. The leaders of the majority dissenting denominations in South Wales, however, turned to Voluntaryism as a reaction against the Graham Bill. They rejected State intervention as undesirable and dangerous, believing it to have implications for the integrity of religious liberty. They felt the danger particularly strongly because they had always identified education with religion. They believed State intervention would become State domination and that this would inevitably lead to a State Church educational monopoly. The Graham Bill confirmed their convictions. Not all the older dissenters shared this view, and some were prepared to accept a modicum of State aid provided their religious and civil rights were safeguarded. Some Voluntaryists from an early stage, doubted the feasibility of their movement, which probably contributed to its ultimate failure. But, in the immediate aftermath of Graham, Voluntaryist ideas prevailed. They were

strengthened by the influence of the Congregational Board for General Education founded in 1843, and its mouthpiece in Wales, Henry Richard, and by the character and tone of the Blue Books Reports of 1847¹⁴⁶.

The essential difference between the Nonconformist supporters of Voluntaryist and State aided education did not lie in any disagreement about social values. On the contrary, they shared the basic Nonconformist values of thrift and sobriety, personal discipline and exacting moral standards, centred on the work ethic and leading to self help, 'improvement' and respectability. The difference between them was confined to their attitudes to the proper role of the State. Hugh Owen could see no clash between Benthamite and Nonconformist values. The Voluntaryists on the other hand, rejected State intervention: in this respect they were more loyal than Hugh Owen to a laissez faire ideology. They believed that State intervention would inevitably lead to the overmighty State. Exactly where the 'Welsh' factor fitted the equation is problematical. Possibly, if Voluntaryist schemes for the establishment of non State aided elementary schools, such as that of the Voluntaryist Pembrokeshire Education Committee described by R.R.W. Lingen had succeeded, then a place might have been found for the Welsh language in nineteenth century Welsh elementary education¹⁴⁷. Such a thesis, however, remains doubtful in view of the fact that the Welsh language had no place in the Voluntaryist teacher training college established at Brecon in 1846¹⁴⁸.

Because the Voluntaryist movement was strong in South Wales, Hugh Owen's early efforts to persuade his fellow countrymen to work for a systematic network of British schools were limited to

the North. The denominational unity which Nonconformists had forged under the threat of the Graham Bill was thus dissipated. Nevertheless, Hugh Owen sent a copy of his Letter to the Welsh People, to the Central Committee of the British Society. With it he sent an appeal that one of their agencies be established to start the work of creating a network of British schools in Wales¹⁴⁹. The Society responded favourably and gave Hugh Owen a free hand in choosing an organising agent who, initially at least, was to confine his work to North Wales. The man Owen chose for the job was the Rev. John Phillips, formerly a Calvinistic Methodist minister at Holywell, Flintshire, then living at Brynteg in Anglesey¹⁵⁰. In its Report for 1844, the British Society reflecting the influence of Hugh Owen, referred to 'the destitute condition of North Wales with reference to good day schools', a condition only just brought to its notice¹⁵¹. It also reported the appointment 'at a reasonable cost' (this was £150 a year) 'of a gentleman in every way qualified to promote the objects of the institution in that country'¹⁵². The British Society engaged the Rev. John Phillips in 1843 for a two year period, with the option of extending his agency, should it prove worthwhile. The immediate prospect was said to be favourable. In only a few months, 'a series of public meetings have been held (throughout North Wales), numerous committees have been formed and arrangements have been made for the immediate establishment of schools in central positions'¹⁵³.

From the above account, it appears that the impetus to educational endeavour in the country as a whole, in Wales, and in

Caernarvonshire, was a twofold impetus. One impulse can be defined broadly as the need to exercise social control of the working classes through the socialising and civilising process of education. The establishment of an organised network of inspected schools, under the management and supervision of reliable social groups, taught by carefully trained schoolteachers, was seen as the most effective instrument of that civilizing and ameliorative process. The second impulse, which was particularly powerful in Wales and Caernarvonshire, sprang from growing Nonconformist self-awareness and was reflected in the attitudes, both of Hugh Owen and the leaders of the Voluntaryist movement in South Wales and most notably, perhaps, in Welsh responses to the Graham Bill. The Reports of the National and British Societies, like those of Kay-Shuttleworth and his Inspectorate tended to concentrate on the magnitude and importance of the civilizing mission, and the crucial role it ascribed to teachers. Hugh Owen too, strongly implied the need for Welshmen to extend their horizons, and adopt new ways of thinking. But Owen was also strongly motivated by fears of a pre-emptive attempt to establish a Church monopoly in Welsh education. In his view such a monopoly would endanger the future of Nonconformity in the Principality. In the 1840s the themes of socialisation, and amelioration appear to have been dominant among the prime 'movers' and 'initiators' of education centrally. Hugh Owen's Letter and the anti-Graham Bill campaign suggest that these were not the first priority locally, where the case for education and schools rested more strongly on the issues of religious and civil liberty and Nonconformist integrity. Whether this was so, and how far it served to generate educational provision in the late 1850s and 1860s,

will be examined in the following section.

4. Evidence of local motivation for the founding of schools, 1840-70

i. Evidence of the social control factor

As might be expected, the 'social control' motive in founding schools was prominently asserted in many parishes in South Wales where the influence of the Chartist movement was strong. In 1843, the curate of Blackwood (Monmouthshire), - a name 'too notorious in the late Chartist riots in this county' - wrote to the National Society appealing for funds for a school to counter 'the pestilential effects of infidel lectures given each Sunday by Zephaniah Williams', described as instigator, along with John Frost, of the Chartist march on Newport in 1839¹⁵⁴. A National school was 'necessary' to instruct the people in 'the loyal wholesome principles of the Church'. Otherwise, 'they must be open to the wicked designs of unprincipled men'¹⁵⁵.

Even letters from clergymen in relatively quiet counties such as Caernarvonshire stressed the 'social control' factor. The Rev. J.V. Vincent, Vicar of Llanfairfechan and secretary to the Bangor Diocesan Board of Education, wrote to the National Society in 1844, that the building of the Chester to Holyhead railway would expose the whole of Caernarvonshire to the spread of dangerous insurrectionary ideas. 'Without schools and a greater means to religious instruction than is yet provided! he wrote, 'the prospect is a fearful one'¹⁵⁶. In submitting an appeal for funds for a National school in Llandudno, its sponsors noted that its population 'of upwards of a thousand (miners) in very humble

circumstances', had 'a claim to the Special Fund of your Society',¹⁵⁷. The money collected in the Bangor diocese for a school in Llandudno, with the Bishop giving £60 showed the concern felt in the county at leaving an industrial population unschooled¹⁵⁸. In the heavily populated slate quarrying parishes of Llandygai and Llanllechid, Col. Pennant of Penrhyn Castle, proprietor of the Penrhyn slate quarries, took special care to provide the children of his workmen with a network of National schools where they could learn 'the wholesome discipline and instruction of the Church'¹⁵⁹. From the small seaport of Nefyn, the Vicar sent an appeal to the Society based on 'the almost total absence of discipline in the parish', where people regarded 'justice as cruelty',¹⁶⁰. Unable to provide evidence of subversive political activity, he relied on rather ludicrous accounts of community 'demoralization'.

'Observing', he wrote, 'that the land was but very indifferently cultivated, and that no green crops such as turnips, carrots etc., were grown, your memorialist inquired into the cause, and was informed that it is useless to sow such things because they would not grow to maturity owing to the depredations committed by sailors, young boys, and others',¹⁶¹. His object in appealing for a grant was to effect 'a reformation by way of a National School',¹⁶². The same was the objective of the Vicar of Pwllheli, who wrote in 1843 that 'our poor children are only a little removed from savages',¹⁶³.

Four years later, the two clergymen gave evidence to the Blue Books Commissioners that 'vices unchecked by any instruments of civilization' were 'flagrant' throughout Caernarvonshire. The most flagrant, 'the besetting evil of this country' and 'especially of this district of Llyn', was 'want of chastity' leading to a high incidence of illegitimate births¹⁶⁴. 'Our

workhouse (at Fwllheli) is completely filled with the mothers of illegitimate children, and the children themselves and the parents do not see the evil of it', wrote the Rev. St. George Armstrong Williams vicar of Fwllheli, while the Rev. William Jones vicar of Nefyn, admitted that, 'It (even) became necessary to secure the chamber windows of my own servants with bars, to prevent them from admitting men.... and being courted in bed',¹⁶⁵

Their testimony was supported by the Rev. J.W. Trevor, chaplain to the Bishop of Bangor, a Caernarvonshire magistrate and Poor Law guardian in the Anglesey Union. In a sweeping condemnation of the 'totally corrupt and abandoned moral principles of the Welsh people', he wrote that 'no restraints or penalties of law can cure or even check the evil, until by the appliances of better education and more general civilisation', they 'are taught to regard their present customs with a sense of shame or decency',¹⁶⁶. He included the Welsh farming class in his indictment of the Welsh peoples's moral standards and alleged that his fellow guardians in the Anglesey Union, - 'who are almost all country farmers,' - were 'so familiarized to this iniquity' (that is to say, pre-marital sexual intercourse), and have 'so long (themselves) partaken of it', that 'they are totally incapable of any right feeling on the subject',¹⁶⁷. The fact that these farmers were nearly all Nonconformists would explain some of the increased tension which arose between Nonconformists and the Established Church in Wales, during this decade. It is ironic that the case for 'social discipline' and the inculcation of civilized values by education, was more crudely stated by clergymen in the undisturbed areas of the Principality, than those in the centres of Chartist agitation.

What is striking about the pleas of clergymen in the industrialized parishes of South Wales, is the sympathy they evinced with the plight of their parishioners, and the force with which they criticised the new class of coal owners and iron masters, for their neglect of the moral and educational needs of their workmen. It becomes clear that industrialists who showed an awareness of social responsibility towards their workforce were a very small minority. Even the few 'works' schools set up were usually maintained by the workers themselves, by deductions at source, of a penny or tuppence a week, from their wages. The Works Master or Coal Owner nearly always limited his contribution to the provision of a school building, which was often unsuitable. But the majority of industrial proprietors did far less than this. The curate of Mynyddislwyn, strongly condemned them in a letter to the National Society in 1845. 'Scarcely any of them take any interest but on the contrary evince the utmost apathy towards doing anything for their hard working dependants', he wrote¹⁶⁸.

The Rector of Llanhileth was just as scathing. He wrote of 'the capitalists', that 'they have brought together a vast number of people and planted them in these hills, and yet no sense of shame or duty can prevail upon them to provide the means of instruction or the means of grace for the numerous operatives from whose labour they derive so much wealth'¹⁶⁹. Of £304 collected for a school in his parish, nearly all had been raised by the workmen themselves, and 'as for capitalists none was contributed by them'¹⁷⁰.

Other clergymen, such as the Rector of Merthyr and the Vicar of Ystradfydwg (Rhondda) wrote in similar vein. Possibly the harshest strictures were those of the Rev. John Griffiths, Vicar

of Aberdare, who wrote that,

'People are so busy here digging up coal, receiving royalties and making money in every shape they possibly can, that it is quite out of the question to interest them in anything else Looking at the state of Wales generally I confess I almost despair of anything being done except by some Government enactment to compel owners of Property and Proprietors of Works to attend to the educational needs of their dependants'.¹⁷¹

These were highly radical sentiments for an Anglican clergyman of the 1840s. Griffiths became a leading Welsh liberal churchman on the issue of education, and angered many of his fellow clergy by his stance in favour of publicly controlled non-denominational elementary schools. But the weight of emphasis which clergy in South Wales placed on the social irresponsibility of the coal owners was impressive. Possibly, this indicated something of their natural prejudices against the new capitalist class. They had themselves always been aligned in a kind of feudal relationship with the old landowning aristocracy, and thus disliked the social and political aspirations of the new economic order, often associated with an aggressive religious nonconformity and, all too often also, with an equal attachment to self help. It may also be true that living in industrial communities, they had their own perspectives on social problems and how they should be solved. They were highly critical of the all consuming nature of the profit motive and the mechanistically inter-dependent structure of industrial society, lacking old pre-industrial values of duty, obligation and charity. While local

clergy in the industrial areas of South Wales were strongly motivated by 'social mission' and the ameliorative concept of education, this was tempered by a warm streak of humanitarian sympathy with the industrialised working classes, - a sentiment rarely reflected among clergy in less disturbed counties such as Caernarvonshire, and in no sense embodied in reports published annually by the National Society.

ii. Evidence of the religio-political factor

While some of the local clergy emphasised 'social mission', others indicated the significance of the religious factor in generating school provision at local levels. As we have seen in chapter two, the first signs of religious conflict over elementary education were shown in Caernarvonshire in the 1820s when attempts to found church schools in Llanwnda, Llanrug and Llandudno were prevented by anti-Church feeling. This had been mobilised by Nonconformist ministers, who had incited the population to refuse to accept or support Church schools. Their refusal was based partly on the fear that their children would be proselytised by the teaching of the Catechism and their enforced attendance at Church services on Sundays. But it also had a more positive side: it was a means of asserting their autonomy, a claim to independence, and a demand that they be free to shape their own communities and social institutions, unfettered by interference from the Church of England, which they identified with traditional forces of privileged wealth and power.

Their growing determination to resist Church schools was made clear in the reactive correspondence of local clergymen to the

National Society, after the failure of the Graham Bill. The Bill was followed by a long period of increasingly bitter rivalry between Anglicans and Nonconformists to provide schools for the working classes in Wales. This rivalry was keenly developed in North Wales and in Caernarvonshire, where Dean Cotton's leadership of Church education was now matched by the Rev. John Phillips, in his capacity as agent for the British Society. During his first agency year (1844-5) Phillips visited seventy nine places in North Wales to encourage the founding of British schools, and, in June 1844 alone, he 'travelled about three hundred miles on horseback' engaged in a mission, which required 'an inexhaustible amount of patience, an untiring zeal and a steady perseverance'¹⁷². He addressed several public meetings of up to two thousand people, and in many places helped form committees to collect funds and supervise school foundations¹⁷³. He continued to re-visit these committees when some showed signs of beginning to 'languish'¹⁷⁴. Perhaps his most important work was his evangelizing activity at Calvinistic Methodist presbyteries. It was here that he sought the denomination's approval of the interventionist principles of the British Society. He also used the denomination's organisational network as the infrastructure for the support of British schools. It was under his influence that the General Association of the Calvinistic Methodist Body passed a resolution at Bala in 1849, thanking the British Society for 'the kind and effectual notice it has taken of Wales', and urging that 'a public collection be made this year by all the congregations which are in connection with the Assembly throughout North Wales, and in the towns of Liverpool and Manchester, towards the income of the Society'¹⁷⁵. Even before this resolution was

passed, Phillips had expressed his surprise at the absence of organised school provision for 'the children of the working classes in North Wales'¹⁷⁶. His comment was a significant acknowledgement of the long history of their neglect by Nonconformists. It was also an implicit admission of the existence of social divisions within Welsh Nonconformity, with its more prosperous adherents having taken steps to provide effective schooling for their own children (vide Hugh Owen), without attempting any systematic provision for the working classes. Changing the attitudes of middle class Nonconformists, and getting them to acknowledge the importance of secular schools for the working classes, became the Rev. John Phillips's basic tasks.

Throughout the 1840s the number of British schools opened in North Wales grew steadily, and by 1853 as many as a hundred schools were established in the six North Wales counties¹⁷⁷. It is difficult to verify this number but according to a later list published by the British Society, nineteen British schools had been established in Caernarvonshire by 1853¹⁷⁸. They were at Llandudno, Llanllechid (two schools), Glynnog, Portdinerwic, Glan Conwy, Llanengan, Nant Gwynant, Carneddi (Bethesda), Penygroes, Rhostryfan, Roewen, Trefriw, Waunfawr, Llanddeiniolen, Beddgelert, Dolbadarn (Llanberis), Mynydd Llandygai, and Cwmyglo¹⁷⁹. Only doubtful credence can be given to this list: some of its schools petered out before 1870, others only had unofficial links with the Society being more akin to private venture schools associated with particular chapels. What their organisation was like, and who their teachers were, is unknown. Meanwhile in South Wales the Voluntaryist movement was in decline; its leaders unable to mobilize resources to support either Voluntaryist

schools or the Voluntaryist teacher training college established at Brecon in 1846 and moved to Swansea in 1849¹⁸⁰.

As a result of the Voluntaryist failure, Hugh Owen and the supporters of State aided British schools turned their attentions to South Wales. A committee of leading Nonconformists was set up to promote the British school movement in South Wales in February 1854, the Rev. David Charles, Principal of the Calvinistic Methodist academy at Trefecca being commissioned 'to draw up a pamphlet in the Welsh Language containing instructions for the establishment of schools showing the advantages offered by the Government and answering objections'¹⁸¹. At the same time, the British Society appointed the Rev. William Roberts (Nefydd) as its South Wales agent¹⁸². After 1854, Roberts reported the founding of a growing number of British schools in the south, and the re-opening on State aided lines of Voluntaryist schools previously closed for lack of funds¹⁸³. By 1859, both Roberts and Phillips agreed that progress was 'very encouraging' although a stubborn residue of Voluntaryist feeling remained in some places, and a few Voluntaryist schools still functioned in Monmouthshire in 1866.

In Caernarvonshire, Anglicans responded to the post-1843 Nonconformist initiative by redoubling their own efforts. The achievements of the diocesan and local boards of education under Cotton between the 1840s and 1870 were impressive. Indeed, between the early 1840s and the late 1860s National schools were built, enlarged or improved all over the county. The greatest Church successes were in single-school rural areas, where one school building was sufficient for all the children. By providing such districts with a Church school, the Anglicans outflanked Nonconformist attempts

to provide a network of non-denominational schools. In Caernarvonshire Nonconformist efforts were largely nullified in country districts such as Betws Garmon (National school built 1844), Llanarmon (National school 1844), Bontnewydd (National school 1844), Boduan (National school 1844), Botwnnog (National school 1845), Llangelynin (National school 1845), Clynnog (National school 1849), Llanfairfechan (National school 1849), Llanystumdwy (National school enlarged 1852), Llangwnadl (National school 1854) and Penmachno (National school 1856).¹⁸⁵ Not a single rural parish in the county was dominated by a British school in 1870¹⁸⁶.

But the enterprise of local clergymen was not confined to rural areas and Church education was impressively advanced in the county's towns. The work of the Rev. Thomas Thomas in Caernarfon, and outlying areas of Llanbeblig parish, was the most productive output of Anglican school-building energy in an urban area. Within five years after 1842, Thomas inspired the building of four new National schools, including a large school for over a thousand children in Caernarfon and a smaller ragged school for the children of the poor¹⁸⁷. Well over five thousand pounds were spent on these projects, together with others at Bontnewydd (1844) and Waunfawr (1845) and in launching the Teacher Training Institution¹⁸⁸. Thomas worked tirelessly to raise funds, and plan the most effective schools, often making changes to designs after 'conversations with Mr. Shuttleworth at various times when I was in London'¹⁸⁹. He was anxious that Caernarfon's Church schools 'should supply models to the country around'¹⁹⁰. He made his chief impulse clear in a letter to the National Society in 1847. 'I feel,' he wrote, 'that we are placed in this parish in the front of the battle (to give a

sound, that is to say, an Anglican education) and (that) if we fail to maintain our ground it will have an injurious effect on the surrounding area,¹⁹¹. J.G. Lonsdale, the Society's Secretary acknowledged that 'it appears that you are not asleep in Caernarvon'¹⁹². In turn, Thomas's activities stimulated the Nonconformists so that they opened an official British school in 1858, originally associated with Evan Richardson's Moriah chapel¹⁹³. By 1870, Caernarfon's Church schools had 587 in average attendance, and the British school 240. In Conwy, the Rev. Morgan Morgan played a superintending role over school building efforts in the north of the county, advising vicars and curates in other parishes how best to proceed. In Conwy itself, he succeeded in stalling all Nonconformist efforts so that by 1870 Conwy National school was the only school in the town with 333 in average attendance¹⁹⁴. The National school was also the first elementary school built in Porthmadog in 1855. Madocks's British school was no longer situated in a convenient location for the new port's population. That was why the local vicar decided to abandon his original site at Tremadog, for another in the centre of Porthmadog itself, 'that being,' he wrote, 'by far the most populous part of the district and one of the most important sea ports in North Wales'¹⁹⁵. This would 'secure a footing for the Church at Portmadoc (sic)',¹⁹⁶. By 1870 it was the only school in the port with 274 in average attendance¹⁹⁷. At Cricieth too, the Church dominated the scene providing the only grant-aided school in 1870 with 128 in average attendance¹⁹⁸. At Pwllheli and Nefyn, however, mutual rivalry had led to the establishment of schools by both parties: the Troedyrallt British and Penlleiniau National schools in Pwllheli, with average attendances of 184 and 135 in 1870,

and the National and British schools at Nefyn with average attendances of 69 and 87¹⁹⁹. It was not the lack of provision but its quality which was disputed in these places in the 1870s.

Growing competition between Church and Nonconformists to provide elementary schools in Caernarvonshire did much to sharpen the edge of religious and denominational rivalries. Once again, this was reflected in letters which local clergymen wrote to the National Society appealing for help in building schools. The Rev. Thomas Thomas, admitted that his principal reason for building the National school in Bontnewydd was that he had heard that 'the Dissenters proposed to the inhabitants to build a British and Foreign School'²⁰⁰. He was 'anxious myself to secure a footing in the village'²⁰¹. The curate of Penmaenmawr wrote that he was acting because of 'Dissenters attempts to establish an Opposition school in this parish'²⁰². He was conscious of their greater numerical strength, and believed the Church should act 'quickly and silently'²⁰³. As he put it, 'I avoid a public meeting upon the subject, and quietly but eagerly collect as much power as I can into my feeble hands'²⁰⁴. By these methods he outflanked the opposition and opened a much enlarged National school in 1847. The Rev. J.V. Vincent, vicar of the neighbouring parish of Llanfairfechan, also pre-empted the Nonconformists by providing a Church school in the parish. He told the Society in 1845 that he was 'confident that if it acted quickly the education of the poor will be under the permanent superintendence of the Church, but if it (is) delayed, I am not so sanguine that such will be the case'²⁰⁵. In looking at the wider Caernarvonshire scene, he later warned that 'at present there are some important parishes

without any schools connected with the Church, and unless the ground is systematically occupied by us, we shall have Dissenting ones springing up in every vacant spot'²⁰⁶.

Such being the circumstances under which school building was conducted it is not surprising that educational confrontations should have occurred. At Llanengan in the Llŷn peninsula, the vicar wrote that he had 'to contend with powerful adversaries who are doing all in their power to frustrate our endeavours to educate the rising generation in sound scriptural principles'²⁰⁷. The inability of Churchmen and Nonconformists to co-operate meant that two schools were provided, a National school and a British school, which then engaged in a long and enervating rivalry for pupils, thus poisoning relations still further. The same situation emerged at Beddgelert, where Churchmen and Nonconformists opened schools within 160 yards of each other²⁰⁸. Between them they accommodated 400 children, in a catchment area where the number of children was not more than 200²⁰⁹. Yet the remainder of the parish was left without provision. Inevitably, the schools became involved in mutual competition to eliminate each other. The Beddgelert situation became one of the educational 'causes celebres' discussed by the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Education (the Pakington Committee) in 1866²¹⁰. At Ederne, near Nefyn, difficulties came to a head very quickly when the Vicar, the Rev. J.P. Wynne, insisted that the National Society's rules be implemented in all their vigour. He warned the National school's headteacher that 'if any child missed three consecutive Sundays in church, he should be dismissed'²¹¹. Such was the strength of feeling in the locality that 'the school fell off', and had to be

closed within three weeks²¹². The school's patron, the local landowner, Wynne Finch of Cefnamwlch, disagreed with the vicar's actions and persuaded the Bishop of Bangor to intervene. He wrote to the Society that he had told the vicar that 'under the present circumstances of his parish, (the vicar) would have acted more discreetly by not enforcing the rule in all its vigour but given it a milder interpretation'²¹³. Instead he had played into the hands of 'the Dissenters whose influence in the parish is almost paramount'²¹⁴. The Bishop wrote to the vicar that he should re-open the school 'upon some mode of not entirely abandoning the society's rule (but) without enforcing it too rigidly'²¹⁵. The religious circumstances of the county were such that the Church could not even begin to insist upon enforcing the full 'vigour' of the Society's regulations. The Rev. David Howell, the Vicar of Pwllheli, made it quite clear to the National Society that any attempt to enforce the attendance of children at Church services in his parish would be 'impracticable'²¹⁶. 'Here,' he wrote, 'Dissent is uniform, most of the wealthier classes being Dissenters If I compel them (their children) to attend church, the parents would immediately be up in arms and our schools would be ruined'²¹⁷. In counselling action in the same year, the Vicar of Nefyn was clearly aware of a 'thousand or more missionaries in my parish who act against the Church every day; the more energy that may be brought to bear (in building a National school) the more is the hostility that is manifested'²¹⁸.

In view of the county's religious and denominational background, most Church schools in Caernarvonshire were unable to enforce the rules of the National Society. Their practice varied

from school to school reflecting the local religious situation. Although the Anglican Welsh Education Committee stated boldly in 1857, that 'The Church can enter into no compact to withhold any part of that form of sound words which she is commissioned to proclaim', it was compelled to add that 'if there are found in any corner of the land children who will not receive her religious teaching, it assuredly must be her proper duty to supply to them so much truth as they may accept, although less than she would desire to give'²¹⁹. Generally speaking, Church schools in Caernarvonshire attempted to teach the Anglican Catechism during the 1850s and 60s without rousing the open opposition of working class parents, - or so it was claimed by Church spokesmen. Even so, Nonconformist leaders stressed the bitterness of the underlying resentment. Most Churchmen were prepared to acknowledge that attempts to enforce attendance at Anglican services, or Anglican Sunday schools were bound not just to fail but to be counter-productive. Indeed, after the Rev. J.P. Wynne's abortive attempt to enforce Church attendance at Ederon in the 1840s, it was not attempted seriously in any Caernarvonshire parish.

Even so, the Church faced an increasing tide of Nonconformist opposition. Some of its attempts to found schools during the 1840s and 50s failed because of the strength of local resistance led by Nonconformist ministers. In Caernarvonshire, the resistance appears to have been particularly strong in the slate quarrying districts. The willagers of Llanberis, whose district qualified for support from the National Society's Special Fund, refused a Church offer to build a school in 1849, even though the only existing school was a transient private venture 'kept in the chapel

of the Independents and attended by about fifty children'²²⁰. Although records of failures were not carefully stored in the National Society's files, a retrospective view from 1870, enables us to identify where the National Society made least progress. Almost without exception, they included the slate quarrying communities. Only in the parishes of Llanllechid and Llandygai, had the Church made a substantial contribution to day school provision in a slate area by 1870. But there were exceptional factors in both parishes. It was here that the Pennant family, in alliance with Dean Cotton, showed a personal interest in establishing schools for their dependent workforce²²¹. The Church had provided five schools, Bodfeurig, Glan Ogwen, Llandygai, Llanllechid and Ty'ntwr, with an average attendance of 945 by 1870²²². Their work, in turn, had stimulated the Nonconformists; they had two large grant-aided British schools by 1870 at Bethesda (the Carneddi school) and Llanllechid, with 382 in average attendance²²³. Even so, gaps still remained to be filled in 1870-71, and without the Pennant family's renewed willingness to fill them, the election of school boards could not have been avoided. As for the other slate quarrying areas, only three Church schools had been provided by 1870, the National schools at Bronyfoel, Llanddeiniolen and Llanrug, although their aggregate population was more than twenty two thousand²²⁴. What makes the Church's failure more significant was that the Nonconformists had also failed to fill the vacuum by establishing a network of strong British schools. Although some British schools were built, most were in the earlier tradition of private venture, though in connection with particular chapels. According to the British Society's own lists, British

schools were opened between 1853 and 1870 at Rhiwlas (1854), Deiniolen (1856) and Bethel (1862) in Llanddeiniolen parish; Talysarn (1854) in Llanllyfni parish; Bryn Eryr (1862) in Llanrug parish; and Nant Peris (1859) in Llanberis parish, - this latter in addition to Dolbadarn school opened in association with the Calvinistic Methodist Capel Coch (Chapel) in 1850²²⁵. Originally linked to chapels some had achieved annual grants in the 1860s, but most were weak, their future uncertain and grants small; the Talysarn British school with 129 children in average attendance received £53 in 1869-70, the Llanrug British school with 128 children received £49, a new British school opened in the 1860s at Llanllyfni with 144 children received only £37, even the Dolbadarn school with 218 children was only granted £74²²⁶. In toto there were eight grant-aided British schools in the Caernarvonshire slate quarrying areas (outside Llanllechid and Llandygai) in 1870. They were at Bethel, Deiniolen, Dinorwic, Dolbadarn, ^{Llanllyfni} Llanrug, Nant Peris, and Talysarn²²⁷. Their small number reflected both a lack of resources in these communities, and a lingering resistance to accepting State aid. The inevitable upshot was that Caernarvonshire's quarrying parishes had some of the largest gaps to be filled by rate-raising school boards after the Forster Act in 1870. It remains significant, however, that the Church failed to take advantage of the situation during the 1850s and 60s, despite the patchy Nonconformist provision.

iii. Repercussions of the sectarian political factor

After 1850, the mounting religious tension which surrounded the provision of schools in Wales, coupled with the progressive

politicisation of Nonconformity turned the question of elementary education into a leading political issue. The increasing influence of religion and politics on education throughout the 1850s and 60s was shown in evidence provided by government inquiries and reports. In the 1870s it was to turn the debate about the Forster Act, and the election of school boards, into a major political confrontation.

Even Her Majesty's Inspectors found themselves drawn into this religio-political controversy. In 1854-5 Joseph Bowstead, who was HMI of British schools in Wales, having analysed the pattern of religious allegiances among the Principality's population, concluded that, the day schools 'best suited for such a population are those based on the unsectarian yet strictly scriptural principles of the British and Foreign Schools Society'²²⁸. Not surprisingly, the British Society and its Welsh supporters were delighted at this authoritative support. In 1856, the British Society referred to Bowstead's 'very important Report which has given great satisfaction to all the friends of liberal education'²²⁹. The Society decided to publish it as a small booklet, with its title imprinted in large letters: 'BRITISH SCHOOLS BEST ADAPTED TO THE EDUCATIONAL WANTS OF WALES'²³⁰. A year later, in 1857, the Society was delighted further when Bowstead's view was confirmed by another Inspector, Dr. J.D. Morell²³¹. Equally unsurprisingly, the National Society reacted sharply, accusing both Inspectors of mischievously exciting Welsh prejudices against the Church. It rallied to a spirited defence of National schools, effectively contrasting the relatively meagre achievements of British school supporters in Wales, with those of the National Society.

It laid side by side, the achievements of the Anglican Welsh Education Committee, and those of a Nonconformist pressure group, founded by Hugh Owen, called the Cambrian Education Society. The aim of this Society, founded in 1846, was to 'promote the establishment of day schools in Wales on the grounds of religious neutrality or what were termed comprehensive principles'²³². In comparing the Cambrian Society's efforts with those of the Church, and quoting Bowstead's own evidence that for years the Nonconformists made a poor display, the National Society concluded that 'it will be seen how little progress had really been made by the agency of principles so greatly lauded'²³³. Later, the National Society showed no qualms in describing the Welsh supporters of British schools as 'that class which has done the least work and made the scantiest sacrifices in the cause of education'²³⁴.

During the Newcastle Commission's Inquiry in the late 1850s and early 1860s, the Assistant Commissioner for Wales, John Jenkins, concluded that 'the division and often antagonism of effort originating in the distinction between Church and Dissent raises a barrier to the extension of education more insuperable, and presents obstacles to the educational progress of the country more formidable than those which arise from any other cause'²³⁵. He described religious rivalry reflecting the social divisions of Welsh society, as 'this great retarding influence'²³⁶. In particular, the landowners and gentry, adherents of the Anglican church, appeared unable to co-operate with the rest of the population, - 'a literally overpowering superiority,' - who adhered to the Nonconformist denominations²³⁷. The problem was, that while 'the power to aid education' lay in the hands of the Church

'the vast majority whose conscientious opinions or feelings have to be consulted in order to render the education given, available to them, are of other denominations',²³⁸. He noted the impasse reached in several localities, with the result that 'all education in a neighbourhood went into abeyance', for several years. He was convinced that 'no direct opposition to Government aid (a reference to the South Wales Voluntaryist movement) has so much impeded education in Wales and particularly in North Wales as this division of effort',²³⁹

As the only remedy for the difficulty, he suggested the establishment of schools based on common principles. These should be expressed in 'general religious instruction' modelled on 'some special course of reading, such as the books of the Irish Commissioners', which might succeed in uniting Churchmen and Nonconformists in a single educational cause²⁴⁰. As for their management, he wanted them to be under the control of a body 'which should fairly represent all parties and be a guarantee of strict impartiality',²⁴¹. Managers should be elected from among those who supported the schools and the parents of the pupils, with local ministers of religion managers ex-officio, under the chairmanship of the officiating parish clergyman. To encourage the adoption of such a scheme, he wanted the Committee of Council to lay down as a condition of future school building grants in Wales, that 'any religious instruction given in the school(s) should not interfere with the admission to it of children of parents of any denomination',²⁴³.

What John Jenkins was suggesting was a comprehensive network of non-denominational schools, not unlike those of the British Society. His solution in fact did not differ much from

that advocated by Bowstead and Morell in their controversial reports. As might be expected, neither party was ready to accept his proposals and Anglicans were particularly hostile. Although local schemes were tried in a few places during the 1860s, they all failed, as the contending parties could not agree about who would ultimately control the schools. Nevertheless, the 1860s saw the first serious attempts to suggest compromises to the apparently intractable 'religious difficulty' in Welsh education.

Following Jenkins's authoritative report, the Committee of Council, under Granville and Robert Lowe, took an important decision in 1863-4, in the case of a building grant application for the erection of a church school at Ystradyfodwg (Rhondda)²⁴⁴. Along with other decisions taken at the time it set a precedent for the future allocation of building grants in Wales. It illustrated the power of the Office to make political decisions with far reaching implications without first having to submit them to Parliament; an example of what one writer has described as 'policy making by precedent following', which was a feature of R.R.W. Lingen's bureaucratic leadership at the Education Department²⁴⁵. In the Ystradyfodwg (Rhondda) case, an appeal by Anglicans for a grant was turned down, on the grounds that 'a Church school however liberally supported would be unsuitable for the district in which the majority of the inhabitants were Nonconformists'²⁴⁶. Instead, the Office submitted an amended Management clause which would have converted the school into a quasi-British school, with the only form of religious instruction consisting of 'the Bible daily read', and with the insertion of 'the so called conscience clause', leaving it entirely 'optional with the parents whether their children shall

learn any religious doctrine or attend any place of worship on Sunday,²⁴⁷. On the vital issue of management, this was to rest with a committee unfettered by religious qualifications. Even the automatic right of the clergyman to be ex-officio chairman was denied.

The Ystradyfodwg (Rhondda) Church school sponsors objected both to the Department's refusal to sanction a grant, and to the suggested amendments of the Committee of Council. They accused the Office of overturning the original intention of State aid which was to assist the voluntary societies on a pound for pound basis, and 'deeply regretted to find their Lordships employing the influence which the Parliamentary Grant places in their hands to induce Churchmen to build a school in which the doctrines and principles of the Church of England should not be in any way recognized'²⁴⁸

Such was the importance of the Ystradyfodwg precedent, that the Archbishop of Canterbury interceded with Granville, the Lord President of Council, on behalf of the Church sponsors, but to no avail. Granville insisted in his reply that, 'we (the Office) have never admitted the obligation to grant money voted by Parliament to schools without any reference to the circumstances of the district in which it is proposed to erect them'²⁴⁹.

The repercussions of the Ystradyfodwg policy-decision were soon felt in other Welsh cases. The National Society's Reports noted that Departmental grants had been withheld from several proposed Church schools in Wales, including school projects at Llanfairfechan (Caernarvonshire), Llanwrin and Llwydiarth in Montgomeryshire, Pontlottyn in Glamorgan, Llanarth in Cardiganshire,

New Tredegar in Monmouthshire, Dyserth and Llanslyddid in Denbighshire and Llanelli in Carmarthenshire²⁵⁰. In the Llanfairfechan (Caernarvonshire) case, the Department refused the grant because 'the families belonging to the Church of England would probably supply (only) about seventy children of school age'²⁵¹. The Office's new policy was further expanded in the Llanwrin (Montgomeryshire) case, where local Nonconformists had declared their readiness to accept a National school. It became clear that such declarations of support could not affect the new policy: 'My Lords cannot allow the assent of the population to the establishment of a National school to be a ground of deviating from this rule' said the directive, - the rule being that no Committee of Council grant should be given for building a school unless 'Dissenters have as much legal right as members of the Church of England' in areas where the majority of the population were Nonconformists²⁵². This was also the principle to which the Office adhered in the case of the Church school proposed at Llwydiarth (Montgomeryshire), even though 'every Dissenter in the district (had) signed a Petition praying for a National school'²⁵³. The response of the National Society to these policy developments, - themselves a response to religio-political pressures in the country, - was to advise its supporters that they should 'not be deterred from seeking (building) grants'²⁵⁴. On no account, however, should they accept government aid 'if the insertion of the Conscience clause be insisted upon'²⁵⁵.

Far from inducing Churchmen to compromise, the Office's new policy hardened Church attitudes in the 1860s, so that the two parties were further apart than ever by 1870. Church and

Nonconformist attitudes on all questions relating to elementary education became more rigidly polarized, and were reflected in celebrated school disputes in different parts of the Principality. Among the most notorious were those at Trecastell and Dynevor in Brecon and Carmarthenshire, and Gellifor and Dyserth in Denbighshire²⁵⁶. In each instance both parties were recklessly determined not to give way to their opponents, but to engage in a ruinously competitive struggle to provide their own schools, and destroy those of their rivals. In the heightened atmosphere of the time, each case became a Welsh 'national' issue, widely reported in the Principality's newspapers and inflaming political passions throughout Wales. In the case of school provision in Dyserth (Denbighshire), Thomas Gee the Denbigh newspaper proprietor, had a notable clash with the Rev. E.T. Watts the local rector, who in 1868, in an almost incomprehensible decision, was appointed H.M. Inspector of elementary schools in North West Wales²⁵⁷. His choice, and the way he carried out his duties, helped keep education in the forefront of the partisan political struggle in Caernarvonshire up to the early 1890s, when Watts eventually retired from the Inspectorate.

At the end of the 1860s, however, the basic educational conflict between Church and Nonconformists in Caernarvonshire revolved around issues which had been raised in John Jenkins's 1861 Report, and by the Ystradyfodwg (Rhondda) and other case decisions of the mid 1860s. The religious rivalry of contending school sponsors, the conscience clause, forms of religious instruction, and the possibility of constructing agreed plans for the maintenance and management of schools, were identifiable educational 'issues'. All of them tended to camouflage the crux

of the debate, which was concerned with political power and advantage at local levels: the essential question at stake, was that of the control of schools. At root, the interest of the rival school contestants was political. Very little was said about substantively educational issues: contestants did not approach education questions as educationists, but as politicians and religious protagonists.

Something of the nature of the conflict and the bitterness of feeling it aroused, can be gleaned from Welsh evidence submitted to the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Education (the Pakington Committee) in 1866. The Committee sat against a background of increasingly sophisticated Nonconformist organisation throughout the country, with the Liberation Society actively promoting Nonconformist interest in political questions. Professor Ieuan Gwynedd Jones has shown how the Society was assiduous in forming cells and groups during the 1860s throughout North Wales²⁵⁸.

Nearly all the Welsh witnesses who gave evidence before the Pakington Committee, rejected the possibility of a consensus between the parties, in solving the educational problems of Wales; the educational differences dividing Church and Nonconformists were too irreconcilable to be bridged. Only Hugh Owen, of all the witnesses, believed a common approach was still feasible. A Benthamite to the last, he continued to put his faith in the possibility of creating a rational and efficient system of elementary education by sound administrative action within a context of constructive political compromise. But his plan for the establishment of a non denominational system of 'Cambrian Day schools', based almost entirely on John Jenkins's 1861 proposals, found little support

even among his fellow Nonconformists²⁵⁹. His closest colleague in the British school movement in Wales, the Rev. John Phillips, felt the prospect of achieving co-operation between the contending parties was non-existent²⁶⁰. His view was endorsed by the professional civil servants directly involved in Welsh educational administration, - the HMIs Joseph Bowstead and B.J. Binns, - and by R.R.W. Lingen permanent secretary to the Education Department, who said that school supply in Wales was worse than in England on account of the religious impasse²⁶¹. They were all of the opinion that Hugh Owen's theoretically sound scheme was unacceptable to the two parties, and especially so in the uncompromising political climate of Wales.

Each side remained as determined as the other to gain control of elementary education in the Principality. The Rev. John Griffiths believed that 'the clergy desire to have the entire and uncontrolled direction of schools in their own hands'²⁶². The Rev. B.J. Binns agreed that the education question could be 'reduced rather to the question of governing of a school than of the teaching of the children'²⁶³. The Rev. John Phillips accused the clergy of 'entertaining the idea that they are to be the only guides of religion and education' in Wales, and of refusing to concede equal rights to Nonconformists²⁶⁴. Joseph Bowstead said that Nonconformists were not disposed to concede to clergymen 'any privileges whatever in the management of neutral schools'²⁶⁵. The Rev. William Roberts (Nefydd) agreed, that 'The management is very essential they (the Nonconformists) wanted some hand in the management and control' of Welsh education²⁶⁶. It was important to have it to defend their children against

proselytism, determine the course of religious instruction, have a voice in the appointment of teachers, prevent favouritism to Anglican children, and ensure 'equality' of treatment for all²⁶⁷. Evan Davies, the former Principal of the Voluntaryist Training College at Brecon and Swansea, also stressed the need to ensure 'equality' between the parties, while Thomas Gee felt that, in view of the Principality's religious allegiance, 'justice' demanded that the British system be the universal system of schooling in Wales²⁶⁸. He agreed that the education issue revolved around the concepts of 'control' and 'power', and claimed that Welsh Nonconformists, in these respects, were only seeking rights to which their overwhelming preponderance entitled them²⁶⁹.

Political control had become the crux of the education issue throughout Wales. The Office's attempts to mould a consensus by administrative means in the mid 1860s failed, and Hugh Owen's compromise solution found no favour. Although an unofficial conscience clause operated in most Church schools in Wales, and clergymen exercised their discretion about the extent to which Anglican formularies could be used, they were not ready to concede the right of the State, or any other authority, formally to impose an official conscience clause on their schools. Many Churchmen complained bitterly against what they saw as the bias of the Committee of Council, but their complaints were matched by equally bitter complaints from Nonconformists who thought that the bias was against them. In its efforts to persuade the two sides to converge, the Committee of Council alienated them both; in fact its neutral and anonymous attitude encouraged the take-up of entrenched positions and incited an unwillingness on both sides to make concessions. By

the end of the 1860s the basic issues of Welsh educational politics were discussed in terms of 'justice', 'equality', 'privilege', 'control' and 'power'.

Such was the impasse reached by 1870 that a few interested individuals such as H.A. Bruce, later Lord Aberdare, began to think of an alternative system altogether, based on secular schools with no religious instruction. Their hope was that a system such as this might take the religio-political conflict out of education. But the idea of 'secular' schools had little support in Wales, or in Caernarvonshire at this time: they were too easily described as 'godless' schools, and open to the accusation of irreligion in an age of religious earnestness and devotion. Although a secular system was discussed in the late 1860s, there was never any prospect that it might be adopted in the country as a whole, although as we shall see later, a fairly substantial section of Welsh Nonconformists espoused the secular solution to the religious difficulty in the early and mid 1870s²⁷⁰. It was against this background of religious rivalry with its strong political overtones, reflecting the social divisions of contemporary Welsh society, that the State tightened its involvement in working class education with the passage of the Forster Act in 1870.

In evaluating the dynamics of educational promotion at the local community level, in Wales and in Caernarvonshire, between 1840 and 1870 it would appear that the most powerful impulse was the religious conflict between Church and Nonconformity, and the competition for political power between the social forces they represented. At local levels educational conflict reflected, both the way in which religious grievances played a role in motivating

political action, and also the way in which education itself had become a focus for the resolution of the political contest between rival social elites within localities.

Although the concern of government and the two voluntary societies for social stability and the spread of civilized values, was reflected in the correspondence of local clergy and the National Society, and by implication in Hugh Owen's Letter to the Welsh People (1843), it does not appear to have been the chief generator of educational promotion at local levels in Caernarvonshire, or in Wales as a whole, except in a few instances, and for a few years during the troubled decade of the 1840s. As the prosperity of the 1850s spread wider and deeper, as the living standards of the majority of the population improved, and as the working class movements of the 1840s lost their influence, so the impulse of socialisation and cultural amelioration became weaker at local levels. It became weaker in relation to the religio-political impetus of an increasingly self-conscious Nonconformity and its political aspirations. The Graham Bill's political impact in making Welsh Nonconformity aware of the potential of politics in promoting its interests was in many senses a watershed in its history. Against a background of consensus between the conflicting parties on the social values which ought to inform a civilized society, the religio-political conflict became the central bone of contention. Locally in Caernarvonshire and throughout Wales the issues were those of religious rights and the control of schools, and both were addressed in terms of 'power' 'justice' and 'parity'.

How far the two parties genuinely represented working class educational aspirations is difficult to say. Both certainly

attempted to present themselves as champions of 'their interests'. Welsh Nonconformists regarded their representativeness as their most powerful claim to legitimacy: their leaders invariably related their educational demands to their overwhelming support among 'the people'. The Religious Census of 1851, and other inquiries upheld their massive numerical strength among the Welsh population. Churchmen, on the other hand, asserted that they had the best interests of 'the people' at heart, often commenting that those for whom their schools were provided showed no objection to learning the Anglican Catechism, or to accepting a denomination-
alist form of religious instruction. Neither had they objected to the clergy's management of Church schools. Indeed, the Church claimed that the regime of its schools was adaptable to local circumstances; that the working classes were not really concerned with 'who' provided schools, but whether they were provided or not, and that if they were provided, whether they were efficient in giving their children a basic education.

It is difficult to judge which of the two views was nearest that of the Welsh working class. But on the bases of circumstantial evidence, it can be postulated that there was a demand for education among the working classes, that it was most strongly informed by the idea of material and social advancement, and that it was best channelled through Nonconformist agencies. The clearest indication of the strength of working class educational interest in Caernarvonshire came during the 1870s in the campaign for school boards in the county. This showed that the demand for educational provision was most powerfully and insistently

articulated in the industrial/slate quarrying areas of the county, where cohesive working class communities were found, and that it was most effectively expressed through Nonconformist channels.

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119. Seren Gomer, Mai 1843. Y Drysorfa, Mai 1843
120. Y Drysorfa, Mai 1843.
121. Y Dysgedydd, Mai 1843.
122. Ibid. 'Da gennym weled fod y Trefnyddion a'r Wesleyaid wedi dyfod i gydweithredu ag enwadau eraill yn yr achos hwn'. We are pleased to see that the Calvinistics and Wesleyans have come to co-operate with other denominations in this cause.
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124. North Wales Chronicle, 20.6.1843
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128. Ibid., 20.5.1843.
129. Ibid., 27.5.1843.
130. Ibid.
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132. Ibid.
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136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
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141. Ibid.
142. Ibid.
143. Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald, 6.5.1843.
144. Ibid., 19.8.1843.
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156. Ibid., Llanfairfechan. Rev. J.V. Vincent to the National Society (undated).
157. Ibid., Llandudno. John Williams to the National Society, 11.6.1845.
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162. Ibid.
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164. Reports of the Commissioners appointed to Inquire into the State of Education in Wales, op.cit., p.534
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168. Nat. Soc. Schl. Fs., Crumlin. Rev. Isaac Hughes to the National Society, 16.11.1844.
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170. Ibid.
171. Ibid., Cwmbach. Rev. John Griffiths to the National Society, 27.1.1848.
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175. Ibid., (1849), p.5.
176. Ibid., (1845), p.78.
177. Ibid., (1853), p.3.
178. Ibid., (1897), pp.400-01.
179. Ibid.
180. Report of the Commissioners appointed to Inquire into the State of Education in England (the Newcastle Commission): Report of John Jenkins, Assistant Commissioner for Wales, vol.11, pp.499-500.
181. BFSS Ann. Rep., (1854), p.16.
182. Ibid.
183. Ibid., (1855), p.10.
184. BFSS Ann. Rep., (1859), p.10
185. Nat. Soc. Schl. Fs., Betws Garmon, Llanarmon, Bontnewydd, Boduan, Bottwnog, Llangelynin, Glynog, Llanfairfechan, Llanystumdwy, Llangwnadl, Tudweiliog, Fennachno.
186. MCC (1869-70). See also Report of the Select Committee on Education (the Pakington Committee) (1866), p.373. Evidence of Sir Thomas Phillips, 'British schools are very rare in rural districts'.

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188. Ibid.
189. Ibid. Rev. Thomas Thomas to the National Society, 23.6.1842.
190. Ibid. Rev. Thomas Thomas to the National Society, 30.7.1842.
191. Ibid. Rev. Thomas Thomas to the National Society, 23.10.1847.
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200. Nat. Soc. Schl. Fs., Bontnewydd. Rev. Thomas Thomas to the National Society, 25.5.1844.
201. Ibid.
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205. Ibid., Llanfairfechan. Rev. J.V. Vincent to the National Society, 24.3.1845.
206. Ibid. Rev. J.V. Vincent to the National Society, 2.2.1849.
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225. BFSS Ann. Rep., (1897), pp.400-01
226. MCC (1869-70), pp.682-3
227. Ibid.
228. MCC (1854-5), p.642.
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230. Ibid.
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241. Ibid.
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253. Ibid., p.xii.
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256. Report of the Select Committee on Education (the Pakington Committee) 1866, pp.132 ff, 142 ff, 185 ff, 227 ff, 230 ff, 251 ff, 281 ff, 295 ff.
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258. Ieuan Gwynedd Jones, The Liberation Society and Welsh Politics 1844-1868, Welsh History Review, vol.1, no.2., especially pp.220-3.

259. Report of the Select Committee on Education (the Pakington Committee) op.cit., pp.143 ff.
260. Ibid., pp.131 ff.
261. Ibid., pp.162, (Bowstead), 213 (Binns), 185 ff (Lingen).
262. Ibid., p.188.
263. Ibid., p.209.
264. Ibid., p.132.
265. Ibid., p.165.
266. Ibid., p.221.
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268. Ibid., p.301.
269. Ibid., pp.231, 249.
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CHAPTER FOUR

PROVISION AND ATTENDANCE, 1840-70

1. Provision

During this period the provision of adequate school buildings was recognised as a necessary educational strategy, because without a network of schools there was no possibility of achieving the broad objectives set out by the State in its Minutes and Regulations, and agreed to by the National and British Societies. That educational issues were complicated by sharp denominational and political differences between those expected to contribute locally to the founding and maintenance of schools, made little difference to the objectives of central policy. But it had the effect of making policy goals difficult to achieve.

Up to 1870 the country continued to rely on the grant aided voluntary system for its supply of schools. State aid for school building was limited to the payment of a grant allocated on a pound for pound basis. At least half the cost of schools had to be met by private subscription and collections, raised mainly in the communities the schools were intended to serve. Once established they were maintained by voluntary subscriptions and school fees, although during the period leading to 1870 other Parliamentary grants evolved, and these were paid as additional maintenance grants to schools qualifying for them. State grants to finance voluntary schools increased fourfold during the 1850s, although the Newcastle Commission showed that most children were still being 'educated' in schools with no financial support from public funds¹.

In Caernarvonshire some of the greatest problems in providing schools had to be faced in areas with a growing population. These included the slate quarrying districts, where the difficulty was not simply one of building adequate numbers of schools to keep

pace with growing numbers of children, and making additions and extensions as they became necessary, but also one of siting schools in the most convenient places for constantly changing catchment areas. This was a continuing problem throughout the 1850s and 1860s, as new communities settled alongside new quarries, and as more people migrated into slate quarrying areas from other parts of the county, and from further afield. Indeed, it was during these decades, and during the 1870s, that the population in Caernarvonshire became most mobile.² School promoters in the slate quarrying areas had to contend, not only with problems of population growth, but also with population migration and redistribution.

In addition, they had to face the difficulty of establishing schools in communities which had few material resources. The problems of such working class communities in meeting the financial costs of building and conducting schools before 1870 were formidable. It was clear to them that the expenditure incurred in building schools was not the last step but rather the first in a constantly recurring expenditure, involving not just the maintenance of school fabric and the occasional extension of accommodation to keep abreast of population growth, but also the cost of buying stocks of materials, books, desks and other equipment, and, most demanding of all, the recurring burden of teachers' salaries. Their financial difficulties were compounded by the absence both of resident landowners and a sizable middle class. Resident landowners in other parts of the county sometimes provided school sites and contributed to the funding of schools, and showed a continuing paternal interest in their wellbeing.

To a limited extent, this occurred in districts surrounding the quarrying village of Bethesda that is, in the two parishes of Llandygai and Llanllechid, where the Pennants of Penrhyn Castle helped establish schools. A middle class might have made easier the accumulation of local funds to qualify for government building grants, as well as provided more effective leadership in organising voluntary effort. The absence of both these social groups in the quarrying areas undoubtedly made the funding of schools more difficult.

More important still were denominational and political divisions within the slate quarrying communities, and within the 'Welsh' community generally, between the Anglican upper and middle classes who were able to provide funds for schools and the majority of Nonconformists whose children required education but who were without means. Indeed John Jenkins, the Newcastle Commission's Assistant Commissioner in Wales, identified this division as the most serious single barrier to the establishment of a network of schools³. Even in the Llandygai-Llanllechid area many Nonconformist parents resented having to send their children to Pennant-provided Church schools. In addition, the introspection of slate quarrying communities remained strong with their tradition of autonomous 'Nonconformist' private venture schools and the chapel-school link. This made them suspicious and uncertain of State aid and outside interference. Indeed, their inwardness was only broken down finally after 1870 when they were assured of having complete control of their schools through school boards accountable to the community itself and free of dependence on voluntary subscriptions. As a result, in Caernarvonshire' slate areas neither National schools

nor Nonconformist supported British schools had made much progress by 1870. Some improvement had taken place since the 1840s but provision was still inadequate and future prospects under the grant-aided voluntary system doubtful.

At first glance, providing schools in Caernarvonshire's growing towns presented fewer difficulties. Generally, in the towns, there was a greater concentration of children and their educational needs could be more accurately assessed, although they had to be kept under constant review in the light of population inflow from other areas, and general demographic growth. Neither did a lack of resources present such difficulties. Each town had a thriving middle class whose accumulation of wealth enabled it to provide the funds required to qualify for government school building grants. Their rising social and political status also gave the middle classes the local influence to organise school promotion campaigns. In addition, the towns were far less inward looking. Caernarvonshire's urban middle class was eager to be assimilated into the mainstream of society. Its members were much readier to accept State aid for education and much more confident of their ability to handle it successfully. By the 1860s they saw their provision of elementary schools for the 'lower orders' as evidence of their commitment to social progress and improvement.

Even the effects of bitter denominational rivalry between Church and Nonconformists was less enervating in the towns. Most towns had a child population sufficient to sustain two or more schools, so that the position was not the same as in rural areas, or isolated slate quarrying communities, where a single school

was often adequate to meet the needs of the whole population, and thus likely to become the focus of a bitter struggle between the competing parties. It is even arguable that in the towns the rivalry was healthy as it sometimes triggered attempts to perfect school organisation, improve the quality of teaching, and at least until the Revised Code (1862) to provide a more flexible and attractive curriculum. Not surprisingly, nearly every town in Caernarvonshire had a National and British school by 1870, and their problems were those of quality not quantity of provision. Despite these healthy aspects, party rivalry still tended to prevent the adoption of optimum solutions to urban needs, often resulting in political confrontations adversely affecting schoolteachers and children.

The competition between school protagonists to attract the majority of working class children also led them to neglect the poorer children in the community. No great local prestige was attached to schooling the 'children of the residuum' or 'street arabs'. Indeed, it could be counterproductive, as respectable working class parents were likely to withdraw their children from schools which had too many 'ragged children'. The result was that 'ragged children' were often less well provided for than pauper children institutionalised in workhouses, for whom Kay-Shuttleworth had insisted that some provision be made. The educational needs of the 'residual' population was ignored in many towns during the 1850s and 1860s, and in some places until the last decades of the nineteenth century when compulsory school attendance regulations became more general. Voluntary school promoters only made a few half hearted attempts to establish schools for ragged children in

Caernarvonshire before 1870. Most of them were unsuccessful and quickly disbanded.⁴ A ragged school was opened by the Church in Caernarfon in the 1850s, but operated spasmodically and was closed in the early 1870s, so that in most towns ragged children remained 'a disorderly crowd serving to contaminate their fellow children'⁵. Even after 1870, neither school boards nor voluntary agencies showed much interest in tackling this problem. The Caernarfon School Board had to be threatened with a declaration of default in 1890 when an inquiry ordered by the Education Department showed that 212 children of school age were not on the registers of any school in the town, and that existing schools had insufficient provision⁶. The Board was ordered to enforce the attendance of 'habitual absentees' belonging to 'respectable' families at the Board or National schools, and to open a separate ragged school for the others, - 'ragged children fit subjects for a free ragged school'⁷. Nearly a hundred children turned up on the day the school opened in 1891⁸. Of these, it was said that 'only one child was fit to be placed in Standard II'⁹. Most of the rest were put in Standard I, but according to the school's teacher, 'only seven are really fit to be there, the remainder in this standard know absolutely nothing'¹⁰. These events took place twenty years after the school board had ostensibly provided all the school places needed in Caernarfon, and after it had operated a policy of compulsory school attendance for two decades. In some respects, therefore, generations of ragged children were victims of competition between the Church and Nonconformists to win the educational loyalty of the respectable working classes.

The problems of building schools in rural areas under the grant-aided voluntary system were also rooted in changing demographic patterns and financial difficulties. The population of rural parishes all over Wales declined after 1841; in addition many were geographically isolated and remote, some consisting of extensive moorland areas with a sparse population living in isolated farmsteads or in very small hamlets of six or seven houses. In most rural areas the inhabitants were unable even to contemplate raising the requisite funds to qualify for a Departmental school building grant, although one or two of them went so far as to levy a voluntary rate for the purpose¹¹.

Longueville Jones took a special interest in the education of children in sparsely populated rural areas, and used his Reports to bring their problems to the attention of the Department. Among the Welsh areas he listed as examples of such districts, were those between Trawsfynydd, Dolgellau and Bala in Merioneth; between Goginan and Llangurig, Newtown and Bugaildy, Aberystwyth and Rhayadr in mid-Wales, and those in the Prescelly and Eryri mountain ranges of north Pembrokeshire and Caernarvonshire¹². He was convinced that in these areas 'the existence of a school that could even approach to a compliance with the Minutes of 1846 must be for a long period an Utopian if not an impossible object'¹³. As a solution he suggested the restoration of the circulating principle of the eighteenth century, best characterised in Wales by the schools of Griffith Jones. 'If the children cannot come to school,' he wrote, 'the school or rather the schoolmaster must come to the children'¹⁴.

He was advocating the idea of the peripatetic teacher.

He pressed for 'special legislation' to sanction the employment of such teachers in Wales, each of whom could visit four or five groups of children collected together at various times during the week in cottage parlours and farmsteads, or even in suitably adapted farm outbuildings¹⁵. He also suggested that Madame Bevan's trust fund be applied to finance such a scheme, as it was intended originally to support the circulating schools, and still produced an annual income of £900¹⁶. Longueville Jones was convinced that,

'A circulating school of this kind conducted with energy and good sense and embracing within its spheres of action all the disposable children of the district would be more effective than (the existing) torpid, half-starved, dirty and neglected schools with a score of children attending them irregularly'¹⁷.

But Longueville Jones's interest embraced all types of rural areas. His particular concern with rural problems might well reflect the Church's traditional preoccupation with rural districts, and its far less powerful interest in the industrial areas. This was powerfully reflected in Caernarvonshire where Church schools dominated single school rural areas, but were thin on the ground in most slate quarrying districts. Jones marked the following difficulties as those most often met with in Welsh rural areas: first, their declining and scattered population which made the siting of schools difficult; secondly, their poverty and lack of resources which made fund raising a major operation, and thirdly, the apathy of farmers who were antagonistic to educating the poor. Many HMIs criticised the attitude of

farmers, who were apprehensive that the provision of schools might cut off their traditional supply of child labour¹⁸. The compulsory imposition of school boards on many rural areas in Caernarvonshire after 1870 provided ample evidence of the stubborn resistance of farmers to the notion of educating the rural poor. The question was also bedevilled by religious and denominational rivalry, so debilitating in the 1850s and 1860s that no schools were provided in some rural areas, while in others, too many tiny schools were built (vide Beddgelert and Llanengan), none viable, and most of them inefficient.

Until his retirement from the Inspectorate in the mid-1860s Longueville Jones continued to press for special policies to deal with the needs of Welsh rural areas. What he was advocating was the devolution of administrative regulation so that some account could be taken of the Principality's distinctive features, geographical, demographic and cultural. 'Regulations,' he wrote, 'that will apply on the shores of the Bristol channel will not hold good in all cases in Montgomeryshire, and it does not follow that because a London plan may be good for Swansea, therefore it will be equally applicable to a village at the foot of Snowdon'¹⁹. He pressed the Department to pass cheaper and less ambitious school building designs for Welsh rural areas. He advocated sanctioning a building grant even where only £50 had been raised locally, instead of first insisting on voluntary contributions of £250 or more. As befitted the editor of Archaeologica Cambrensis, he urged the Department not to insist on imposing 'the stiff formalities of Anglo-Norman laws with rigorous uniformity on Celtic minds'²⁰.

Longueville Jones never succeeded in persuading the Department to relax its school building regulations. Neither was he successful in his advocacy of greater Departmental flexibility in dealing with the Principality's distinctive needs, so that the problem of building an adequate network of schools in Wales remained unsolved until the post 1870 period. It would be unwise, however, to generalize too much about the difficulties which hampered the building of schools under the grant-aided voluntary system in the Principality, as each area and community presented its own problems. Nevertheless, a number of difficulties were common to them all. By far the most intractable was the impasse, nearly everywhere, between Church and Nonconformist supporters of the two main voluntary societies. As we have noted above, John Jenkins had pointed out in 1861 that this was the most serious obstacle to the provision of an adequate and rationally organised network of schools in the Principality. Welsh witnesses to the Pakington Committee's inquiry in 1866 confirmed this view, as did R.R.W. Lingen, so that by the end of the decade it was clear that the voluntary system would never succeed in providing the schools required in various parts of the country²¹. In contrast, the Voluntaryist movement which had rejected State aid, had never been strong in North Wales. Indeed, Voluntaryism was only a serious difficulty in South Wales where Joseph Bowstead, as late as 1857, reported that he still considered it a part of his work 'to exterminate the many errors and prejudices that prevail with respect to Your Lordships measures'²². At no time was Voluntaryism a major stumbling block in Caernarvonshire, and it was never anywhere such a difficult long-term problem as that of

the Church-Nonconformist divide.

In Caernarvonshire this difficulty compounded the others noted above. Together they made it impossible to meet school building needs systematically or rationally, and substantial gaps still existed in many areas. The Minutes of the Committee of Council showed only 53 inspected schools in the whole county in 1869-70. Thirty two were National or Church schools, 20 were British schools and 1, - in Bangor, the St. Paul's school, - was Wesleyan²³. Aggregate average attendance was 7,566 - in a population of 106,121²⁴. With a real child-population ratio of 1:4, average attendance should have been nearer 26,530. Even with a 1:6 ratio, acceptable at the time, it should have been 17,350. Though some children attended middle class schools and seminaries, and others uninspected private venture schools, the numbers in average attendance at inspected schools were still unsatisfactory.

As expected, the position was least unsatisfactory in the towns. Most had National and British schools, though Llandudno and Cricieth only had inspected National schools, and at Porthmadog the British school was a mile away from the town, at Tremadog²⁵. Average attendances at Church schools were 2,007; at British schools, only half this, 1,087²⁶. Only in Pwllheli and Nefyn did more children attend British schools. At Caernarfon an overwhelming majority, - 588 to 240,- attended Church schools²⁷.

The Church also dominated in rural areas though their provision was often scanty, and schools apparently failed in many parishes or went into abeyance (vide Aberdaron, Bryncroes,

Betws Garmon, Boduan, Llangwinnadl)²⁸. One thousand two hundred and eighty five (1,285) attended Church schools, only 258 were in British schools²⁹. These figures confirm Sir Thomas Phillips's comment to the Pakington Committee (1866), that 'British schools are very rare in rural districts'³⁰. Many gaps remained in 1870 and difficulties were formidable.

Only in the slate quarrying areas did British schools predominate. One thousand six hundred and twenty six (1,626) went to them, as against 1,319 to Church schools³¹. But the Church figure was inflated by exceptional provision made in Llanllechid-Llandygai with the Pennant family's support³². In the rest of the slate quarrying communities 1,244 went to British schools and only 374 to Church schools³³. These figures confirm the greater impact of Nonconformist efforts in the slate quarrying communities, and their radical ethos. But many of their schools were shaky and their future uncertain. In addition, large gaps remained (average attendances should have been 8,073 not 2,945), and the prospects of filling them under the grant-aided voluntary system were poor.

Though progress had been made since the 1840s, it was inadequate for the county's needs. In addition, most schools were still Church schools in an overwhelmingly Nonconformist county. The passage of the Forster Act in 1870 was an acknowledgement that voluntary effort had been insufficient throughout the whole country and that more positive State intervention was now required to achieve the goal of a universal network of elementary schools.

2. Attendance

Compulsory school attendance became an issue once a general consensus about the aims of educational policy had been reached by the State and the British and National Societies. It soon became clear to central policy makers that no social or educational mission could succeed unless its potential converts were reached. Simply providing school buildings was not enough: those for whom the schools were intended had to attend them regularly.

The school attendance question had a number of aspects, but two assumed a special importance. These were irregular attendance and early leaving. It was difficult to persuade parents who had not been in the habit of doing so, to send their children to school regularly. Children were also wage earners and family income supporters, and working class parents tended to regard 'education' as a short-term experience. They withdrew their children from school and placed them in the labour market as early as they could. The question was bound up with the living standards of the poor, with the concept of 'the poverty cycle', and the need for working class families to use every available source of income to provide against the scourge of poverty and the social stigma attached to it in the age of 'lesser eligibility', when the qualities of independence and self-help were at a premium. Parents also thought it their duty to find work for their children.

These fundamental difficulties of irregular attendance and early leaving were met with in every part of the country, and reported upon extensively by HMIs. It is difficult to assess the nature and scale of these problems between 1840 and 1870 because

of the dearth of statistical evidence relating to them.

The early School Inspectors, however, began to make surveys to show the nature and extent of the problem, and to give an impressionistic account of non-attendance in their own districts, suggesting the main causal factors and offering remedies which might be attempted.

One of the most valuable pre-1870 surveys of working class school attendance patterns was the National Survey compiled by the Rev. F.C. Cook HMI in 1857. This showed that only 11.05 per cent of all children in inspected schools throughout England and Wales were over twelve years of age, and that in London, where employment opportunities for children were more numerous and varied, only 8.24 per cent of the children in schools were over twelve³⁴. At the same time, as many as 40.06 per cent had been in school for less than twelve months, and in London the figure was as high as 50.83 per cent³⁵. The findings of a special survey made by Joseph Bowstead in South Wales in 1860, tallied with those of Cook. He found that the duration of a child's schooling in South Wales varied from one and three quarters to three and a half years³⁶. Both Cook and Bowstead agreed, that even this limited period of school attendance was usually divided for most children into periodic short stays at more than one school. Longueville Jones's analysis of attendance patterns at the Cyfarthfa school near Merthyr further corroborated the estimates of Cook and Bowstead. He found that 95 out of the 107 children present at the Cyfarthfa school on the day of his inquiry, had been on its registers for less than twelve months, and that only three had been there for more than three years³⁷. No fewer than fifty had spent previous short

periods at two or three other schools, and fifteen at as many as four or five schools. One child had even attended six schools in under two years. As Longueville Jones commented, this made the 'regular national school system inapplicable in Merthyr'³⁸. The Inspectorate was very concerned that existing patterns of school attendance made the fulfilment of Kay-Shuttleworth's civilizing mission to the working classes doubtful, if not impossible.

Child migration between schools remained a serious hindrance to the establishment of stable schoolgoing patterns for many years. Parental choice was exercised in the most cavalier fashion during a period when each school was largely autonomous, and only indirectly responsible to the Education Department if under inspection, through its school management committee, correspondent and headteacher. As for the uninspected schools, they were unaccountable to any authority either local or central. Parents and children were therefore free to choose their schools at will, and they exercised their choices, as the Inspectorate's surveys implied, in the most erratic and unpredictable fashion.

What factors weighed with parents is uncertain. Perhaps children switched schools so frequently because their parents were searching for the most effective schools. Brief and interrupted school attendance patterns might also have mirrored the continuing strength of the old tradition of concurrent work and schooling, with children being sent to school when work was unavailable but withdrawn when work turned up, only to be returned to school for another short period when the work ended. But children who were withdrawn may not always have returned to the same school. The

religio-political divide probably accounted for some of the movement in Wales, as Nonconformist parents withdrew their children from a Church school once a British school was built. There were also all kinds of personal factors, ranging across the spectrum of individual preferences and prejudices, to petty quarrels and disagreements. Of them all, the child labour tradition was probably the most important single factor militating against consistent attendance at a single school.

An important factor in the 1850s and 1860s, was the frequent migration of working class families between and within working class areas, especially in the bigger towns, where stable schoolgoing populations were only very slowly formed. Referring to this movement in some of London's East End parishes, F.C. Cook wrote that 'nine tenths of their poor have moved to another street or quarter within two or three years'³⁹. J.G.G. Fussell HMI described the scale of population movement in mid-century as 'incredible', while Cook once again produced figures from his own surveys to show its effects on schools⁴⁰. He showed, that within only nine months as many as 5,367 children had passed through nine schools with an average attendance of 3,769 in the Camden Town and Hoxton areas of London⁴¹. Five hundred and ninety three children had been admitted to the St. John's Church of England school in Hoxton and 596 had left, though there were only 465 on its registers⁴². Although no part of Caernarvonshire would have experienced such massive and fluid population movement as this, it is likely that schools in its slate quarrying areas had their attendances seriously affected by population in-migration from other areas, and by internal movement within their own districts.

Opportunities for child employment were also widespread before 1870 when the only legislative attempts to curb it were the easily evaded Factory, Mines, and Workshops Acts, all of which were partial in their application to named industries or to categories and age groups of children⁴³. Only in 1870 was education legislation eventually used to impose some degree of compulsion on parents to send their children to school, but even then the approach was cautious and experimental, and left a wide measure of discretion to decentralized local bodies.

Indeed, during the thirty years before 1870, farmers had wilfully compounded the habits of child employment and irregular school attendance by almost becoming dependent on children for some kinds of work. In some parts of the country they had employed children for appreciable periods, - up to five months a year, - in seasonal jobs reflecting the type of agriculture pursued locally. Setting potatoes, gatheringstones, watching crows, collecting muck, barking trees, and helping out with the corn, potato, hay or acorn harvests had been child employments since time immemorial. During the 1850s, with the great surplus of children in the rural population, as a result of continued high birth rates, some children were engaged in this kind of work at the very early ages of six and seven - sometimes working together as part of an agricultural 'gang'. Against this background it was inevitable that school attendances would be irregular and fortuitous in such districts, even where a British or National school was provided. What made a bad situation worse, was the increasing willingness of many farmers to exploit full or part time child labour at the expense of regular adult labour which was more expensive. Cook did

much in his Reports to expose some farmers methods, and their disastrous social consequences in the countryside. While farmers, he wrote, were content 'to leave elderly people and grown up youths unemployed', they 'set children to work in gangs under a contractor', and even threatened to dismiss 'labouring parents' if they sent their children to school⁴⁴. He also indicted them as Poor Law Guardians in rural counties, for 'refusing to give any assistance to parents who have children at school'⁴⁵. In the 1850s Cook's main complaint was that by keeping 'peasant children' away from schools, farmers were jeopardising the success of Kay-Shuttleworth's civilizing mission. He was afraid that by setting children to work in the fields at such tender ages they would help to 'desolate their intellectual and moral faculties': he feared they would grow up 'with the wild and furtive habits of the animals among whom they live'⁴⁶. He took every opportunity to reiterate the basic socialising objectives of the new education system, as when he wrote that,

'It ought not to be necessary to prove that every child has a right to such education as will teach him his duty to God and man and make him an intelligent member of the Church and State'⁴⁷.

There were plenty of opportunities for child employment in urban and industrial areas as well. Among temporary short term employments, debilitating regular school attendances in Caernarvonshire's small towns, were errand running, and helping out in shops at busy times of the year, delivering goods, and in some towns such as Caernarfon, Conwy and Llandudno, where a tourist trade opened up in the 1850s and 60s, acting as guides to visitors

brought in by train⁴⁸. In Caernarfon, 'molesting' visitors for a penny or two was in itself something of a child occupation during summer months, and a few mothers deliberately set their children on street corners to beg for money⁴⁹. Practically every town had its own variety of child employment, often deeply rooted in local custom. In a letter to Longueville Jones in 1854, the Rev. Morgan Morgan, Vicar of Conwy, said it was hopeless to open the town's school on Mondays and Fridays, because Friday was market day with children 'serving in shops, stalls and standings', or staying at home 'to take care of the house and little ones while mother is a-marketing'; Monday was washing day with girls helping their mothers at the tub, and boys fetching water from the town pump⁵⁰. Even the few children not so employed, said Morgan, 'take advantage of the general confusion to play truant'⁵¹. He could see little prospect of improvement despite 'the application of frequent expostulations and severity'⁵².

Although children in the towns and industrial areas did not end their schooling as early as in the countryside, they had more opportunities of permanent employment at ten or eleven. Cook noted in 1849 that children of ten employed by tradesmen and shopkeepers in London could earn up to ten shillings a week, while Longueville Jones reported in 1854 that the average wage paid to ten year old boys in Welsh mines and quarries was about six shillings a week, 'although exceptionally lads are gaining no less than nine shillings a week'⁵³. In Caernarvonshire, as a coastal county, seafaring had a strong appeal and many boys left school at ten or eleven to serve in slate carrying ships. Many Official Reports referred to 'boy sailors' returning home during winter months, when

their sailing vessels were laid up in port⁵⁴. Many then had little to do other than roam the streets and make a nuisance of themselves. Longueville Jones persuaded several schools in Caernarvonshire to establish navigation classes so that the 'boy sailors' could spend their time usefully in vocational training⁵⁵.

Despite the incremental growth of the Factory Acts movement from the 1840s, Inspectors's reports showed that child employment was becoming a more serious social problem in the 1850s and 1860s. It may have been that the extent of child employment was only fully realized when the first systematic attempts were made to encourage school attendance. In addition, the return of economic prosperity in the eighteen fifties, presented even greater opportunities for the employment of children. Some Inspectors felt that a distinction should be made between the relative insolubility of child employment in areas where there were many small industries, as against other areas where a single industry was subject to a relevant Factory Act. Such pleas amounted to a rejection of narrowly operative Factory, Mines, and Workshops Acts as competent instruments for dealing with a mounting problem. The Inspectors' comments implied that broader based Education legislation would be more effective.

The Inspectors blamed parents far more than those who employed their children for the high incidence of child employment throughout the country. Parents were, in their view, failing to discharge their responsibility because they were lacking in a proper code of values. B.J. Binns blamed 'the avarice and selfishness of parents' for the deaths of 45 boys under the age of thirteen in the South Wales pits in 1866-7⁵⁶. A few HMIs,

however, appeared to have gained a new insight into the nature of working class 'need' and 'poverty'. F.C. Cook, for example, took a far more sympathetic view of their condition, and was much harder on employers, especially farmers, who gave work to children simply 'because their labour is much cheaper'⁵⁷. As for working people he wrote that,

'Many parents as I can testify from personal knowledge are well aware of the value of the education which their children receive but the temptation or rather let me call it the inducement to set boys to work when their earnings contribute materially towards the maintenance and comfort of the family is too strong to be resisted by parents dependent on manual labour'.⁵⁸

Such comments showed, not only a much greater understanding of the nature of the child labour problem, but also a realisation that its final solution was irrevocably linked with raising working class living standards.

The Inspectorate's increasing appreciation of the scale of the problem led some of them to suggest counter measures. The idea of enforcing school attendance by mandatory social legislation was too advanced for the eighteen fifties and for much of the eighteen sixties - two decades in which the ideology of laissez faire was still in the ascendant and government intervention regarded with suspicion and resentment, though gradually increasing in volume. Some Inspectors toyed with the idea of compulsory attendance in their Reports. F.C. Cook wrote in 1854 that he 'could see no reason why the power of the legislature should not

be brought to bear upon a question that so materially affects the physical, social and intellectual condition of the large mass of the population'⁵⁹. But he conceded that 'the spirit of the age' was against it - a view shared by HMIs in Wales such as Bowstead, Morell and Longueville Jones who wrote that 'interference with parents and employers on the part of the government' would be repudiated as 'unconstitutional and impracticable'⁶⁰. Although the promoters of individual schools, such as the Rev. John Griffiths, had long supported compulsory attendance, the two main voluntary societies rejected it as both theoretically undesirable and impracticable. The National Society thought 'compulsory attendance opposed to the genius of the English people and the spirit of the constitution'⁶¹. This comment confirmed the conclusions of the Newcastle Commission which considered compulsory school attendance in 1861, only to reject it as 'opposed to the feelings and in some respects the principles of this country'⁶². The grounds on which informed opinion rejected compulsory school attendance in the eighteen fifties and sixties were twofold: first, that of principle based on the sanctity of individual liberty and choice, and of parental responsibility and rights, and second, that of practicability based on the hopelessness of expecting working class parents to maintain their families without the earnings of their children. Even in 1870 the National Society reported that, 'the least thought will show us that nothing could be more unreasonable than to suppose that the ordinary English labourer could out of his own earnings maintain his children for twelve years at school'⁶³. That no one seriously envisaged elementary education extending for twelve years appears not to have

occurred to the National Society: the period of compulsory schooling, at most, would have been seven or eight years, extending from the ages of five or six to twelve or thirteen. But two years earlier, in 1868, the Society had pointed out the strong link existing between working class living standards and child employment. Faced with 'the pressure of severe and bitter poverty,' it felt that compulsory school attendance 'would destroy domestic comfort and in extreme cases break up the family home'⁶⁴. Thus it once again linked the question with traditional views of the child as a source of income, seeing it as a threat to the family which had to be preserved at all costs. Far from advancing education, the National Society thought compulsory school attendance would create a sense of injustice and 'cause the very name of school and education to be obnoxious'⁶⁵. As late as 1870, the National Society was still rejecting the notion that children might have a social 'right' to education, or that the State had a duty to provide that 'right'⁶⁶.

With little likelihood of legislation in the 1850s and 60s, educational policy makers and school promoters relied on alternative means to encourage more regular attendance. These included several forms of persuasion and administrative devices to engineer better attendance rates. Although public opinion would not tolerate legislative compulsion, what was described as 'the indirect mode of compulsion' was thought to be both permissible and generally acceptable⁶⁷. The 1850s and 60s were thus two decades which saw measures of 'indirect compulsion' being applied.

The inception of capitation grants in 1853 and their extension in 1856, represented the limits of State intervention.

The 1853 regulation allowed school managers to claim an annual grant of six shillings for each child who had attended school regularly during the year⁶⁸. Initially the grant was limited to rural areas, where problems of irregular school attendance and child employment were thought to be most severe and the need for financial help most urgent. It soon became clear that this distinction was anomalous and unfair. One of its effects in Wales was to include relatively prosperous communities which were not towns in the technical sense, such as those in the South Wales valleys, while excluding small and relatively poor incorporated towns such as Conwy, Pwllheli and Cricieth in Caernarvonshire⁶⁹. The Inspectorate was soon pressing for the extension of the capitation grant to all parts of the country: it was only thus they maintained that the civilising aims of the 1846 policy could be achieved. As Bowstead wrote in 1854, 'Towns are the nurseries of the dangerous classes and the public has an urgent interest in the proper training of such children as are likely in after life to revenge early neglect by preying upon the rest of the community'⁷⁰. The Education Department responded in 1856 by extending capitation grants to schools in all areas, but the validity of the assumption that better and more regular school attendance would thus be promoted remains questionable. A similar administrative device was incorporated in the Revised Code (1862) which made the presentation of each child for examination conditional on two hundred school attendances during the year⁷¹. The grants then paid were dependent on satisfactory local attendance rates and patterns. As with the capitation grant, its implications were doubtful. C.H. Alderson HMI believed that

its principal effect was to exclude large numbers of children from examination because they had failed to make the required number of attendances⁷². Indeed, B.J. Binns reported that only 54 per cent of children in his South Wales district had satisfied the attendance qualifications in 1865⁷³. While the capitation grant no doubt provided a useful supplement to school funds in some places, its efficacy in encouraging better school attendance remains problematical. The real causes of absenteeism, irregular school attendance and early leaving, were far too deeply rooted in prevailing social conditions to be seriously affected by administrative ingenuities such as the capitation grant. Not until general working class living standards were raised could such devices be expected to produce more positive results.

In addition to capitation grants, the Inspectorate made many other proposals to improve attendance. One involved the establishment of voluntary agreements between schools and employers in the hope that non-statutory self administered half-time systems of schooling would become universal⁷⁴. Unfortunately, working class parents were not included as 'contractual' parties in the schemes. Either direct interference with parental rights was inadmissible, or working class parents were not considered trustworthy contractual parties. Yet such schemes could not succeed without their good will and co-operation; it was at least as necessary as that of local employers and the schools. The history of the Factory Acts and other child labour regulations gave no grounds for optimism that local employers even, would observe voluntary contracts with schools to cease or limit the employment of children. The belief entertained by some Inspectors that such

voluntary schemes were feasible and that they might become widespread, was naive. There is no evidence that such schemes were tried in Caernarvonshire.

Other ideas for improving school attendances in the 1850s and 60s included manipulating school fees to induce working class parents to send their children to school. David Thomas HMI suggested collecting school fees six months in advance because 'people generally try to get their money's worth after it has once been paid'⁷⁵. But his idea was impracticable, as working class families would have found it impossible to plan their budgets six months in advance. For a time, some school committees in Caernarvonshire were attracted to a scheme first tried in Chester, by which school fees had been reduced progressively for pupils in the upper standards⁷⁶. The hope was that working class parents would thus be dissuaded from withdrawing their children from school too early. In practice, however, such schemes had little impact on attendance patterns. Their main effect was to benefit somewhat better off families who would have kept their children at school in any case. Even in places where lower fees were levied in the upper standards, the bulk of working class children still left school well before reaching the 'cheaper' classes. At a deeper level these failures showed that working class living standards could not be materially affected by manipulating school fees. Tinkering with fees might have made a marginal difference to a small number of children, but it could never produce a satisfactory solution to the general school attendance problem deeply rooted in low working class wages and living standards.

Another remedy widely discussed in the eighteen fifties and sixties was that adult night schools or evening classes might be used to compensate for interrupted or irregular schooling during childhood⁷⁷. This suggestion implied the abandonment of systematic attempts to enforce school attendance during childhood years, and was an acknowledgement that living standards made regular schooling between the ages of five and thirteen impracticable. It also implied shifting the emphasis towards encouraging young wage earners to spend part of their earnings, at a time when most of them were financially better able to do so, buying themselves the education they had missed as children. This idea approached the modern concept of compensatory 'adult' education, but the Education Department failed to give it the financial encouragement it needed. Despite a number of imaginative recommendations by H.M. Inspectors such as Joseph Bowstead, who made a special study of evening schools in Wales, such schools were never allowed to fulfil a compensatory role, although a few did so, such as the evening school opened in connection with the Carneddi British school in Bethesda (Caernarvonshire) in 1864, and held up as exemplary of its type by the Aberdare Committee in 1881⁷⁸. It also remains problematical whether compensatory evening schools were feasible without an accompanying reappraisal of workingmen's working hours and conditions. Certainly it was prevailing work patterns which prevented the success of ambitious schemes tried in various parts of the country during the 1850s⁷⁹. There, the working classes for whom the schools were intended, simply did not have enough leisure, nor possibly the financial resources, to make the idea a success. Lack of vision in the Education Department, which

retained its narrow and rigid Evening Schools Code until the 1890s, also prevented the fullest and most rewarding development of night schools until the last few years of the century. Only then was progress made, but evening schools in Caernarvonshire failed to measure up even in the 1890s, to the notions of Joseph Bowstead and other members of the early schools Inspectorate.

With the failure of all these means to improve regular school attendance and check early leaving, the voluntary agencies turned to more palpable means of persuasion. During the 1860s it became commonplace for schools to give prizes to children in the form of 'pecuniary inducements' or books, as rewards for regular attendance⁸⁰. Most Inspectors regarded the prizes with some scepticism, believing that most went to children who came from families whose living standards were such that they would have sent their children to school in any case, and kept them there for five or six years without the lure of reward. William Scoltock HMI wrote quite plainly, that 'in the schools which I visit (in Wales including Caernarvonshire) it is only the children of the well-to-do parents (by which he meant the better off working class parents) that compete at the general prize giving competition'⁸¹. J.D. Morrell agreed, and said that prizes had little effect on 'the masses whom it is most important to influence'⁸². John Jenkins also agreed, that 'the pecuniary value of a prize even of four or five pounds can have little influence when put in the balance against the child's earning at least three or four shillings a week'⁸³. Yet the award of prizes became so well established that they continued to be used widely for many years after 1870, by both voluntary school committees and school boards.

Indeed, giving prizes in the form of money, books and/or medals was one of the most characteristic features of the elementary school system in the nineteenth century. Prizes were given out all round, - to children, pupil teachers and teachers, - for a whole range of achievements, from good examination performances to exemplary conduct and satisfactory levels of attendance. Even the compulsory attendance officers appointed under the Forster Act were paid bonuses or commissions on the results of their work. Some school authorities such as the Llanbeblig School Board in Caernarvonshire devised elaborate local regulations to give all children in their districts an equal chance of winning prizes for regular attendance, grading and varying their value in accordance with the distances children had to walk to school, and the nature of the terrain to be covered⁸⁴. Doubtless, combined with other more direct 'enforcement' measures, they had a positive long term influence in encouraging better attendance patterns over the years.

Though some progress had been made under the grant-aided system in providing schools and improving attendances it was still partial and unsatisfactory. As we have noted, only 7,566 pupils attended inspected schools in Caernarvonshire in 1869: there should have been more than 20,000. Progress was, therefore, insufficient to meet the country's needs, especially in the light of growing anxiety about its economic position. Particular concern was now expressed about foreign competition in manufactured goods and exports. Lyon Playfair had given authoritative expression to this concern in 1867, and Forster was to emphasise it when introducing his Bill in 1870⁸⁵. The country's need for

skilled workers, adaptable and inventive, helped focus powerful attention on the deficiencies of the voluntary system. Not surprisingly, the economic incentive merged into the socialisation theme. The approach of a full democracy reinforced the need for a more efficient system. These concerns were voiced centrally and locally; public opinion was thus readier to accept a greater measure of State involvement. It was ready for education legislation, though religious and political animosities were to make its substance a contentious issue, particularly in Wales.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE FORSTER ACT AND THE
SCHOOL BOARDS

1. The Forster Act controversy

Following the return of Gladstone's Liberal government at the 1868 election, the whole country expected a Bill to be introduced to strengthen the role of the State in providing schools for the working classes. In view of this expectation two countrywide organisations were formed to press for the national system they favoured. One of these was the Birmingham Education League, formed early in 1869 to demand a system of rate supported, unsectarian, free and compulsory schools¹. The League had some difficulty in interpreting 'unsectarian', but most of its members wanted religious instruction to be limited to Bible reading without comment or explanation by the teachers. They felt that this was the only guarantee against denominational bias in the classroom. The League was prepared to allow secular schooling in areas where the majority of ratepayers demanded it. In a short time the influence of the Birmingham League spread rapidly to all the large towns of the country and, by the Autumn of 1869, League branches had been formed in London, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Bristol, Exeter and elsewhere, including Merthyr Tydfil in South Wales². Confronted by the Birmingham League, the defenders of the existing system formed their own organisation to press for the continued extension of elementary education along established lines. The organisation set up for this purpose was the Manchester Education Union which misleadingly and mischievously proclaimed its intention of 'counteracting the efforts of the Birmingham League and others advocating secular training only, and the secularisation of our national institutions'³. It was clear, from their declarations that religion would be the central

issue but, as we have already noted, it was deeply involved in the politics of school control. As one of the supporters of the Birmingham League noted, 'the leaders of the Manchester Union saw in fancy their cherished preserves invaded and their vested interests in danger'⁴. Just as the Birmingham League was a largely Liberal and Nonconformist body, so the Manchester Union was mainly Conservative and Anglican, though it had the support of what its opponents described as 'a few doubtful Liberals'⁵. These included some former leaders of the Nonconformist Voluntaryist movement such as Edward Baines who was driven by the logic of his position into the arms of the Manchester Union⁶.

The broad division between League and Union supporters was accurately mirrored in the Principality where two parties were poised to fight a final solution of the Welsh schools problem. In December 1869, prominent Welsh Nonconformists, inspired by the example of the Birmingham League, called a conference at Aberystwyth in January 1870 to prepare a common programme for the settlement of elementary education in Wales⁷. They were also anxious to establish a pressure group to promote their views, modelled on the Birmingham League and the longer established Liberation Society. This conference lasted for three days. It was attended by about three hundred delegates from all parts of Wales, and was a positive attempt to heal the old Calvinistic Methodist State aider-Old Dissenter Voluntaryist divide. Most delegates were Nonconformist ministers but several Welsh MPs also attended. They included T.L.D. Jones-Parry, member for Caernarvonshire, and Richard Davies MP for Anglesey, both elected in 1868. Henry Richard, member for Merthyr, one of the former leaders of the Welsh

Voluntaryist party turned down an invitation, possibly because he thought the conference might be dominated by North Walian Calvinistic Methodist State aiders. He sent a letter wishing the conference well, but reserving the right to formulate his own view.⁸ Observers from the Birmingham Education League were also present as fraternal representatives of English Nonconformity.

In drawing up its programme the conference was unanimous that no system of national elementary education would be acceptable in Wales unless its schools were rate-aided, compulsory, free and unsectarian. Though the conference was agreed on the general principles which should guide the development of Welsh education, its solidarity was seriously weakened by important differences about the meaning of 'unsectarian'. One group of delegates, composed very largely of Independents and Baptists from South Wales, led by Dr. Thomas Davies, Principal of the Haverfordwest Baptist college argued for the total separation of religious and secular education, and the establishment of a national system of secular day schools. They were narrowly outvoted, however, by delegates from North Wales who favoured continuing the unsectarian religious education found in British schools. The leader of this North Walian, and mainly Calvinistic Methodist group was the Dr. Lewis Edwards, Principal of ^{the} Calvinistic Methodist college at Bala. In accordance with the ameliorative view of education, he felt that to ensure the moral and social well being of the Welsh working classes it was vital that public day schools should provide systematic religious instruction.⁹ The conference debate on this issue was long and closely argued. Neither party found it easy to compromise: it was an issue which had long divided

them, and, indeed, their failure to agree weakened them considerably in their ensuing debate with the defenders of the existing system.

Apart from the religious issue the delegates found themselves in agreement on the rest of their programme. For example, they all accepted the idea of compulsory school attendance as 'the only cure for the evil of absenteeism', though many speakers, especially the former Voluntarists, admitted that initially they had found it 'somewhat objectionable'¹⁰. The notion of compulsion was clearly alien to many Nonconformist Liberals in an age of laissez faire, but, despite that, the conference rather self-consciously prided itself on being sufficiently 'advanced' to think that in time, compulsory school attendance would be as acceptable 'as the present system of vaccination'¹¹.

The conference also gave unanimous support for rate aid, but it was strongly determined that rate aid should be confined to non-denominational or unsectarian schools. It also hoped that rate aid would allow school fees to be abolished. Many speakers, claiming to represent the working classes, said that they favoured paying for their children's education through the rates, rather than more directly by fees. Though some delegates had doubts about the wisdom of 'free' schooling for all, on the grounds that the free receipt of social goods might undermine a proper sense of 'independence', they were agreed that free education ought at least to be available to the children of the very poorest in society, who were thought to be as deserving of education as of 'the light of the gas on the streets, or indeed the very light of heaven'¹².

Before the conference ended the delegates appointed a standing committee, known as the Welsh Educational Alliance, to press its views on the government. Though mandated to confer with the Birmingham League, it was instructed to retain its freedom of action, so that Welsh Nonconformity could have its authoritatively independent voice. This insistence on a separate voice, not only reflected the strength of Nonconformity in Wales, but also its growing self confidence and sense of 'national' distinctiveness. As 'Y Gohebydd' later wrote in Y Faner, 'Y mae gennym ein safle ein hunain i edrych ar bethau - our Welsh way of looking at things'¹³.

Despite the Nonconformists' divisions at Aberystwyth over religious teaching, the Welsh Liberal and Nonconformist press thought the conference had been very worthwhile, seeing it as further proof of the political awakening of Wales following the 1868 election. Although the Welsh press tended to mirror the religious divisions, it tried to minimise them by stressing the wide areas of agreement on the rest of their policy. The Calvinistic Methodist newspaper Y Goleuad, for example, declared that when Nonconformists come to 'reality', they found more to unite than divide them, especially their broad consensus for a free, compulsory, rate aided and publicly accountable system of schools¹⁴.

While Welsh Nonconformists were trying to organize themselves, Churchmen were actively preparing to defend their own interests. The Rev. John Griffiths was the only Anglican clergyman to attend the Aberystwyth conference, and by doing so he drew upon himself the odium of Church authorities in South Wales.

The great majority of the clergy saw Nonconformist aspirations destroying National schools and displacing the Church as chief promoter of education for the working classes. Led in the localities by young clergymen, many strongly influenced by the Oxford Movement and the mid-century Church revival, they organised their opposition around diocesan education committees set up in all the Welsh dioceses.

In Caernarvonshire, two young clergymen - the Rev. H.T. Edwards, Vicar of Caernarfon since 1869 and the Rev. David Evans, Vicar of Corris - went further and took their defence of Church schools to the people. They held meetings throughout the county, as well as in Anglesey and Merioneth, to expose the 'dangers' of the Aberystwyth programme and promote the existing system. In the sharpened political atmosphere of 1870, their meeting which often ended in disorder, quickly became the focus of intense interest not only in Caernarvonshire but in Wales as a whole. The alternative to the Nonconformist programme which they advocated proposed the extension of school provision within the existing framework, with each denomination given initial grants to build schools, and then annual grants to maintain them¹⁵. They attacked the Nonconformist programme for its religious ambiguity which could only lead to secular schools and the advance of 'godlessness'. They accused those they described as 'political dissenters' of 'wanting to destroy the religious life of the country with godless (secular) schools'¹⁶. At the same time, they rejected compulsory school attendance as a threat to freedom, an interference with the rights and responsibilities of parents and a danger to family stability. The Rev. Daniel Evans, warned that if compulsory

school attendance was adopted,

'the love of children towards their parents would be diminished and a sort of educational police would be necessitated. These policemen would go into every house, look into the cradle in this place and the small bed in another. The three year old babe (sic) would be taken away from its mother's breast'¹⁷.

They also rejected rate aid and free schooling. 'Putting education on the parish', as they scornfully called rate aid, would 'dry up the benevolence of the rich', on which Wales had always relied for schools¹⁸. They condemned free schooling as socially demoralizing, undermining the self-respect and independence of the working classes, and making them despise education as worthless¹⁹.

The two parties had thus taken up their positions in Caernarvonshire some weeks before Forster presented his Bill in the House of Commons. Their rival programmes differed quite markedly. They disagreed fundamentally on the structure of educational organisation: this was a basic disagreement reflecting deep divisions of political outlook on patterns of control and accountability. Despite this they were at one about the social values which should inform the system. There was a consensus, for example, about the secular curriculum - about its range, content and methodology - and they were in accord about the functional, moral and social objectives of schooling, despite their bitter skirmishing on religious instruction. Both parties took a narrow 'class' view of the elementary school. Neither thought even distantly in terms of equalising educational opportunities

to create a more just society. Yet both parties competed as representatives of working class interests and champions of their welfare.

2. Presentation of the Bill: Reactions and Amendments

On 17 February 1870, W.E. Forster presented his Education Bill to the House of Commons. He was aware that public opinion was sharply divided on the religious issue and the place of religious instruction in the national system. His Bill was a transparent attempt to contain both views on this and related questions, and to produce a generally acceptable compromise. As a leading Liberal politician Forster knew that educational control and accountability were highly charged issues for members of his own party. In his speech introducing the new Bill he declared that his basic aim was 'to cover the country with good schools and to get parents to send their children to them'²⁰. He intended to achieve this, not by replacing, but by confirming the existing system. As for the State it would only be called in as a last resort to 'fill up gaps'. That was the basic principle which suffused his Bill. In greater detail its main points were as follows,

1. The country should be divided into school districts.
2. The government should take powers to ascertain deficiencies of school accommodation in those districts.
3. The denominations and voluntary bodies should have twelve months to fill up the gaps revealed on inquiry.
4. Should the voluntary bodies fail, local authorities known as school boards with rating powers should be elected.

5. The school boards should be elected by town councils in boroughs and by select vestries elsewhere.
6. School boards should have the power to assist all existing schools out of the rates.
7. School boards should be able to remit fees in cases of poverty, although there was no provision to abolish school fees as such.
8. School boards should have permissive powers to frame by-laws for enforcing the compulsory attendance of children at schools between the ages of five and twelve, although compulsory attendance was made neither statutory nor universal.
9. School boards should be free to choose the form of religious instruction to be taught in their schools, except that the conscience clause should be provided for parents who wished their children to be exempted²¹.

As presented the Bill was given a welcome in all parts of the House. But its reception in the country, particularly among Nonconformists, was very different. They had expected Forster to announce a new national system of elementary education. Instead, they saw the government making major concessions to the Anglicans. Welsh Nonconformists, in particular, were determined to resist the Bill because it threatened to leave the majority of Welsh schools in the hands of the Church, to which only a tiny minority of the population adhered. Not surprisingly, the Welsh Nonconformist and Liberal press united in a chorus of condemnation, with the Independent journal Y Dydd typifying the general response by denouncing the Bill as a parliamentary 'lobscouse' (the Welsh

version of Irish stew) soured by the 'rotten **cabbage** of compromise'²².

From all over Wales there were demands for fundamental changes in the Bill, including the abolition of the twelve month 'period of grace' given to the Church to build schools, and the universal election of school boards by secret ballot. Nonconformists and radicals thought a secret ballot was essential both to prevent boards being dominated by agents of privileged wealth and power, and to secure an effective education system. Radicals and Nonconformists also wanted the Bill's compulsory powers tightened up; at the same time they wanted them exercised only in relation to non-denominational schools; compulsory attendance at denominational schools, 'was a provision never bargained for and to which the Nonconformists of Wales will never consent'²³. They were equally incensed by the power given to the school boards, to decide the religious complexion of their schools, and to levy rates for their maintenance. They foresaw situations even in strongly Nonconformist areas in which Nonconformist ratepayers found themselves paying rates to subsidise the teaching of Anglican formularies to their own children at Board schools. They dismissed the Bill's rates provision as an insidious attempt to resuscitate 'that slain adversary.... Church rates'²⁴. The Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald thundered, that 'if the Government had wished to cast a flaming firebrand into every town and parish in the country a more likely device could not have been contrived'. As for the conscience clause its 'protection' was 'a miserable farce a snare and a mockery'²⁵.

The Welsh Educational Alliance moved quickly to denounce the Bill. Meeting at Llanidloes on 23rd February 1870, it passed

a resolution, that 'we cannot regard the proposed measure as any real approach to a settlement of the important question of public education for either England or Wales'²⁶. It sent a point by point rebuttal of its clauses to every member of the Cabinet, every Welsh MP and leading English and Welsh national, provincial and local newspapers. It sent a weighty delegation, including at least two Caernarvonshire men - the Rev. E. Herber Evans the influential and politically radical minister of the Salem Independent Chapel at Caernarfon, and the Rev. Daniel Rowlands, John Phillips's successor as Principal of the Bangor Normal College - to meet Gladstone and Forster on 9th March²⁷. A few days later the Welsh delegation were dining with members of the Liberation Society at the Cannon Street Hotel, where they pledged to oppose the Bill with all their might.

What particularly irked Welsh Nonconformists was the obvious pleasure and relief of Welsh Anglicans. At a meeting in Port Dinorwic, the Revs. Daniel Evans and H.T. Edwards declared their 'great satisfaction' that 'every clause (of the Bill) except one or two proposed to establish what (they) had been advocating'²⁸. At a meeting in Bangor, uproar broke out when Edwards praised the government for acknowledging Church schools in Wales as 'the goose that lays the golden eggs'²⁹. Uproar rose to a crescendo as he invited Nonconformists to accept defeat with good grace and join as junior partners with Church and State in educating the poor.

Caernarvonshire's Nonconformists responded by launching a series of meetings within the county at which they sought to organize opposition against the Bill and the two vicars's speaking campaign. Such meetings were held at Caernarfon, Bangor

Bethesda, Llanberis, Llandudno, Llanllyfni, Penygroes, Porthmadog, Cricieth and Pwllheli, and resolutions were passed calling for the Bill's withdrawal and replacement by another, to create a national system of non-denominational, rate aided, free and compulsory schools. The presence of the two Church protagonists led to an intense political excitement in which 'party anger' alternated with 'gales of mirth'. Everywhere, the meetings were packed. Three thousand people were at Bethesda's Market Hall; even the rafters were 'swarming with agile quarrymen'³⁰. The meetings were fully reported in the press, and as one speaker put it they intended to show Forster that 'the Welsh nation will not have his Bill'³¹. It was said that the fervour of the meetings exceeded anything shown in Caernarvonshire during the 1868 election³².

Under the impact of Nonconformist pressure throughout the country, and as a result of the formation of what the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald described as 'an extreme Liberal party at Westminster', both Forster and Gladstone made conciliatory speeches at the second reading on 14 March 1870³³. Forster, however, while acknowledging the force of Nonconformist opposition to specific clauses insisted that the Bill's basic principles were non-negotiable.

Forster's promise to consider amendments at the Committee stage was followed, during March and April 1870, by the submission of hundreds of petitions from Wales requesting the government to make changes. Some of these petitions came from Nonconformist congregations, others were organized by communities and some were even sent by groups of workmen from their places of work in

mines and quarries. Dozens of petitions were sent up from Caernarvonshire, including one from Talysarn signed by 'the officers and workmen of the Dorothea slate quarries',³⁴. They mirrored the intense canvassing of Nonconformist organisers throughout the county. Most were presented by T.L.D. Jones-Parry and William Bulkeley-Hughes, Caernarvonshire's two Liberal MPs. But other members were also busy presenting petitions from groups in Caernarvonshire. Indeed, looking back over the year in January 1871, George OsborneMorgan, Liberal MP for Denbighshire, declared that,

'I myself presented over a hundred memorials from Denbigh, Flint, Caernarvonshire and Anglesey Sir Francis Sandford jocularly told me they were obliged to keep a separate room at the Department called Morgan's Room',³⁵.

At the same time, Welsh Anglicans were busy petitioning the government to stand firm. The Rev. H.T. Edwards, for example, sent a petition from Caernarfon signed by 1,500 townsmen urging the government to ignore the demands of 'the unscrupulous leaders of the political dissenters in Wales'³⁶. He alleged that 'political dissenters' were unrepresentative of 'sincere religious dissenters' and were only interested in education as politics³⁷. A deputation consisting of leading Welsh Anglicans, including the four Welsh Bishops, met Gladstone and Forster on 11 May 1870. Their main concern was to discount the 'religious difficulty' in Wales. They went so far as to claim that Nonconformist parents always sent their children to Church schools whenever they had a free and unfettered choice, simply because they

thought a Church school was better and more effective than a British or any other type of school³⁸. They also defended the conscience clause as an adequate safeguard for the few parents of 'tender conscience' who might object to the Church's religious teaching³⁹.

Subjected to conflicting pressures, the government responded in May and June 1870, by introducing amendments to its Bill. The most important of these was the Cowper-Temple clause, providing that 'no catechism or formulary distinctive of any particular denomination' should be taught in board schools⁴⁰. The government also retained the 'time table conscience clause', by which children could be exempted from time tabled religious instruction lessons in voluntary schools at the request of their parents. In addition such lessons had to be plainly time tabled, before or after normal school lessons⁴¹. Moreover, the government abandoned its proposal to rate aid denominational schools⁴². Another change reduced the 'period of grace' from twelve months to ~~six~~^{six}⁴³. The cumulative effect of these changes was that school boards could be established in all places after six months, that they could provide publicly maintained elementary schools in their districts, that all such schools would be non-denominational - or secular if a majority of school board members wished - and that rate aid would be limited to such schools.

Another government concession ceded the election of school boards to ratepayers in all localities, so amending the original proposal to vest it in town councils and select vestries. Under the amendment the popular vote was to be by secret ballot, and women ratepayers were to be eligible to vote and stand for

election. In addition, the government adopted the 'cumulative vote' in school board elections⁴⁴. By this, each voter was to have as many votes as there were seats on the board, and could cast his quota as he wished, either 'plumping' them all for one candidate or distributing them between the candidates in whatever proportion he chose. Its object was to safeguard minority rights but, in practice, it increased their influence out of all proportion. Nevertheless, the introduction of some of the elements of democracy into school board elections in 1870 was due largely to the pressure of Nonconformists and radicals for changes in the Bill.

Despite these changes many Nonconformists were still dissatisfied with the Bill's final version. In Wales, they were particularly unhappy with the voting system which they thought would benefit the minority Church. They also opposed the six month 'period of grace'. They could not understand why the voluntary agencies - in effect the Anglican Church - should be given any leeway to build schools in the Principality, which was so overwhelmingly Nonconformist. As for the Cowper-Temple clause, they denounced it as giving insufficient guarantee against subversive sectarian teaching. The Rev. Sidney Boucher, self-styled 'Priest-Principal' of the Anglican North Wales Training College at Caernarfon, was widely quoted by Welsh Liberal MPs in the House of Commons, as saying that whatever 'clauses' might say, Churchmen could always find ways of teaching their distinctive dogmas, and that catechisms and formularies were not necessary for the purpose⁴⁵. George Osborne Morgan MP said the amended Bill, despite its improvements, still left 'religious

nitroglycerine in the hands of excited and half-educated men small farmers and small tradesmen, led on by the parson on one side and by the deputy minister on the other'⁴⁶. Yr Herald Cymraeg was still referring to the Bill in June 1870, as 'that sectarian measure which the government seeks to push through the House under the false title of the Bill for National Education'⁴⁷

Welsh MPs continued to oppose it in the House of Commons, and as late as 20 June 1870, Henry Richard initiated a three day debate on a motion calling for a national system of secular schools. Richard still felt that the only answer to the religious difficulty was the old Voluntaryist solution of completely segregating secular and religious education. At the end of the debate nine Welsh Liberal members including George Osborne Morgan and T.L.D. Jones-Parry, the member for Caernarvonshire, joined Henry Richard and fifty seven others, including Sir Charles Dilke, in the division lobby⁴⁸. The Radical wing of the Liberal party was still unappeased when the Bill was read a third time on 22 July, 1870. Harsh words were then spoken on both sides. The Radicals blamed Gladstone for having led them, - 'the main force that carried him to victory in 1868' - through 'the valley of humiliation'; he responded by suggesting that if they were dissatisfied with the government they should in conscience quit the Liberal party⁴⁹.

In Caernarvonshire, and in most of Wales, the government's amendments were still regarded as unsatisfactory, so that the Liberal and Nonconformist press continued to condemn the Bill. It also foresaw disastrous electoral consequences

for the government in Wales. Yr Herald Cymraeg condemned 'the unnatural liaison' between government and Conservative opposition over the Education Bill⁵⁰. It was an act of political betrayal preventing Welsh Nonconformists and radicals from continuing to support the administration. As for Gladstone, no 'true Liberal' could look to him as leader⁵¹. The Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald deplored the fact, that 'the hitherto unbroken ranks of the great Liberal party should be divided by the hand to which it had looked to keep them in unison'⁵². The Independent denomination's Y Dysgedydd condemned the devious manoeuvrings of Gladstone and Forster, and even expressed preference for Disraeli's more open and honest opposition⁵³. At the same time, Anglicans all over Wales sent letters and illuminated addresses to the Revs. H.T. Edwards and Daniel Evans, congratulating them on their 'courageous and successful' stand in defence of Church schools⁵⁴.

Despite their disappointment, Nonconformists had really succeeded in forcing through some crucial changes. In some respects, it was a new Bill which emerged from third Reading. Nonconformist pressure had ensured that publicly maintained board schools would be non-denominational or secular, according to the preferences of ratepayers, that such schools alone would be rate aided, and that attendance could be compulsory at the discretion of a public board. They had also ensured that schooling could be free for the children of the poor. At this stage the significance of the fees remission provisions of section twentyfive had not been grasped. Nonconformists and radicals had also ensured that denominational schools would be debarred

from rate aid and that their religious instruction lessons would be neither compulsory nor grant earning. What they had failed to achieve was the establishment of a nationwide system of publicly controlled, rate aided schools conducted on undenominational lines by popularly elected local boards. In this respect the Bill retained much of its compromise with denominational agencies of education, which in Wales meant the minority Anglican church. Though the balance of the compromise had shifted in the course of the Bill's passage, it left considerable power of controlling schools in Church hands. It was this factor which accounted for the bitterness of the Nonconformists' campaign - a campaign which had assumed something of the character of a religio-political crusade in Caernarvonshire and throughout Wales. Their bitterness was to rankle for many years as Welsh Nonconformists continued their campaign against the partial nature of the Forster Act.

Politically the controversy had the effect of sharpening Liberal party organisation in Wales, and emphasising the accountability of Welsh Liberal MPs to their constituency supporters. Y Faner insisted that in the future Welsh Liberals should demand the adoption of Parliamentary representatives committed to radical Nonconformist policies. 'Rhaid i Gymru yn y dyfodol ymofyn am gynnrychiolwyr o blith y dynion ydynt o waed a chalon', it declared. (In future Wales must insist on representatives who are fully committed to Radical-Nonconformist causes)⁵⁶. And in November 1871 T.L.D. Jones-Parry became the first MP in Caernarvonshire's political history to attend a specially convened constituency meeting to give an account of his Parliamentary opposition to a

government measure⁵⁷. Earlier in the year, George Osborne Morgan, Samuel Holland, Liberal MP for Merioneth, and T.L.D. Jones-Parry made speeches dissociating themselves from the Forster Act which they described as 'that very unfortunate measure'⁵⁸.

Later, at the end of November 1871, Welsh Nonconformists organized a second and bigger conference at Aberystwyth - attended by five hundred delegates - to express their continuing opposition to the Forster Act⁵⁹. At this conference they went a step further, by demanding a national system of secular (rather than non-denominational) schools for Wales. They added that should the government continue to frustrate their aspirations 'they would make it impossible for a Liberal government to exist'⁶⁰. Already, they were threatening a separate Welsh party to pursue their aims. This idea was greeted enthusiastically by Caernarvonshire's two Liberal newspapers, Yr Herald Cymraeg and the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald. In fact the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald having first noted the success of the Irish party in securing special attention for Ireland and Irish interests, went on to suggest that Welsh Nonconformists should give serious consideration to emulating them. Earlier, Y Faner suggested somewhat recklessly that Fenian tactics might be adopted in Wales⁶¹. That the idea of establishing a 'Welsh party' was given at least some thought in 1871, may be inferred from Sir John Hamner's reply, declining to attend the second Aberystwyth conference. 'I don't like the idea of a Welsh Party' he wrote, 'I deprecate the idea of a Welsh Party. Hence I should perhaps be mistaken at Aberystwyth'⁶².

Although talk of a Welsh party was premature, opposition to the Forster Act rumbled on until the general election of 1874,

both in the House of Commons and in the country at large. Henry Richard, hankering after some of the elements of the old Voluntaryist programme was the most prominent Welsh leader in the continued fight. He addressed large public meetings and rallies in Manchester, Leeds, Bradford and elsewhere, and spoke several times in the House of Commons for a series of wrecking amendments⁶³. He was usually joined in the division lobbies by the more radical members among Welsh Liberal MPs including T.L.D. Jones-Parry (Caernarvonshire), Richard Davies (Anglesey), Watkin Williams (Flint), George Osborne Morgan (Denbighshire), Evan Morgan Richards (Cardiganshire) and Samuel Holland (Merioneth). Such was the power of Radical-Nonconformist members to upset the government's programme, that Cardinal Manning referred to them in his diary as 'a small knot of discontented liberals and fanatics who succeeded in disrupting the work of the Government throughout the remainder of the Parliament'⁶⁴.

The continued frustration of Welsh Liberal Nonconformists at the government's refusal to amend its Education Act saw the Liberal party weakened and divided in Wales as it entered the 1874 general election. The Rev. E. Herber Evans confided in his diary that he would gladly have campaigned at Bradford to try and unseat the treacherous Forster⁶⁵. Evans's anger turned to bitter disappointment when T.L.D. Jones-Parry, Caernarvonshire's Liberal member, a consistent supporter of the Nonconformist view in education, was narrowly defeated by his Tory opponent, G.S. Douglas-Pennant. Evans himself wrote that he had slipped away from the count at the Guild Hall to walk home through the town's side streets, with tears streaming down his cheeks⁶⁶.

The political nature of the 1870 Education debate is clear: educational issues had hardly been raised. The debate was a political, religious and administrative debate, not an educational one. The role of the Inspectorate, the training and quality of teachers, and the aims and objectives of education lay outside the area of controversy. Nor was the Welsh language and the bilingual difficulty a matter of concern. Both sides accepted current curricular patterns and content as determined by the Revised Code, and both shared the belief in 'results' and 'standards' which informed it. Neither party showed interest in the processes of education. Apart from endless questions raised by the formularies of religion, both parties were in broad consensus about the social values of working class schooling. Each party also acted on the assumption that it represented the interests of the working classes. John Bright the Radical member for Rochdale, was one of the few who had doubts about the validity of this assumption. He wrote to the Rev. John Dale in 1873, that the working classes had 'little real interest' in the kind of bourgeois political contest which had grown around education in the 1860s and early 70s⁶⁷. Indeed, he implied strongly that neither party had grasped the true nature of the educational aspirations of 'the people'.

3. The School Board movement of the 1870s

The development of elementary education as an issue of public controversy explains why Welsh Nonconformists in the early 1870s were determined to gain control of the new school boards, despite their dissatisfaction with many aspects of the Forster Act.

Their aims were twofold, first, to establish school boards in as many places as possible, and second, gain a majority on each of them. They would then be in a position to challenge the unrepresentative predominance of Church schools in the Principality. In a broader sense they were making a bid to extend their influence in Welsh local government, by capturing one of its institutions. By September 1870, North Wales Calvinistic Methodists had elected action committees in all their associated presbyteries to organise and spearhead their campaign for school boards⁶⁸. They had also commissioned the Rev. Daniel Rowlands to translate the Forster Act into Welsh, and visit as many places as possible to encourage the establishment of boards⁶⁹.

Before they could launch their campaign they had to wait for six months, so that the voluntary agencies could be given their 'period of grace' to try and 'fill up (the) gaps' in the existing supply. Churchmen throughout Wales responded with determination, anxious to preserve the autonomy of their schools, defend the integrity of denominational religious instruction, and retain the local control of education.

Seeing the school boards as a long term threat to the existence of their own schools, Churchmen tried to provide as many school places as they possibly could. By 1872 the National Society had completely exhausted its funds, having disbursed over £63,000 in aid of school building projects throughout England and Wales, to which the SPCK added a further £10,000⁷⁰. Churchmen in parishes the length and breadth of the country subscribed another £85,000⁷¹. To these sums should be added the Education Department's building grants in support of the voluntary effort.

All in all the National Society used the six month 'period of grace' to build or improve about three thousand schools. Even in strongly Nonconformist Caernarvonshire up to fifteen Church schools were newly built or extended and improved. A series of claims for building grants were sent to the Society, from places as diverse as Caernarfon, Permaenmawr, Pentrefelin, Llanllechid, Pwllheli, Llanfairfechan, Llanddeiniolen, Glynnog, Dolwyddelan, Llandwrog and Penmachno⁷². Such was the volume of Church claims for Departmental building grants that the county's Nonconformists were thoroughly alarmed, and submitted many petitions praying that no public money be granted to assist in building Church schools in such an overwhelmingly Nonconformist part of the country⁷³. Similar petitions were organised in Denbighshire by Thomas Gee. In December 1870, the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald assured its readers that Forster had received these petitions favourably, and that 'denominational schools in Wales (would) receive very few if any grants of public money'⁷⁴. Whether this turned out to have been the case, however, remains doubtful.

Interest in education remained at a high level through the Autumn of 1870, when the first school board elections were held in London and in the large English towns, such as Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham. These elections sharpened political interest in education still further by showing the anomalies of the cumulative vote. Despite their disappointment with English school board results, particularly with those in Birmingham, - the headquarters of the radical Education League, - Welsh Nonconformists were confident of winning overwhelming control of school boards in

Wales and thereby of the education of the people. By the middle of 1871, towns and villages throughout Caernarvonshire were involved in their own school board campaigns, and, for a time, the county provided one of the main focuses of school board activity in the country. Its Nonconformist leaders were determined to put an end to the dominance of Anglican schools and terminate one of the most intensely resented exercises of privileged wealth and power. The county's Anglican leaders were equally determined to maintain their long pre-eminence in elementary education. The political contest between the two parties, - Nonconformist and middle class led on the one hand, and Anglican and traditionally privileged on the other, - was fought in parishes from Llandudno in the north of the county to Aberdaron in the south west.

The results of the first school board elections in Caernarvonshire were a serious set back to Nonconformist aspirations. Only four of the county's towns, Gricieth, Pwllheli, Caernarfon and Bangor, voted to establish school boards, and two of these, Caernarfon and Bangor, denied effective control to the Nonconformist party.

The ratepayers of Conwy, Llandudno, Nefyn and Porthmadog rejected the opportunity to establish school boards in 1871. Conwy's rejection was, perhaps, the least surprising as the town had the reputation of an Anglican and Tory stronghold. But rejection at Llandudno, Nefyn and Porthmadog represented major Nonconformist defeats. In all three towns the campaign was marked by intense religio-political rivalry, exacerbated by campaign visits from the Revs. H.T. Edwards and Daniel Evans, both of whom insisted on being allowed to speak at meetings

organized by their Nonconformist opponents. At a rowdy meeting in Llandudno 'fears were (even) entertained that a riot would break out', and a week later the Rev. H.T. Edwards wrote to the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald, that the next time he went to Llandudno he would surround himself with 'a few stalwart policemen to restrain the violence of the so-called religious teachers and political agitators'⁷⁵. In Nefyn, the proposal to establish a school board was turned down by a majority of three to one at a poll, while at Porthmadog, neither the intervention of T.L.D. Jones-Parry, who gave his opinion that 'there was not a fitter parish in the county to make the experiment of a School Board', nor the support of Charles Breese, the largest individual ratepayer in the parish, was of any avail, as its ratepayers rejected the proposal by a substantial majority⁷⁶. The Church party was delighted with its unexpected success, and celebrated its victory with a firework display and torchlight procession, ending with burnings in effigy of local Nonconformist ministers, and the extempore versifying of a prominent lay Churchman, - R. Isaac Jones (Alltud Eifion), proprietor of the 'Cambrian Pill Depot' - who declaimed as he was carried shoulder high to his home,

Llais y plwy er lles y plant	(The parish has spoken
Ddaliodd dros wirfoddoliant! ⁷⁷	to the advantage of its
	children and held firm for
	the voluntary principle!)

At the old established borough town of Caernarfon, the decision to form a school board lay with the town council. With its Liberal-Nonconformist majority it came down in favour of the

proposal, and withstood all attempts to reverse its decision. The town's Nonconformist leaders soon realized that the ratepayers were very strongly against them; that their opponents were successfully branding them 'the rate raising' party. Facing almost certain humiliation at the election of members, they agreed to Anglican terms for the avoidance of a poll, dictated by the local vicar, the Rev. H.T. Edwards. These provided that the board should be split four-to-three for the Nonconformists, but that it should be pledged in advance not to accept the transfer of any voluntary school, nor to levy a rate until the ratepayers had expressed their wishes on both issues at a triennial election⁷⁸. In effect, these terms were a moral defeat for the Nonconformists, almost as great as the rejection of school boards at Porthmadog, Nefyn, Llandudno and Conwy.

The school board issue came up rather later in Bangor, in December 1871, when the management committees of the British and Wesleyan schools operated Section 12(ii) of the 1870 Act, declaring themselves 'unwilling' or 'unable' to maintain their schools on voluntary lines, so creating a deficiency of school places which could only be filled by a school board⁷⁹. Local Anglicans denounced this move as mean and underhanded. It set the scene for the most unruly school board election in the county. Exaggerated estimates of the education rate likely to be levied in Bangor 'created a panic' among the ratepayers, and a spontaneous open-air meeting of working class ratepayers on Hirael Beach, pledged itself to defeat 'the Nonconformist taxraisers', also described as 'the underhanded lunatics of Bangor city'⁸⁰. The three week school board campaign was marked by verbal

excesses with the two parties accusing each other of telling lies, using intimidation and 'the screw', and fostering drunkenness for sectarian and political advantage. Windows were smashed, and at several meetings respectable ratepayers came to blows. The North Wales Press reported 'a fearful tumult' at an education meeting in the Penrhyn Hall on 9 December 1871, with 'several free fights going on and cushions wrenched off chairs and thrown about the reporters table broken in two and a portion of the platform forced out'⁸¹. At another meeting, the Bishop was jostled and berated with cushions and his hat was trampled in an angry melee⁸². Extra policemen were drafted in on election day, and the results amply demonstrated the force of fears about the rate. Denominationalist candidates headed by Lord Penrhyn swept five of the seven school board seats⁸³. Special editions of local newspapers were printed to carry the results, and the Liberal Herald Cymraeg lamented that the day would forever be remembered for the triumph of prejudice and hypocrisy.

Only at Cricieth and Pwllheli were school boards established with a degree of enthusiasm in 1871, and Cricieth was the only town in the county where ratepayers actually recorded a majority of votes at a poll in favour of a school board. Raging competition between an uninspected British school, without means but fairly efficient, and an inspected National school, complicated by personal and cross denominational feuding - the very stuff of parish politics - may have swamped even the rate issue there⁸⁴. Even so, it was close, the pro-board majority being as low as twenty one⁸⁵. In Pwllheli, an incorporated borough, the decision lay as in Caernarfon, with the town council, which had a Liberal-

Nonconformist majority. They were able to push a decision in favour of a board, but carefully avoided a contest for the election of members being afraid of an anti-rate backlash⁸⁶.

Caernarvonshire's Nonconformists fared badly in the county's towns, because of ratepayer resistance to the 'education rate'. All kinds of rumours were circulated about its likely level. The rumoured rate in Llandudno was ninepence; it was three shillings in Bangor, and varied at Porthmadog from five shillings to a pound in every pound. Y Faner was convinced that a school board was rejected at Nefyn because of anti-rate feeling⁸⁷. Nonconformist leaders were certainly aware of the unpopularity of the rate, and in Porthmadog, Charles Breese called on 'Parliament to get rid of the difficulty (of local rates) and get the means wholly from the Imperial Exchequer'⁸⁸. He even suggested that for a school board to levy more than a threepenny rate would be illegal and that ratepayers could properly refuse to pay a higher demand. In this, Breese was plainly wrong. As a lawyer, he either misinterpreted the Act or deliberately spread an opinion which suited his political purpose, although even Forster had dropped 'the unfortunate remark' that he did not believe the rate would ever amount to more than threepence in the pound⁸⁹.

It is clear, that unlike the local Nonconformist leaders, the majority of ratepayers in Caernarvonshire's towns did not see the school board issue as a choice between non-denominational education in publicly controlled schools and denominational education in Anglican schools, nor as a political contest for the government of local affairs. Rather they saw it as a far plainer choice between a public board and 'the rate', or the

existing voluntary system without 'the rate'. In voting against a school board in Nefyn, Llandudno and Porthmadog, they were not making a positive declaration for denominational religious instruction and the continuance of clericalist domination in education. Rather they were voting against the rate. In fact resentment against the education rate appears to have been the most important determinant of the outcome of school board contests in Caernarvonshire's towns during the early years of the 1870s.

Only after the excitement abated, after the education rate was seen not to be as heavy as was feared, and as the need for new or improved schools became more urgent, were school boards belatedly established or enabled to act more positively. School boards came into being in Porthmadog and Llandudno in 1877, following the Sandon Act (1876) extending the operation of compulsory school attendance powers to school attendance committees of boards of guardians⁹⁰. In neither town were ratepayers in the mid seventies willing to let their childrens' schooling be stigmatised by connection with the Poor Law. Equally important, new schools were urgently needed in both places. These were provided at a cost of nearly seven thousand pounds by the early eighteen eighties. In addition, a number of ailing voluntary schools were transferred to the boards and revived with public money. In time, both school boards fell under the more or less permanent control of the Nonconformists. A school board was also set up at Nefyn in 1874, when the local British school committee carried out a threat, first made in 1871, but then withdrawn, not to continue its school on voluntary lines, so that a school board became necessary, as at Bangor, under Section 12(ii) of the 1870

Act⁹¹. In time, this board also fell under Nonconformist control. Even the ratepayers of Conwy accepted a school board in 1891, to carry out compulsory attendance measures so removing them from the Conwy Union Poor Law Guardians⁹². This meant that a school board had been established in all Caernarvonshire's towns by 1900. With the exception of the Bangor and Conwy School Boards, on which the two parties were always finely balanced, the Nonconformists gradually emerged as the normal governing party.

As for rural areas, they were even more reluctant to establish school boards than the towns, though school provision was glaringly inadequate in many of them and in some non-existent. Only one Caernarvonshire rural parish established a school board voluntarily in 1871. This was the rural parish of Llangybi, where the local landowning rector, the liberal churchman, the Rev. John Williams-Ellis of Glasfryn, was one of the few clerical supporters of publicly controlled non-denominational schools⁹³. He played a decisive role in persuading local farmers to support the establishment of a school board.

No other rural parish established a school board voluntarily in the eighteen seventies, though a number of unsuccessful attempts were made to do so in some parishes. At Llanengan in the Llyn peninsula, moves made by local Nonconformist leaders to establish a school board were foiled by Nonconformist farmers and churchmen, who agreed to conduct the British school jointly on voluntary lines without a rate⁹⁴. Other rural parishes which rejected a school board included Clynnog, Trefriw, Aber, Llanfairfechan, Abererch, Llannor and Dolbermaen. So anxious were Nonconformists to avoid the rate at Trefriw that the local British

school, - one of the oldest in the county built in 1852 and rebuilt in 1866, - was transferred to Church control and conducted as a National school for almost thirty years.⁹⁵ In Clynnog, ratepayers voted down a school board by two to one - by 132 votes to 79⁹⁶. Instead, Clynnog ratepayers accepted Lord Newborough's offer to maintain two National schools at his own expense. In other parishes, including some in which the need for new schools was urgent, there appears to have been no attempt to give the issue an airing. There were no accounts in the local press of meetings to discuss school boards in such parishes as Aberdaron, Bryncroes, Dolgarrog, Pistyll, Garnguwch, Llanrhychwyn and Llanfihangel-y-Pennant - in all of which there was a serious lack of schools as the reports of HM Inspector of Returns, the Rev. E. Sneyd Kynnersley, had shown⁹⁷.

Like the townsmen the county's farmers were more concerned in avoiding the rate than with religious equality and undenominational education, or the government of schools. Most farmers were at pains to point out that the education rate would be added to the poor rate and other local rates, and to rents, tithes and the cost of horse and dog licences⁹⁸. In addition, as we have already noted, farmers were prejudiced against educating the labouring classes, believing that too much 'peasant education' would deprive them of their traditional supply of child labour. At the same time, they were fully aware of the importance of educating their own children, which some of them went to considerable lengths to do.

Lack of schools was so great in many of Caernarvonshire's rural parishes that school boards had to be imposed by compulsory

order of the Education Department, under Sections 40 or 10 of the 1870 Act. Section 40 allowed the Department to unite any number of adjoining school districts where provision was inadequate, to form 'united school districts', then 'cause a School Board to be formed'⁹⁹. By merging rural parishes, the Department hoped to create viable administrative units, able to assess and deal with their needs in a more rational manner than isolated small parishes. It also hoped to equalise the education rate and avoid a multiplicity of small schools. The following school boards were formed compulsorily by the Department under Section 40, in Caernarvonshire,

1. The Penmorfa United District School Board comprising the parishes of Penmorfa, Dolbenmaen and Llanfihangel-y-Pennant.
2. The Aberdaron United District School Board comprising the parishes of Aberdaron, Rhiw, Bryncroes and Llanfaelrhys.
3. The Caerhun United District School Board made up of the parishes of Caerhun, Dolgarrog and Llanbedr-y-Cennin.
4. The Llannor United District School Board comprising the parishes of Llannor and Llanfihangel Bachellaeth¹⁰⁰.

According to the 1871 census schedules, only 177 or 38.1 per cent of the 491 children aged between five and twelve, in the parishes of the Penmorfa United District, were returned as 'scholars', and HM Inspector of Returns confirmed the districts' major deficiency of schools¹⁰¹. Yet the ratepayers of Dolbenmaen

rejected a school board at a public meeting in 1871. In the parishes of the Aberdaron United District, only 62 or 11.4 per cent of the 538 children between five and twelve were returned as 'scholars', and the only schools for them were one or two inadequate private venture and charity schools¹⁰². At Caerhun in the Conwy Valley, only 110 out of 217 children aged between five and twelve were described as 'scholars', while in the Llannor District only 112 out of 243 such children or 40.1 per cent were so returned¹⁰³. Yet here, as at Dolbenmaen, the ratepayers had rejected a school board.

It was under Section 10 that a school board was compulsorily formed in the parish of Pistyll, to which the small adjoining parish of Carnguwch was later appended¹⁰⁴. Under Section 10, the Department could impose a school board on single school districts which still had a deficiency at the end of the six month period of grace. The Pistyll area had one of the worst records of non-schooling in the county. According to the 1871 census schedules only 11 out of the parish's 123 children aged between 5 and 12, or 8.9 per cent, were 'scholars'¹⁰⁵. In addition, H.M. Inspector of Returns showed that no school of any kind was provided.

As a result of the implementation of compulsory powers, sixteen of Caernarvonshire's rural parishes were brought under school boards by 1875. In addition another parish, Llanarmon in Eifionydd, only narrowly avoided compulsory imposition by agreeing to build a voluntary school at the last possible moment with a once-for-all voluntary rate¹⁰⁶.

It appears, therefore, that in the early 1870s ratepayers

in Caernarvonshire's rural parishes preferred to be without schools than to pay the education rate. In some, including Clynnog, Trefriw and Llanengan, Nonconformist ratepayers and parents were even content to send their children to Anglican schools, provided that thereby they could evade the rate. It was this kind of outcome which enabled the Rev. E.T. Watts HMI to describe 'the religious difficulty' as a figment of propagandist newspapers. 'Personally' he wrote, 'I am not acquainted with it, and practically I believe it has no existence'¹⁰⁷

The motivating force behind the ratepayers attitudes in rural areas, however, may have been somewhat more complex. Farmers were both strongly opposed to the education rate, and apprehensive about educating agricultural labourers. Though they had a strong allegiance to Nonconformity many were willing to accept Anglican offers of cheap schooling for the children of the labouring classes. There was also a marked absence in the countryside of the kind of middle class which assumed Liberal-Nonconformist leadership in the towns, and the political and social aspirations associated with it were less well developed.

Even after school boards were compulsorily established, old prejudices remained strong. Membership of rural school boards was usually dominated by farmers; many were uncommitted to expanding educational opportunities. The Aberdaron United District School Board, even had to be threatened with dissolution for default in 1880, after its failure to build three schools found necessary by HM Inspector of Returns¹⁰⁸. This was seven years after its own compulsory establishment. Generally, all rural school boards were also unenthusiastic in implementing the compulsory attendance

provisions of the 1870 Act, and some of their members, doubtless influenced by their needs for seasonal child labour, connived in none too subtle a fashion, at irregular schooling and early leaving. Progress in curriculum development was also far more sluggish and nearly all lagged behind in the provision of books and equipment. Rural school boards paid their teachers lower salaries and were usually less ready to support them in their daily tasks. Teachers held a low opinion of 'farming' boards and school managers. Certainly farmers as a social group were not so ready to accept the commitment of political Nonconformity to gaining control of education at local levels in the 1870s and 80s.

By contrast to the towns and rural areas, the county's slate quarrying communities responded to the opportunities of the Forster Act, with an overwhelming enthusiasm. School boards were established in all the slate quarrying districts with the exception of the Llanllechid-Llandygai (Bethesda) area, where schools and school places had been brought up to required levels by 1871. In other quarrying districts parish vestries voted so massively in favour of school boards that the Church did not think it worthwhile in many places to test opinion by calling for a poll of the ratepayers.

The vote in favour of a school board in the Llandwrog vestry was 53 to 3, though local farmers stayed away from the meeting¹⁰⁹. This allowed them to show their antipathy towards the board without openly disavowing Nonconformist principles, or being seen to oppose the wishes of other ratepayers, largely slate quarrymen employed in Dyffryn Nantlle, who were ambitious for their

children. Llanllyfni ratepayers were so eager to set up a board that they asked permission to hold an election in October 1870, well before the end of the 'six month period of grace', and before the Education Department had completed its administrative arrangements¹¹⁰. Eventually, when a vestry was held to decide the issue, fewer than ten ratepayers supported the local rector's attempts to oppose the move¹¹¹. Similarly, in the large slate quarrying parish of Llanddeiniolen, the vestry vote in favour of a board was 205 to 25, a majority large enough to deter anyone from demanding a poll¹¹². The same occurred at Llanrug where the pro-board majority was 127 votes to 16¹¹³. The voting at the Llanwnda vestry was 98 votes to 28, while the decision to set up a board at Llanberis was unanimous, not a single vote being cast against¹¹⁴.

If a comparison were made of voting figures on the school board issue in Caernarvonshire's towns and quarrying areas, marked differences would emerge in their response. These differences are shown in Table A.

TABLE A

Voting figures on the school board issue in Caernarvonshire towns and quarrying areas

<u>TOWNS</u>	In favour	Against	<u>QUARRYING AREAS</u>	In favour	Against
Griccieth (poll)	105	84	Llandwrog (vestry)	53	3
Porthmadog (poll)	301	347	Llanddeiniolen (vestry)	205	25
Llandudno (poll)	279	286	Llanwnda (vestry)	98	28
Nefyn (poll)	51	145	Llanrug (vestry)	127	16
TOTAL	736	862		483	72
	(45.6 per cent)	(54.6 per cent)		(87.1 per cent)	(12.9 per cent)

Apart from the parish of Glynnog, where 79 votes were cast in favour of a school board and 132 against, (37.6 per cent to 62.4 per cent) no vestry or poll figures are available for the county's rural districts¹¹⁵. But the contrasting pattern of votes for the towns and quarrying communities indicate sharp differences in the responses of the two types of community to the school board question.

In addition, the actual election of school boards was marked by enthusiasm and eager participation in the quarrying communities entirely lacking in the towns. Thirteen candidates were nominated to contest the five school board seats in Llanllyfni, and twenty one candidates presented themselves for the seven seats in Llanddeiniolen, where all attempts to avoid a contest failed, due to divisions within Nonconformist ranks. Even then, the sole Anglican candidate - the local rector - was badly defeated, coming bottom of the poll with 609 votes, the seven elected members, - four Calvinistic Methodists, two Independents, and one Wesleyan Methodist, - each polling between 1,713 and 1,003 votes¹¹⁶. The one anti-board Anglican candidate in Llanrug parish fared even worse, polling only 92 votes, while the five elected members each polled between 408 and 893¹¹⁷.

Enthusiasm for the Nonconformist 'education' cause was thus far stronger in Caernarvonshire's slate quarrying communities than in its towns and rural parishes. Almost certainly this was related to the social class structure of quarrying communities. Possibly their religio-political awareness was stronger, and their adherence to principle more compelling than the deterrent effect of the rate. On the other hand, their enthusiasm may be seen as

an affirmation of their belief in education as an instrument of self help. While cherishing education for its own sake, they also saw it as their only means to better life chances, and an avenue of escape from the harsh existence of industrial mining and quarrying. This was reinforced by the serious shortage of schools in most quarrying communities before 1870, - two schools were needed as an immediate priority in Llanllyfni, no fewer than four were needed in Llanddeiniolen, and one each in Llanwnda and Llanrug. The voluntary system had failed to provide them. School boards were thus perceived as the only means which could supply them. As elected bodies they would be accountable and democratic - highly regarded values in quarrying society, but new schools were also needed in towns such as Nefyn, Porthmadog, and Cricieth, and in rural parishes such as Aberdaron, Rhiw, Penmorfa and Caerhun: indeed, new schools were needed in all parishes compulsorily formed into United Districts and with school boards imposed during the 1870s. The social composition of quarrying communities, with almost every family dependent on the quarries for work, and the mix of working class and Nonconformist values as determinants of their social attitudes, were vital factors.

A detailed analysis of responses in the mixed parish of Beddgelert confirms this view. Beddgelert parish consisted of small farming districts such as Nantgwynant and Nantmor, a slate quarrying area centred on Rhyd Ddu, and a mixed quarrying and farming district round the main village of Beddgelert. A poll of ratepayers on the school board issue resulted in the distribution of votes, contained in Table B:

TABLE B

Votes cast in the School Board Poll in
Beddgelert Parish in 1871¹¹⁸

	For a School Board	Against a School Board
Beddgelert and Nantgwynant	73 (48.2 per cent)	79 (51.8 per cent)
Nantmor	19 (32.7 per cent)	39 (67.3 per cent)
Rhyd Ddu	43 (91.5 per cent)	4 (8.5 per cent)
TOTAL	135 (53.5 per cent)	122 (47.4 per cent)

These figures show that only the quarrying part of the parish voted solidly for a school board. Left to the farming and mixed districts, the board would have been rejected by 118 votes to 92 (56.3 per cent to 43.7 per cent). Their votes were more than counterbalanced by an overwhelming pro-board majority at Rhyd Ddu, almost entirely dependent on the slate quarries of Rhyd Ddu and Dorothea (in neighbouring Llanllyfni parish), and the copper mines of Drws-y-Coed. The divided social response of the parish, was underlined by the fact that though a majority of ratepayers had voted for a school board, its largest ratepayers representing £1,871.5.0. of its rateable value had opposed it. The property of those favouring a board had been less than half of this, at £918.5.0.¹¹⁹

Nonconformity was not the decisive factor in deciding the issue at Beddgelert. The whole parish was strongly Nonconformist: it was said that the Anglican church had 'as few members in the parish of Beddgelert as the parson has fingers on his hands'¹²⁰. Nor did the figures simply reflect inadequate school

provision in the village of Rhyd Ddu, for school provision in other parts of the parish was equally, if not more, inadequate, and one of the first tasks of the new school board was to build new schools at Nantmor and Nantgwynant¹²¹.

It appears from our survey of local community responses in Caernarvonshire that the impetus to establish school boards in the 1870s came from the new and politically conscious middle class, with the exception of the slate quarrying areas where the school board movement was more populist and genuinely democratic. In addition, the motivation of the movement was social and political as well as religious. In fact, nowhere was it a narrowly religious or denominational movement. The impact of 'Nonconformist principles' on the ratepayers was extremely limited. Yet 'Nonconformist principles' were undoubtedly important to local Nonconformist leaders, influential as the activists of the school board movement, especially in the towns. They came from that politically aspiring middle class, enfranchised in 1867, and which had shown its political clout in 1868. Their views were powerfully expressed at Westminster by 'the extreme liberal wing' of the Liberal party, and in the provinces their main mouthpiece was the local press, which they had organised themselves in syndicates to own. Their influence in Wales was strengthened by their leadership of the Nonconformist chapels, the centres of local social and community life. They were also successful in permeating the lower ranks of Welsh society with their own socio-political values, though they were not always able to carry their political aims to immediate fruition, as the school board movement of the 1870s showed. Individually, many were of considerable means, acquiring their

wealth in various entrepreneurial ventures. Financially, some were almost independent, able to devote a good deal of their time to local and community politics. Some had even begun to rival the old privileged classes in their devotion to public affairs. Already prominent in local government, they made it their business after 1870 to secure election to school boards. Even in the quarrying areas many of those actually elected belonged to this class: to all intents they formed a new social elite determined to replace the old aristocratic-Anglican hegemony. Perhaps the Rev. H.T. Edwards was a little unfair in his description of them, as 'the unscrupulous leaders of the political dissenters'. But it was true that their principal objective sprang not from an intrinsic belief in the value of working class education. Still less did they articulate a particular view of education, or show concern for its quality. Rather, their determination was political - to win control and management of schools as a means of furthering their broader political aims. Above all, they were determined to transform local government and oust the Anglican Church and its secular allies from their old positions of local political leadership and social pre-eminence.

Despite setbacks suffered by the Nonconformist leadership in the early 1870s, they tightened their grip, gradually but inexorably, on school boards in Wales and in Caernarvonshire during the 1880s and 90s, though they never succeeded in achieving permanently the overwhelming preponderance which Nonconformist strength in the Principality led them to expect in the 1870s. Nevertheless, by the mid 1880s, the Nonconformist party in Caernarvonshire assumed a natural, if narrow, preponderance on most

school boards in the county, so that their long maturing aim of controlling the education of 'the people' was to a considerable extent achieved.

4. The political dimension of the School Boards 1870-1902

During the period to 1902, apart from carrying through policies consolidating Liberal-Nonconformist political strength, the county's school boards showed no interest in evolving new approaches to elementary education, nor in any aspect of education per se. The only issue about which they showed genuine enthusiasm was the transfer of former British schools to public control, and their reinforcement vis a vis Church schools, with rate aid and government grants. In Caernarvonshire such transfers presented no ideological difficulties. What it meant in practice was that former British schools were still controlled by the party managing them previously on voluntary lines, except that after transfer, they had access to the rates, while Church schools continued to rely on voluntary subscriptions, and the highly unpredictable receipt of school fees. This meant that Church schools could only match the financial strength of board schools in two ways: first through the determination of Anglican subscribers to continue to support the voluntary principle despite having to find their share of the education rate, and second, through consistently better performances at annual examinations for government grants. Voluntary schools were hardly likely to achieve better examination results because board schools had the powerful advantage of more resources for better facilities, and more up to date school buildings. Above all, school boards were able to use their extra resources to

establish a better staff-pupil ratio and employ more competent teachers, attracted by better pay and career prospects.

Though few legal impediments prevented the transfer of denominational schools to the school boards, powerful ideological constraints stood in the way. Transferred Church schools automatically lost their denominational status; they became non-denominational or even secularist if a secularist majority won control at triennial elections. This was far from impossible in parts of Wales. Transfer would thus destroy their 'raison d'etre'. Not surprisingly, few Church schools were ever transferred. The National Society constantly warned against transfers of Church schools to school boards, and in the 1870s its organising secretary visited hundreds of places to end transfer negotiations¹²². He issued a warning to Churchmen that 'a transfer even under the most favourable circumstances is at variance with the intentions of those who have founded the schools' and 'a practical surrender' to their enemies¹²³. Only National schools in desperate financial straits, where voluntary sources of finance had dried up completely, or government grants insufficient to keep them open, were transferred. Exceptionally, a transfer slipped through the net where the local clergyman favoured non-denominational publicly controlled schools. During thirty years, only seven National schools were transferred to school boards in Caernarvonshire, and two of these were transferred in the late 1890s after long-continued efforts to sustain them as voluntary denominational schools had failed¹²⁴. In contrast, twenty six British schools were transferred in the early years of the 1870s and in most cases the transfers were absolute¹²⁵.

In conjunction with accepting transferred schools, the school boards extended and improved them. They also built the new schools needed in many places. In Caernarvonshire they built twenty one new schools during their first five years (1871-76), building more than four new schools a year, at a cost of more than thirty thousand pounds¹²⁶. The requirement to build and rebuild schools, and improve school fabric and facilities, continued throughout the period, under the impact of population changes and with the development of new ideas in school design. The need for more space to accommodate the greater number of children who went to school after the tightening up of compulsory school attendance regulations, and the extension of the length of a school life, with the inception of infants classes and higher elementary standards (standard VI and VII) in the 1880s and 1890s, put even more pressure on space. The result was that school boards gained a growing hold on elementary education within the county, while Church schools found themselves in a deteriorating situation. By the 1890s voluntary agencies throughout the country, and the National Society in particular, were pressing government to restore a fairer and more equitable balance between the financing of their schools and those of the rate-raising school boards¹²⁷.

Within Wales, the Nonconformist controlled school boards regarded the provision of school places as their most important single task. This was due, at least partly, to their belief that by building and providing schools they could achieve their political aim of controlling elementary education at local and community levels. Though they had doubts about compulsory attendance, there was a political edge even to this, as some showed far greater

determination to enforce attendance at non-denominational board schools than at National schools. In 1885, the Caernarfon School Board took an obvious delight in announcing that its school had overtaken the local National school as the largest single agency of education in the town. It published the following figures to show the changing balance of attendance at the two schools¹²⁸.

TABLE C

The Table published by the Caernarfon School Board in 1885 to show how the Board School had overtaken and replaced the National School as the chief agent of elementary education in the town

Year	Attendance at Board School	Attendance at National School
1882	492	582
1883	584	605
1884	602	612
1885	635	634
	(+144)	(+52)

By 1892 attendances at the Board school had reached 778 while those at the National schools had fallen to 536¹²⁸. In ten years there had been a dramatic change in relative attendances. In 1869-70 the position had been very different with 588 at Church schools and 240 at the British schools¹³⁰. Moreover, it appeared that the trend in favour of the Board school would continue. The Nonconformist majority on the Caernarfon School Board could thus feel satisfied that it had achieved its central policy objective, - that of breaking the Anglican domination of education in the town.

By the same token the National school's management committee grew increasingly alarmed, not just about attendances at the school, but its long term survival. Inevitably such preoccupations kept educational politics at the very centre of local political discourse.

Religious and political considerations had an effect on nearly all attempts to formulate rational approaches to elementary education in the 1870s and 80s. Though no one had apparently grasped the implications of Section 25 of the Forster Act during the 1870-71 campaigns, it became a burning political issue as soon as the parties understood that it allowed a portion of the local rates to be spent on educating poor children in denominational schools. Nonconformists throughout the country then focused their opposition to the Act on the palpable injustice of this clause. Welsh Nonconformist feeling ran very high on the issue. Not surprisingly, Henry Richard was closely involved with George Dixon, Charles Dilke and others in Parliament to repeal Section 25. Nonconformist inspired amendments to repeal the clause failed in 1872, and again in 1874 when Richard was the prime mover¹³¹. He was also prominent in opposing Lord Sandon's Education Bill in 1876, his opposition to it being combined with his antipathy to Section 25. His main objection was that it extended the operation of Section 25 so 'further subsidising sectarian schools managed by irresponsible persons'¹³². He moved an amendment, defeated in July 1876, that 'in the opinion of this House the principle of universal compulsion in education cannot be applied without great injustice unless provision be made for placing public elementary schools under public management'¹³³. As a former leader

of the Welsh Voluntaryist movement he was never enamoured of compulsory attendance, but felt strongly that 'if they were determined to have compulsion it was essential that the consciences of those children who were obliged to attend denominational schools should be protected',¹³⁴.

Parliamentary pressure helped to keep the issue simmering for many years, so that school boards and voluntary school committees spent an inordinate amount of their time grappling with its implications. Section 25 caused a spate of difficulties in Caernarfon where the National school's management committee refused to co-operate with the school board in developing a fees remissions policy. It was not prepared to cede powers of decision in relation to its own school to the school board, being unable to trust the school board's Nonconformist majority to act without malice¹³⁵. Although, in the schools, Section 25 caused less difficulty than expected, - very few parents whose children qualified for free education were sufficiently concerned to insist that their children attend denominational schools, - yet the emotive political climate surrounding it sustained the debilitating religious-political rivalry marking the relationship of local school promoters in the 1870s.

All attempts by rival school committees to co-operate during this period were likely to collapse in recriminations that one party was taking unfair advantage of the situation. Very little that took place after 1870 made things any easier. A classic example of the persistence of party rivalry occurred in Caernarfon with the failure of a joint Board-Church scheme launched in 1890 to tackle the town's chronic problem of unpunctual attendance.

The scheme was forced on the rival parties by the Rev. E. T. Watts HMI who had shown that unpunctual attendance was a serious problem in Caernarfon. Under his pressure the School Board and the National school's management committee agreed in February 1890, that no children arriving later than 9.15 a.m. and 2.15 p.m. should be admitted to their schools¹³⁶. Within days, however, each side was accusing the other of breaking the agreement and using it to poach latecomers for their own school. Eventually both sides planted 'spies' to report infringements by their rivals. Such was the level of suspicion that even children admitted to school less than a minute after the agreed deadlines, were pounced on as examples of their rivals's bad faith. After four months, the situation became so impossible that the agreement was abandoned. It exacerbated bad feeling between the parties and led to 'a serious decrease in average attendances'¹³⁷. 'Spies' used by both sides had turned children away from schools though only a few seconds 'late'; other absentees took advantage of the situation to play truant, safely protected from bye-law provisions.

Educational politics intruded strongly on school board decision making and policy formulation throughout the period. Apart from political concern for the control and management of schools they showed little interest in any substantive issue of education. Their educational vision was narrow, constrained within the boundaries of Liberal-Nonconformist political objectives.

Not surprisingly, individual members of school boards in Caernarvonshire, most drawn from the county's Liberal Nonconformist middle class showed far more interest in the Welsh Intermediate Education Act (1889) than in the quality of elementary

education. They held more concern for secondary education as a distributor of life chances for children of their own class, than for the social role of elementary schools for the bulk of working class children. Perhaps this was only natural: as middle class schools, the new County schools were ipso facto the objects of middle class interest, with board schools still largely perceived as schools for the working classes, though their role was also changing. Not surprisingly, school boards devoted as much, if not more, time from the 1880s exploring the Intermediate schools' curriculum, than in evaluating the aims and objectives of elementary schools. By the same token they showed little interest in higher grade or advanced elementary schools. Their response to the 1882 Departmental Circular to Welsh School Boards was disappointing¹³⁸. Not a single higher grade school was opened in Caernarvonshire before the 1900s. Even technical scholarships given by William Rathbone MP and Henry Tate (the sugar merchant) at the new Brynrefail Intermediate school in the 1890s were opened up to academic subjects¹³⁹. School boards very largely ignored technical training; their members were much more concerned with a professional middle class education.

In elementary education it was not education per se, that is its content, substance and underlying values that divided the contending parties in Wales - but educational politics linked to religious and denominational rivalry. As such, education became a Welsh 'national' issue once again during the Balfour Act controversy (1902-6) when the central contention was still the political control both of schools and the machinery of

administration at county and local levels. David Lloyd George MP for the Caernarfon Boroughs since 1890 was able to exploit the deeply entrenched attitudes of Welsh Nonconformists on issues of educational control, to lead the 'Welsh Revolt' against the Act. Locally the 'Revolt', which continued for several years, led to countless disputes involving the division of communities, the boycott and closure of several schools and a great deal of parochial mean mindedness leading to bitterness and discord. Inevitably it inflamed political passions. Lloyd George's campaign drew its strength from the long established determination of Welsh Nonconformists to gain full control of the education of the people. It was also a dimension of the Nonconformist middle class's aspiration to take over local government in Wales and complete the overthrow of the old hegemony of privileged wealth and power.

The educational historian, however, must remain sceptical about the extent of the new party's commitment to education as such, about the importance of working class education in their scheme of priorities, and their professed concern for 'the education of the people'. Working class education does not appear to have been all that important as an end in itself: rather it took the guise of a 'means', an educational 'means' to basically political 'ends'.

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CHAPTER SIX

PROVISION AND ATTENDANCE 1870-1902

1. School Provision

The Education Department launched an inquiry into the extent of school provision throughout the country following the passage of the Forster Act. Undertaken during the Autumn of 1870 and the Winter and Spring of 1871, it revealed substantial gaps in many parts of Wales. Such was the intensity of religious rivalry that in many places even the inquiry itself became embroiled in controversy. Churchmen throughout Caernarvonshire organised themselves to fill every gap in provision before the government's inquiry was concluded. They wanted to avoid rate raising school boards, which they were certain would be dominated by their Nonconformist adversaries, who would use their powers to ruin Church schools. At the same time, Nonconformists were ultra sensitive to Anglican attempts to increase National schools during the period of grace, so preempting publicly accountable school boards. They were eager to see the boards established; they too thought they would be able to dominate them because they realized that the overwhelming majority of Welsh ratepayers were Nonconformists.

When the Education Department's Inspector of Returns, E. Sneyd Kynnersley, started his work of checking available schools in North Wales, he was taken aback by the ferocity of the rival parties, determined to secure control of education and schools. As a committed Anglican, he had an inevitable affinity with Church schools and the existing system. He later noted in his memoirs that during his visits to ascertain the adequacy of voluntary provision in North Wales, he had preferred the urbane company of

the clergy and their cigars and old port, to the socially gauche Nonconformist ministers plaguing him with endless political tirades, buttermilk and local shag tobacco¹. He could neither conceal his disdain for the Nonconformists nor keep from showing that he found their company unpalatable. His supercilious attitude soon brought accusations of unfairness against him. His clandestine meetings with the Church hierarchy at Bangor, and his refusal to admit to local Nonconformists that he had been in the city, brought upon his head their considerable wrath². He was accused of conspiring with Church leaders to falsify school returns, and nullify the need for school boards. The scene was thus set for the school board election controversy.

According to the Government's initial calculations, each 'school district,' based mainly on parish and borough boundaries, was to provide school places for one-sixth of its population: the proportion the Government (mistakenly) calculated to be children of school age. In reality it was far more. It is clear that Sneyd-Kynnersley went out of his way to count every pre-1870 school as adequate. He did so even where the school needed replacing or extending within months, or a year or two at most. He even counted school buildings not yet completed, but which local clergy claimed were 'in the course of being provided'³.

Not surprisingly, Sneyd-Kynnersley's returns showed school provision in the county to be satisfactory, even in places where it soon became totally inadequate, as at Gricieth and Llandudno⁴. In other places, children found themselves walking considerable distances to Church schools outside their own 'districts' but calculated by Sneyd Kynnersley as being within reach. In more

than one case, time and experience showed that his assumptions were so wildly unrealistic as to admit no other explanation than bias. Even Sneyd Kynnersley could not disguise that slate quarrying areas suffered serious shortages of schools and school places; here the voluntary agencies had failed to keep pace with rapid population growth. But the voluntary societies had also failed in rural areas, which suffered serious deficiencies, despite the concentration of Church resources in the past. Only in the towns had the voluntary agencies built adequate numbers of schools, but even here extensive capital expenditure was necessary in the 1880s to improve existing schools or replace them with newer ones.

The best indication of the shortfall of school places in Caernarvonshire after a quarter century of grant-aided voluntary effort, was the scale of school building taking place immediately after the implementation of the Forster Act. First of all, Churchmen succeeded in building or rebuilding up to fifteen schools during the six months 'period of grace'. This effort cost more than £7,000, half of it raised by voluntary subscription in the localities themselves⁵. National schools were built or rebuilt at Glasinfryn near Bangor, Llanllechid, Llanddeiniolen (the Gors Bach school), Llanfairfechan, Dolwyddelen, Clynnog, Pentrefelin, Edern, Llandwrog, Penmachno, Penmaenmawr and Llangystennin, a cross section of communities in the county's social patchwork.⁶

Church efforts, however, were not sufficient so that rate raising school boards were formed in many places. Once established, their immediate task was to fill remaining gaps in school provision. Thus was launched an extended period of large scale publicly subsidised elementary school building throughout England and Wales.

In six years from 1871 to 1877, fifteen school boards in Caernarvonshire spent nearly £27,000 providing a network of new elementary schools in various parts of the county⁷. Boards were preoccupied with school building problems and procedures - with such tasks as finding and selecting school sites, purchasing land, drawing up plans, inviting tenders for building, signing contracts, negotiating loans and supervising construction. The extent of the increase in capital expenditure on schools can be gauged by comparing the £27,000 spent by fifteen Caernarvonshire school boards before 1877, with the aggregate school building grants of £2,135 sanctioned by the Education Department to support school building throughout the Principality under the grant aided voluntary system in 1865-6⁸. The sum spent by fifteen Caernarvonshire school boards exceeded the 1865-6 grants for the whole of Wales by nearly £25,000, while the sum expended by the school boards and the National Society together exceeded it by £32,000 - an excess in only one county of nearly 1,600 per cent!

Most capital expenditure in Caernarvonshire took place in the slate quarrying areas where the grant aided system had most obviously failed. The School Boards of Llanddeiniolen, Llanrug, Llanllyfni, Llanwnda and Llandwrog, accounted for nearly sixty per cent of the county's school boards's capital expenditure⁹. These boards built ten new schools - the Llanddeiniolen School Board at Penisa'rwaun (1871), Dinorwic (1872) and Rhiwlas (1872), the Llanrug School Board at Cwmyglo (1873), the Llanllyfni School Board at Penygroes (1872), Nebo (1873) and Talysarn (1876), the Llanwnda School Board at Rhostryfan (1876), and the Llandwrog School Board at Nantlle (1872) and Penfforddalen (1872)¹⁰.

The Llanberis School Board carried out major improvements and extensions at its transferred British schools in Llanberis (the Dolbadarn school) (1874), and Nant Peris (1874)¹¹. Not surprisingly, the same school boards had substantial school building loans from the Public Works Loans Commissioners, with the Llanllyfni School Board having loans of £4,982, followed by the Llanddeiniolen School Board with £4,691, the Llanberis School Board with £3,140 and the Llandwrog School Board with £2,710¹². The Llanwnda and Llanrug School Boards had somewhat less heavy loans of £1,850 and £451¹³.

One aspect of post-1870 efforts to build schools in the slate quarrying areas was the enthusiasm shown by smaller slate quarrying communities in pressing claims for a school. In Llanddeiniolen, the small communities of Rhiwlas and Penisa'rwaun-Glascoed both presented petitions to the School Board asking for their own schools, and backing up their requests with suggestions for school sites¹⁴. Community pressure was also exerted in the small quarrying settlements of Clegir and Ceunant - the first in the parish of Llanrug, the other straddling the parish boundary between Llanrug and Llanbeblig¹⁵. Though the villagers of Ceunant were denied a school in 1871, and again when they reapplied in 1874, on the grounds that there were not enough children to justify a separate school in addition to the schools at Llanrug and Waunfawr (under the Llanbeblig School Board) some two to three miles away, they persisted with renewed claims in 1881, 1888 and 1893¹⁶. In 1895, their persistence was rewarded when an infants school was opened in the vestry of the Ceunant Calvinistic Methodist Chapel¹⁷. In some respects, this school

was a continuation of the old chapel link which had been strongly marked in slate quarrying areas. Though the school was initially opened as a short term experiment its success was such that it was allowed to continue indefinitely. The small communities of Brynrefail in the parish of Llanberis, Cwmyglo in Llanrug and Tarrallt in Llanllyfni also pressed claims. The Cwmyglo claim for the enlargement of their infants school (built 1872) as an all age school was successful in 1879¹⁸. They backed up their claim with the results of a voluntary house to house census proving their community's 'needs'. Such pressures reflected the demand for education which came from the slate quarrying working class, and their strongly held belief that education was their sole means of personal and social improvement. Now that their schools were rate-aided and thus financially secure, and by being publicly accountable free from the danger of external interference, they pressed for them and the opportunities they offered, with an open and unfettered enthusiasm.

Board schools were also built in rural areas where the pre 1870 system had failed to provide adequately. All too often, however, new schools had to be imposed by peremptory order of the Education Department. The usual reason was the reluctance of local farmers to respond to the obligations and opportunities of the Act. The farmer-dominated Aberdaron, Bryncroes, Rhiw and Llanfaelrhys United District School Board had to be threatened with dismissal by a declaration of default, before its members consented to build the four schools found necessary to meet the educational needs of its district¹⁹. Even then, the schools were not built until 1880, ten years after the Forster Act. Other

rural boards, dominated by farmers, were almost equally slow and had to be pushed by the Department. The Maenan School Board in the Conwy Valley was actually dismissed in 1886 and new members elected. The dismissed members had wasted their time in party disputes and personal feuds instead of applying themselves to their district's educational needs²⁰. There were marked differences, therefore, in the responses of different communities in Caernarvonshire, and of dominant groups within communities, to the educational opportunities of the Act. Communities in the slate quarrying areas responded quickly and enthusiastically, those in the rural areas sluggishly and often under compulsion, while town communities coped during the 1870s and early 1880s with the alteration and improvement of existing schools. The history of post 1870 school building in the towns, with some exceptions such as Cricieth and Llandudno, where new schools were built in 1881-82, was that of 'incremental building' to meet extra needs as they arose²¹. Most arose in the late 1880s and 1890s, when considerable sums were spent on school building and adaptations.

The last two decades of the nineteenth century saw school boards and voluntary school management committees compelled to meet tighter school design and building regulations laid down by the Department. Initially, in the 1850s and 1860s, such had been the urgency of the country's needs, that premises were approved which a few years later would never have been sanctioned. Even in the 1860s, one HMI referred quite frankly to 'second rate institutions more or less imperfectly adapted for the accommodation of children'²². They suffered from a wide range of defects which, after 1870, were increasingly condemned. These

included inadequate ventilation, bad light through tiny small-paned windows, and insufficient or unsuitable forms of heating, usually grate fires throwing out inadequate heat and filling schoolrooms on windy days with clouds of smoke. Many pre-1870 schools had no playgrounds or cloakrooms. Others had unmacadamed playgrounds, impossibly muddy after rain, and impossibly dusty in dry hot weather. Some management committees allowed farmers or contractors to dump their materials in playgrounds; the Llanddeiniolen School Board was ordered to remove two dunghills from its Penisa'rwaun school in the 1880s²³. Lack of cloakrooms led children to leave their coats 'everywhere and anywhere', and after rain many schools were steaming and unhealthy²⁴. Others were far too small with inadequate cubic space per child, badly overcrowded and a danger to health, especially later in the century when more children attended school regularly. One parent at Waunfawr, charged with failing to send his child to school, told the Llanbeblig School Board in 1884, that 'his boy's health is always injured whenever he attends the school'²⁵. Other schools had no lavatory arrangements or insanitary facilities often lacking 'the first essential of decent seclusion'²⁶. Even before 1870, HMIs recognised that such schools would pass muster only in the short term. J.G.G. Fussell HMI described a large number of schools presented for approval under pre-1870 regulations as 'the surest indication of future disappointment and expense'²⁷.

After the Forster Act the Education Department demanded higher standards of school design. Many newer designs, especially after 1880, reflected changes in school organisation and teaching methods accompanying the large scale expansion of the late

nineteenth century: the provision of infants schools and kindergarden rooms, higher grade 'standards', cookery kitchens, craft workshops and gymnasia. By the mid nineties the progressive erosion of Payment by Results was changing elementary education.

New ideas about education were expressed in building designs increasingly recommended by the Department as models for school promoters. Building to these designs placed heavy burdens on school boards and voluntary school promoters, but the financially stronger boards were able to shoulder them more easily. As a result, board schools pulled ahead of voluntary schools in quality of buildings and facilities. These, in turn, helped them to pull ahead in other respects, so that an ever widening gulf was created in the effectiveness of board and voluntary schools.

Voluntary schools found it particularly difficult to meet Departmental building and design regulations. Essentially their problem was a shortage of cash. Deprived of initial school building grants in 1871, they faced mounting financial difficulties in building new non rate-aided voluntary schools, and adapting and improving older premises. They felt their difficulties particularly harshly in rural areas where traditionally their influence was strong. Their financial difficulties were so great that many Church schools were in danger of transfer to school boards and losing their *raison d'etre*. Such difficulties accounted for the pressure of their Parliamentary sympathisers in the 1890s to change their relationship with the State and qualify for rate aid. These attempts culminated in the Balfour Act's radical provisions for elementary schools in 1902. They also led to a recharging

of religious and political conflicts between Churchmen and Nonconformists.

Much of the work of building schools was carried out by local builders and contractors, more often than not, before the 1880s, working to plans and designs drawn up locally by amateur architects. Very often building the school was the most ambitious project the local builder had undertaken. Not infrequently the contract proved too much for many of them; they misjudged their costs and estimates, succeeding only in bankrupting themselves, and leaving the school half-built. Others did the work so incompetently that repairs were needed at once for such defects as leaking roofs, unsound doors and ill-fitting windows. So common was bad local workmanship that the Department began to turn down requests for extra loans from school boards to rectify faults in buildings only just completed. A note by one of the Department's officials relating to incompetent building for the Llanllyfni School Board in 1879 emphasised the point:

'I should not be disposed to allow of any loan', the official noted. 'The work has been badly done and we have no guarantee whatever that any new work will be better done. Welsh tradesmen are not to be trusted and I confess to having no confidence in the Llanllyfni School Board to see that the work is properly done. The only way to keep these people straight is to let them feel the consequences of their neglect to look after the work of the contractor'²⁸.

Some school boards responded by appointing stronger

managing committees to supervise improvements, as did the School Boards of Llanrug, Llanllyfni and Llanddeiniolen. Others remained slack: they were unwilling to share authority with local managers, jealously keeping power in their own hands.

Even after 1880 the general position improved only slowly. The Department had to appoint E.R.R. Robson, the London School Board's supervising architect from 1871 to 1889, as its consultant architect before there was a substantial improvement in the country as a whole²⁹. Robson was the leading authority on school architecture and influenced the design and construction of schools in many towns and villages. He travelled widely inspecting school sites, discussing the merits of proposed styles and design, and advising on work in progress. He had a strong influence on the design of two new, expensive 'Queen Anne' type board schools - one for girls and the other for infants - built by the Caernarfon School Board between 1896 and 1898 at a cost of more than £7,000³⁰.

The task of providing schools, adequate in quality as well as quantity, was to remain throughout the school board period. As average school attendances increased as a result of the more effective enforcement of compulsory school attendance, as more children stayed at school for longer periods after the general provision of infants schools and the universal raising of the school leaving age in the 1890s, and as more importance was attached to better school design, the burden of capital expenditure was increasingly felt by school committees and school boards. In addition ~~class~~rooms, lavatories, macadamed playgrounds, greater space inside the schools, bigger windows, 'American stoves', gas

lights, and better desks, became more and more necessary so adding to costs and putting intolerable pressure on many voluntary school committees³¹.

In conclusion, some measure can be given of the volume of school building undertaken in Caernarvonshire during the quarter century following the Forster Act. By 1895, £52,000 had been spent by twenty three of the county's school boards on capital building projects³². By 1903 the Bangor, Caernarfon and Llandudno School Boards had spent £13,505, £10,845 and £10,081 respectively on new schools, closely followed by Llanddeiniolen with £8,082 and Llanllyfni with £5,945. Even the recalcitrant Aberdaron had spent £2,556³³. In addition, an extensive programme of improvements and lesser alterations had been carried out. Churchmen had also spent considerable sums - though less than the school boards. The result was that by the turn of the century Forster's aim of providing an elementary school within reach of every child of school age had been achieved in Caernarvonshire.

By 1896 there were 119 elementary schools in the county earning annual grants, compared with 53 in 1869-70³⁴. There were thus 66 more schools; their number had doubled in twenty five years. Of the new schools, 43 were Board schools, 20 Church or National schools, 2 Roman Catholic schools, and 1 a granite company undenominational works school transferred to a school board in 1903³⁵. Though Anglicans had made a substantial contribution, most new building was done by school boards.

Board schools dominated the slate quarrying areas. There were 25 Board or British schools to 12 Church schools. In

reality their preponderance was even greater as nine of the Church schools were concentrated in Llandygai-Llanllechid where the Pennant family's contribution was outstanding. In the remaining slate areas there were only 3 Church schools with 214 scholars in 1896; there were 22 Board schools with 3,275 scholars³⁶. These figures indicate the strength of anti-Church, pro-Board radical working class feeling in these areas. Board schools also dominated the towns: Nefyn, Cricieth and Porthmadog only had Board schools; Board schools had by far the most pupils in Bangor, Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Llandudno³⁷. Only in Conwy did the Church have a monopoly. There were 12 Board schools in the towns against 7 Church schools and 2 small Roman Catholic schools. Three thousand four hundred and four went to Board schools; only 2,039 to Church schools³⁸. The position since 1869-70 had thus been transformed, and to an appreciable extent the Nonconformist urban middle class had fulfilled its political aims. Only in rural areas did the Church remain dominant with 35 schools, against 28 non-denominational, mainly Board schools. Church schools had 3,274 scholars, Board schools 2,180³⁹. The Anglican presence was thus still potent: Liberal Nonconformity did not feel it had a permanently secure hold. This explains the heated nature of the 1902 controversy; the Balfour Act revived Church schools just when many were about to die.

Yet since 1870 the Nonconformists had undoubtedly made great strides. Caernarvonshire was now well supplied with non-denominational, rate-aided, and publicly accountable schools. This was due to the school boards. Despite his predilections for the

voluntary system the Rev. E.T. Watts HMI admitted that 'the year 1870 will doubtless be regarded by many of the rising generation as the period which gave birth to the system which alone secured for them the chance of education'⁴⁰. Though qualitative deficiencies remained, especially in the voluntary sector, a universal network of schools had been established. Without State intervention mediated through the boards this could never have been achieved. The denominational and political tensions accompanying the expansion of elementary education persisted throughout the period, and flared up strongly in Caernarvonshire as attempts were made to strengthen voluntary schools from the 1890s onwards. Despite this, each locality and community now possessed a school, so that the essential pre-requisite for the achievement of educational policy aims had been fulfilled. In Caernarvonshire, some communities had responded far more readily and radically than others to the new opportunities of the Forster Act. The explanations for different responses lay in different social outlooks.

2. School Attendance

Though the difficulties of persuading parents to send their children to school recurred throughout the nineteenth century, there was a gradual but distinct change of attitude towards legislatively enforced compulsory attendance during the mid and late 1860s. Before the 1870s public opinion had only been prepared to accept the so called 'indirect mode' of compulsion. As we have already noted, this took several forms, but its limitations were increasingly clear. The provisions

of the 1870 Education Act should thus be seen as a major shift of informed opinion towards legally enforced school attendance. It was in 1870 that the State first acknowledged that new solutions must be sought to the problem. This is not to say that changes of attitude came uniformly, evenly, or easily to the individuals and agencies long concerned in the provision of schools.

Indeed, the National Society remained strongly opposed to legally enforced school attendance. Its well organised opposition made it a major issue during the six month debate accompanying the passage of Forster's Bill. On the whole, the British Society accepted compulsory attendance provided there were safeguards protecting the rights of parents to choose undenominational schools for their children. But three years after the Forster Act even the National Society conceded that a degree of compulsion was necessary, and three years later still, in 1876, when the Sandon Act was passed, it admitted that 'the difficulties in securing the attendance of many of the children of the poorest class have hitherto baffled all efforts to overcome them'⁴¹.

In the light of the National Society's reluctance to embrace compulsory attendance, and the long history of suspicion surrounding it, it was not surprising that the Forster Act was cautious, partial and non-prescriptive. It permitted school boards, should they wish to do so, to draw up compulsory school attendance bye-laws which had to be sanctioned by the Education Department⁴². Even so, the Act laid down the maximum penalties which magistrates could impose on parents who refused to comply: these amounted to a fine of five shillings or, in the last resort, a short and hopefully salutary term of imprisonment⁴³. 'School districts'

created under the Act but not under school boards, were unable to apply attendance bye-laws until the Sandon Act in 1876, though until then existing Factory Acts were assumed to be operating in them. In practice, this meant that for most of the 1870s the operation of compulsory school attendance was patchy. Even the provisions of the Sandon Act were permissive. They only went so far as to permit Poor Law guardians to establish themselves as school attendance authorities, and to give them the same discretionary powers to compel attendance in non-school board districts of their Unions as the school boards had in theirs. It was the Mundella Act in 1880 that made compulsory attendance statutory throughout the country. The principle of compulsion was thus only conceded by degrees over a ten year period. In some senses, the adoption of compulsory attendance was not completed until the Free Education Act in 1891⁴⁴. Experience of operating the 1870, 1876 and 1880 Acts showed that no policy of compulsory attendance could be successful unless school fees were also abolished. The build-up of large fees arrears at most schools in the 1880s, and the wholesale cancellation of debts, was a de facto recognition that free schooling was a necessary corollary to compulsory attendance legislation. It was an admission that, with prevailing working class living standards, universal compulsory school attendance could never be achieved without universally free schooling.

This gradualism reflected the reluctance which many felt about allowing the State to intervene in the primary relationship between parent and child, and thus threaten long cherished notions of parental 'authority', 'responsibility' and 'freedom'. The

compulsory attendance clauses of the 1870 and 1876 Education Acts reflected these doubts.

Though most school attendance authorities in Caernarvonshire adopted school attendance bye-laws relatively quickly, they not only operated a diverse range of regulations, but did so with widely varying degrees of commitment. The variety of 'total' and 'partial' exemptions from the obligation to attend school which their regulations allowed, were so bewildering that they became the primary cause of a countrywide problem of 'capricious migration', by which parents frequently moved their children from school to school as a means of evading the regulations. 'Capricious migration', in reality a much older habit, remained a troublesome and insoluble problem until the abolition of the school boards in 1902.

The diversity of attendance regulations was complicated by some local attendance authorities adopting 'total' as well as 'partial' exemptions, while others adopted total exemptions only. Furthermore, some authorities allowed 'partial' exemption to children who satisfied the third Standard of the Code, while others insisted on the fourth Standard or even the fifth. In addition, some required their partial attenders to attend school for fifteen hours a week; others only for ten hours. Some, such as the Llandudno School Board were even prepared to grant 'total' exemption to children who passed the third standard, others, such as the Bangor School Board not too far away, insisted on the sixth standard⁴⁵. In addition, school boards and school attendance committees laid down a confusing variety of 'walking distances' which children, not in the exemption category, were expected to

walk to school. Some added the further complication of linking 'walking distances' to children's ages. One or two boards, such as the Llanbeblig School Board had 'walking distances' varying for children of six, seven, nine and eleven years of age⁴⁶.

At the same time, boards bordering on Llanbeblig, had different 'walking distances'. An even greater complication was added in the 'contributory districts'⁴⁷. These had no schools of their own, but were required to make rate contributions to neighbouring school boards for maintaining a school or schools attended by children from their 'districts'. Yet they did not come under the jurisdiction of the school board's attendance bye-laws. Instead they remained under the Factory Acts until 1876, and then came under the attendance regulations of school attendance committees under the Sandon Act. Their regulations often differed from those of the 'maintaining' school board so that impossibly complex situations arose. This occurred, as late as 1899, in the Conwy Valley in the case of the non-schooled parish of Llanrhychwyn which made a rate contribution to the neighbouring Trefriw School Board whose school many Llanrhychwyn children attended⁴⁸. Yet the parish remained under the attendance and exemption regulations of the Llanrwst Poor Law Union's School Attendance Committee. Their regulations differed from those of the Trefriw School Board, and were more loosely operated.

Variations in the actual operation of bye laws, that is in the thoroughness with which they were applied, added enormously to the inherent difficulties of diverse regulations. The chaotic situation thus caused was made worse by the parallel operation of Factory, Mines and Workshops Acts. For a time, there were

doubts as to which sets of regulations should take precedence in each locality - whether those of the Factory Acts or those of the local school attendance authorities. Eventually the supremacy of the Education Acts was established, but the extent of bye law permutations and the very wide differences in their application by the local authorities concerned, made progress in securing better patterns of school attendance slow and uneven throughout the country, and in Caernarvonshire as much as elsewhere. An inquiry conducted in the county by Edward Roberts HMI in 1896, showed that many schools even under the same school attendance authority had different exemption regulations and that, in some areas, the regulations were widely ignored⁴⁹.

Not only were there widespread differences between school boards and school attendance committees in their operation of post 1870 bye laws but implementation sometimes varied under the same board. Quite often this reflected changes in the board's membership after triennial elections, and the strength of the views of new chairmen or leading members about the exercise of compulsory powers. Generally, most school boards and school attendance committees hesitated long before using their ultimate powers of prosecuting negligent parents in the courts. Exhortation and persuasion continued to be their first approach, usually combined with cajolery and threat, and the bribery of prizes. Members sitting on locally elected school boards were reluctant to take decisions bringing them into conflict with some of their neighbours. They were particularly reluctant to be cast in the role of **heartless** persecutors of poor and needy families. They were afraid it might make them unpopular, and as many were small businessmen or

shopkeepers they were also afraid it might effect their livelihoods. They were strongly aware that many defaulting parents, if taken to court, would not be able to pay their fines. A few of the worst offenders, who were prosecuted from time to time, not only lacked money to pay fines, but even goods to the value of five shillings which might be distrained in lieu. School board members were upset by the very thought of being responsible for imposing the alternative penalty of imprisonment, even on clearly 'undeserving' parents, though it appears to have had an immediate, if short term effect, in boosting attendances on the rare occasions it was used. Most school board members would probably have agreed with John Menzies, a member of the Caernarfon School Board, who stated that he had gone home from a meeting of the School Board's Attendance Committee in 1889 'quite ill and distressed at the poverty he had seen'⁵⁰. 'Almost in every case', he went on, 'it was impossible for the Board to proceed'⁵¹. Even when school boards occasionally acted more resolutely by launching the judicial process, they found magistrates reluctant to convict, either acquitting defaulting parents absolutely, or letting them off with a warning. Like many members of the school boards themselves, magistrates were reluctant to inflict fines on poor parents who had simply sent their children to work to keep their families 'independent'. Some magistrates also had a deeper ideological antagonism to the principle of compulsion by State directive. In 1878 the Llandudno School Board, which had itself decided only reluctantly to prosecute a number of negligent parents, threatened to report the Conwy magistrates to the Lord Chancellor for refusing to grant summonses to their School Attendance Officer, even though he had travelled by

train six times at public expense to fetch them⁵². In 1885, the Cricieth School Board protested against the decision of Porthmadog magistrates in dismissing a small number of trial cases brought by the Board 'in the absence of any proof of reasonable excuse', stating that 'the result will be to undoubtedly encourage bad attendance'⁵³. The Llanllyfni School Board went so far as to circularize other school boards in its district with a petition 'praying that the magistrates at Caernarfon should support the Boards'⁵⁴. The Llanllyfni School Board in its pursuit of enforcement by laws became one of the most active school boards in the county. Its members learned that their main problem, once they had taken the first step of braving the imagined hostility of local opinion, was avoiding public ridicule by having their prosecutions dismissed by a hostile or indifferent bench.

In view of the difficulties surrounding judicial action, Caernarvonshire's school boards and school attendance committees operated their bye laws with circumspect caution. Parents everywhere were subjected to exhortatory letters and circulars, to verbal appeals delivered in chapels and vestries, and to 'suasive' posters calling on them to send their children to school. These usually relied on a combination of appeals, to parental self-interest in trying to further their children's careers, and to social co-operation in the national civilizing crusade. A poster issued by the Caernarfon School Board in 1873, sought 'the cordial co-operation' of parents, 'in the task of raising your children in life'⁵⁵. Its appeal was based, first, on the personal advantages of education, and secondly, on the socialising theme that efficient education would combat the degrading and demoralizing social evils

of 'idleness, ignorance, lying, deceit, poverty, drunkenness and misery'⁵⁶. By the eighteen seventies the appeal to worthwhile values was being overtly pursued in many localities.

When such exhortations failed, 'Attendance Notices' were usually sent to defaulting parents pointing out their neglect and 'softly' threatening punitive measures. The Caernarfon School Board's early 'Attendance Notices' were benevolent in tone; 'May I kindly ask you to let me know the cause of absence?' they inquired, before continuing that, 'should no reply be made the Officer of the Board will undoubtedly summon you which I should much regret'⁵⁷. They were signed personally by the chairman of the School Board, and some were delivered by Board members, though this was done more often by the Board's compulsory attendance officer, - a task which in time became a regular part of his duties. In Pwllheli and Bangor, 'Notices' were reinforced by Town Crier and Bellman⁵⁸. Refusal to comply was usually followed, - but only after the delivery of several Notices, - by others summoning parents to appear before the School Board or its Attendance Committee, to give reasons for their continued neglect. Between 1880 and 1883, the Llanrug School Board gave 835 verbal warnings to negligent parents summoned before its Attendance Committee⁵⁹. Though most heeded the Board's warning and sent their children to school, not all of the 835 did so. So reluctant was the Llanrug School Board to resort to the law that only four of their most hardened cases were taken to court. In June 1880 alone, the neighbouring Llanddeiniolen School Board summoned forty nine defaulting parents before its Attendance Committee, but chose not to prosecute in the courts⁶⁰. The Minute Books of most school boards in the 1880s

contained long lists of parents summoned to appear before them, and warned to send their children to school. The continued use of such measures had a salutary long term effect on school attendance patterns in the 1880s, partly because the attendance authorities gained more confidence and began to act with greater resolution. They may also have realized that the adherence of public opinion to laissez faire principles was not as strong as had once been thought in social policy areas such as education. Boards may have grasped that much of the current absenteeism was simply a reflection of social need; that only a small residual minority of irresponsible parents wilfully flouted their bye laws.

In the late 1880s and 1890s local enforcement machinery was generally tightened by the appointment of better paid and full time compulsory attendance officers and the division of large school districts into sub-divisions, each under local attendance sub-committees often consisting of one or two school board members and co-opted teachers and neighbourhood representatives.

Although practically every school board appointed a compulsory attendance officer, initially they left their duties very vague. During the early 1870s most compulsory officers were only employed on a casual part-time basis, ^{and} usually paid small sums for performing specific tasks such as the compilation of periodic and highly suspect local censuses of children, and delivering 'Attendance Notices' to defaulting parents. Before 1880, the Compulsory Attendance Officer at Pwllheli was always referred to as 'the Persuader'⁶¹. But during the 1880s and 90s their duties were extended. In most places they became full-time officials, actively seeking truants and absentees, presenting

defaulting parents to school boards and occasionally presenting evidence in the courts. The Llanllyfni School Board even directed its Compulsory Officer 'if necessary to imprison parents who refused to meet distress warrants' following the imposition of fines⁶². He was also to call on some such parents weekly to collect their fines in small instalments⁶³. Some school boards encouraged their compulsory officers to improve 'results' by awarding them commissions or bonuses when attendances reached certain levels⁶⁴. During the 1890s the Caernarfon School Board began to employ sergeants stationed with the local garrison as compulsory officers, apparently hoping that a military approach would be more effective than that of their former civilian officers⁶⁵.

As for the construction of neighbourhood machinery, working almost on an informal network pattern, many school boards in Caernarvonshire followed the example of the Llanllyfni Board which divided its district into four sub-divisions centred on Penygroes, Talysarn, Nebo and Llanllyfni⁶⁶. Committees, to whom the School Board delegated its attendance responsibilities, were appointed for each of these centres. They did the work of the Board at the neighbourhood level, summoning parents to appear before them and warning them to send their children to school, or face judicial action in the courts. They also arranged frequent and well attended meetings to support 'the cause of education', while the School Board's Compulsory Officer liaised between the sub-committees and the School Board, and between each sub-committee and the others⁶⁷. By 1885 these arrangements were so effective that the headmaster of the Penygroes Board School wrote in his log book that the average daily attendance at his school exceeded

the number of places available, - a state of affairs with which the Llanllyfni School Board was 'very pleased'⁶⁸. Other school boards, adopting similar neighbourhood arrangements in Caernarvonshire, included those of Llanddeiniolen, Llanrug and Llanberis, all in slate quarrying areas still experiencing population growth. In **Nefyn**, local arrangements were based on chapels, absentees being categorised by religious denomination, and deacons recruited as 'suasive' agents⁶⁹.

Generally, attendance enforcement became more effective in the towns during the 1880s, when there was also a more determined outlook about its use, though instances of complacency still remained as at Caernarfon where the School Board's neglect of ragged children, and others described as 'habitual absentees' brought a Departmental threat of dismissal upon its head⁷⁰. Even after 1890, so few of the town's negligent parents had been prosecuted that the Education Department ordered the Board to send it a monthly list of prosecutions with the results in each case⁷¹. Only then, twenty years after the Board had adopted compulsory provisions, did it begin to tackle absenteeism seriously. This apparently fresh determination to act more resolutely at local levels in the 1890s, was a reflection, in part, of the Education Department's tighter supervision of policy implementation.

But in rural districts progress remained disappointing. In some, attendance machinery continued ineffectual till the end of the century, with the onus often placed on part time compulsory attendance officers responsible for extensive areas. Occasionally, these officers were expected to combine their duties with those of clerk to the board or even school caretaker. A few rural officers

were still part timers in 1902; one such, mentioned at an educational conference in Llandudno, was said to be a county court officer, billsticker, auctioneers man, town crier, collector of debts, school cleaner, bird fancier and organist, as well as compulsory attendance officer in an extensive rural parish⁷².

The greatest difficulty in the countryside was the well entrenched tradition of child employment, and the reluctance of their boards, usually dominated by farmers, to implement their powers. As we have noted, the Aberdaron United District School Board had to be threatened with a declaration of default in 1880 for obstructing the aims of the Forster Act by failing to build the four schools required in its district and showing the utmost disregard for education⁷³. At Llannor, the head teacher of the local National school complained to HMI in 1888, that there were 'dozens of children at home who ought to be in school', which was 'a disgrace to the Board'⁷⁴. Two lived within a hundred yards of the school⁷⁵. At the Deunant Board school the head teacher wrote in his log book in 1894, that 'the Compulsory Officer went to make enquiries for the absentees, a list of whose names he had been given So far from improving the attendance fell'⁷⁶. The Aberdaron School Board did not, in fact, prosecute a single negligent parent in thirty years. Other rural boards were almost equally reluctant to act. Even the Trefriw School Board, which showed more resolution, did not take its first negligent parent to court until 1902.

Although progress was at best erratic in the thirty years after 1870, the general situation had improved substantially by the turn of the century, and the turning point appears to have

occurred during the ten years from the mid 1880s to the mid 1890s. It is very difficult to measure the extent of the improvement in school attendance rates and patterns between the passage of the Forster and Balfour Acts. Yet this is a task which ought to be attempted to test the effectiveness of compulsory attendance provisions in the 1870s and 80s.

One means of measuring school attendance rates at the beginning of the 1870s is to set information contained in the 1871 Census Enumerators Schedules alongside figures of average attendances published in the appendices to the 1870-71 volume of the Minutes of Committee of Council. It should be remembered that the boundaries of parishes used for recording population census figures, did not always conform to 'school districts' established under the Forster Act, although in most cases they did. Still less did parish boundaries conform to actual school catchment areas. Yet such an exercise gives a broadly accurate impression of school attendance patterns at the time of the Forster Act. They also indicate the extent of the task still needing to be accomplished, and allow inferences to be drawn about the rate of progress made under the voluntary system and 'indirect mode'.

The following table - Table A - uses this approach for a sample of Caernarvonshire parishes⁷⁷,

TABLE A

To illustrate school attendance rates in a number of
selected parishes in Caernarvonshire in 1870-71

Parish	The number of children aged 5-13, according to the Census Enumerators Schedules (1871)	Average attendances according to Minutes of Council appendices
<u>1. Urban parishes</u>		
Bangor	1,583	879 (55.5 per cent)
Caernarfon	1,430	847 (59.2 per cent)
Llandudno	725	359 (49.5 per cent)
Ynyscynhaearn (Porthmadog)	815	482 (57.2 per cent)
<u>2. Slate quarrying parishes</u>		
Llanberis	520	375 (72.1 per cent)
Llanddeiniolen	1,394	574 (41.2 per cent)
Llanllechid	1,502	1,164 (77.5 per cent)
Llanrug	510	237 (46.5 per cent)
Llanllyfni	843	333 (39.5 per cent)
<u>3. Rural parishes</u>		
Bryncroes	178	- -
Llannor	205	69 (33.6 per cent)
Glynnog	294	- -
Penmorfa	214	74 (34.6 per cent)
Caerhun	252	78 (30.9 per cent)

Figures relating to the first four parishes in Table A, that is the urban parishes of Bangor, Caernarfon, Llandudno and Ynyscynhaearn, show that average attendances at schools, varying widely in standards of adequacy, ranged from 49.2 per cent to 59.2 per cent of the child population aged five to thirteen. The comparatively low figures for Llandudno reflected the importance

of private schooling among its new anglicized middle class and a lack of places for working class children. Bangor and Caernarfon produced surprisingly uniform returns, and the validity of the Bangor calculation can be corroborated by comparing it with the official return of E. Sneyd-Kynnersley. In June 1872, he counted 1,846 children between three and thirteen years of age, reckoning that 1,051 or 56.8 per cent were in average attendance⁷⁸. Allowing for the time difference, and the age difference of the sample, together with Sneyd-Kynnersley's supposed bias in favour of the voluntary system, his figures show a remarkable correlation with Table A and confirm its findings. The combined average return for the four towns in Table A show 55.3 per cent of children in the 5-13 age bracket attending school with a fair degree of regularity in 1871. The figures imply that a much higher proportion of children between the ages of seven and nine attended regularly, as there was a tendency to concentrate school going during those years when work prospects were at their lowest.

Figures for the next five parishes in Table A, - the quarrying parishes of Llanberis, Llanddeiniolen, Llanllechid, Llanrug and Llanllyfni, - were far less uniform. They reflect the wide differences in school provision made under the voluntary system. At Llanllechid and Llanberis the Nonconformists had been relatively active so that by 1870 both parishes had large and flourishing British schools, the best known of which were the Carneddi school in Bethesda (in Llanllechid parish) and the Dolbadarn school in Llanberis. In addition, five schools had been built in Llanllechid by Lord Penrhyn. The relative abundance of schools in both places accounted for their particularly high

attendance rates - a combined average of almost 75 per cent in 1870-71. The exceptionally high figure of 77.5 per cent at Llanllechid may also reflect the influx of children from the neighbouring parish of Llandygai. Average attendance figures for Llanddeiniolen, Llanrug and Llanllyfni were much lower, reflecting the grave shortage of schools in each of them. Generally, the slate area figures suggested that where schools were provided children attended them.

Figures relating to the rural parishes in Table A, - Bryncroes, Clynnog, Penmorfa, Llannor and Caerhun, - at first appear unsatisfactory, as three had no schools and therefore no figures of average attendance. But even rural parishes in which there were schools had low average attendance returns, with only about a third of all children between the ages of five and thirteen attending regularly. In toto, however, the general position in rural areas was worse than this, in view of the substantial number of unschooled parishes. These returns showed how great had been the difficulties of establishing and conducting schools in rural areas under the voluntary system, and the magnitude of problems facing them after 1870.

Unfortunately, the summary presented in Table A cannot be provided for the mid 1880s-1890s when the attendance regulations of school boards and school attendance committees were beginning to have an impact. To try and measure the improvement which had taken place in Caernarvonshire by that time, the historian has to rely on school attendance figures recorded in their log books by headteachers. Almost invariably they show an improving pattern of regular attendance, and higher average attendances almost

everywhere, but with rural areas still lagging behind the towns and quarrying parishes, where interest in education and enthusiasm for schooling remained strong.

In the schools of Llanddeiniolen, for example, average attendances rose dramatically from 77 per cent in 1884 to 89.4 per cent five years later⁷⁹. Table A had shown it at 41.2 per cent in 1870-71, when the parish badly lacked schools. The Llanddeiniolen School Board (formed in 1871) issued the following table in 1889 to show improvements in regular attendance in individual schools within the parish since 1884.

TABLE B

The Table issued by the Llanddeiniolen School Board to show the trend of attendances at five schools in the parish between 1884 and 1889⁸⁰

School	Percentage average attendance	Percentage average attendance	Percentage increase or decline
	<u>1884</u>	<u>1889</u>	
Bethel Board	73	93	+ 20
Deiniolen Boys Board	82	95	+ 13
Deiniolen Girls Board	80	93	+ 13
Rhiwlas Girls Board	73	85.5	+ 12.5
Dinorwic National	83	80.6	- 1.4
	78.1	89.4	+ 11.3

The table - Table B - shows a very dramatic improvement to a position of near full attendance in the quarrying villages of Bethel and Deiniolen where the School Board built new schools in central and accessible locations. The table also shows the

continuing relevance of the religio-political divide between Church and Nonconformity, and the success of Nonconformists in achieving the political objectives of their education programme. Not only did the overwhelming majority of Llanddeiniolen children attend non-denominational Board schools in 1889, but the Dinorwic National school was the only school in the table whose attendances deteriorated. It is significant that while attendances at the National school declined, those at the Board schools increased markedly. The percentage increase in average attendances at the four Board schools was as follows:

Schools	Percentage average attendances 1884	Percentage average attendances 1889	Increase or decline in percentage average attendances 1884-9
Bethel Board Deiniolen Boys Board Deiniolen Girls Board Rhiwlas Girls Board	77 per cent	91.4 per cent	+14.4 per cent

By September 1895, no fewer than 73 per cent of children at the Deiniolen (boys) Board school received prizes for 'unbroken attendance', with 'the palm for regularity won by Standard two, all the class with the exception of one boy having been present at each meeting of the school'⁸¹. At the Bethel Board school, the headteacher recorded a hundred per cent attendance during the whole of December 1895⁸². A child's view of the improving attendances may be gleaned from Professor W.J. Gruffydd's Memoirs (Hen Atgofion) where he describes the parental obsession with education in Bethel - an obsession which caused some parents

to force their children to school though plainly unfit through illness or exhaustion to go there⁸³. At the Llanrug Board school, average attendance in 1896 was 399 compared with 237 in 1871 - a rise of 68.3 per cent - although the population of the parish had remained almost static, rising marginally from 2,720 in 1871 to 2,758 in 1891⁸⁴.

Things were much improved in the towns as well. In Bangor, average attendances at the St. Paul's Board school rose from the base of 55.5 per cent in 1870-71, to 65.5 per cent in 1884, 75 per cent in 1888, and 83.7 per cent in 1892 - a substantial, if less dramatic, improvement than those in slate quarrying areas⁸⁵. At Caernarfon, the totals attending school rose from 879 in 1871 to 1,073 in 1881, and 1,274 in 1891, (a rise of 44.9 per cent in twenty years), - again at a time when the population was relatively static, and despite many criticisms of the Caernarfon Board's laggard attitude to attendance enforcement⁸⁶. By September 1901 average attendances at the Caernarfon (boys) Board school had reached an astonishing 96 per cent, the figures for each standard being as follows:

Standard 1	93.5 per cent
Standard 2	93.5 per cent
Standard 3	96 per cent
Standard 4	94.4 per cent
Standard 5	98.9 per cent
Standard 6	99.6 per cent

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By the turn of the century the first generation of children educated under compulsory provisions were themselves parents, and appeared to have a more meaningful grasp of the importance of

education than their own parents. Sending children to work was now less evident, and it was becoming generally accepted that the years between five and twelve or thirteen should be spent at school. In part, this reflected the impact of compulsory attendance provisions and more determined measures against child labour, but it also reflected rising standards of living enabling working class families to send their children to school more regularly. In addition, the abolition of school fees was not an insignificant factor.

Indeed, in Caernarvonshire's towns and quarrying districts the main obstacles to regular near-full attendances in the 1890s were exceptional events which could still disrupt schools for days, and occasionally weeks, on end. Spells of exceptional weather could affect attendances throughout the year. In summer, dry hot weather combined with the inadequate length of school holidays, (usually only ten to fourteen days), was an incentive to widespread truancy. In September, when all kinds of edible fruits and berries were available, there was an added temptation. In addition, extraordinary events such as militia parades, presbytery meetings, hiring fairs, cymanfaoedd canu (singing festivals), general and local elections, regattas, funerals, circuses and shipwrecks, were all cited as causae absentiae. In Caernarvonshire as a coastal county, attendances were often affected by storms and the attractions of resultant shipwrecks. The log book entry made by the headmaster of the Bryn croes Board school, in 1901, was in no way exceptional when he stated that, with 'the barque Stuart' having gone aground at Porth Mawr Llangwnnadr (Devil's Mouth) 'thither hundreds from far and near flocked'.⁸⁸ 'I would

not complain if the children took a day's opportunity to see it as it is a sight worth seeing but to go there every day alters the case entirely'⁸⁹. But shipwrecks offered far more than a 'sight worth seeing'. They gave opportunities for picking up flotsam and jetsam. The headmaster of the Trefor Board school wrote in 1883, that nearly all the children in his school absented themselves for a week in February 'to gather pieces of shipwreck for fuel'⁹⁰.

Towards the end of the school board period, epidemics were identified as one of the most serious causes of large scale non-attendance. Diseases ranging from scarlet fever, whooping cough, influenza, chicken pox, diphtheria and small pox sometimes decimated attendances for months, often causing large numbers of child deaths within a single catchment area. In 1884 the North Wales Chronicle referred to 'a terrible fever - diphtheria - which has done much injury to the educational cause at Llanddeiniolen bringing many of the children to an early grave and terrifying not a few of the border children into neighbouring schools'⁹¹. In Aberdaron an illness referred to as 'the distemper' reduced some children to total blindness in 1896⁹². What happened to their schooling following the outbreak remains problematical, as no provision was made for educating blind children in a remote place like Aberdaron. The effects of such diseases were usually exacerbated by the reluctance of school authorities to close their schools for sufficiently long periods, despite pressures from Medical Officers of Health. Most school managers were too concerned about the effects of closures on their grants, and were reluctant to take adequate measures to combat the spread of disease.

In the long term the failure of most managers to take appropriate measures was far more harmful to regular attendance, and totally injurious to the health of the children. The action of one school board in closing its school during a serious outbreak of scarlet fever in 1880 was so exceptional that the county's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Hugh Rees, wrote a public letter to its members expressing his 'warmest thanks for the public spirit they have deployed in closing their school during the epidemic'⁹⁴.

Only in rural areas was regular if periodic child employment still a factor in attendance policy by the last decade of the century. Farmers continued to condone the seasonal employment of children so that attendance enforcement by rural authorities remained half hearted. In May 1890 two farming members of the Llanaelhaearn School Board employed children in 'picking stones', and in 1891 the chairman of the Board was among the 'delinquents'⁹⁵. We have already noted how exasperated was the headmaster of the Llannor National school with the Llannor United District School Board in the 1880s. In 1889 he again complained that 'there seems to be no compulsion whatever in this district as the children come and go just as their parents please'⁹⁶. Eight years later, the headmaster of the Deunant Board school was writing to the Aberdaron School Board pleading that it should take more effective action against local parents who told him 'they would not be sending their children to school for the rest of the winter and would start sending them again in the Spring'⁹⁷. Three years later, the same headmaster was asking the board to make clear whether it intended to enforce attendance on wet days 'so that the few may not walk here for nothing'⁹⁸. Meanwhile, the headteacher of the Bryncroes

school under the same Board, noted that even in 1902-3 the average attendance was only 73 per cent - doubtless an improvement on past figures (vide Table A) but still far short of satisfactory, with over a quarter of the pupils failing to attend regularly⁹⁹. A typical entry in his log book in 1902 read as follows, 'Lizzie Williams, Lletty, has been absent for the last seven months - the child playing all day while the Board is quite content'¹⁰⁰. A few months later, when the Board was abolished under the Balfour Act, the same headteacher wrote with self-evident satisfaction, that 'Today (October 31, 1903) the Aberdaron United District School Board drew its last breath and expired'¹⁰¹. Less than a month after its replacement by LEA control, attendances had reached more than 80 per cent - the highest ever recorded¹⁰². But attendances had remained low in rural areas generally. At the Maenan Board school, in the Conwy valley, the average percentage attendance in 1899 had only been 66 per cent, the headteacher describing a large number of his pupils as 'regularly irregular'¹⁰³. The notion that the compulsory attendance clauses of the 1870, 1876 and 1880 Education Acts had led to universal regular attendance by the turn of the century would be a serious mistake.

Farmers had been encouraged to act obstructively by suggestions made by influential politicians such as Sir John Gorst. In 1899, he went so far as to say that the flow of migration from rural areas to the towns had led to such severe shortages of rural labour, that schools in rural neighbourhoods ought only to be conducted during winter months¹⁰⁴. Such an arrangement would release an extra supply of child labour to work on farms during the busy season. The British Society thought Gorst's argument 'open to

grave criticism'; it condoned child labour in the countryside while condemning it in the towns!¹⁰⁵ That such a suggestion was seriously advanced by Gorst, who became Vice President of the Board of Education under Balfour, encouraged farmers to continue their lukewarm operation of compulsory school attendance by laws¹⁰⁶.

Despite such difficulties much had been achieved since 1870, with the gradual adoption of more realistic means of enforcement in most parts of the country. Nearly nine out of ten children of statutory school age went to school more or less regularly in England and Wales by 1902, an achievement secured at the same time as the extension of the age limits of schooling. Even in the rural areas, headteachers were recording the arrival of children at school for the first time in the 1880s and 90s who did not know a single letter of the alphabet at the age of eight or nine, and who had previously either lived beyond the scope of bye law provisions or been allowed to ignore them. Two such, at Trefriw, were Margaret Jones 'a child of nine years who is not able to name any of the letters of the alphabet,' and Thomas John Owen 'a big boy from the mountains and therefore very strange with other children,'¹⁰⁷. It remains true that 'total' and 'partial' exemption regulations continued to vary from district to district, even from school to school, and that educational journals were still demanding the 'simplification and co-ordination of school attendance laws,'¹⁰⁸. It also remains true that children continued to be employed outside school hours, sometimes for long periods. This aspect of the child labour question drew increasing attention at the turn of the century. The journal, Educational Record, criticised long hours of employment before and after school

as detrimental to the physical, moral and educational growth of children, and in October 1902, a Bill was introduced in Parliament to enable local councils to regulate the employment of children in street trading during daylight hours, and prohibiting it entirely between the hours of nine at night and six in the morning, as well as forbidding the employment of children in 'injurious occupations' involving the lifting and carrying of heavy weights¹⁰⁹. Although the Bill was lost, showing that there was still resistance to government intervention, the trend of opinion was plain, and in 1903, twenty five hours per week, - still a considerable total, - was fixed as the maximum number for which schoolchildren could be employed legally outside school hours¹¹⁰.

Identified as an allied issue was that of tired and underfed children, often the same as the overworked. According to the British Society such children were 'incapable of intelligent attention and continuous industry'¹¹¹. 'So great is the mental and physical exhaustion of these unhappy scholars that they cannot profit by the instruction to which they listen'¹¹². There were demands for the amendment of the Shop Hours Act, and the Cruelty to Children Act, but a scheme proposed by a group of London School Board members to provide free or cheap school dinners was rejected by the majority, who opposed it as 'socialistic', and 'tending to loosen the bonds of parental responsibility'¹¹³. Its opponents claimed that it would lead to further demands, - possibly even for free clothing and housing, - so saddling ratepayers with an intolerably heavy burden. Instead of indulging such claims the London School Board declared its intention of 'tightening the sense of parental responsibility by severely punishing those parents who

were negligent'¹¹⁴. These attitudes reflected the continued resilience of laissez faire values, and the notion of parental responsibility, within the framework of strictly limited government intervention. The figures produced, and the kinds of areas under discussion, also implied the complex nature of the child employment problem and the still partial success of the attack on irregular school attendance and early **leaving**, despite the very real achievements of the 1880s and 1890s.

Yet there had been an indisputable improvement since the 1840s and 1850s. Figures issued by the Board of Education showed that the average duration of a school life in England and Wales in 1897 was 7.05 years¹¹⁵. This represented an improvement of 4.50 years since 1870, when the average duration had been 2.55 years, and an improvement of 5.60 years since 1847 when the Blue Books Commissioners had estimated the average duration of a school life in Wales as 1.45 years. Despite 'capricious migration', most children, in 1900, also concentrated their school life in one school. The greatest improvement in both respects had taken place after the gradual application of compulsory attendance following the 1870 Act.

Despite all the difficulties and failures, school attendance rates had improved in Caernarvonshire alongside the rest of the country. There were over 21,000 children on the registers of public elementary schools in the county in 1900, compared with an estimated 5,867 recorded in the Blue Books Inquiry of 1847¹¹⁶. Average attendances in 1900 were over 16,300 which was more than 75 per cent of the total¹¹⁷. As figures for rural areas, and infants schools were included in this calculation, they distorted

the substantially better rates achieved by most schools in the county's towns and quarrying areas. Even so, they represented a marked improvement on the immediate pre-1870 period when 7,566 had been in average attendance¹¹⁸. By 1903, the two essential preconditions for the successful achievement of educational policy aims had been secured: schools had been provided in every district in the county, and children attended them with a fair degree of regularity. But many problems remained. Above all, it was becoming ever clearer that attendance patterns were still tied to social conditions and family poverty.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

TEACHER TRAINING

As noted, Kay-Shuttleworth intended to achieve his social and educational objectives in partnership with the voluntary societies, creating a body of carefully selected and thoroughly trained elementary school teachers, to whom the task of civilizing the working classes could be entrusted. It was anticipated that five or six years would pass before the first set of 'apprentices' completed their carefully mapped out training. HMIs kept a close watch on the new system. Theirs was the task of selecting schools to participate, and guiding ^{all} those who joined towards Departmental goals whether as managers, teachers or 'apprentices'. Their most delicate task was assuaging the anxieties of older teachers, afraid of being displaced by newly trained professionals. It required considerable tact and personal relations skill. Many HMIs - aware of the older teachers' anxieties - tried to persuade them to become certificated by means of alternative regulations prepared for them¹. Many, however, were reluctant to do so; some felt they were too old to start a course of study, others were afraid of failing the examinations. Generally, they were anxious about losing career opportunities and social esteem in competition with newer and younger certificated teachers.

The Inspectorate kept a particularly close eye on pupil teachers. 'No clergyman in the land', wrote F.C. Cook, 'is more fully aware than H.M. Inspectors of schools that in dealing with them we are touching the very root of the national life, inasmuch as the sources from which the opinions of the working classes will be derived for many years, must be affected by the principles infused into the hearts and minds of these youths'².

Their family and social background, intellectual calibre and moral character, as well as their progress and development, were subjected to regular and searching assessment.

Most Inspectors were satisfied with the development of the system in its early stages, especially where it was well established. F.C. Cook, wrote, that 'of all the measures that have been devised, this has been incomparably the most efficient'³. A great deal of attention was paid to the selection of children as 'apprentices'. Though expected to be of good intellectual standard, even greater emphasis was placed on their social and moral qualifications. Socially they were selected from well reputed local families; as one HMI put it, 'from the most respectable families among the poor in each parish'⁴. In rural areas these were 'small tradesmen and yeomen', or 'upper servants in gentlemen's families'; in towns, 'the better and higher division of the operative classes respectable artisans, silk weavers, cabinet makers etc.'⁵ It was a calculated feature of Kay-Shuttleworth's strategy that pupil teachers be drawn from families not so socially advanced as to be out of sympathy with the rest of the children, and not so low that they 'are not likely to be endued with the principles and habits, or to possess that degree of influence which are requisite to raise the moral and intellectual condition of children in National Schools'⁶. As Kay-Shuttleworth intended, they were chosen from those ambitious to raise themselves socially, but happy to do so within the existing social framework. They 'were to be happy to be raised in, though not out of their natural station and (to) look upon their appointment as a high privilege'⁷. They were to feel that

their very selection gave them a stake in the social system.

Apprenticeship in schools lasted five years, and gave pupil teachers the experience of teaching and managing children, under close supervision, while furthering their own education in subjects they had to pass for a training college place. Their tuition normally took place before or after school hours, sometimes at seven o'clock in the morning or half past eight in the evening, and often on Saturday mornings as well, so that their time was fully occupied⁸. They also had to prepare lessons, and learn their homework for their examinations. They had little time to acquire knowledge in depth, still less for leisure. This again was deliberate policy: the aim was to produce teachers who could work long hours teaching the essentials of 'elementary' education to working class children. Competence in the three 'Rs and a smattering of factual knowledge were all that was aspired to. In terms of 'facts' the new teachers were superior to those they replaced, but were far less original than some of the older type.

By the late 1850s an increasing number of pupil teachers entered the system. Two hundred and sixty four were serving in Church schools in Wales (1855) and 393 in British schools in Bowstead's Inspectorial district including South Wales (1861)⁹. But their distribution was uneven. Urban areas were better served than rural areas, and large parts of Wales were barely touched. Small schools in rural areas found it impossible to provide the premises, facilities or teachers, to qualify, so that something like a dual system evolved. On the one hand, there were inspected schools concentrated in towns, and on the other, uninspected schools still dominant in the countryside. This duality

was reinforced as schools in towns especially London attracted certificated teachers from elsewhere. Teachers in towns were usually paid better salaries and could augment them with additional grants, such as those for training pupil teachers. Joseph Bowstead estimated that the earnings differential between headmasters in London schools and those in the best Welsh schools was two hundred pounds a year in the 1850s; that it was two hundred and sixty pounds between most schools in London and most schools in Wales¹⁰. The towns were thus magnets for certificated teachers looking for the best salaries. Town schools were also said to have more progressive school management committees. They were thought to consist of men with a greater commitment to education, and an interest in the welfare of teachers. In contrast, small schools in the countryside were thought to be under the thumb of an overbearing clergyman, a coterie of half-educated Nonconformist deacons or parsimonious farmers. In addition, many teachers were attracted by the novelty of an urban environment and the social opportunities it provided. Longueville Jones was soon commenting on the system's uneven development and its patchy impact in Wales. Furthermore, 'all the young teachers in Wales have a tendency to try their fortunes in England'¹¹. Jones was as disturbed by the social, as educational implications, of teacher migration. Not only were Welsh schools deprived of the best teachers, so that efficiency within the system varied, but those who left were harbouring 'ideas'; what he called 'fond aspirations and vanities'¹². Some had used training college education to acquire 'commercial situations' or to enter the Church¹³. The potential of pupil teachership as a means of social mobility was

thus identified early. Jones wanted something done to restore original aims by monitoring the attitudes of candidates more carefully, preventing those with social ambition from working the system to their own benefit. He saw them as a threat to stability: working class children would 'contract an indeferent bearing from having exhibited to their view the puffed up and conceited set of men who are now too often instructed with the training of youth'¹⁴.

In Wales these trends were reinforced by the absence of a State-aided Nonconformist Training College. This was due largely to Hugh Owen; initially he opposed a separate Welsh college to train teachers for British schools. He secured the rejection of a proposal before the committee of the British Society in 1843 to open a model training school at Bala (Merioneth) - already the educational centre of the Calvinistic Methodist and Congregationalist denominations¹⁵. In 1848 he remained silent in response to the offer of five hundred pounds by William Williams, MP for Coventry, to launch a fund to provide two Welsh colleges to train teachers for British schools¹⁶.

Hugh Owen explained his views in another Letter to the Welsh people published in Y Drysorfa in April 1845. In this, he gave three main reasons for opposing a Welsh teacher training college, and in favour of sending Welsh students to Borough Road. First, he was afraid that a Welsh college would be a second rate institution. Second, and this was central to his outlook, he intended British schools to end the social and cultural isolation of Wales. It was important, therefore, that Welsh teachers should be trained in England, by English teachers in the English language

and that they practice their art in an English model school¹⁷.

He wrote in Y Drysorfa,

'As our day schools are to be English schools in Wales it is of great importance that students while in the Training College should become accustomed to speaking English and to speaking it with a proper English accent'.¹⁸

In this, he concurred with the Blue Books Commissioners, seeing the Welsh language as a barrier to social and material progress. Like Kay-Shuttleworth he saw British schools as mission centres for the dissemination of civilized values; these needed the English language. The Rev. John Phillips agreed; in 1848 he wrote that 'the importance of establishing English schools in Wales can scarcely be overrated', and in 1853, quoting Matthew Arnold, he foresaw the day when the Welsh language had declined to the position of Cornish in Cornwall¹⁹. Hugh Owen's third reason for opposing a Welsh training college was the cheapness of educating students in London: nothing could have given him more satisfaction than his discovery that the 'best' training was also the least expensive. He reckoned that students required no more than six months training, which could be bought in London for six shillings a week, board and lodging included²⁰. This showed Hugh Owen's narrow view of the elementary teacher's status and intellectual needs.

In fairness to Owen and Phillips, it should be made clear that informed opinion concurred with their interpretation of the educational needs of Wales, believing that their suggestions met the Welsh people's genuine aspirations. Jelinger Symons was

convinced of 'the earnest and unprompted desire of the poor (in Wales) to acquire a knowledge of English'²¹. He did not doubt that 'any schoolmaster would starve if he sought to maintain a school for exclusively teaching the Welsh Language'²². Henry Vaughan Johnson agreed, that to teach English was 'the professed object' of all day schools in Wales²³; Welsh parents always told him, 'We wish our children to be taught English only; what good can be gained by teaching us Welsh?'²⁴. So hostile was Welsh public opinion to the Welsh language that it even opposed its use as the medium of instruction. Vaughan Johnson referred to 'the prejudice of Welsh parents against the employment of their own language even as a medium of explanation'²⁵. In this, Welsh public opinion was more extreme than the 1846 Commissioners, who condemned 'the Welsh stick' and other devices to stamp out 'Welsh', as counter productive²⁶. Lingen agreed with Symons and Johnson that Welsh parents without exception wanted their children to learn English; but he too advocated Welsh as a teaching medium. 'So long as the children are familiar with none other (than Welsh)', he wrote, 'they must be educated to a considerable extent through the medium of it, even though to supersede it be the most important part of their education'²⁷. It was 'the language of life' which had to be used if 'the language of lessons' was to be learned²⁸. He suggested a careful inquiry into bilingual methods such as those successfully used at the Venalt Works school near Swansea²⁹. He wanted Welsh to be the scaffolding - which could later be discarded - for building the edifice of English civilization in Wales. The problem was 'how to employ the old tongue as a scaffolding, yet leave if possible no trace of

it in the finished building'³⁰.

The Commissioners showed more insight on this issue than Hugh Owen and John Phillips, neither of whom appears to have considered the possibility of using Welsh as the medium of instruction in British schools. Neither condemned 'the Welsh stick', and unlike the Scottish and Irish Education Societies, the Cambrian Education Society, established on their model by Hugh Owen, ignored the bilingual approach³¹. In this respect, the National Society's Welsh supporters were far more flexible. National schools had long experimented with bilingual approaches; many Churchmen recommended the use of 'duoglott' books in their schools. Two Church training colleges had also been founded by 1856 and the National Society was still stressing that teachers in Welsh schools be 'qualified in both the Welsh and English Languages'³². Longueville Jones gave strong support pressing that more books be published in Welsh to make education more truly bilingual - 'of the possibility and indeed of the probability of the two languages existing and flourishing concurrently in the Principality', he wrote, 'I must repeat that I entertain little doubt'³³. His view is in marked contrast to that of Hugh Owen and John Phillips. In this respect, Hugh Owen's Benthamite preoccupation with efficiency and 'improvement' blinded him to the educational merits of bilingual education, even in attaining his own aim of spreading English civilisation and values in Wales. It also caused him to resist a State-aided Nonconformist training college in the Principality for close on twenty years.

It should be remembered that the South Wales Voluntaryists had already opened 'a Normal school' at Brecon (1846) 'for the training of teachers expressly for the Principality'³⁴. Their

decision was taken at a meeting in Llandovery (Carmarthenshire) held in the same month as the publication of Hugh Owen's letter in Y Drysorfa, proclaiming the superiority of Borough Road³⁵.

The Brecon Normal College provided graded courses for different categories of students as many had a scanty educational background. Apart from rejecting State aid, and providing a more flexible approach to courses, the college taught the 'British' system of school management and religious instruction, and 'British' pedagogical methods³⁶. Not surprisingly, many schools opened in conjunction with it were called 'British' schools. The Voluntaryists also shared Hugh Owen's view of the Welsh language, though less coldly; they thought the 'need' to replace Welsh was sad but unavoidable. The Rev. Henry Griffiths, one of the founders of Brecon College, gave his opinion that 'at the best, the vanishing for ever of a language which has been spoken for thousands of years is a deeply touching event. There is a melancholy grandeur in the very idea to which its bitterest enemies cannot be wholly insensible. Yet attached to it (the Welsh Language) as we are, few would want to postpone its euthenasy'³⁷. Voluntaryism would not have led to a network of Welsh language, or bilingual schools. The Voluntaryists were as dedicated to the dissemination of English as the State aiders of the North. The only difference was that the process was to take place within an independent context free of State interference. On the central issue of the aims of education they shared Kay-Shuttleworth's concept of mission, openly proclaiming that teachers trained at Brecon - the 'Normal College of Wales' - should 'be scattered throughout the country as so many missionaries' engaged in the work of civilisation³⁸.

Entirely dependent on voluntary subscriptions, the Brecon College faced a bleak future. The difficulty of maintaining Voluntaryist schools, most dependent on the support of the labouring poor and small tenant farmers, meant that its students' prospects of employment were uncertain³⁹. The college also lacked a model school for practice in the art of teaching and school management. In addition, the government of the college was cumbersome, its management committee consisting of sixty members drawn from five distinct denominations⁴⁰. They were divided even on the basic principle of State aid. Not surprisingly, Jelinger Symons described it as 'a hopeless enterprise'⁴¹. Its subscriptions in 1847, its second year, were only 31 per cent of those of the first year, and they fell to 13 per cent in 1848. In an attempt to attract more students the college moved to Swansea in 1849, but was forced to close in 1852 when it was converted into a middle class academy⁴².

Though their teacher training college failed, the Voluntaryists, unlike the Nonconformist State-aiders, had acknowledged the need for a training college in the Principality to meet its special needs. In six years the Brecon College 'trained' about a hundred and forty students, some of whom were still teaching in 1866. It had also inspired the founding of 120 to 130 Voluntaryist schools some forty five of which became State aided British schools, while others survived into the late eighteen sixties as small quasi-British Voluntaryist schools⁴³.

Even the belated establishment of a Welsh State aided Nonconformist Training College resulted from the failure of a more ambitious project. As a committed utilitarian, Hugh Owen supported

the idea of middle class education and wanted a college in Wales on the model of the Queen's Colleges in Ireland. As non-denominational colleges offering a broadly utilitarian curriculum they appealed strongly to Owen, anxious to rectify the glaring inadequacy of educational provision for the middle classes in Wales. The Queen's Colleges also met the aspirations of the middle classes themselves. They were eager for access to education and training leading to careers in business, industry and the liberal professions. In a sense Owen also thought of the Queen's College as a seminary for the new governing class in Wales. Though willing to concede entry to exceptionally able working class boys he saw the college as an essentially middle class institution⁴⁴. To Hugh Owen it was only natural that the education system should reflect the class structure.

His failure to win a government grant for a Queen's College during a period of economic retrenchment following the Crimean war, persuaded him to turn to the 'second best' alternative, a teacher training college⁴⁵. As a member of the British Society's Central Committee he was also aware of Borough Road's growing difficulties in meeting the needs of Welsh students, while the establishment of the Anglican North Wales Training College in new buildings at Caernarfon (1856) gave an additional incentive. Having accepted the inevitability of postponing a middle class college and seeing that prospects for a Welsh training college were brighter, he committed himself wholeheartedly to the new scheme.

Once again he recruited the unstinting assistance of John Phillips, and the support of Nonconformist leaders in North Wales. Initially, the aim was to establish a college serving

needs of North Wales, and Bangor was selected as its best location⁴⁶. The Bangor British school also provided a model for student practice in teaching and school management. Bangor's choice indicated the continued relevance of the North-South divide within Wales; on this occasion reflecting the denominational differences between North Wales Calvinistic Methodist State aiders, and the older Dissenting Voluntaryists of the South.

Once the decision to establish a training college was taken, John Phillips worked tirelessly to raise funds. He travelled throughout the Principality making appeals for support to all kinds of organisations, chapel congregations and wealthy individuals. Occasionally he was rebuffed in South Wales but Hugh Owen gave him constant encouragement. Eventually the college was opened in temporary premises in the vestry of the Twrgwyn Calvinistic Methodist Chapel (1858), with fourteen students of whom eight were Queen's Scholars. John Phillips was appointed first Principal. In 1863 new purpose built buildings were opened costing £13,500, with a government grant of two thousand pounds⁴⁷. The rest of the money was raised voluntarily. Most came from Calvinistic Methodist sources; only £120.1.5½d. or 2.4 per cent came from the Congregationalists and Baptists⁴⁸. The Bangor college was also essentially a North Walian venture - 82.2 per cent of the money was raised in North Wales, Liverpool, Manchester and Chester; only 14.2 per cent came from South Wales⁴⁹. Caernarvonshire contributed £3,667.3.8½d. or 32.2 per cent, while Anglesey's contribution was larger than that of Glamorgan or any other South Wales county⁵⁰. Bangor Normal College was therefore an overwhelmingly Calvinistic Methodist and North Walian institution.

It took many years to become a Welsh national institution training teachers for the non-denominational schools of Wales.

The first annual report of the Bangor Normal College paid tribute to Hugh Owen and John Phillips for their 'untiring labour and enthusiastic zeal' in founding the institution⁵¹.

The educational historian must assess their work in the light of their basic aims which were threefold: first, to supply Wales with trained teachers to facilitate the extension of undenominational State aided education, so diminishing the influence of Church schools and denominational teaching; second, to create the infrastructure of schools for the spread of English civilisation and values, so promoting the social and material improvement of their fellow countrymen; third, to create an intellectual and social climate favourable to the inception of a new political order in Wales based on the socio-political aspirations of a rising middle class strongly imbued with the moral ideology of Protestant Nonconformity. In these directions, Hugh Owen and John Phillips personified the peculiar dynamic of mid-nineteenth century Welsh Nonconformity, so productive of political and social energy.

The new training college at Bangor opened against a backcloth of mounting criticism of the pupil teacher and teacher training processes and of the direction of elementary education policy. The rising tide of doubt about the outcome of educational expansion involved a suspicion, both of the new professionalism of teachers and the growing expertise of the Inspectorate. There was a belief that the Inspectorate had divorced itself from its original task of monitoring the efficiency of schools and become too closely identified with the interests of teachers. The force

of this criticism was reflected in two sets of regulations issued by the Education Department as the Minutes of 1859 and the Revised Code of 1862, both of which checked the expansionary trend in teacher training, and dented the morale of the developing 'service'.

The 1859 Minutes rested on the assumption that teacher supply in London reflected the position throughout the country. The Education Department believed that the supply of certificated teachers everywhere was outstripping the needs of schools. The Minutes of 1859 thus stipulated that no certificated teacher should train more than four pupil teachers at a time⁵². It was thought that cutting down the numbers being trained would force school managers to take up the supposed glut of certificated assistants. The Minutes also sought to check abuses of the pupil teacher system by those already said to be using it as a route to other employment. They thus appealed to a powerful section of public opinion, claiming to cut public expenditure and check abuses.

Almost without exception the Welsh Inspectorate commented unfavourably, predicting that their cumulative effects on Welsh schools would be harmful. Joseph Bowstead, Daniel Fearon and J.D. Morell all felt that the Minutes were based on false logic; that, if managers were forced to cut pupil teachers, most would restore an inefficient monitorial arrangement⁵³. The Minutes were particularly serious for schools of up to four hundred children, often training fifteen pupil teachers at a time, and regarded as model schools for their districts. They were equally serious for Wales. In Wales, the main problem was the under production of certificated teachers and the inability of school managers to employ pupil teachers by bringing their schools under Committee of Council grants. It was

doubly unfortunate that the Minutes were issued just as the Nonconformist State aiders had belatedly recognized the needs of Wales.

Three years later, in 1862, the Revised Code exacerbated the situation, reinforcing the 1859 policy and imposing a deteriorating teacher-pupil ratio. The Code stipulated that no school be allowed to train a pupil teacher unless the certificated teacher had eighty nine pupils under his supervision. Even then, only one pupil teacher was allowed for the next forty pupils⁵⁴. This meant that certificated teachers assisted by a single pupil teacher had to conduct schools of up to 129 pupils. Most inspected schools in Caernarvonshire were in this category. In practice, whereas each pupil teacher, on average, had twenty five scholars under his charge in 1846, he had 36 after the 1859 Minutes and 54 under the Revised Code; Kay-Shuttleworth condemned these ratios as 'preposterous'⁵⁵. At the same time, indenture changes allowed pupil teachers to terminate their contracts at six months notice, and government payments to teachers training them were withdrawn. In addition, the instigation of Payment by Results and the government's refusal to sanction a teachers pension greatly reduced the attraction of a teaching career.

The Revised Code was followed by a collapse in the number of pupil teachers throughout England and Wales, from 16,277 in 1861 to 10,981 in 1866⁵⁶. Equally important, there was a disastrous decline in their quality. Both these factors affected the training colleges. Two, Highbury and Chichester, were compelled to close, and colleges generally suffered cuts in numbers⁵⁷. Students at the Anglican North Wales Training College at Caernarfon

fell from 42 to 21 between 1862 and 1865, while Bangor Normal College with accommodation for 41 never had more than twenty five students between 1862 and 1871⁵⁸. The tragedy of the situation lay in the serious underproduction of teachers in Wales.

Furthermore, Welsh witnesses told the Pakington Committee in 1866, that the shortage of certificated teachers was the most serious obstacle to the opening of schools - more serious than the shortage of funds, or finding school sites⁵⁹. Bangor Normal College's difficulties were illustrated in 1866 when only twelve candidates passed its entrance examination; even seven of these were so weak that they had to attend preparatory classes before starting their training⁶⁰. For some years the college's future was in jeopardy. Not surprisingly, its Principal, John Phillips told the Pakington Committee, 'Our college is not full because we are not able to find a sufficient number of candidates in consequence of the action of the Revised Code'⁶¹.

The reactions of the developing education 'service' to the new teacher policy launched in 1859 and confirmed in 1862 were mixed, but there was undeniable force in some criticisms. Several HMIs were particularly upset, especially if they had played a part in teacher training during the eighteen fifties. J.D. Morell regretted the new policy's impact on the professionalism of teachers. 'There can be no doubt', he wrote, 'that the first ten or fifteen years after the issue of the Minutes of 1846 were years of great educational enthusiasm. This has undoubtedly in great measure died away. The difference in this respect is daily perceptible to those whose life takes them among teachers, pupil teachers and managers'⁶². Collectively teachers were too weak to

influence the shaping of policy, but individual teachers recorded their feelings in their log books, many particularly regretting the decline in pupil teacher quality. Teaching was now so unattractive, that many schools could no longer afford the luxury of 'selecting' apprentices. Instead, they had to take what was available. Even before the new policy, there had been a developing problem as economic prosperity diverted able children, particularly boys, to better paid jobs. Able pupil teachers, only getting eight to fourteen pounds a year, facing large classes and constant strain, were already difficult to find. But the new policy made it many times worse. From now on, a substantial minority of pupil teachers were mediocre, second rate or indifferent. A few were so unsuited to teaching that they and their teachers were in a constant state of strife. As Kay-Shuttleworth wrote in 1868, 'the quality of pupil teachers has grievously fallen off',⁶³. Yet few were ever expelled; finding better replacements was too difficult. The pupil teacher situation was to remain unsatisfactory for twenty years.

Inspectors, teachers and other educationists also criticised new teacher training policies before the Pakington Committee in 1866. Their criticism persuaded the Committee to reject a suggestion that headteachers should not have to be certificated before their schools entered annual examinations; that annual grants should be allocated solely on examination results. This was a major attack on teacher training, training colleges, and the professionalism of certificated teachers. Welsh witnesses of all denominations and politics, - men as diverse in religious and political allegiances as John Phillips and the Rev. John Pryce,

secretary to the Bangor Diocesan Education Board, united in defending new standards created for the teaching profession, by Kay-Shuttleworth's teacher training system⁶⁴. In this, they were at one with authoritative English witnesses such as H.W. Bellairs, HMI since 1844; Patrick Cumin later Permanent Secretary to the Education Department, Frederick Temple, future Archbishop of Canterbury, and B.F. Smith, an influential Diocesan Inspector in the south of England⁶⁵. It was J.P. Norris HMI, who made the most spirited defence of Kay-Shuttleworth's original policy, reiterating that teachers were not 'mere instructors', but 'a humanizing and civilizing influence training the childrens character as well as instructing their minds'⁶⁶. He defended training colleges for giving students the opportunity of 'living in a well ordered society and in daily contact with superior minds'⁶⁷. B.F. Smith referred to the certificated teacher as 'the keystone of the whole fabric of improved education in England', defending the 'Certificate' as 'the fulcrum upon which we have raised the state of education from its former position'⁶⁸. Kay-Shuttleworth himself entered the fray, making a passionate defence of his teacher training system and the motives informing it, and launching a sweeping attack on the policy changes of 1859-62. Kay-Shuttleworth adhered to his original concept of elementary teacher as social missionary. As he wrote in his Memorandum on Popular Education in 1868,

'To have been five years as an apprentice pupil teacher whose whole conduct was under the eye of the teacher and the clergyman - to have passed every year a stringent examination and obtained a certificate of

good conduct - to have entered a Training College after a searching examination, and to have pursued studies for two years, passing a further examination at the end of each year of training under vigilant guardianship affords a warrant for reliance on character which the conduct of the teachers so certificated has justified. No sufficient substitute has been proposed for this prolonged trial of character and conduct'⁶⁹.

For the Revised Code he had nothing but contempt. 'It has constructed nothing,' he wrote, 'It has only pulled down. It has disorganized and threatens to destroy the whole system of training teachers These ruins are its only monument'⁷⁰.

These criticisms and the adverse effects of new policy on teacher recruitment persuaded the Department to issue the so called Life Boat Minute in February 1867. This gave extra grants to pupil teachers completing their training, and going on to training college. It was an administrative device, encouraging more pupil teachers to stay the course; an acknowledgement of declining teacher recruitment. Kay-Shuttleworth described it as 'an improvement in the right direction', but its effects were marginal⁷¹.

The log books of elementary schools in Caernarvonshire reflected the dissatisfaction of teachers with the quality of many pupil teachers in the 1860s and 70s. They also showed pupil teachers frequently leaving their schools to take more lucrative jobs outside. Many parents encouraged them to do so, being ready to pay heavy fines for breaking their children's indenture

agreements. In 1875, one parent at Llanddeiniolen paid six pounds for breaking his son's agreement, and in 1877 three pupil teachers were withdrawn from Board schools in Bangor for other employment⁷². One went to Liverpool, another 'to work on the railway', and as for the third, the School Board declared that 'it did not want to place any obstacles to J.O. Fritchard's advancement in life'⁷³. Another left the Board's service in 1880 'to enter a merchant's office'; another in 1883 'became an engineer with the LNWR Company'⁷⁴. The policy changes of 1859-62 did nothing to check abuses by those who used pupil teaching to gain extra education as a means to better paid jobs. On the contrary, the practice became more common. The demoralizing effects of pupil teacher withdrawals were reinforced as headteachers were forced to accept replacements often even more unsuitable than those who left.

The quality of pupil teachers was central to the well being and success of schools; headteachers were nearly everywhere dependent on them for their teaching staff, and government grants reflected their quality. In 1880 the staffing complement of four Board schools in Bangor was four headteachers and sixteen pupil teachers⁷⁵. At Llanrug, headteachers at four schools depended on nine pupil teachers and four monitors (trainee pupil teachers)⁷⁶. As late as 1895, out of a teaching staff of twenty nine at the three Caernarfon Board schools, seventeen were pupil teachers⁷⁷. Some taught between 60 and 80 children so that the tone and discipline of a school depended on their calibre and commitment⁷⁸.

Unfortunately, after the changes of the 1860s, both were often poor. Many pupil teachers were so unsatisfactory that they drove their headteachers to desperation, sometimes leading their

classes to the brink of insurrection. Many absented themselves from school or were hopelessly unpunctual; this mirrored their haphazard attitude to teaching. By not turning up, or simply disappearing in the course of the day, they often succeeded in upsetting discipline and organisation. The following record of pupil teacher unpunctuality at the Caernarfon Board school during one week in 1877 was indicative of this laxness,

Table showing pupil teacher unpunctuality at
the Caernarfon Board School, 23-30 July, 1877⁷⁹

Name of pupil teacher	Number of minutes lost
William Roberts	90
Peter Hughes	120
Richard Green	0
Benjamin Jones	10
Thomas Lacey	90
William Lewis	120

A few of them indeed were almost as 'regularly irregular' as some of the pupils. Headteachers openly condemned them in their log books, exposing their feeble excuses in the hope that school managers would tighten discipline, which they seldom did. As late as 1897, the headteacher of the St. Paul's school at Bangor, exasperated by his pupil teachers, wrote of one who had failed to turn up for the umpteenth time,

'Being suspicious of his plea of illness I rode over on my bicycle and found that he had not prepared his work and that his health was not affected although

his mother said he had contracted a bad cold and that she had given him medicine to get him to perspire. But he came to school in the afternoon'.⁸⁰

Two pupil teachers at Caernarfon turned up so late that the doors had been locked. They upset discipline by impertinently demanding entry and rattling the latch vigorously'.⁸¹ Eventually, the headteacher launched a system of fines by which pupil teachers more than five minutes late paid a ha'penny fine⁸². But this measure failed: they refused to pay. The scheme was a total flop: only the headteacher himself ever paid.

Even when they attended, some pupil teachers were difficult. Uncommitted to a teaching career, they were a source of aggravation to headteachers whose job depended on their school's results. Whether from apathy, high spirits or sheer indiscipline an unsatisfactory relationship existed in many schools. That some teachers were themselves patently inadequate as pupil teacher instructors made matters worse. Not surprisingly, frequent clashes took place: school routine was disrupted, log books were filled with tales of woe.

The headteacher of the Caernarfon Board school wrote that, when he admonished a pupil teacher for 'idleness and inattention' telling him 'I might as well place a baby before the class', the pupil teacher invited him to 'try it' and walked out'.⁸³ At Penygroes two pupil teachers, who had fallen out, were found fighting on the schoolroom floor, with their pupils forming a ring⁸⁴. At Trefriw National school the headteacher wrote, that the pupil teacher 'put it into the minds of the class to mob me if I should punish the offender', a boy who when 'singing a hymn at

the close of the school made an unusual squeak'. He went on, 'I find there are many more instances when she has acted in direct opposition to my wishes when out of sight'. The headteacher of the Trefor Granite Company's school, saddled with an unsatisfactory pupil teacher, wrote that 'Pupil teachers should be picked out of well regulated families, fairly successful in the world, otherwise there is scarcely a chance of ordering them during their apprenticeship'. His own pupil teacher was unpunctual, 'went away from lessons without reporting himself', smoked and led his pupils to do the same. On one occasion 'he went up the road with Standard IV boys and all were smoking'till they smelt all over the classes'. The headteacher of Cricieth Board school was so exasperated by one of his pupil teachers that he gave the Board an ultimatum: either it expelled the pupil teacher or he would resign. Among other things, the pupil teacher was said to have been 'in the habit of intimidating some of the children to bring him presents or they would be punished'⁸⁹. The headmaster of the Waunfawr Board school refused to be responsible for a pupil teacher who had failed his examinations so many times that the HMI had threatened to cut the school's grant if he failed again⁹⁰. At the Caernarfon Board school, the headmaster wrote of one pupil teacher, 'I am afraid that to end my trouble with this wicked, daring and impudent boy I will have to ask the School Board to expel him'⁹¹. On one occasion he behaved so badly that the headteacher 'took hold of him and shook him and threatened to punish him like the other boys'⁹². At Bangor, all the pupil teachers were summoned before the School Board in 1874 to be 'admonished as to their defects'⁹³. Though a minority, albeit

sizable, disruptive pupil teachers had a serious effect on schools. The 'Life Boat' Minute had little effect in restoring pupil teacher quality nor did it stem premature withdrawals and early termination of indentures.

Quantitatively, however, teacher supply improved in the 1870s following the readoption of expansionary teacher training policies, necessary for implementing the Forster Act. The major drive to build schools and improve attendances led to a growing demand for teachers. Coming on top of the shortage of certificated teachers in Wales before 1870, this gave the Bangor Normal College a crucial role to play. David Williams, the British Society's South Wales agent, successor to William Roberts (Nefydd), wrote in his Report for 1871, that 'I see clearly that our progress is likely to be seriously impeded by the want of trained teachers unless means can be devised to increase the supply'⁹⁴. With the transfer of many British schools to school boards he wrote in 1872, 'It is evident that the one (remaining) great work of the Society in Wales is to provide qualified teachers. Unless this be done on a much more extensive scale than at any former period, our machinery must come to a standstill'⁹⁵. The Bangor Normal College's Report for the same year showed a recovery in teacher demand. No fewer than seventy candidates sat its Christmas entrance examination in 1873, compared with twelve in 1866⁹⁶. Although forty-six of the seventy candidates passed, only twenty nine were admitted so that successful candidates were now turned down⁹⁷. There were as many as fifty two students in residence in 1872, 'exactly double the average for the first thirteen years from the opening of the college to the end of 1870'⁹⁸. By 1873, the number of students

was sixty and the college's prospects transformed⁹⁹. At the same time, a second State-aided Nonconformist training college was opened at Swansea in 1872¹⁰⁰. The new college, training female students, occupied buildings previously housing the old Voluntaryist Training College. In the eighteen eighties, Swansea Training College was enlarged for seventy students. Bangor Normal College then became the acknowledged Nonconformist training college for men in Wales, and Swansea Training College its sister institution for women.

For the rest of the century, there was little uniquely Welsh about the ethos of the Bangor college. Like other training colleges its routine was marked by tight discipline, a minutely detailed time table and an astonishing range of subjects. All were taught under the stimulus of competition, not just between students for the title 'top man', but between rival colleges each vying for 'top place' in the Department's 'merit list'¹⁰¹.

Bangor's students were kept working throughout their waking hours. Their time table commenced at 7 o'clock in the morning, so that students got up between 6 and 6.30. Their day was strictly organized until eight o'clock at night¹⁰². Their only sustained break came on Saturday afternoons, but they had to be back for another 'study period' after tea¹⁰³. Sunday was devoted to three attendances at a place of worship¹⁰⁴. The college had no playing fields and there were no team games; neither was there a gym. According to one student, drafts was the only game possible; their only physical exercise was 'going for a walk'¹⁰⁵. The college was thus conducted within Kay-Shuttleworth's 1846 strategy.

As might be expected, college teaching kept the needs of elementary schools well in mind. Subjects included Reading, Writing, Dictation, Recitation, Spelling, Composition, Etymology, Geometry, the Principles and Practice of Arithmetic, Mensuration, Algebra, Euclid, Religious Instruction, Natural Philosophy, History, Geography, Mapping, Drawing, Music, Singing and School Management. Students were given the option of being taught Welsh in the form of translation exercises during the college's earlier years, but it was never a popular subject; public opinion was against it as a 'useless' subject for secular education. Twelve students passed it in 1860, but only seven in 1863, and by 1864 the number was down to three¹⁰⁶. When the Revised Code restricted school syllabuses for grant earning purposes, the pressure to abandon Welsh was irresistible, and it was dropped altogether. It appears to have been replaced by Latin - a substitution making little sense for students trained to teach in Welsh schools¹⁰⁸. But little was taught about Wales. A former student wrote that when he was at Bangor in the 1870s, he did not hear a single word about Wales, the Welsh Language, Welsh music or Welsh culture¹⁰⁹.

Science subjects included Botany, Biology, Human Physiology, Astronomy, Physics and Physiography. The college had no science laboratories and only one piece of scientific equipment, a microscope, serving each student in turn¹⁰⁹. Science was almost wholly based on text books. One student, later a University Professor, wrote that even 'Physiography' was taught from a book, despite examples in Snowdonia of the different features the students were required to learn. In the course of two years his tutor never mentioned the local environment¹¹⁰.

This student summarised the college's idea of education as a process of cram, - learning and memorizing facts at the expense of intellectual training and understanding. The college's greatest disservice was its influence on generations of teachers who imitated its methods, overloading the minds of their pupils with an endless stream of disjointed facts, and ignoring the need to foster their interests, develop their understanding or open their eyes to the world about them. The ethos of training college education was 'harmful to the minds and personalities' of teachers and pupils^{lll}.

An important area of the syllabus was School Management, intended to bring sound teaching practice to the attention of students. It consisted of lectures on topics such as 'Keeping the Register' and 'the Gallery', and school practice at the college's model schools - the Garth and St. Paul's Board Schools. John Lloyd Williams, the former student, described the lectures as 'poor' and 'unprofitable'. Because schools were simply regarded as outlets for repeating facts learned in college, even the periods of practice were valueless. Williams never received any constructive criticism or advice from his tutors, nor in his view any useful guidance to improve the content or style of his teaching.

The system of Payment by Results, ushered in by the Revised Code (1862), was in large measure responsible for the continued inflexible regime of the colleges, though the 1846 Minutes had never conceived them as anything but seminaries for teachers capable of teaching the 3Rs and civilized behaviour. Superficiality, and the rote learning of facts, were hallmarks of teaching training until the eighteen nineties, when changes

permeated the colleges following the erosion of Payment by Results, and the inception of a more liberal educational regime in the schools.

At the same time, changes took place in pupil teacher instruction. Teachers had long complained of this task. It was exhausting and unrewarding; some teachers were unsuited to it. It exacerbated tensions inside the schools. Even the gentlest teachers had trouble. Miss Kerruish, headmistress of the Caernarfon infants (Board) school, wrote in her log book in 1894,

'Had to reprove Maggie Roberts this morning (7 o'clock). Her lessons were not prepared and because her attention was sharply called to the fact Maggie became rude and threw her books down. She was told to leave the room and not return without apologising. Maggie returned at 9 o'clock and apologised'¹¹⁴.

Teachers' associations had long pressed for more co-ordinated approaches. In 1874 the Caernarfon District Association of British and Board Teachers was formed expressly to pool ideas on pupil teacher instruction. It organised trial examinations every three months, drawing up a common curriculum and approaches to training¹¹⁵. Teachers in the Llyn[^] peninsula, and around Llandudno, had similar schemes¹¹⁶. They eased difficulties, but teachers still found instructing pupil teachers a worrying and vexatious task.

The main changes occurred in the 1880s when pupil teacher centres were founded in many places to teach pupil teachers from several schools together. The first centres were opened in the

bigger English towns after the 1880 Code had allowed pupil teachers to be instructed by any certificated teacher instead of insisting on the teachers in their own schools. Both the majority and minority reports of the Cross Commission (1886-9), having upheld the pupil teacher system, proposed the extension of centre instruction to improve the quality of their training, and through that their calibre. Centres came fairly late to Caernarvonshire, but in 1897 and 1898 pupil teachers from neighbouring districts were travelling by train to **three** centres at Bangor, Caernarfon and Penygroes¹¹⁷. Pupil teachers attended the Bangor Centre from as far away as Llandegfan and Beaumaris in Anglesey, as well as from Aber, Llandygai, Llanfairfechan and Portdinerwic¹¹⁸. In 1898, 53 pupil teachers were given tuition at the Bangor Centre in all their examination subjects with the exception of School Management and Theory, for which each headteacher remained responsible¹¹⁹. The Bangor Centre was regarded as a success, and its mode of instruction an improvement on the old system. In 1900, the Bangor School Board congratulated the staff of its Centre, on 'very satisfactory' results in the Queen's Scholarship examination¹²⁰. Pupil teacher quality was slowly being restored.

Many rural schools, however, lay beyond the reach of a pupil teacher centre. There was a tendency, therefore, for improved methods of pupil teacher instruction to be confined to schools in urban areas, so that many qualitative differences, already noted between schools in urban and rural districts, were retained throughout the century. The other practice by which school management committees and school boards began to send pupil teachers to the County schools opened under the Welsh Intermediate Education

Act (1889), was also only partially adopted. Nearly all Caernarvonshire's County schools were established in towns and well populated slate quarrying districts¹²¹. This meant that pupil teachers in rural schools once again did not benefit. They continued to rely on their own headteachers for their preparation and training, much of which remained narrow and superficial. Those pupil teachers able to attend the County schools were taught by specialist graduate teachers. Many insisted that pupil teachers should reach acceptable academic standards. D.R.O. Prytherch, M.A., headmaster of the Penygroes County school, would only accept pupil teachers who had passed the Junior Central Welsh Board Examination (at 13+)¹²². In 1900 he refused to take two pupil teachers who had not passed that examination, threatening to resign if attempts were made to compel him to take them¹²³. His attitude reflected the anxiety of County school headmasters to protect the status of their recently established schools. County schools soon eclipsed the pupil teacher centres in Penygroes and Caernarfon, although the Bangor Centre was retained until the end of the school board period. The Brynrefail County school, serving the Llanberis, Llanddeiniolen and Llanrug slate quarrying communities, also took pupil teachers at the turn of the century. They attended the County school for about half their time, spending the rest of it teaching in their own schools or learning School Management from their headteachers¹²⁴. Wales and Caernarvonshire took the lead in these developments by showing the rest of the country the kind of work which could be done in training pupil teachers in secondary schools. The results were an impressive improvement in the quality of pupil teachers.

In 1903 the Llanddeiniolen School Board awarded one of its pupil teachers a prize of six pounds for gaining an exceptionally high place in the Kings Scholarship Examination¹²⁵. It was a result widely regarded as justifying the role of County schools in teacher education.

Once again, however, the rural areas lagged behind - many of their elementary schools were beyond the reach of the County schools. As we have already noted, they were also too far away from pupil teacher centres. By 1902-3 it was clear that some national policy initiative was needed to ensure that higher standards of training and education achieved by pupil teachers able to take advantage of new training methods were matched elsewhere.

Despite refinements introduced into teacher training by 1900 and qualitative improvements in personnel, its basic strategy remained largely unchanged. Though open to criticism, the pupil teacher system survived intact, upheld by the Cross Commission, and staunchly defended by many teachers and educationists. The Principal of Swansea Training College wrote in 1900, that despite being an 'illogical' system, - so illogical that, when he spoke about it in America he 'had some trouble in removing the doubts as to our national sanity', - it produced 'a race of teachers whose technical skill and power of managing large classes are unexcelled'¹²⁶. The rationale informing the system also remained very largely intact. Elementary school teachers were still selected mainly from the working classes, though more lower middle class girls now entered the profession. They were still discouraged from social ambitions, their style of training still

reinforced their self consciousness as social NCOs. As late as 1902 one student, describing his college training wrote, that 'We sat on wooden chairs and wrote on green tables - furniture fit for a workhouse - and learned and learned and learned and learned, and when it became dark the gas was lighted (but) the machine went on working. Even when we asked to leave the room, we had to mark it on the blackboard'¹²⁷. Elementary teachers were still not regarded as 'professional' nor as even remotely middle class by a society conscious of class divisions.

But the sheer growth of their numbers, - from 13,729 certificated head and assistant teachers in 1870, to 68,323 in 1890, - and their sense of solidarity as they were unionised in the NUT, together with their criticism of the form and outcome of teacher training, meant that the system and its values would be re-examined at the beginning of the twentieth century¹²⁸. The granting of a teachers' pension scheme, and the fact that individual teachers had always breached Kay-Shuttleworth's strategy, breaking through the social parameters designed for them, to become ministers of religion, businessmen, H.M. Inspectors, University Professors and even Members of Parliament, were signs of the changes which teachers themselves were to demand in their professional and social status during the twentieth century¹²⁹.

Yet for fifty years they had faithfully discharged their mission and according to all who bore witness to it, had done so thoroughly and effectively. By 1900 it was widely agreed that the working classes were not only literate and numerate but far more respectable and civilized. As the Daily News wrote at the end of the 1890s, 'teachers have a profound sense of the greatness

of their mission their power is very great they have used it wisely and well with a keen sense of responsibility'¹³⁰. To the Educational Record (1903) they had successfully trained the working classes 'in great national qualities discipline, patriotism, contentedness and the like'¹³¹. For the British Society, 'habits of order, industry and economy the principles of religion and morality' were the fruits of their work¹³².

By 1902 there was as much general satisfaction with the evolved teacher training system in Wales as elsewhere. But many problems remained. A difficulty to which Longueville Jones had drawn attention in the 1850s, the migration of trained Welsh teachers to London and the bigger English towns, was still a factor. Their schools still commanded higher salaries and better career prospects. As a result, insufficient numbers of trained teachers were produced for Welsh schools despite the establishment of four Welsh training colleges, supplemented by Day Training Departments at the new University Colleges, including Bangor, from the 1890s¹³³. More strikingly still, the number of trained bilingual teachers was far too few. Insufficient Welsh speaking pupil teachers went to training college, most remaining in schools as ex-pupil teachers. Many could not afford a training college course; others were so badly instructed they could not pass the Queen's Scholarship. There was a specially severe shortage of trained female bilingual teachers, with only one of the Welsh colleges training women. This was a very serious deficiency as teaching was a predominantly female calling by 1900¹³⁴. The upshot was that too many Welsh schools had to employ English teachers, often the least good that England could produce, and most staying for short periods, finding salaries too

low and unable to teach monoglot Welsh children. As a consequence, Welsh rural schools still suffered frequent and demoralizing changes of staff. The little Pennant school in Caernarvonshire (average attendance about twenty five) had nineteen headteachers in twenty six years before 1900, each staying an average of thirteen months¹³⁵. The Rhyd Ddu Board school (average attendance forty four) had eight headteachers in as many years before 1880¹³⁶. Not surprisingly, Welsh witnesses told the Cross Commissioners that 'what we want in Wales is to have trained bilingual teachers'¹³⁷.

These problems meant that progress in achieving the objectives of the nineteenth century pioneers of Welsh elementary education, was not as striking as it might have been. The spread of the English language and English civilisation was not as extensive as Hugh Owen and John Phillips had hoped for, fifty years before: there were no intimations of the imminent extinction of the Welsh language, nor its relegation to the position of Cornish in Cornwall. The 1890 Population Census showed 54.5 per cent of the population able to speak Welsh (898,914)¹³⁸. Ironically its decline was about to begin during the twentieth century, as progress was made in training bilingual teachers, and as bilingual methods were adopted. Soon such methods brought a marked decline in Welsh language speakers. By 1911 only 43.5 per cent spoke Welsh, and by 1921 37.2 per cent¹³⁹. Against their better judgements in the 1840s and 50s, it was this approach which came nearest to achieving the objectives set for British schools by Hugh Owen and John Phillips.

In addition, Welsh teacher training still suffered from 'cram' and insufficient discrimination between 'giving instruction'

and 'educating'. This question needed to be tackled in the twentieth century particularly in the training colleges, but teachers' associations were already pioneering more professional attitudes before 1900. Branches of the NUET in Caernarvonshire had inquired into new teaching methods, the special problems of Welsh teachers, and the need for separate regulations for Wales¹⁴⁰. The quality of pupil teachers and the status of the profession were also discussed¹⁴¹. Teachers were already dismissing training college instruction, - 'creating minds resembling an issue of Tit Bits, stored with superficial knowledge', - and rejecting the narrow parameters cast for them by Kay-Shuttleworth and maintained by the system¹⁴². In reality, as noted, pupil teachership had always acted as a route to upward social mobility and better job prospects, but in the twentieth century teaching itself became a principal avenue of 'personal improvement' for working class children in Wales.

Despite residual difficulties, the new corps of social missionaries had achieved much in the way of instructing and civilizing the working classes, though changes were creeping in to their social composition¹⁴². Welsh children now had a fair idea of how to behave and conduct themselves: they could read simple English, write a fair hand and calculate simple sums, even if their knowledge of English was patchy and their manners rough and unsophisticated.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

CURRICULUM

Despite mounting criticisms at the end of the 1850s about the over-wide curriculum of the elementary schools, the reports of HMIs during the first ten to fifteen years of the system established in 1846, showed that elementary schools in Caernarvonshire, as much as elsewhere, regarded teaching the three Rs as their primary task, within the ethos of moral and social amelioration. Not surprisingly, whenever they dealt with the curriculum they concentrated on these facets. They gave far more column space to the basic subjects than the 'extra' subjects together.

Their comments showed that the changes initiated by the Minutes of 1846 had led many schools to adopt more effective teaching methods. The time was ripe for change. By the 1840s the monitorial system was universally condemned: monitors were hardly older than the children, and employed almost solely to teach 'facts' by repetitive methods, chanting or singing. The usual technique was for the teacher to give a collective lesson, then for monitors to work over its 'facts' with groups or 'drafts' of children. These sat on moveable benches, all in the same schoolroom, in rows, squares, circles, or semi-circles¹. Drafts were often rearranged to relieve the monotony. Occasionally they were taught standing, sometimes in lines back to back especially for 'competitive lessons' in spelling or mental arithmetic². Few schools had desks, usually placed along the schoolroom's walls. Older pupils sat in these, paying higher fees, or additional fees for 'extras' taught by the teacher³. HMIs, without exception, held a low opinion of the monitorial system with its inevitable

noise and confusion. They were convinced that monitors could never be trusted with the task of moral regeneration.

Pupil teachers were older than monitors, more carefully selected, and more thoroughly trained in sound school management. They were also subjected to a more rigorous course of personal instruction, supervised by HMIs and their own school managers. Within the schools the most important organisational change was the deployment of pupil teachers to 'classes', so that by the mid-1850s, schools adopting the new system were divided into three main 'classes' or 'divisions', normally the 'lower', 'middle' and 'upper'⁴. Pupils were placed in classes according to their age and attainment, though irregular school attendance made it impossible to adopt a thorough system for many years. F.C. Cook thought the divisions should consist of children up to six years old, those between six and nine, and those over nine, and this was the classification usually adopted⁵. In practice, the 'middle division' was nearly always the largest because children concentrated their schoolgoing between the ages of six and nine. This imbalance between 'classes', together with the increasing realisation that the divisions contained a wide range of ability, led to a sub-division, taken furthest in town schools which had ^{more} pupil/teachers and were thus able to implement sub-division more fully. Smaller schools, like most of those in Wales and in Caernarvonshire, found it more difficult to organize themselves as they would wish, while many rural schools, together with most of the large number of schools outside the new system, continued to use monitorial methods for many years, thus reinforcing the duality, emerging in the early eighteen fifties, between schools which were inspected, and those which were not.

Classification, encouraged by the pupil teacher system, led teachers and managers to divide their formerly open school-rooms into separate classrooms. Initially, most were marked off only by the physical separation of classes within the room, but increasingly during the 1850s by curtains, and later still by moveable partitions. As a class arrangement became normal, schools became more orderly and less noisy; there was less movement especially as the easily moveable bench was replaced by the parallel desk. The 'collective lesson' also faded out; it was disliked by the Inspectorate as a 'positive and great evil interfering with discipline, and giving a tone of superficiality and presumption to the whole course of instruction'⁶. Surprisingly, changes were made relatively quickly. Matthew Arnold was writing as early as 1855, that

'It is hardly possible adequately to describe to those who have not experienced it, the sense of relief and satisfaction, felt on entering a school, which one had formerly known as ill arranged, and ill organized, for the first time after it has been reorganised in a good plan. What was formerly intricate, confused, difficult to discipline, difficult to inspect, now lies before you, simple, clearly divided and comprehensible'⁷.

Organisational changes encouraged more effective teaching methods all round, especially in the three Rs, the central core of the elementary schools curriculum. The so called 'empirical' method of teaching children to read, by which 'drafts' had learned the names of letters and combinations of letters by rote and then

chanted them out until they were known was now varied, with newer 'look and say' and 'phonic' methods⁸. These concentrated on using the eye and ear more systematically to teach the correct 'sounds' of the seen letters. HMIs did much to spread these newer methods, bringing various aids to the attention of teachers and school committees, such as Roak and Varty's pioneering series of reading cards, appropriately entitled 'Reading Disentangled', and reading card series issued on their model by the SPCK and the Irish Education Commissioners⁹. By the eighteen sixties, cards and books published by these bodies, were the most popular reading aids used. Their popularity standardized approaches and methods in many parts of the country.

While HMIs were satisfied with progress in teaching younger children to read, many were far from happy with books and materials for older children. These, and the way they were used in schools, were unlikely to develop reading ability, still less to foster a continued taste for reading. Most were too didactic in style, consisting as they did of selected passages of scripture, alternated with paragraphs of 'general information' of a drily pedantic, or openly moralising kind¹⁰. Matthew Arnold gave many examples in his Reports of the kind of boring sentences found in 'readers'. 'The crocodile is viviparous'; 'Summer ornaments for grates are made of wood shavings'; 'The slope of a desk is oblique, the corners of a door are angles'; 'Some time after one meal is digested, we feel again the sensation of hunger which is gratified by again taking food'; were typical of them¹¹. In response to HMIs criticisms some publishing houses then went to the opposite extreme, publishing books containing supposedly more

exciting sentences, imitating the sounds of animals, and what Arnold called, 'too much of that part of human utterance which may be called interjectional',¹². Instead of stimulating children with the urge to read, and a love of books, they merely bemused them. Just like the arid sentences of useful information or elevated sentiments, they made no appeal to their imagination or intellect.

HMI's were aware of the danger that once having taught children to read, schools would then turn them against reading for the rest of their lives. They advised them to use well illustrated story books, or travel and adventure books, even books containing 'amusing information' so long as they were adapted to the interests of children and written in simple, direct and intelligible English. Joseph Bowstead was an enthusiastic supporter of school libraries, and wanted them opened to the whole neighbourhood; this idea was an essential part of his concept of a continuing education¹³.

Though not particularly successful in improving the quality of 'readers', HMI's did as much as they could to ensure that the books used were read in the most intelligent and constructive way. All stressed the importance of explaining the meaning of difficult words and passages, so that pupils could understand what they were reading about. As Joseph Bowstead wrote in 1855,

'Nothing is as great an impediment, than allowing a class to read sentence upon sentence, without understanding the meaning of any part of the lesson'.¹⁴

A feature of Inspection in the eighteen fifties, was that HMI's were not tied to rigid examination procedures. Until the Revised Code, it was not obligatory for Inspectors to test every

child's reading ability, and many preferred to spend some of their time testing comprehension. Some HMIs clearly enjoyed the free exchanges with children; this practice encouraged the Inspectorate's views about the kinds of books which should be read and the way to read them.

In Caernarvonshire and in much of Wales, the existence of the Welsh language was an added, and very special difficulty in teaching children to read English. HMIs responded by advising schools to use bilingual teaching methods, which William Scoltock HMI, was still advocating on the eve of the Revised Code¹⁵. In this, the HMIs were advocating the prescription of the 1846 Commissioners. They agreed that there was nothing the Welsh people desired more, than that their children should learn English, and be able to read, write and speak it well - 'it is of immense importance', wrote Longueville Jones, 'to all who desire to rise in life and to fight a good battle with a struggling world'¹⁶. But they also agreed that the best way to achieve this was 'by teaching the two tongues concurrently, so as to elucidate and explain each other'¹⁷. We have already noted that Longueville Jones expected both languages to flourish side by side for many decades, but he found that one of the main difficulties in encouraging bilingual approaches was the low esteem in which the Welsh people themselves held their language, and their support for the use of devices such as the 'Welsh Note' and 'Welsh stick'. Hugh Owen and John Phillips have to bear a considerable part of the responsibility for encouraging such attitudes, and for inducing the poor response of schools in Wales to the opportunities given them to adopt bilingual teaching methods in the eighteen fifties.

In the few schools which adopted them such as the Venalt Works school near Swansea the children's ability to learn English, was 'very remarkable'¹⁸. Longueville Jones was convinced that the use of bilingual methods would be 'the surest proof of the increased efficiency of schools in Wales'¹⁹. Under the Revised Code, in the eighteen sixties, however, these approaches were suppressed for almost thirty years, when the regime favoured by Robert Lowe and R.R.W. Lingens and supported by the aspirations of Hugh Owen and many leaders of Welsh Nonconformity was applied.

In Caernarvonshire, as elsewhere, reading and writing were the two basic skills taught. 'Writing' consisted of two separate aspects. First, there was the technical aspect known as 'penmanship', involving shaping the letters of the alphabet, spelling and writing an 'acceptable hand'. Gradually the old practice of learning these skills on slate gave way to writing on paper with steel pens, though the ultra thin paper used for economy was often untidily punctured with holes and blots. In some schools slates continued in use. The ultimate aim of 'Penmanship' was the adoption of 'the copper plate', which eclipsed all other 'hands' including 'the old pointed hand', once thought particularly suitable for ladies, but condemned by HMIs as weak, ungraceful and spindly²⁰.

Less progress was made in the second aspect, that is in the creative aspect of composing 'themes' and writing compositions. Themes were more often conceived as exercises in the accurate use of English, than the expression of imaginative ideas. F.C. Cook, noted the difference between the children's 'writing from dictation', usually well done, and their attempts at composition, often a mass of 'vulgarisms, blunders and abuses of language'²¹.

These compounded weaknesses of content and imagination. Cook, describing the children's 'stunted and dulled imagination', referred to the roughness of their general social environment as the cause²².

The same pattern was discernible in the teaching of arithmetic. Many children were able to learn basic rules and tables, but problems caused difficulties, sometimes for teachers as well as pupils. Though the amount of arithmetic done was limited, HMIs still found satisfaction in the increasingly practical nature of the 'sums' taught. F.C. Cook wrote that 'most girls in the upper division of good national schools can keep accounts of a household or retail business', and that 'a large proportion of the boys can make accurate estimates of the quantity and expense of the different kinds of work in which they were likely to be engaged'²³. HMIs welcomed the fact that, despite its limitations, school arithmetic was becoming more appropriate to the world of work.

Longueville Jones was keen to link arithmetic and work in Welsh schools. He drew up a list of 'mathematical' teaching aids, which every Welsh school would find useful. They included a set of common weights and measures, a pair of large scales, a wooden bushel quart and pint, a two foot rule, a draper's yard measure, 'a long stick cut out of the coppice of some kindly disposed squire and measured off as "the rod, pole or perch"', and 'a common rope with knots in it, at six feet distance, to show that a sailor can stretch his arms out thus far, and so measure a fathom'²⁴. He thought such aids would be far more useful in a school than 'Walkinghame and all the Tutors' - a reference to one of the dreariest but most widely used mathematical 'primers'²⁵.

J.G.G. Fussell thought the best way to foster interest in 'sums', was to frame them in such a way as to stimulate the children's curiosity, encouraging them to identify and appreciate problems. Working out such sums correctly would give them a greater sense of achievement and progress. He claimed that children actually enjoyed doing sums such as the following,

'Add 17 to 18, double the result, take away 4,
divide by 11 and multiply by 12.

Call the product pence. What is the amount?'

and,

'Find the number of farthings in $7\frac{1}{4}$ d, add 22, divide
by 17, take away 2, multiply by 1,649. What is
the number?'²⁶

By the end of the eighteen fifties most Inspectors were satisfied with progress in the basic subjects. The ability to read and write English was more widespread, and said to be highly valued by working class parents anxious that their children should acquire skills so self evidently assets in the expanding labour market. They also valued the ability to apply basic arithmetical rules in practical ways, measuring its usefulness in vocational terms. It was Joseph Bowstead who paid the most fulsome tribute to the system when he wrote in 1862, that 'I could certainly name several schools in which if the boys of the first class were pitted against an equal number of undergraduates taken at random from Oxford and Cambridge, the average marks obtained by the boys in the three elementary subjects would probably exceed that of their competitors'²⁷.

Even if only an approximation of the truth, it seemed to

invalidate accusations beginning to be levelled at the way schools were said to be concentrating on unpractical 'extra' subjects, particularly in 'upper divisions'. The Inspectors's Reports gave no support to such a view. On the contrary, they stressed the continued importance of the three 'Rs and the utilitarian and vocational value of much that was taught. According to Cook, schools were more than aware that 'the working classes will always estimate the progress of their children by their ability to read and write'²⁸. That was what parents expected their children to learn in the schools, and the Inspectorate believed that their aspirations were being met.

At the same time, it was characteristic of the system that it sought to combine the teaching of the three 'Rs with the introduction of a broader curriculum. The Inspectorate's hope was that this would foster a taste for self improvement, and establish a tradition of continuing education, encouraging the establishment of mutual improvement societies and night schools, and influencing individuals to make use of the basic tools of education later in life. They could then find out more for themselves about the wider areas of study touched on in school: this would lead to greater personal competence and happiness.

Almost every school taught some history, geography and grammar, and under the umbrella of 'common things' did some 'natural history' and 'political economy'. Music, or more correctly 'singing' also found a place, while girls normally spent at least part of their time learning needlework, generally the 'plain' or 'simple' variety. As a rule Art or Drawing was limited to boys. It was introduced in some schools following the

establishment of the Department of Science and Art at South Kensington²⁹. A number of schools taught other subjects in response to pressures from local Inspectors with personal interests in particular areas of study.

It is easier to make a list of the extra subjects taught, than describe what took place in the classroom. But HMIs comments imply strongly that most of what was attempted tended to be superficial in content and somewhat arid, and that teaching methods were mechanical and unimaginative, relying too much on memorization. Almost certainly this reflected the ethos of the training colleges, typified what we have already noted about the syllabus, time table and teaching methods of the Bangor Normal College. Over the years many Inspectors advised changes in outlook and teaching methods encouraging teachers to select more interesting and meaningful material. Teachers might then see that the purpose of a wider range of subjects was not simply to drum more 'facts' into children's heads, but train their intelligence and understanding, foster their desire to educate themselves, and show them the best way of doing it. By 1860 many schools were beginning to open up new areas of study so that prospects for the gradual introduction of a broader concept of elementary schooling were favourable.

The Inspectorate was sufficiently independent to canvass the introduction of new subjects in the schools they inspected, and promote new approaches to teaching. J.G.G. Fussell believed strongly in the value of history as 'progressive experience experience in the widest sense'³⁰. He encouraged schools under his inspection to select 'leading periods in small portions and examine them thoroughly', or look at longer periods to give 'a comprehensive

view of men in general'³¹. Either approach, would show children 'what other men have felt, suffered and done'³². This would **widen** their imaginative experiences; they would also grow up as more rounded and better balanced citizens. Though socialisation was clearly an aspect of Fussell's justification for the teaching of history, he went beyond this, seeing it in terms of imaginative enrichment and worthwhile experience.

Joseph Bowstead's main interest lay in promoting geography and 'common things'. He helped teachers in his own district to formulate graduated schemes of work which he hoped would foster the children's understanding of their immediate physical and social environment. He was particularly concerned to link school and work, 'to connect', as he put it, 'the school learning of the children with the earning of their daily bread'³³. He thought this might be done by a series of lessons on local industries and occupations, and on 'social habits' and political institutions³⁴. From his conversations with school managers, teachers and parents, he was convinced that there was widespread and strong support for it; it would 'add to the estimation in which education is held among the labouring classes'³⁵. Taught imaginatively, with a wide range of visual aids such as maps, pictures and models, it would draw out the children's intelligence and foster their interests more than any other part of the syllabus.

Matthew Arnold's burning concern was the correct use of English among the children of the poor. He regarded the systematic introduction of English grammar as the best means of disciplining the young mind, and cultivating good sense and good taste: two personal qualities against which working class children did

'grievous violence' almost daily³⁶. He also thought that learning passages of poetry and prose by heart should be an intimate part of the discipline. 'Here', he wrote, 'they will be insensibly nourished by that which is stored and their taste will be formed by it'³⁷. By the early eighteen sixties he could write that he was 'by no means dissatisfied' with the progress already made in some schools³⁸.

Longueville Jones tried to arrange special Departmental aid to encourage the study of Navigation, Art, and Music in Welsh schools. He thought it was of the utmost importance to teach Navigation as a school subject in towns and villages from which boys and young men went to sea. All his Reports pressed for Navigation classes in such places, and he was successful in persuading a number of school management committees to establish them in ordinary day schools in ports along the Welsh coast, such as Caernarfon, Barmouth, Nefyn, Porthmadog, Aberdyfi, Borth, Aberystwyth and Pembroke Dock³⁹. Most classes only met on a regular basis during the winter months, because the youths who attended them were away at sea during the summer. During the winter, however, when their coasting ships were laid up in dock, they were often out of work, with plenty of time on their hands. In addition to being taught the Principles of Navigation, they were given some elementary and higher mathematics, spherical and plain geometry and trigonometry, a little astronomy and the geography of the sea⁴⁰. Longueville Jones thought that young sailors would also find Euclid 'an admirable companion when becalmed'⁴¹. He claimed that some of those who had attended Navigation classes set up by his pressure had risen very quickly

to become masters of important ships⁴². Not many of the classes survived the educational storms of the eighteen sixties. Ordinary day schools found it difficult to combine the teaching of Navigation with elementary work; it was not always easy to find teachers qualified to teach Navigation as well as the other subjects, so that after the implementation of the Revised Code the classes faded away. A small number, however, managed to survive as privately conducted Navigation schools, usually taught by retired master mariners, some of whom gave navigational instruction of a high standard. They met a demand and for this reason made a regular living.

Longueville Jones thought music and song were powerful means of moral regeneration - instruments for disciplining wayward spirits, and refining rough sensibilities. HMI's quoted Luther's view, 'Eine halbe Disciplin und Zuchtmeistrin!', as the justification for 'singing' in schools⁴³. Longueville Jones favoured the use of Hullah's new tonic solffa system and was a strong supporter of vocal exercises with the modulator. He was critical of the usual choice of songs, and of the poor undisciplined quality of the singing. He thought Welsh children should be taught more national melodies, if possible, to the accompaniment of the harp, 'a most suitable instrument for a village teacher'⁴⁴. He also believed that working class children should be acquainted with the music of great composers, in simplified arrangements, yet without 'the soul of the music' being lost⁴⁵. Partly as a result of his pressure, singing became a feature of time tables in Welsh schools, though Longueville Jones' brief for 'the music of great composers' bore little fruit.

Despite his strong belief in the subject, Jones was not particularly successful in promoting Art or Drawing. Few schools in Wales could satisfy the Department of Science and Art's examination regulations⁴⁶. These required schools to possess a wide range of apparatus and aids, including drawings, engravings, models, sets of compasses, rulers and set squares, while teachers were expected to show some personal aptitude for the subject. The Department also required an Art studio, or at least a specially designated room set aside for the work. While some bigger schools in the towns were able to adapt their facilities, most Welsh schools were unable to do so, so that the subject made very little headway; Longueville Jones later described it as 'a dead failure'⁴⁷. In accounting for this, he referred to the country's 'historical, geographical and religious peculiarities' which deterred the development of an artistic tradition⁴⁸. 'We have nothing to show, nothing to point to', he wrote, so that 'the spirit of Art' was dormant⁴⁹. Such was the lack of an artistic inheritance that even painted Inn signs did not exist; the only engraving fairly generally displayed in Welsh homes was a hackneyed piece entitled 'The Prodigal Son'⁵⁰. The Education Department also failed to respond to his plea for special aid so that by the eighteen sixties, he 'abandoned hope' of progress⁵¹. Even the economic and utilitarian case for Art, that 'the success of the artisan and the prosperity of the nation depend upon the cultivation of taste and neatness of execution', brought no significant response⁵².

In view of the growing importance attached to the economic and utilitarian justifications of educational expansion, it is surprising that more was not done to foster direct vocational

training. The only systematic attempt to do so involved the teaching of needlework, but even this was more concerned with the socialising aim of producing self-reliant wives and mothers able to mend their family's clothes and keep them respectably clad, than with showing girls how to earn a living as sempstresses and milliners. Needlework was seen as a behavioural lever to encourage the development of responsible family budgeting, very much in line with the view that poverty was a reflection of bad family management. Many obstacles stood in the way of direct vocational teaching. It required qualified teachers with a variety of skills, as well as adequate school premises and stocks of materials. It was also difficult to combine vocational training with the need to teach the basics to children, many of whom attended school only irregularly and only ^{for} two or three years at that. In addition, the fact that vocational instruction was identified with workhouse and ragged schools, and with refuges for destitute children, was a formidable psychological barrier⁵³. Vocational training of a crude and basic sort was thus perceived essentially as instruction for the inmates of institutionalised schools where vocational and moral education were stressed in equal measure⁵⁴. Vocational training was not seen as part of the curriculum for children of the independent working class. This was to be one of the many factors making the establishment of a vocational and technical school tradition extremely difficult; it was to have important economic implications for the future.

Nevertheless, the growing expertise of the Inspectorate and the increasing commitment of its members to a more liberal education led them to press broader objectives for elementary schooling,

and to press them more openly. Systematic expansion was thus beginning to generate its own momentum. The objectivity of the schools Inspectorate, and the developing professionalism of the new body of certificated teachers, both looking to educational expansion and progress, inevitably brought them into conflict with influential lay opinion which retained a limited and instrumental view of elementary schooling. As the political instability of the Chartist decade merged into the calmer 1850s, much of the old suspicion of working class education returned. As working class education was felt to be taking an increasingly liberal character, this suspicion hardened into a firmer hostility. The whole system, including the schools, teachers, and HMIs, came under increasing attack from the late eighteen fifties.

The attack took overall forms. Schools were accused of ignoring the original objectives of the system, that is providing a functional and social class oriented education for the working classes in the three Rs together with religious instruction to elevate their minds and regenerate their morals. Instead they neglected the three Rs concentrating on irrelevant higher subjects, adopting a curriculum far too broad for the educational needs of the working classes. Their critics suspected that the children who benefited were those from better off homes. Inspectorial references to children being withdrawn from private schools and sent to grant aided ones added fuel to their fire⁵⁵. The new certificated teachers were blamed for welcoming these developments for professional and prestige reasons. They were also accused of concentrating on the senior classes - once again for status reasons - and neglecting the middle and lower 'divisions', where

most working class pupils were found. As for HMIs they were blamed for encouraging these trends, and indulging the professional vanities of teachers; these were 'puffed up' and 'conceited' as a result. In particular, the Inspectorate was accused of fostering the take up of unpractical and useless subjects, irrelevant both to the needs of the working classes, and the interests of society, and often in conflict with the basic socialising rationale of the original system.

Though there appears to have been little substance in these allegations, they were widely believed at the time, and 'expressed by some very influential persons'⁵⁶. Resentment against the increase of public expenditure on education added to the hostility especially as it fed current fears that laissez faire orthodoxy was being abandoned in a torrent of wasteful indulgence. At the centre of the criticism was the belief that the spirit of the 1846 Minutes had been betrayed, and that it was time to return to first principles.

Policy changes reflecting the new mood of public opinion began to be made in 1859, with the advent, first of R.R.W. Lingens, and then of Robert Lowe, to the Education Department, both strong laissez faire protagonists, and supporters of economic retrenchment⁵⁷. The Minutes of 1859 were followed by the Report of the Newcastle Commission in 1861; this showed the reactionary tide continuing to flow strongly. But its most spectacular output was the Revised Code of 1862.

Lingens and Lowe prepared the way for the implementation of the Revised Code by curbing the independence of the Inspectorate. This was necessary because the more the Inspectors had been

attacked, the more powerful was their defence of the system. In fact F.C. Cook's report in 1859, amounted to a passionate justification of what had been achieved. 'With respect to the attainments of children', he wrote, 'I must enter my protest against the statements so frequently made as to their superficial and impractical character'⁵⁸. In 1861, J.G.G. Fussell openly challenged his critics to accompany him on his tour of inspection, to test their allegations about the system's 'formal and illusory' nature⁵⁹. 'If any man really believes that reports fail as fair representations of the character and efficiency of schools', he wrote, 'I think I can convince him of the contrary if he will place himself in my hands for a fortnight or longer He will find that the lower classes are carefully examined, that religious knowledge, reading, writing and arithmetic are the subjects to which the chief prominence is assigned, that no amount of excellence in other subjects is accepted as a plea for failure in these. He will find that the tone and discipline of the school are carefully observed, that the instruction and training of pupil teachers are strictly enquired into, and that everything that bids fair to be practically useful and to establish a good understanding between teacher and children is commended and encouraged'⁶⁰.

The Inspectorate had a history of commenting on policy in their reports, and their influence had been responsible for a number of policy initiatives in the past. The inception of the capitation grant and its extension flowed very largely from their pressure and advice. Both Lingens and Lowe were aware of the Inspectorate's independence, based initially on the Concordat of 1839. They were also aware of the potential damage which the

Inspectorate could inflict on their policy⁶¹. They therefore brought HMIs under new regulations. These changed the nature of the Inspectorate's relationship with the Department, cutting down their freedom to comment on policy, and take part in policy making.

The new regulations subordinated the Inspectorate to 'the Office', forbidding HMIs from expressing opinions on policy in their annual reports. They were no longer consulted in the formulation of new policy, not even in drafting the Revised Code, despite their experience of the working of schools. Their annual policy-discussion meetings with Departmental officials and its political heads were brought to an end, while their duties under the Revised Code emphasized their subordinate role. Changes in the organisation and deployment of HMIs, with their redistribution on a 'district' basis for the Department's convenience, reinforced their new position⁶².

These changes were not accomplished without opposition, as Inspectors long accustomed to the freedom of the old system found it difficult to accept the new rules. J.D. Morell, Matthew Arnold and Longueville Jones, all had reports suppressed because of their continued insistence on discussing policy. It was the mutilation of one of Longueville Jones's reports and his mischievous circulation of the mutilated copy among backbench MPs that eventually brought Lowe's resignation from the Department in 1864⁶³. Yet the regulations were retained, and though not operated quite as rigidly after Lowe's departure, Inspectors being allowed to comment on policy in oblique or muted terms, the Inspectorate never regained the independence it had possessed in

the eighteen fifties, which had enabled it to act as the touchstone of educational progress. The so called 'heroic' period of the schools Inspectorate was ended.

The effect of the Revised Code on the schools curriculum was cataclysmic: it bore heavily on its range, content and methodology. By using money grants to ensure compliance with its conditions, the Code established a system of Payment by Results, under which annual grants were paid for examination passes at prescribed 'standards' in reading, writing and arithmetic. 'Standards' were graduated according to the expected attainments of each age group, which had to be presented in its appropriate 'standard'⁶⁴. In addition, each child had to qualify for examination presentation with the requisite number of attendances during the year. He could then earn four shillings for a 'pass' in each of the basic subjects. Should he fail in any of them, he lost the grant for that particular subject. It, therefore, followed that a school's total grant would be determined by the aggregate number of children passing the basic subjects at the examination.

To understand the rationale of the new policy, it should be noted that Article IV of the Revised Code laid down that only the children 'of the labouring and manufacturing classes' were to be examined⁶⁵. This resulted in HMIs having to comb through entrance rolls before each examination, to exclude middle class children and others whom they decided should not be educated at public elementary schools. This reflected the narrow class view of education informing the Code, and the concern felt about the way the system was thought to have grown away from its original limited objectives. It was precisely by deserting the principles

on which it was founded that the system had become irrelevant. In 1864 William Campbell HMI described how he had carried out 'a careful sifting of children whose parents ought not from their social position or pecuniary means to require their education at the hands of the public'⁶⁶. Matthew Arnold referred to 'an inquiry which has just been added (to the Inspector's work) respecting the means and position in life of schoolchildren's parents to discover whether they are the proper objects of State Aid'⁶⁷. C.H. Alderson HMI, wrote of 'Your Lordships efforts to limit the Parliamentary Grant to the children of persons living by manual labour'⁶⁸. He discounted 1,357 'passes' on social grounds, adding that 'in many cases scholars of this class are not presented at all, so that the total number of children excluded from the grant on this account is even greater'⁶⁹. He continued that 'I have lost no opportunity for impressing on school managers that it is part of their function, and a very important part, to decide whether the children for whom they claim a grant are in point of status eligible'⁷⁰.

The segregation of children belonging to better off families from those of the working classes, and their exclusion from the examination shows that one of the essential justifications of the Revised Code was the social class justification; the belief that elementary schools should provide a particular kind of education, suited to the perceived needs of a particular social class. Ostensibly this represented a restoration of the original notions of 1846 from which the system, under the influence of non-accountable 'professionals', was said to have strayed. The Revised Code thus marked a return to the narrow concept of elementary

education as the three Rs for functional proficiency in basic skills, with religious/moral education for 'civilisation'.

The effects of the Code on the elementary schools curriculum, and teaching methods, were immediate. Many additional subjects introduced in the eighteen fifties now withered on the vine, as teachers concentrated almost exclusively on 'grant earners'. So complete was the decline of 'higher subjects', that in 1867 the Education Department, alarmed at the extent of the contraction, issued a Minute permitting HMIs to examine schools in any two 'specific' subjects usually chosen from history, geography or grammar. Few children took these examinations in the 1870s. In 1875 'class subjects' were introduced; small additional grants could then be claimed if three quarters of a class were able to answer the Inspector's questions. These regulations saved the 'higher subjects' from disappearing altogether, but did nothing to restore the vitality with which they had begun to be taught in some places during the eighteen fifties. They presented syllabuses almost as rigid as those of the three 'Rs, in no way did they restore the broader curriculum of the 1850s. Perhaps their most significant contribution to breaking down the rigidity of the Revised Code, was their restoration of the 'class' unit for examination purposes (from 1875), and the small shift away from the concept of 'standards' which this entailed.

One of the most regrettable features of the Revised Code was its impact on teaching methods, which had begun to open out under the patronage of the Inspectorate in the eighteen fifties. Now, however, the rigidity of the curriculum was reflected in the strengthened use of mechanical and unimaginative teaching techniques.

The annual inspection mirrored this change. In the eighteen fifties, Inspectors were free to examine a school in ways which seemed most appropriate to them. More often than not, their assessments were based on general impressions, gauged by a wide variety of assessment techniques. In addition, they did not need to confine their attention to the three 'Rs'; they took the whole range of a school's activities into account. Matthew Arnold claimed that the evolved system had been good 'for testing and promoting the intellectual force of schools'⁷². He wrote that,

'The whole life and power of a class, the fitness of its composition, its handling by the teacher were all well tested, the Inspector became well acquainted with the children, and was enabled to make his remarks on them to the head teacher, - a powerful means of correcting, improving and stimulating them was thus given'⁷³.

Under the revised system, even the term 'inspection' was replaced by 'examination'; this reflected the basic difference between the assessment techniques. The Inspector now faced children grouped in 'standards' instead of their usual 'classes'. In examining 'reading' he listened to each child read a selected passage from the book used in his 'standard' during the year. He was not permitted to put further questions to test children's understanding of what they had read - at least not for deciding the grant. Testing in Writing and Arithmetic was similarly restricted. As he tested each child the Inspector filled up three marks in the examination schedule for the Department, so that the school's aggregate grant could then be calculated - a procedure which many

Inspectors found tiresome and distasteful. Joseph Bowstead wrote that,

'Persons who have a money interest in every mark assigned, not unfrequently stand by and watch each movement of his (the Inspector's) hand and eye. The process requires the most fixed attention, and is characterised by nothing so much as unmitigated sameness, and does not afford the least spark of interest or amusement particularly the oral examination of the first standard which in a large school is really a species of "peine forte et dure", that can only be fully understood by one who has had experience of it'⁷⁴.

J.D. Morell summed up the change in inspection methods best, when he stated that, 'Formerly we were occupied chiefly in examining PROCESSES, now we are occupied almost entirely in testing RESULTS'⁷⁵. Even members of the Inspectorate who supported the Code, found it difficult to muster enthusiasm for its examination techniques, while others who disliked the changes, such as Bowstead, Morell, Arnold, Campbell, Fussell and Alderson, found them, in Matthew Arnold's words, to be 'a game of mechanical contrivance in which the teachers learn more and more how to get children through in reading, writing and ciphering, without their really knowing how to read, write and cipher'⁷⁶.

In 'reading', each 'standard' was required to read sentences or passages selected from a book of about fifty pages length, written in bold print and containing words and sentences of prescribed 'standards' of difficulty. What the Code prescribed

was the level of difficulty, so that books were chosen accordingly. Most publishing houses, seeing that this was a potentially profitable market began to produce books fitting the 'standards'. To all intents they were fakes, quite literally put together like jig-saws, from a number of approved words, and consisting of sentences of ascribed levels of difficulty. Their content was of secondary importance; they usually consisted of the most factually 'instructive' passages imaginable, - what Matthew Arnold quite bluntly described as 'trash'⁷⁷. The following passage taken from a standard one 'reader' emphasises Arnold's point,

'Bill is not well. He is ill at the mill. Bid Ann fill a can of jam and get us a bit of ham and we will go with them to him. Did Bill sip the jam? Oh yes, he sat up in his bed and did sip the jam 'till his lips were red. He did not have a bit of ham'⁷⁸

Inspectors were forbidden to use other books at the examination, and as the teacher's main object was to get their schools to earn the highest grant - their own salaries were likely to depend on it - it became the universal practice for each 'standard' to read the same book so many times that each child knew it by heart. By the examination, each standard could usually chant out the whole of its book unseen, and when called upon to read, each child could usually satisfy the requirements of the Code by reading the words accurately but devoid of expression and understanding. One HMI in Caernarvonshire described the reading of children in his schools, as 'the meaningless repetition of words like pellets from a pop gun'⁷⁹. Some HMIs were so angered by this

pretence that they exposed its hollowness in their reports, recording how they had held books upside down, or left out passages and sentences, and showing that this made no difference; children just 'rattled away regardless'⁸⁰. The Inspectorial crusade of the eighteen fifties to create a taste for reading and encourage an inclination for continuing education and self improvement, came to a sudden and sad end.

The Code had a particularly damaging effect on schools in Wales, where bilingual teaching methods suffered a set back. Teachers found that children in Welsh schools like those in England could 'pass the Inspector' by learning the words of their 'readers' like arithmetical tables. As no credit or extra money was given for comprehension, the efforts of the early Inspectorate to foster these qualities went by the board. This sharpened still further the unfavourable image which most Welsh people already had of their native tongue as having no utilitarian or 'secular' value. The effects of these changes on 'reading' ability and the spread of the English language were highly mischievous, because that which appeared to be language and reading proficiency was only a camouflage for ignorance. When in 1883 one HMI in Caernarvonshire asked a class of children who had just chanted Thomas Campbell's poem Lord Ullin's Daughter, 'Who was her father?' no one was able to answer⁸¹. They had no idea of what the poem was about. When he then asked them, 'Who was the father of Lord Ullin's daughter?' there was still no response⁸². The Code ousted the Welsh language for about thirty years except in some places where it was still used surreptitiously for translation and explanation, often in the face of parental opposition. Not until the eighteen nineties,

when the Code was itself beginning to break up did Welsh schools begin to use bilingual methods seriously again.

The other basics suffered a similar fate. Attempts in the eighteen fifties to encourage creative expression in 'compositions' and 'themes', and foster the use of correct English, were overtaken by a renewed stress on the technical formalities of 'penmanship'. 'Holding pens properly', 'observing the lines when writing', 'correct spelling', 'acquiring a better finish', what was known as 'the civil service style', these were the central concerns of the Revised Code⁸³. It was for observing such rules that the grant was paid. Children were thus made to sit for hours every week copying out passages from their 'readers' - the 'trash' that Matthew Arnold so eloquently condemned - or writing from dictation, 'slowly one word at a time'⁸⁴. Mistakes were usually punished by repeating the exercise ad nauseam until all errors were erased, - a process often accompanied by sharp 'cuts' across the knuckles. Whenever HMI's tried children in 'themes', their efforts were so hopeless, that one Inspector in Caernarvonshire wrote that 'it is scarcely possible to assign any value to them'⁸⁵.

As for Arithmetic, the attempts of the eighteen fifties, to make 'sums' relevant to the lives and occupations of the people, even to introduce problem solving into the exercises, were brought to an end. They were replaced by a renewed concentration on rote learning and the solution of theoretical 'problems' with little obvious relevance to the children's lives. The following are examples of 'sums' set in Caernarvonshire schools during the eighteen seventies and eighties. They illustrate the mechanical nature of the work,

415.

106018 - $\overline{7)938764}$ £395.16.4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. x 178
90190

6,415 x 15s.8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. 1,728 $\frac{1}{4}$ x £18.18.9d.

Bring $\frac{2}{3}$ of 1s.7d. to the fraction of £2.10.0d.

What is the 146th part of £87,715.11s.8d. ⁸⁶

These 'sums' were typical of what C.H. Alderson called 'government arithmetic', described by Matthew Arnold as 'a science peculiar to inspected schools and remarkable chiefly for its sterility'⁸⁷.

As an example of the all pervading influence of the 'examination', children at the little Pennant Board school in Caernarvonshire were made to copy out the following 'greeting' on a Christmas card for their parents in 1887,

'My dear Parents'

I have nearly mastered practice, weights and measures, and compound multiplication and even know something about the Analysis of Sentences and Parsing'⁸⁸.

It is doubtful whether the 'dear parents', hill farmers and slate quarriers, knew what the passage meant; their first, and probably only language was Welsh. But they may have been impressed, as doubtless was intended, by the letter's grandiloquent English, and the impressive finale that 'STILL there is a lot to learn'⁸⁹.

By inducing teachers to use mechanical methods in the hope of achieving a high pass rate and getting the maximum grant for their schools, it appears that contrary to all its objectives

the Revised Code led to reduced attainments, even in the three Rs. Teaching techniques regressed to 'neo-monitorial' forms. The Code further encouraged this by reducing the number and quality of pupil teachers. In addition, teachers conditions of work became more difficult because their tenure came to depend on 'Results'. It became standard practice for teachers whose schools did badly at the examinations to be dismissed. Even if their schools only fell back from the previous year their salaries were cut, sometimes drastically. Their anxiety about 'Results' led many to work too hard, or 'overpressure' their pupils. This was brought to nationwide attention by Dr. Crichton-Browne, Edinburgh's Medical Officer of Health, who made startling allegations connecting the school system with increasing child suicides in the 1880s⁹⁰. Whatever may have been his exaggerations about the effects of the system on child health, there is little doubt that it had a bad effect on relationships between teachers and children. A number of teachers imposed an iron discipline on their schools, sometimes bordering on the cruel. This may have been worse in some areas than others, but was particularly bad in Caernarvonshire where E.T. Watts HMI insisted that schools be conducted in 'utmost silence'⁹¹. The rod was a constant source of ill will between teachers and pupils, and often also between teachers, parents, and the local community.

Beatings were sometimes severe; many parents complained to school boards, sometimes taking their children along to meetings to show the marks on their bodies⁹². Others, infuriated, invaded schools 'blagarding' the teachers, 'acting in a termagant manner', and using 'threatening and abusive language'⁹³. School boards

and managers found themselves holding the ring, but beatings were so common that most began to insist on a 'punishment book'; they also forbade pupil teachers from caning. One headteacher in Caernarvonshire solved the difficulty by getting offenders' relatives to 'chastise'. On one occasion he recorded that 'the boy Hugh Williams' caught stealing a knife was 'caned by his grandfather in the presence of the whole schoolchildren, the master and the clerk'⁹⁴. It is difficult to know whether excessive beatings were general, but corporal punishment had always been used. It was probably more cruel under the old system (vide the 1847 Reports) but obsession with grants and results led to its continued use in the 70s and 80s. Some teachers were so obsessed with results that they lost all sense of proportion. The headteacher of the Penisa'rwaun Board school was eventually dismissed in 1878 for beating a boy 'until he was spitting blood' and shouting in his face 'who was going to make up the loss of twenty two shillings caused by his failing the examination'⁹⁵. Generally, beatings became less frequent in the 1890s as the Code system broke up; not all teachers approved, one at Trefor recording ruefully in 1898, 'In former times healthy cane application worked wonders with shiftless children'⁹⁶.

Anxiety about the Code drove some Caernarvonshire teachers to drink, in an effort to drown their anxieties. One had to be carried in a dog cart to be told he was sacked despite his willingness to enter an 'inebriates home'⁹⁷. Others had nervous breakdowns, one or two committed suicide, while many simply gave up the teaching profession looking for more amenable jobs. The Revised Code also produced fundamental changes in the relationship

between teachers and the Inspectorate. In the eighteen fifties teachers regarded HMIs as allies in their educational mission: F.C. Cook said they were greeted 'with an alacrity and friendly welcome that proved sufficiently the value attached to their visits'⁹⁸. The religious Societies also reported the same sense of solidarity in their annual reports, but the Revised Code brought this partnership to an end. Now the Inspector was an enemy to be deceived and beaten. Some teachers devised an elaborate strategy of hand and finger movements, or winks and coughs to outwit the Inspector on examination day. Some Inspectors, men like Watts, Fearon and Binns, generally newer men appointed in the eighteen sixties and seventies, responded in kind. The general opinion of E.T. Watts in the Llŷn peninsula was that he was 'a devil'⁹⁹. Fearon's view of the child was that he was an animal, 'as cunning as the fox portrayed in the Second Irish Reading Book, he has ten tricks and ten times more than you can guess'¹⁰⁰. One Inspector was even reported to have said that, 'I never feel that I have done my duty in school unless I have left the mistress in tears' - a statement which even the egregious Sneyd-Kynnersley described as 'appalling'¹⁰¹. These attitudes were a source of great regret to other HMIs and many did as much as they could in an unobtrusive and informal way, to lighten the oppressiveness of the system. They were almost as much victims of the Code as teachers and children. Generally, their collective intelligence was repelled by it. Indeed, members of the Inspectorate eventually played a vital role in bringing about the abandonment of Payment by Results, which they disliked as educationally unsound.

What may be difficult to understand is why the system which was so patently ineffectual in achieving even its own limited objectives was allowed to continue relatively unchanged for so many years? The answer almost certainly lies in its popularity with public opinion. The rationale of the revised system appealed to the prevailing mood: Matthew Arnold described it as 'just the sort of notion to catch of itself popular favour'¹⁰². School managers and school boards supported it because of its simplicity, enabling them to judge 'progress' at a glance. Equally important, it allowed them to retain lay control over the new and largely suspect teaching profession. By glossing over 'processes' and focusing entirely on 'results', the system denied the ambiguities and complexities of education, reducing it to a quantifiable artefact with the added advantage of measuring it in terms of value for money. J.G.G. Fussell's warning, that the educative process could never be as simple as the Revised Code implied, was ignored. He had written in 1862, that a school's efficiency depended on a variety of social factors defying measurement by mere examination and the award of passes with a money grant attached. His list of determining factors included, 'the unavoidable change of pupil teachers, the ceaseless ebb and flow of the children the richness or poverty of the district, the demand for labour (whether) continual or intermittent, (and) the neighbourhood (whether) healthy or unhealthy'¹⁰³. In addition, 'trades which afford employment for young children may or may not be at hand, the schools may be well or ill suited, commodious or incommodious, with playgrounds or without them', and most important of all, 'the character of the labouring population from which the

children are drawn' was of crucial importance¹⁰⁴. None of these factors, wrote Fussell, were measurable in examination terms and yet were all-important determinants of a school's 'results'.

Fussell believed that once the public had grasped the significance of the social backgrounds of schools in determining their educational performance, it would be ready to concede 'how difficult it is to praise one school without injustice to others, for though undoubtedly a good school always implies more or less excellence in the teacher, yet the best teacher has not always the best school'¹⁰⁵. As it turned out, public opinion chose to ignore Fussell's analysis of the social context of education, finding it easier and simpler to accept the Education Department's assurances about the foolproof nature of the system's assessment techniques.

The Revised Code, reducing the school syllabus so that, in effect, it consisted only of the three Rs and religious instruction, and limiting examination entry to the children of the working classes, was indicative of the intention to restore elementary schools to their original function of teaching basic literacy and numeracy within the context of the civilizing mission. No subject reinforced the ameliorative concept more than religious instruction, the socialising subject par excellence. What can be gleaned about its content and methodology in Caernarvonshire schools after the 1870s bears ample testimony to its social orientation. In the 1870s a substantial minority of Welsh school boards forbade religious instruction lessons, fearing there was no safeguard short of totally secular schooling against the subversive influence of proselytism. The residual strength of the old Voluntaryist movement accounted for this in South Wales: in the North the heated 'religious'

controversy surrounding the Education Act in 1870 was the cause, especially as it rumbled on for years. As late as 1899, 62 school boards out of 320 in Wales had no religious instruction, but most secular boards in Caernarvonshire had abandoned their position and introduced carefully programmed 'neutral' schemes in the 1880s and 90s.¹⁰⁶ In any case most boards in Caernarvonshire had always favoured non denominational religious instruction on the 'British' model.

Although the religious controversy surrounding education had been heated, it made little difference to the social objectives of the religious instruction taught. Admittedly National and other Church schools in Caernarvonshire continued to teach the catechism and formularies of the Anglican church in an overwhelmingly Nonconformist society, but with the safeguard of the conscience clause. Non-denominational British schools rejected formularies, and rate aided Board schools were forbidden to use them. Yet all the schools - National, British and Board - used religious instruction to achieve broadly similar moral and social objectives. They sought to inculcate common values: these included integrity, purity, honour, thrift, honesty, temperance, industry, patriotism and obedience. The practice of teaching social values through religious instruction, was openly acknowledged by the Cross Commission¹⁰⁷. In most of Caernarvonshire's National and Board schools, children were set to learn passages of Biblical text by heart, notably the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and selections from the Psalms and Book of Proverbs. They were also given biographical sketches of Old Testament characters, virtuous women such as Ruth and Deborah, and good men like Samson and 'the

boy Samuel', in the hope that learning about them would make the pupils 'good'. The Caernarfon School Board explicitly intended its religious instruction to lead children to appreciate 'the punishments accorded for law breakers and those found in falsehoods, with commendations of the contrary'¹⁰⁸. Pupils were to be shown 'denunciations of hypocrisy, deceitfulness, lying and using bad language and commendations of self control, sobriety and decision of character'¹⁰⁹. The religious tensions which had spurred the founding of schools and presented obstacles to their rational distribution were irrelevant to social values about which there was a strong consensus.

Values teaching underpinned most subjects. Even choices of school songs, passages for recitation and themes for composition were dictated by the system's leading values. Such songs as Let English boys their duty do, Before all lands, Britain by waves caressed, Flag of England, Oh I'm a British boy sir, Hurrah for England, Victoria! Victoria! Victoria!, Rule Britannia, Yon Gentlemen of England and God Save the Queen - all sung in Caernarvonshire schools in the 1880s and 90s - were selected to encourage patriotism appropriate to an age of Imperialism¹¹⁰. Other songs, such as Kiss Me Mother, Never forget the dear ones, Tis fore ordained, Be to others kind, Is there room for Mary there? and selections from Crampton's Moral Gems, were chosen for their kindly, humane and sentimental feelings¹¹¹. Others again, such as Busy Bee, and 'Whate'er is worth doing is worth doing well, Such a chance will not come again', reinforced the work ethic¹¹². Finally, hymns such as Pull for the shore, Pilgrims of the night, and songs like 'Oh come, come away death, were reminders of their inevitable fate.¹¹³ Many 'themes' were also 'improving' or moral; those

set for standards IV to VI at the Trefor Granite Company school during 1891-2 included the following, Thrift, A bad habit among boys - cursing and swearing, Punctuality, Good Manners, Temperance, Honesty, Cruelty to Animals, and Early Rising¹¹⁴. Fragments of history and geography taught, though largely factual, consisting of the names and dates of kings, battles and famous victories, lists of lakes, promontories, bays, rivers and 'productions', fostered pride in Britain, her heritage and her Empire¹¹⁵. When 'great men' were studied at the end of the period, the most popular were Alfred the Great, William the Conqueror, The Black Prince, Sir Philip Sidney, Oliver Cromwell, John Milton, Nelson, Wellington, Wolfe, Richard Cobden, H.M. Stanley, David Livingstone, Caractacus and Victoria (sic) - figures combining the virtues of patriotism and puritanism¹¹⁶. Military drill added to the curriculum in the 1890s, and often taught by locally stationed drill sergeants, further fortified the patriotic spirit; its aim was to build an island race fit enough to defend its country against the conscript armies of Europe. As the Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald put it in 1897, 'though there is no likelihood of the conscription being resorted to in this country, we must have gallant defenders nevertheless'¹¹⁷. Lessons in Plain Needlework and Domestic Economy, were also organized everywhere by committees of middle class ladies. Such lessons had two aims: first, to teach working class girls how to manage family budgets, mend clothes, and cook plain meals; secondly, to train them as domestic servants, able to black grates, wash iron and mangle clothes, clean and scrub floors and cook meals. They fostered qualities of cleanliness, thrift, punctuality, orderliness, and obedience together with a

spirit of 'grateful affection towards their benefactors'¹¹⁸. As the Rev. H.T. Edwards, by then Dean of Bangor, said in a sermon to launch a course of Domestic Economy lessons in the city's schools (1885), their aim was 'to produce the high priestess who stands at the sacred altar of the hearth to make sacrifices, which bring down blessings upon herself and all for whom she ministers'¹¹⁹.

Combining the spiritual and corporeal, he urged working class girls to put their nutritional faith in a diet of oatmeal and milk, so full of goodness that it built up character as well as bodily strength.

In Caernarvonshire, the wives of sworn political enemies sat together in harmony on ladies committees organising domestic management lessons for working class girls in the county. In Bethesda Mrs. W.J. Parry, wife of the 'Quarryman's champion', the Radical W.J. Parry of Coetmor Hall shared the committee with Lady Louisa Douglas-Pennant, wife of Parry's hated political enemy, George Sholto Douglas-Pennant, and in Cricieth Mrs. J.W. Greaves, wife of the well known Liberal functionary of Blaenau Ffestiniog and Cricieth, sat in harmony with Mrs. Ellis-Nanney, wife of the dyed-in-the-wool Tory squire of Gwynfryn and Tory candidate in the famous Lloyd-George bye-election of April 1890¹²⁰. This genteel female consensus was forged by shared values and their common need for reliable domestic servants.

By the eighteen nineties Inspectors usually expressed satisfaction with the achievements of elementary schools in discipline and moral improvement. They felt that the social aims of Kay-Shuttleworth's policy were vindicated, possibly strengthened by the changes of the eighteen sixties, whatever their strictly

educational effects. As L.J. Sharpe, Senior Chief HMI wrote in 1895, 'Clergymen have told me that they hardly know their own parishes, so great had been the change for the better'¹²¹. By then the country was well provided with schools, and children attended them more or less regularly, until eleven or twelve years of age. Moreover, schools imbued them with the values of respectable society. Few HMIs now referred to the working classes as 'classes dangereux'. 'Though still rough and ready, most were seen as law abiding citizens, well grounded in the basic skills, and upholding the axioms of 'a cheerful obedience to duty consideration and respect for others, and honour and truthfulness in word and act'¹²². Most HMIs would have extended the application of L.J. Sharpe's view of the effect of elementary education in London to the whole country that, 'if it were not for her elementary schools she would be overrun by a horde of young savages'¹²³. In Wales, the Chief HMI A.G. Legard, wrote in 1899, that 'it is clear that education has got a real hold of the popular sympathies', - a sentiment which as an Englishman he found 'warm satisfaction' in expressing¹²⁴.

After fifty years, the social objectives of policy were achieved: the working classes were in a fair way to being 'socialised' and 'civilised'. In the process they had also been made sufficiently literate and numerate to fulfil the work functions of their class, and provide manpower according to the needs of the economy. The success which the education system was thought to have achieved was a tribute to Kay-Shuttleworth and his teaching corps of social and moral crusaders. But it was a success which had been won to a considerable extent at the cost of the educational

promise of the eighteen fifties, as the potentially valuable developments of that decade had been nullified by the Revised Code and held in abeyance for thirty years.

By the eighteen nineties, with the social aims of policy attained, there were signs that the bonds limiting the school curriculum were about to be relaxed. Already the Inspectorate had persuaded the Education Department to loosen its tight control of syllabuses in geography and history by allowing schools to introduce the study of their local environment and its past, while the Departmental sanction given in 1890 to the use of bilingual approaches in Welsh schools made the whole course of education more meaningful and effective¹²⁵. The new evening schools code also sanctioned a whole range of new and 'useful' subjects in night schools, so that there was a renewed chance that Joseph Bowstead's dream of a continuing education might become possible once again.

One of the most important long term changes was the gradual introduction of kindergarten methods into infants schools during the 1880s and 90s. The British Society's training college at Stockwell initiated a course in Froebel's kindergarten methods in 1875, with evening classes for serving teachers¹²⁶. Another college known as the 'Kindergarten College' was opened by the British Society at Saffron Walden in 1883¹²⁷. The Kindergarten Exhibition at South Kensington in 1884, helped confer legitimacy on the new approach¹²⁸. By the eighteen nineties, the kindergarten idea was widely approved and in 1893 the Education Department issued a circular to promote it, under the supervision of teachers with an understanding of its principles. The Department's circular

even recommended the abandonment of older forms of teaching; infants schools were no longer to be regarded as pre-standard schools simply offering teachers an extra period for training children for their first examination¹²⁹. Instead, the 1893 Circular recommended a series of kindergarten activities. These included self expression exercises in clay modelling, playing games and looking at 'objects'. They were seen as focal points, around which many activities could be arranged. Training in conceptual and manual skills was suggested by paper cutting and folding, making mosaics with coloured paper and gum, threading beads and arranging shells, twisting paper, plaiting sticks and 'carrying a glass of water without spilling it'¹³⁰. Learning simple and colourful nursery rhymes, and story telling were also encouraged, particularly fairy tales, appealing to the children's sense of wonder and imagination. The old methods of rote learning based on monologue lessons given by the teacher were criticized; teachers were assigned a new role - that of leading children through conversation and activity, to learn by observation questioning and doing¹³¹.

The evolution of kindergarten, and the Circular of 1893, played a decisive part in relaxing the structure and style of elementary education in England and Wales. But it was a process which evolved gradually over several decades. Some local teachers had seen the need to adopt alternative methods of teaching infants and young children long before the Education Department. Miss Anne Thomas, a teacher at the little infants school at Talysarn in Caernarvonshire, was writing as early as September 1885, that she had 'commenced to teach kindergarten this week; lesson on paper folding given to the first class'¹³². Convinced of its value she

had gone to Liverpool for a fortnight at her own expense 'to go through a course of German Kinder Garten Training'¹³³. Later, her school board allowed her to order 'new kindergarten apparatus including six dozen slats for interlacing, two dozen jointed slats, two packets of paper for folding, and two boxes of wires'¹³⁴. By 1891, her class at Talysarn were threading beads, plaiting straw, and pricking outlines by perforating paper, so co-ordinating the action of mind and eye¹³⁵. After 1893, the girls were making baskets of straw, and the boys were modelling in clay, the girls were embroidering patterns, while the boys were tracing and colouring floral designs.

Under the impact of enthusiastic teachers, kindergarten methods were making progress elsewhere. By the turn of the century, children at the Caernarfon Board's infants school were building models with blocks, wordbuilding with coloured alphabet cards, matweaving, embroidering, using an imitation clock, and counting with domino cards and a ball frame¹³⁶. In 1900, Miss Elizabeth Kerruish the infants school headteacher divided her top infants into two sections, and with their pupil teacher took them out for 'observation lessons'¹³⁷. One section had an 'outdoor lesson' on 'The Autumn', and as Miss Kerruish wrote in her log book, 'the falling leaves were particularly noted with the absence of flowers and the ripening of blackberries'¹³⁸. At Pwllheli, infants at Troedyrallt Board school 'went up the hill round Denio' in 1902, 'to see nature in Spring and had a conversational lesson flowers, leaves, buds, bits of wool etc. were brought back by the children to school'¹³⁹.

The infants enjoyed their new lessons, and were said to

be learning more than by the soulless repetition of rules and the memorisation of books. The influence of new ~~kindergarten~~ methods were possibly more deeply felt than might be imagined because many schools admitted children of four and occasionally three years of age; some children were thus exposed to the new methods for two or three years. As in other matters, schools in rural areas tended to lag behind, and some had to be prodded by HMIs. In 1902, Edward Roberts was warning the Aberdaron United District School Board in the Llŷn Peninsula that its schools required 'more charts, some means of teaching with concrete examples, (beads, shells, tablets, etc.), some bells for drill and some specimen pictures for object lessons'¹⁴⁰. In other rural schools such was the shortage of apparatus that teachers had to teach kindergarten without the proper aids. Boot lacing, counting hatpegs in the cloakroom, making shapes and letters with matchsticks, and other improvised activities, were sometimes substituted.

With the exception of backward rural areas the adoption of kindergarten methods in Caernarvonshire's schools and in schools elsewhere, had begun to effect striking improvements, not only in the learning achievements of infants, but also in the whole atmosphere of infants schools and classes. By 1900, the Inspectorate was counselling the continued use of some of the new methods into the lower standards of the elementary schools. Initial developments were cautious, but the gradual extension of some infant teaching methods into the elementary schools helped, in time, both to erase the Code regime entirely, and to substitute a new philosophy of education for that of 'results'. Attention was turned once again to educational processes, and instead of being regarded simply as

receptacles for factual information children were perceived as individuals to be nourished not only mentally and intellectually, but also physically, socially and aesthetically. In a powerful sense it was the kindergarten approach which allowed the resumption of the aborted educational developments of the eighteen fifties. In Caernarvonshire Edward Roberts anticipated 'sound and substantial progress' together with 'vast improvements in methods of instruction'¹⁴¹.

At the same time links were established between elementary and 'middle class' schools. In October 1879, Hugh Owen and a group of prominent Welshmen established an association known as the North Wales Scholarship Association to enable children of 'exceptional merit' to proceed from elementary to secondary school¹⁴². Initially its scholarships were limited to Anglesey and Caernarvonshire but later extended to the six North Wales counties¹⁴³. They were financed by voluntary subscriptions; these came from all classes, from the Duke of Westminster, Samuel Morley, T.L.D. Jones-Parry, William Rathbone, Henry Tate and the quarrymen of Deiniolen, Dinorwic and Ffestiniog¹⁴⁴. Scholarships were awarded on the results of an examination held annually; their value was £20 for two years, and £30 for a further year following another examination¹⁴⁵. They were tenable at any approved Grammar school. Most boys went to Friars school, Beaumaris, Bala, Grove Park, Oswestry or the Liverpool Institute; the girls to Dr. Williams school Dolgellau, or Blackburne House, Liverpool. The examination was very stiff; some elementary teachers complained about this. It lasted six hours, candidates having to answer papers in Grammar, Latin, French, Geography, History, Euclid and Algebra¹⁴⁶. During the later 1880s,

the examiners were professors at the University College of North Wales - Henry Jones, E.V. Arnold and R.W. Phillips.

Some schools established a good record of successes, notably the Caernarfon Board school, and the Wrexham British school. The most distinguished scholar was Thomas Hudson Williams of Caernarfon, later classics professor at Bangor¹⁴⁷. The Association continued until 1894 when it was dissolved on the creation of the County Scholarship scheme in association with the new Intermediate schools. It had performed a valuable if very limited service - only 22 scholarships were awarded in the seven years to 1886¹⁴⁸. Its importance, however, lay in showing that the 1870 Act was likely to be more far reaching in its effects than anyone had envisaged. But these were small beginnings. More working class children were able to benefit from the Intermediate or County schools, especially those set up in quarrying areas, Brynrefail, Penygroes and Bethesda. Ladders, albeit narrow ones, were thus being erected, although fees were to be a barrier for many years. The new schools and scholarships had an effect throughout the county, not all good. Scholarship 'results' replaced those of the Code. As the headmistress of the Caernarfon Board (girls) school wrote in 1894, following the success of two girls in the County Scholarship examination,

'All the girls seem stimulated by the results and seem very ambitious to work for next years exam'¹⁴⁹.

Just as new methods relaxed the atmosphere generally, and the Code was erased, competitive examinations for County Scholarships tended to counter them in the upper standards. As yet however few children were affected.

A development of still greater importance in Wales and Caernarvonshire was the gradual adoption of Welsh as the medium of instruction in predominantly Welsh speaking areas during the 1890s, and the substitution of translation exercises from English to Welsh and Welsh to English for English Grammar as a class subject. That had always consisted of parsing and sentence analysis posing insurmountable difficulties for Welsh speaking children.

The Society for the Utilisation of the Welsh Language was formed in 1886 as a promotional group to press for these changes, as well as for Welsh as an optional specific subject in its own right in Standards V, VI and VII¹⁵⁰. The Society was an offshoot of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion. Ostensibly its aim was to encourage changes facilitating the dissemination of English. It appears incontrovertible that the strongest impulse behind the movement was the mounting concern felt at the slow rate of progress made by the English language in the Principality. Perhaps the Mayor of Caernarfon, Sir Llywelyn Turner, best expressed this concern when he said that something was seriously amiss with the Principality's educational system when 'the natives of India appear to be learning English so much faster than the natives of Wales'¹⁵¹.

The basic aims of the Utilisation Society can be gathered from a study of speeches made by its leaders at public meetings in the 1880s, and by analysing evidence submitted by the Society to the Cross Commission in 1887. This shows that the Society, as its name implied, laid its heaviest emphasis, not on the preservation of Welsh but its utilisation to secure the dissemination of English.

The aims of the Society were made patently clear at a meeting in Bangor in 1888 to promote its views. One of the speakers, W.J. Parry of Coetmor Hall, Bethesda, saw the Society's role in terms which would almost certainly have been approved by the Blue Books Commissioners of 1847. 'Would not the utilisation of the language of the home for the purposes of explaining school lessons' asked Parry 'make them (the children) better Englishmen and Englishwomen?',¹⁵² We have already noted that Lingen had pressed a similar view more than forty years earlier when he wrote that 'So long as the children are familiar with none other (than Welsh) they must be educated to a considerable extent through the medium of it though to supersede it be the most important part of their education',¹⁵³. He was convinced that 'the language of life' had to be utilised if 'the language of lessons' was to make progress¹⁵⁴. Sir Thomas Marchant Williams, another speaker at the Bangor meeting, underlined the Society's aims, 'Be it understood once for all', he said, 'that they held it to be their first and paramount duty to put every child in our elementary schools in possession of a complete mastery of the English language They maintain it was their duty to utilise the Welsh language for the acquisition of the English language purely and simply',¹⁵⁵. Very few speakers upheld the Welsh language per se: only two out of nine mentioned its intrinsic worth. They were the Rev. Ellis Edwards, tutor at the Calvinistic Methodist denominational college at Bala, and John Price, Principal of the Bangor Normal College. Indeed Price castigated the Welsh middle class for thinking of Welsh 'as a language which would do for servants',¹⁵⁶. Yet even he sent his children to a private

middle class school in Bangor for a 'thoroughly English education'. As for those who gave evidence to the Cross Commission, they pressed the same argument as most speakers at Bangor, that the Welsh language should be utilised to facilitate the spread of English. One of the Society's leading exponents, Dan Isaac Davies, sub-Inspector in the Merthyr district, told the Commission that he thought the Society's success would 'endanger the existence of the Welsh language unless the Welsh people are very much attached to their language this movement will be fatal to it',¹⁵⁷.

The Society actively pressed its case throughout the 1880s and 90s. Not only did its leaders give evidence to the Cross Commission, where they had already ensured the sympathetic ear of Henry Richard, but they publicised their case throughout the length and breadth of the Principality, holding numerous public meetings, using the National Eisteddfod as a countrywide platform and publishing a large number of pamphlets together with the results of surveys conducted among professional teachers supporting their case. The Society was equally active in securing the backing of national leaders and newspaper editors, influential school board members and, above all, HMIs whose influence they acknowledged as 'essential',¹⁵⁸. Indeed the Society was very effective in prompting its views and persuading informed opinion to support it.

It scored its first success in 1886 when the Education Department allowed the schools of the Gelligaer School Board (Monmouthshire) to teach Welsh as an optional specific subject in the upper Standards¹⁵⁹. In 1888 the Caernarfon School Board was given the same permission, but its optional Welsh syllabus in effect stressed translation for teaching English more effectively¹⁶⁰.

The Caernarfon experiment was not very successful; the long campaign of denigration against Welsh had struck deep roots. At the same time the district's Inspector, the Rev. E.T. Watts was an uncompromising opponent of the experiment, and later accused by the school board of 'having taken the life out of it',¹⁶¹. He persuaded teachers not to take it up, and criticised them for speaking Welsh to children in other lessons, even for speaking Welsh to infants in casual conversation.

The Hart Dyke Code (1889), following the publication of the Cross Report, was a major breakthrough, in that it allowed almost all the demands of the Utilisation Society. Much had been done quietly behind the scenes by Sir John Puleston, Conservative MP for Plymouth **Devonport**, who had intervened personally with his colleague in the Tory party, Sir William Hart Dyke, Vice-President of the Committee of Council in Salisbury's government, to persuade him to meet the Society's case. In reply to a Parliamentary Question, Hart Dyke told Puleston that 'Inspectors will certainly be instructed to give every encouragement to the translation from Welsh to English',¹⁶². In a private letter to Puleston, Hart Dyke set down quite unmistakably what he regarded as the ultimate aim of the 'concessions': 'We must not encourage the Welsh language at the expense of English', he wrote, 'but rather as a vehicle for the sounder and more rapid acquisition of English',¹⁶³.

The most significant breakthrough did not occur until 1893, when A.H.D. Acland the new Vice President took positive steps to encourage the adoption of the Code's provisions. By then, the Utilisation Society had drawn up a model Scheme of Instruction, which in accordance with the Society's central aims laid its emphasis on

translation and bilingual books, the publication of which the Society itself promoted. Conditions for success were also far better in Caernarvonshire as the hostile Watts had retired a few months before, to be succeeded by his Assistant, Edward Roberts, who had secretly supported the Society's aims. But the role of Acland as Vice-President should not be underestimated. He had powerful connections with Wales and Welsh Liberalism, owned a country house in Caernarvonshire, was a member of its County Council along with the young Lloyd George, and intimately involved with Welsh Intermediate education¹⁶⁴. His political friends included Tom Ellis the MP for Merioneth and Lloyd George, as well as more local leaders such as W.J. Parry and others. Acland's proved to be an all-important ministerial contribution, at a time when the Utilisation movement was caught in confused and contradictory cross currents, reflecting at one and the same time the passionate desire for English as 'the necessary password for every market in the world',¹⁶⁵ and the influence of a romantic national awakening associated with Owen M. Edwards. Acland gave positive official sanction to Welsh in the schools of Wales; his new code in 1893 recognised 'the desirability of teaching Welsh in Wales',¹⁶⁶.

From 1893 to 1902 appreciable progress was made in using Welsh as the medium of instruction, particularly in replacing the almost incomprehensible English Grammar by translation from Welsh to English and English to Welsh. By 1902 a growing number of schools in Caernarvonshire and elsewhere in Wales had begun to use systematic bilingual methods; only some of the rural schools resisted, taking up a customarily reactionary position. The result was that progress in the English language, and in the ability

of Welsh children to speak it correctly, though uneven across the country, began to resume the pace achieved in a few places, just before the Revised Code.

By 1902 most schools using bilingual methods could show positive evidence of progress. In 1896, the Caernarfon School Board reported that 'by the aid of Welsh taught side by side with English much improvement has been accomplished and this year the highest grant for English was earned'¹⁶⁷. At the Rhyd Ddu Board school, where the grant for English grammar was awarded 'only after much hesitation' in 1890, the results in 1894, following the adoption of translation were 'decidedly good'¹⁶⁸. At the Deiniolen Board school the headteacher reported that children took 'special delight in the work';¹⁶⁹ in 1894 his upper standards were reading John Edward Lloyd's 'Cant o Hanesion'. The headteacher wrote that,

'The method adopted was to take the class orally through two or three stories at a time, each child reading a sentence in Welsh and translating it into English'.¹⁷⁰

At the Llanaelhaearn Board school pupils were 'quite taken up with this mode of teaching English'¹⁷¹. Edward Roberts added that 'English is taught bilingually with such success as to merit the upper grant'¹⁷². The Welsh Stick and Welsh Not disappeared from nearly all schools, as Welsh was openly encouraged mainly as a vehicle for teaching English. What it meant to some teachers was that they could now use officially, openly, and systematically, a method which some had been forced to use surreptitiously, and almost subversively for many years, at least to the extent of clarifying difficult points or explaining difficult words - a state

of affairs which Edward Roberts acknowledged to have existed before the 1890s and which accounted in large measure for his fervent support of the Utilisation Society. This is confirmed in log books where some teachers openly recorded using translation in the 1860s, 70s and 80s; in some, Welsh Notes were also in use, but were clearly waived for particular lessons. The changes of the 1890s thus sanctioned methods already used sporadically in some schools¹⁷³.

Progress in teaching Welsh as an optional specific subject in the upper standards was much slower because Welsh parents (and many Welsh teachers) still perceived it as a useless subject for 'getting on in the world'. The headmaster of the Carneddi British school in Bethesda thought he spoke for his quarrying community when he said that the introduction of Welsh would be 'a retrograde step likely to retard their children and further handicap them in the educational race'¹⁷⁴. Most parents, when offered a choice between Welsh and Domestic Economy as a specific subject for their daughters, chose the latter, and at the Bangor girls Board school only one girl out of 58 whose parents were offered a choice between Welsh and French opted for Welsh¹⁷⁵. Public support for bilingual teaching before 1902 was thus strictly limited: many parents even regarded the 'utilisation' of Welsh with suspicion; very few were prepared to go beyond that. The fact that Welsh was given little place in the new County schools appeared to confirm its limited educational value.

Yet the introduction of Welsh and bilingual methods with official sanction in the 1890s was a momentous change. The way was prepared for Welsh to gain equal status with English as the

language of education in the course of the twentieth century. Crucially important, it reappeared as a subject in teacher training, the Bangor Normal College's report in 1893 welcoming 'this valuable concession' (Acland's Code), and noting that 'its effect cannot but prove highly beneficial to the intelligence and culture of the people of Wales'¹⁷⁶. Yet its most immediate effect was to open the floodgates to English, and to make the elementary schools, possibly for the first time, effective in teaching English. In a sense, by 1902, Welsh elementary schools were adopting the means recommended by Lingen, Symons and Johnson in 1847, and pressed equally by Cotton and Longueville Jones, for spreading the English language. Only now did they begin to achieve the ends so fervently hoped for by Sir Hugh Owen and the Rev. John Phillips in the 1850s and 60s.

At the same time, the development of kindergarten ideas and their intrusion into the lower standards of junior schools, held the promise of a somewhat more liberal educational ethos, with much more attention being given to the development of the individual in place of the rigid 'classification' and 'examination' of 'standards'. Indeed, kindergarten ideas, backed up by broader influences then at work, appeared to herald a revolution in attitudes towards children, leading to a new perception of education and significant changes in the education of teachers. This slow, subtle change in human relationships opened up the prospect of resuming once again the kind of educational progress which the early schools Inspectorate had fostered before the Code.

R E F E R E N C E S

1. MCC (1846-7) pp.252-3. Also MCC (1853-5) pp.8-10.
2. Ibid., pp.252 ff.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p.267.
5. Ibid.
6. MCC (1853-4) p.16
7. MCC (1854-5) pp.573-4.
8. MCC (1851-2) p.48.
9. Ibid.
10. MCC (1863-4) p.190.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. MCC (1856-7) p.557.
14. MCC (1854-5) p.629.
15. MCC (1861-2) p.155.
16. MCC (1850-1) p.511.
17. Ibid.
18. MCC (1859-60) p.54.
19. Ibid.
20. MCC (1854-5) p.629.
21. MCC (1853-4) pp.21 ff.
22. Ibid.
23. MCC (1852-3) p.45.
24. MCC (1861-2) p.124
25. Ibid.
26. MCC (1858-9) p.30.

27. MCC (1861-2) p.139.
28. MCC (1846-7) p.271.
29. See P.H.J.H. Gosden, *op.cit.*, pp.43 ff.
30. MCC (1860-1) pp.18-21.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. MCC (1854-5) p.630.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. MCC (1861-2) pp.134-6.
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. MCC (1855-6) pp.534-5.
40. *Ibid.* Also MCC (1854-5) pp.588-90.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*
43. MCC (1847-8) p.57.
44. MCC (1850-1) p.516.
45. *Ibid.*
46. See P.H.J.H. Gosden, *op.cit.*, pp.43-57
47. MCC (1861-2) p.122.
48. MCC (1854-5) p.591.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. MCC (1855-6) p.535.
52. MCC (1853-4) p.22.
53. See MCC (1858-9) pp.520-5. Even in workhouse schools vocational training was usually limited to a little spade husbandry for boys, and sewing for girls. Only charity schools opened expressly for the purpose of vocational training took it more seriously.

53. (Continued) Most such schools were in London and the bigger English towns. They taught housework, dressmaking, millinery, bonnet and lacemaking to the girls, carpentry, matmaking and making shoes to the boys as well as tilling the soil. With this they combined moral instruction. The 'refuge' for boys at Copenhagen Fields in Islington employed 'a spacious bath the habit of frequent immersion in cold water producing results of the highest importance in a sanitary and moral point of view' (MCC 1847-8, p.67).
54. Ibid.
55. MCC (1852-3)pp. 46-7, (1861-2) p.158
56. MCC (1858-9) p.20.
57. See D.W. Sylvester, Robert Lowe and Education (Cambridge 1974), pp.3-39.
58. MCC (1858-9) pp.20-1.
59. MCC (1861-2) p.15.
60. Ibid.
61. See John Hurt, Education in Evolution, Church, State, Society and Popular Education 1800-70 (London 1972) pp.35-8, 46, 191-2.
62. See A.S. Bishop, op.cit., pp.79-117.
63. See J.E. Dunford, Robert Lowe and the Inspectors Reports, British Journal of Educational Studies, vol. xxv, No.2, (June 1977) pp.155-69. See also, James Winter Robert Lowe (Toronto 1976) pp.189-93.
64. MCC (1862-3) the Revised Code pp. xvii-xxix.
65. Ibid.
66. MCC (1863-4) p.73.
67. MCC (1863-4) p.189.
68. MCC (1864-5) p.246.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. See John Lawson and Harold Silver, A Social History of Education in England (London 1973) pp.328-9. Also Frank Smith, A History of Elementary Education (London 1931) pp.301, 316-7. Also Mary Sturt, The Education of the People (London 1967), pp.340 ff.

72. MCC (1863-4) p.186.
73. Ibid., p.187.
74. MCC (1864-5) p.162.
75. MCC (1863-4) p.183.
76. MCC (1869-70) p.291.
77. MCC (1863-4) p.190.
78. E. Sneyd Kynnersley, op.cit., p.240.
79. Education Department: Report of the Welsh division (1886) p.15.
80. Ibid., p.10.
81. GRO ES 1 Deunant Board school, 4.11.1892.
82. Ibid.
83. See Education Department: Report of the Welsh division (1886) p.10.
84. See the Revised Code, MCC (1862-3) p.xxxvi.
85. MCC (1871-2) p.222.
86. These examples are taken from school log books in the Gwynedd Record Office. GRO ES 1 Deunant Board school 18.2.1887, 11.6.1887, 17.2.1893, Llannor National school 22.12.1897.
87. MCC (1868-70) p.292.
88. GRO ES 1 Pennant Board school 21.12.1894.
89. Ibid.
90. See Mary Sturt, op.cit., p.355.
91. MCC (1871-2) p.224.
92. See GRO ET 1 Llanaelhaearn 29.11.1898.
93. GRO ES 1 Llanaelhaearn Board school 3.4.1874, Trefor Granite Company school 27.2. - 3.3.1893. ET 1 Llanrug 6.6.1877.
94. GRO ES 1 Deunant Board school 12.12.1882.
95. GRO ET 1 Llanddeiniolen 10.5.1883.

96. GRO ES 1 Trefor Granite Company school 22.4.1898.
97. GRO ET 1 Llanddeiniolen 2.12.1898, 15.2.1899.
98. MCC (1853-4) p.12.
99. J. Lloyd Williams, op.cit., pp.174-5.
100. MCC (1867-8) p.323.
101. E. Sneyd Kynnersley, op.cit., p.162.
102. MCC (1869-70) p.291.
103. MCC (1861-2) p.16.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. K.O. Morgan, op.cit., p.45.
107. Final Report of the Royal Commission on the Working of the Elementary Education Acts (the Cross Commission) 1888, pp.113-7.
108. GRO ET 1 Caernarfon 6.1.1890.
109. Ibid.
110. These songs were sung in Caernarvonshire schools:
see GRO ES 1 Troedyrallt Board school 13.7.1877,
22.7.1878, Trefor Granite Company school 11.11.1887,
22.8.1890, 29.4.1895, Llanaelhaearn Board school
20.7.75, Trefriw National school 8-12.3.1875,
19.5.1876, Nantmor Board school 10.2.1886.
111. Ibid.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. GRO ES 1 Trefor Granite Company school 14-18.9.1891,
19-23.10.1891, 9-13.11.1891, 16-20.11.1891, 7.12.1891,
13-17.2.1892, 13-17.4.1892, 27-31.3.1892.
115. See GRO ES 1 Talybont Board school 27.6.-2.7.1881,
Beddgelert Board school 8.12.1899, Llanaelhaearn
Board school 28.9.1891. ET 1 Bangor 15.3.1883,
Caernarfon 2.7.1883.
116. GRO ES 1 Trefor Granite Company school 2.6.1901,
Llanaelhaearn Board school 28.8.1891.

117. Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald 12.2.1891.
118. See MCC (1856-7) p.243.
119. Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald 13.10.1883.
120. North Wales Chronicle 30.8.1884, 13.12.1884.
121. See G.A.N. Lowndes, The Silent Social Revolution (Oxford 1970) p.38.
122. Ibid., p.14.
123. Ibid.
124. Education Department: Report of the Welsh division (1898-9) pp.183-4.
125. See W.R. Jones, Bilingualism in Welsh Education (Cardiff 1966), especially chapters 1,2.
126. BFSS Ann. Rep., (1877),p.8, (1893) pp.8-10.
127. BFSS Ann. Rep., (1893),p.10.
128. BFSS Ann. Rep., (1884),p.384.
129. Circular 322, 6.2.1893, The instruction of infants
130. Ibid.
131. Ibid.
132. GRO ES 1 Talysarn (infants) Board school 4.9.1885.
133. Ibid. Her school had just been awarded an 'Excellent' merit grant. (GRO ET 1 Llanllyfni 23.12.1885).
134. Ibid., 17.5.1886.
135. Ibid., 10.10.1889. List of activities for 1890-91.
136. GRO ET 1 Caernarfon 4.5.1896, 4.11.1889.
137. GRO ES 1 Caernarfon (infants) Board school 14.9.1900.
138. Ibid., 28.9.1900.
139. GRO ES 1 Troedyrallt (infants) Board school, 11.4.1902.
140. GRO ES 1 Deunant Board school 28.1.1902.
141. Education Department: Report of the Welsh division (1896) p.10.

142. P.E. Owen, The Establishment of the County Intermediate schools in Caernarvonshire (Unpublished MA thesis, London 1957) pp.37 ff.
143. North Wales Chronicle 12.5.1888.
144. Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald 9.1.1875, 1.11.1879, 12.5.1883, 16.1.1866, 8.10.1887.
145. Herald Cymraeg 20.9.1887, Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald 27.9.1889.
146. North Wales Chronicle 25.12.1880.
147. GRO ES 1 Caernarvon (boys) Board school, 23.4.1886-3.5.1886.
148. North Wales Chronicle 3.7.1886.
149. GRO ES 1 Caernarvon (girls) Board school 4.2.1894.
150. W.R. Jones, op.cit., chapters 1,11.
151. Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald 4.2.1882.
152. North Wales Chronicle 14.4.1888.
153. Supra
154. Supra
155. North Wales Chronicle 14.4.1888.
156. Ibid.
157. Minutes of Evidence to the Royal Commission appointed to Inquire into the Working of the Elementary Education Acts (1887), q 42,675.
158. BMSS 594 9- 6422 Correspondence of Dan Isaac Davies and Isambard Owen, dated 11.11.1885, 25.4.1886.
159. Education Department: Report of the Welsh division (1886) p.28.
160. GRO ES 1 Caernarvon (boys) Board school 5.3.1888.
161. Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald 8.3.1889.
162. Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald 19.4.1889.
163. Bangor MSS 6193, correspondence Hart Dyke to Puleston, 5.4.1889.
164. For Acland's connections with Wales, see his diaries in the possession of Lady Acland, Broadclyst, Devon.

165. North Wales Chronicle 14.4.1888.
166. North Wales Chronicle 1.4.1893.
167. GRO ET 1 Caernarfon 4.5.1896.
168. GRO ET 1 Beddgelert 4.11.1890, 23.11.1894.
169. GRO ES 1 Deiniolen (boys) Board school 10-14.9.1894.
170. Ibid., 12.16.1894.
171. GRO ES 1 Llanaelhaearn Board school 29.9.1893.
172. Ibid., 22.11.1895, also 22.10.1896.
173. See GRO ES 1 Maenan Board school 31.10.1879, 17.2.1882, 23.2.1883, 4.1.1884. At this school it was noted, (17.8.1877) 'Welsh Notes used throughout the school'. Yet 'translation exercises', as the head noted (31.10.1879) 'from English to Welsh and vice versa (were) given occasionally as an exercise in understanding English'. Also GRO ES 1, Llanaelhaearn Board school. The head wrote (30.10.78), 'Children cautioned about talking Welsh in and about the school, this is one of the most difficult things I find to put a check on'. Yet on 6.2.1878, 'Standard III had to write all the nouns and adjectives in their reading lessons as part of their Home Lesson each day and with opposite each their equivalent in Welsh'. Again, 11.3.1881, 7.3.1884, 'From the Second Standard up had to learn the geography terms both in English and Welsh'. Also at Trefriw school, GRO ES 1, Trefriw National school 22.11.1866, 'An hour was devoted in the first and second classes to translating from Welsh to English', 16.5.67, 'More time than ordinary given to translating Welsh from English, and English from Welsh'. Also 23.5.67, 4.6.67, 10.6.67, 14.10.68, 20.10.68, 26.10.68, 15.3.69, 12.8.69, 1.11.69. Also Trefor Granite Company school (GRO ES 1) 19.2.86, 'Translation to Welsh has received extra attention'. Also GRO ES 1, Llithfaen Board school, 21.3.1877.
174. BMSS 6161 Replies to Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion questionnaire (1885). The headmaster of the Gefnfaes British school at Bethesda disagreed with Williams, being a fervent supporter of S.U.W.L.
175. North Wales Chronicle 8.2.1890.
176. MCC (1892-3) pp.537-8.

C O N C L U D I N G S U M M A R Y

Many factors, religious, political, social and linguistic, determined the evolution of nineteenth century elementary education in Caernarvonshire, and all were interwoven. In addition, the growing education system generated its own momentum; it assumed an integrity independent of other factors. Even so, in Wales it inevitably developed distinctive characteristics.

From the beginning of the century education was a religious issue. The voluntary societies were motivated by religion. Churchmen countrywide supported the National Society; Nonconformists were the mainstay of the British Society. In the Bangor diocese, Churchmen led by Dean Cotton founded National schools as early as the 1810s and 1820s. At the same time, Caernarvonshire's Nonconformists failed to establish links with the British Society, living in an insulated milieu, inward looking and suspicious of outside contacts. The difference between them was shown in their strikingly opposite responses to State grants (1833). Yet, they had already clashed over education; Nonconformists in a number of places had thwarted Church attempts to found schools in the 1820s and 30s. More important at this stage, clashes marked the limited number of endowed grammar schools in the county; these clashes reflected the rise of an urban elite with strongly developed social and educational aspirations, Nonconformist in religion and middle class. In the course of the century they were to play a vital role in Welsh educational politics.

The 1840s were crucial years for Welsh education; they saw the defeat of the Graham Bill, the publication of Hugh Owen's *Letter to the Welsh People*, and the 'treacherous' Blue Books. Between them, these politicised Nonconformity opening it up to powerful new influences. Under their impact Caernarvonshire's

predominant Calvinistic Methodists espoused the cause of British schools; their modified presbyterian organisation served as infrastructure for a non-denominational school network. At the same time, Anglicans, inspired by the Church revival pressed ahead strongly to found more National schools. Religious and denominational rivalry was thus the most potent incentive to educational action locally. It became notably more fierce in the 1850s and 60s as religion and politics merged. Increasingly, educational politics became a focus for the opposition of Liberal Nonconformity to landed Tory Anglicanism. The Newcastle and Pakington Reports (1861, 1866) reflected their conflict; they also showed that educational compromise was impossible in the prevailing political climate. By 1870 elementary education encapsulated great issues of Liberal Nonconformist politics; these revolved around concepts of control, power and accountability, justice, equality and parity. This is why the struggle for school boards in the 1870s was so politically vital. Whoever controlled the boards controlled the balance of political power in elementary education. Though Caernarvonshire's Nonconformists suffered early setbacks, by 1902 they had succeeded in effecting a major shift in educational control. Their strength was overwhelming in the towns and slate quarrying areas, but in many rural areas the Church retained the upper hand. Liberal political hegemony in education was thus incomplete even in overwhelmingly Nonconformist areas. Not surprisingly, the Balfour Act, threatening to undermine the Nonconformist gains of the nineteenth century by strengthening Church schools with rate support, roused a political storm of hurricane proportions. More than any other

issue, elementary education mirrored the dynamic mix of religion and politics in nineteenth century Caernarvonshire.

Equally important, educational conflicts reflected a plethora of social aspirations. These were far more complex than anything suggested by the political clash of middle class and landed interests. Social and class patterns varied widely between urban, slate quarrying, and rural areas. Within these contexts, social classes and status groups had distinctive educational aspirations; these were not always complementary; they could be divergent, even diametrically opposed. Class values, reflecting different structures of local society, fostered aspirations sometimes cutting across a common adherence to Nonconformity. They also accounted for varied responses to educational developments and opportunities. They were responsible for the striking educational differences marking various types of community in Caernarvonshire by 1902. The social aspects of education were thus far from simple; social outlooks were less uniform than Nonconformist allegiances might suggest. Educational aspirations transcended limits set by a consensus middle class liberalism; they certainly transcended those set by developing national policy. The social aspects of education need reassessment.

From the earliest years of the century the existence of the Welsh language had made the educative process difficult in Caernarvonshire. The desire for English was strong throughout Welsh society; even before 1847 the main objective of Welsh schools was to teach English. In respect to language, there is little doubt that the 1847 Blue Books accurately mirrored Welsh aspirations. Their solution to the language difficulty was the

utilisation of Welsh, as 'scaffolding' which could later be 'discarded', for building up a knowledge of English. This approach was supported by Longueville Jones, Joseph Bowstead, William Scoltock and many HMIs in the 1850s. Others, however, aiming at the same objective suggested different policies. Hugh Owen and John Phillips preferred that direct approaches be used in British schools, intended quite specifically as 'English schools in Wales'. Such was the Welsh people's desire for English that they distrusted the use of their own language in schools, even for the purposes of translation and comprehension. Few schools, therefore, used bilingual methods systematically before 1862; fewer still under the Revised Code, though necessity compelled some teachers to use them informally, even surreptitiously. By the 1880s, however, direct methods were seen to have failed; the policy of the 'Welsh Note' was reluctantly abandoned. As a result, there was a restoration of interest in bilingual approaches, symbolized by the Utilisation Society's campaign. Its motives were mixed, but in the light of the nineteenth century background they need reassessment.

By the end of the nineteenth century a national system of elementary education had been created. In many senses Kay-Shuttleworth was its architect, and his teacher training system its keystone. It has been argued that it was in the 1840s that a social policy of education evolved. This had a social control rationale symbolized by the concept of amelioration. The elementary school system was also tied to class and self contained. Caernarvonshire inevitably became a part of it. By 1902, the county was well provided with inspected 'public elementary' schools;

children between the ages of five and thirteen attended them under compulsory attendance regulations. The schools were increasingly staffed by trained teachers; they taught a common curriculum based on shared assumptions and values. Though decentralized it was a socially coherent system with consensus objectives. Inevitably, however, as it developed it generated its own dynamic, becoming far more complex. Teachers developed 'professional' attitudes, HMIs became 'innovators' as well as 'controllers'; educational ideas assumed an integrity of their own. Though these developments created tensions, the momentum of the system could not be halted. By 1902, new educational ideas were influencing the curriculum, more children stayed longer in school creating pressures for secondary schooling, narrow 'ladders' had already been built, and new educational aspirations created. Though ameliorative and utilitarian justifications still predominated, they were subjected to increasing challenge from within the system and outside. Indeed, the growth of education was itself beginning to fuel challenges to contemporary notions of society.

In these respects, Caernarvonshire found itself in the mainstream; in some, indeed, it led the way. At the same time it provided its own distinctive characteristics. These were the products of its religious and social complex, its educational politics and its linguistic patterns. Though developing within the national system and the framework of social policy which contained it, educational practice could vary from place to place, and school to school. Thus, the construction of a true picture of the evolution of national education policy requires assessment by reference to local practice both in policy-making and administration, and in the schools.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ILIST OF BRITISH SCHOOLS FOUNDED IN CAERNARVONSHIREWITH DATES, 1815-70 (from BFSS Annual Report 1897)

The information given has to be treated with caution. Considerable doubts surround the dates of schools in particular. In addition some of the schools petered out or went into abeyance.

Tremadog	1816
Portdinorwic	1845
Clynnog	1845
Nant Gwynant	1846
Llanengan	1846
Rhostryfan	1847
Penygroes	1847
Ederne	1847
Carneddi	1847
Trefriw	1848
Roe Wen	1848
Garth (Bangor)	1848
Waunfawr	1849
Llanddeiniolen	1849
Dolbadarn	1850
Cefnywaun	1850
Beddgelert	1850
Cwmyglo	1851
Llanllechid	1853
Talysarn	1854
Rhiwlas	1854

APPENDIX I (Continued)

Aberdunant	1854
Nefyn	1856
Deiniolen	1856
Pwllheli	1857
Nant Peris	1857
Caernarfon	1858
Llanrug (Bryn Eryr)	1864

APPENDIX II

LIST OF NATIONAL SCHOOLS FOUNDED IN CAERNARVONSHIRE
WITH DATES, 1815-70 (from National Society Annual Reports)

As with Appendix I this list has to be treated with caution.

Bangor	1816
Conwy	1816
Vaynol	1816
Llandygai	1818
Llanbedrog	1818
Caernarfon	1820
Pentir	1826
Ederm	1826
Eglwysrhos	1828
Llandudno	1828
Llandwrog	1828
Llanllechid	1828
Llannor	1828
Llanrug	1830
Ty'ntwr	1830
Clynnog	1832
Llanengan	1833
Llangian	1833
Caerhun	1834
Dwygyfylchi	1834
Aber	1835
Abererch	1835
Pentrefelin	1838

APPENDIX II (Continued)

Trefriw	1838
Dolbermaen	1838
Dolwyddelan	1838
Foel Gron	1838
Nefyn	1838
Waunfawr	1838
Capel Curig	1838
Betws y Coed	1838
Cricieth	1838
Betws Garmon	1842
Boduan	1843
Llaniestyn	1843
Pwllheli	1844
Bron y foel	1844
Bontnewydd	1845
Henryd	1845
Llanfairisgaer	1845
Botwnnog	1845
Llanfairfechan	1846
Llanddeiniolen	1847
Llanystumdwy	1852
Llangwnadl	1854
Porthmadog	1855
Meillteyrn	1855
Permachno	1857
Beddgelert	1858
Pantglas	1858
Glanogwen	1868

APPENDIX IIIVOLUNTARY SCHOOLS TRANSFERRED TO SCHOOL BOARDS INCAERNARVONSHIRE, 1871-1903

<u>School Board</u>	<u>School Transferred</u>	<u>Date</u>
Llanddeiniolen	Deiniolen British	1871
	Bethel British	1872
	Dinorwic British	1871
Llanrug	Llanrug National	1872
	Gwmyglo British	1872
	Caeathraw Private Adventure	1872
Pwllheli	Troedyrallt British	1872
Beddgelert	Beddgelert British	1871
	Rhyd Ddu British	1872
Bangor	St. Paul's Wesleyan	1872
	Garth British	1872
Llanllyfni	Talysarn British	1872
	Llanllyfni British	1875
Nefyn	Nefyn British	1874
Llandudno	Llandudno British	1877
Llanberis	Dolbadarn British	1874
	Nant Peris British	1874
Pistyll United District	Llithfaen British	1875
Llanbeblig	Waunfawr British	1871

APPENDIX III (Continued)

<u>School Board</u>	<u>School Transferred</u>	<u>Date</u>
Caerhun	Roe Wen British	1874
Cricieth	Cricieth British	1871
Caernarfon	Caernarfon British	1874
Eidda	Eidda National	1898
Llanaelhaearn	Trefor Granite Company	1903
Llanfairisgaer	Portdinorwic British	1889
Llandwrog	Bronyfoel National	1894
Trefriw	Trefriw National	1898
Ynyscynhaearn	Tremadog British	
	Porthmadog National	after 1877
	Pentrefelin National	
	Porthmadog British	
Penmorfa	Penmorfa National	1875

APPENDIX IVCAERNARVONSHIRE SCHOOL BOARDS 1871-1903

<u>School Board</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>How formed</u>
Pwllheli	1871	By resolution of Town Council
Llandwrog	1871	By majority of Ratepayers
Llanddeiniolen	1871	By majority of Ratepayers
Llanllyfni	1871	By majority of Ratepayers
Cricieth	1871	By majority of Ratepayers
Beddgelert	1871	By majority of Ratepayers
Llanrug	1871	By majority of Ratepayers
Caernarfon	1871	By resolution of Town Council
Llanbeblig	1871	By majority of Ratepayers
Llangybi	1871	By majority of Ratepayers
Llanwnda	1871	By majority of Ratepayers

In 1874 the parish of Betws Garmon was added by Section 40 of the 1870 Act to the Llanwnda School Board. The Board then became that of the Llanwnda United District

Llanaelhaearn	1871	By majority of Ratepayers
Llanberis	1871	By majority of Ratepayers
Bangor	1871	By Section 12(ii)

Penmorfa United District comprising Penmorfa, Dolbermaen and Llanfihangel-y-Pennant	1873	By Section 40
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Aberdaron United District comprising Aberdaron, Bryncroes, Llanfaelrhys and Rhiw	1873	By Section 40
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Caerhun United District comprising Caerhun, Dolgarrog and Llanbedr-y-Cennin	1873	By Section 40
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APPENDIX IV (Continued)

<u>School Board</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>How formed</u>
Maenan United District comprising Maenan and the Abbey	1874	By Section 40
Pistyll	1874	By Section 10
Carnguwch was added in 1875. United District School Board.	The Board then became the Pistyll	
Nefyn	1874	By Section 10
Llannor United District comprising Llannor and Llanfihangel Bachellaeth	1875	By Section 40
Ynyscynhaearn	1877	By majority of Ratepayers
Llandudno	1877	By majority of Ratepayers
Llangystenin	1877	By majority of Ratepayers
Llanfairisgaer	1888	By majority of Ratepayers
Conwy	1891	By resolution of Town Council
Eidda	1897	By majority of Ratepayers
Trefriw	1898	By majority of Ratepayers
The total number of parishes under school boards in 1902 was 40 and they had a population (1901) of 84,250.		

APPENDIX VNEW BOARD SCHOOLS BUILT IN CAERNARVONSHIRE1871-1903

<u>School Board</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Date</u>
Llanddeiniolen	Dinorwic Board	1872
	Penisa'rwaun Board	1871
	Rhiwlas Board	1872
	Bethel Board	1882
	Deiniolen Board	1886
Llanrug	Cwmyglo Board	1873
	Caeathraw Board	1879
Beddgelert	Nanmor Board	1872
	Nantgwynant Board	1875
	Rhyd Ddu Board	1882-3
Llanllyfni	Nebo Board	1873
	Penygroes Board	1872
	Talysarn Board	1876
Llangybi	Pencaenewydd Board	1875
Llanbeblig	Waunfawr Board	1875
Llanaelhaearn	Llanaelhaearn Board	1874
Llanwnda United District	Rhostryfan Board	1877
	Dinas Board	1894
Caerhun United District	Talybont Board	1875
	Roe Wen Board	1875
Llanor United District	Rhydyclafdy Board	1876-7

APPENDIX V (Continued)

<u>School Board</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Date</u>
Nefyn	Nefyn Board	1876-7
Llandwrog	Nantlle Board	1872
	Penfforddalen Board	1872
Maenan	Maenan Board	1874
Penmorfa United District	Garndolbenmaen Board	1875-6
	Pennant Board	1875-6
	Prenteg Board	1875-6
Llandudno	Lloyd Street Board	1881
Cricieth	Cricieth Board	1881
Pistyll United District	Llithfaen Board	1880
Aberdaron United District	Bryncroes Board	1881
	Deunant Board	1881
	Llidiardau Board	1881
Bangor	Glanadda (infants) Board	1888
	Glanadda (mixed) Board	1900
	Hirael (infants) Board	1903
Caernarfon	Caernarfon (girls) Board	1898
	Caernarfon (infants) Board	1898
Ynyscynhaearn	Borth-y-Gest Board	1882
	Morfa Bychan Board	1882

APPENDIX VIHUGH OWEN'S LETTER TO THE WELSH PEOPLE (1843)

TO THE WELSH PEOPLE

8 COLES TERRACE, ISLINGTON,

LONDON, 26th AUGUST, 1843.

Dear Fellow-Countrymen,

You feel the necessity of giving education to your children, and you love liberty of conscience: in order to provide the children with education, you must have schools: in order to secure liberty of conscience, you must have schools which shall not be identified with any particular religious denomination. In order to attain this end, I offer the following scheme for your consideration:-

1. That a British school shall be established in every district.

The plan adopted in British schools is entirely consistent with freedom of conscience, and is excellently effective in the conveying of instruction.

2. That a society shall be formed in every county, to be called 'The British School Society of the County of' The work of the society to be carried on by a committee with the assistance of a treasurer and secretary. The Committee to be composed of fit and proper persons chosen from among the members of the various religious denominations in the county. The objects of the society shall be: to collect a fund for the assistance of poor neighbourhoods in the erection and maintenance of schools; to help in the formation of local committees; and to advise as to the best sites for schools, and upon the plans for their erection and their size; to point out the means for obtaining money for the execution of the work; to choose teachers, etc.

APPENDIX VI (Continued)

3. That in every district where a school shall be required a committee be formed, to consist of about twelve persons, with a treasurer and secretary. The members of this committee (which I will call the local committee) to be chosen from among the various religious denominations in the district, but they need not of necessity be professed members of their respective bodies. The objects of the local committee shall be: to find a site for a school; to secure its conveyance to trustees; to provide plans; to select an architect; to seek the assistance of the neighbourhood in building the school and in its subsequent maintenance; to secure a teacher; and, lastly, to see that the school shall be efficiently conducted.

I would further call your attention to the aid which Government offers for the provision of teachers and for the support of the schools.

Government Aid: Every man ought to know that the Government contributes about thirty thousand pounds annually towards the erection of schools, and that Dissenters enjoy full liberty to obtain part of this sum for the erection of British Schools. As an ordinary rule, a grant of ten shillings is made for every child which the school will accommodate; that is to say, one hundred pounds would be granted towards the erection of a school intended to accommodate two hundred children. The dimensions of a school for that number of children to be about 48 feet in length and 26 feet in width. The officials of Government will prepare, should that be necessary, specifications as well as plans free of expense.

APPENDIX VI (Continued)

I think I am advantageously situated for rendering my fellow-countrymen assistance in this matter, and I am willing to do it gratuitously to the full extent of my power. If therefore anybody, in any part of Wales, feels himself impelled to make a move in the direction of establishing a British School in his district, let him write to me, and I shall be glad to place his case before Government and to send him the necessary information to enable him to carry out his intentions.

Local Aid: I anticipate that the grant which the Government can make will be nearly sufficient, in a country like Wales, where labour and building materials are so cheap and especially where so much help will be given free of cost in the haulage of building materials, to build the school. But to make up any deficiency, help should be asked from neighbouring landlords.

Teachers: It would never be worth entailing the cost and trouble of erecting the schools unless care be taken to secure for them efficient teachers. It is not always he who possesses knowledge himself that can convey it to others; learned men find it a task of extraordinary difficulty to give instruction to children, and it is a task which no one ought to undertake without special training. There is in London a school for the Instruction of Teachers in the method of the British schools, viz. the Normal School of the British and Foreign School Society. Eligible young men from Wales can obtain free admission to this school. They would have to remain there for some months in order to make them efficient in their calling.

APPENDIX VI (Continued)

The Support of Schools: After securing a school and a teacher, provision will have to be made for their support. This should be done in the following way: Let every landowner and every ratepayer in the district be asked what sum he will annually subscribe towards the schools. Every subscriber of five shillings to be entitled to send one child (his own or that of another) to school on payment by him or the child of three-halfpence per week. Every subscriber of ten shillings to be entitled to send one child to school without having to make any further payment. Every annual subscriber of twenty shillings to be entitled to send two children to the school free of further payment; and so on. Children of others than subscribers to pay a school fee of threepence per week.

I believe that this path is so easy that every district in Wales may, by following it, secure an efficient school, with due regard to perfect freedom of conscience. An oppressive yoke has been already placed upon the neck of several districts through the instrumentality of schools; the same yoke is being prepared for others; and the only way to escape it is by erecting your own schools according to the system of the British School Society.

I am, your obedient servant,

HUGH OWEN

We entirely approve the above-written letter of our friend Mr. Hugh Owen, we are grateful for the patriotic offer which it contains, and we would urgently desire our fellow-countrymen in Wales to give it, without delay, the attention it deserves.

JAMES HUGHES,

Jewin Crescent, London.

GRIFFITH DAVIES,

Guardian Assurance Office, London.

APPENDIX VIIQUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED OF PUPIL TEACHERS(from Minutes of 1846)

Pupil Teachers, - Qualifications of Candidates.

The following qualifications will be required from candidates for apprenticeship:-

They must be at least thirteen years of age, and must not be subject to any bodily infirmity likely to impair their usefulness as pupil teachers.

In schools connected with the Church of England, the Clergyman and managers, and, in other schools, the managers must certify that the moral character of the candidates and of their families justify an expectation that the instruction and training of the school will be seconded by their own efforts and by the example of their parents. If this cannot be certified of the family, the apprentice will be required to board in some approved household.

Candidates will also be required, -

1. To read with fluency, ease, and expression.
2. To write in a neat hand, with correct spelling and punctuation, a simple prose narrative slowly read to them.
3. To write from dictation sums in the first four rules of arithmetic, simple and compound; to work them correctly, and to know the tables of weights and measures.
4. To point out the parts of speech in a simple sentence.
5. To have an elementary knowledge of geography.
6. In schools connected with the Church of England they will be required to repeat the Catechism, and to show that they

APPENDIX VII (Continued)

understand its meaning, and are acquainted with the outline of Scripture history. The parochial clergyman will assist in this part of the examination.

In other schools the state of the religious knowledge will be certified by the managers.

7. To teach a junior class to the satisfaction of the Inspector.

8. Girls should also be able to sew neatly and to knit.

APPENDIX VIIISTANDARDS OF EXAMINATION LAID DOWN IN
THE CODE OF 1873Standard 1

Reading A short paragraph from a book used in the school,
not confined to words of one syllable.

Writing Copy in manuscript character a line of print,
and write from dictation a few common words.

Arithmetic Simple addition and subtraction of numbers of not
more than four figures and the multiplication table
to six times twelve.

Standard 2

Reading A short paragraph from an elementary reading book.

Writing A sentence from the same book slowly read once,
and then dictated in single words.

Arithmetic Subtraction, multiplication and short division.

Standard 3

Reading A short paragraph from a more advanced reading book.

Writing A sentence slowly dictated once by a few words at
a time from the same book

Arithmetic Long division and compound rules (money).

APPENDIX VIII (Continued)Standard 4

Reading A few lines of poetry selected by the Inspector

Writing A sentence slowly dictated once by a few words
at a time from a reading book.

Arithmetic Compound rules (common weights and measures)

Standard 5

Reading A short ordinary paragraph in a newspaper, or
other modern narrative.

Writing A short paragraph in a newspaper or ten lines
of verse slowly dictated once by a few words
at a time.

Arithmetic Practice and bills of parcels.

Standard 6

Reading To read with fluency and expression.

Writing A short theme or letter or an easy paraphrase.

Arithmetic Proportion and fractions vulgar and decimal.

APPENDIX IX

BILINGUAL SYLLABUS ADOPTED AT THE LLANAELHAERN
BOARD SCHOOL IN PLACE OF ENGLISH AS A CLASS
SUBJECT (1893)

Standards 1 and 2

- a) To give English names for Welsh names of common objects. A list of 60 such to be prepared by the Inspector to choose from. Another list of 15 common adjectives and 15 common verbs to be prepared.
- b) The Inspector to form simple sentences each containing not more than four or five words combining the above elements and to ask for a translation.

Standards 3 and 4

- a) The following lists (Welsh) to be prepared, namely 100 nouns, 40 common adjectives, 40 common verbs, 20 simple prepositions, 10 adverbs, 5 conjunctions and the simple personal pronouns.
- b) To form simple English sentences each containing not more than three words chosen by the Inspector from the full vocabulary and to name the parts of speech for each word in a sentence so formed.

Standards 5 and 6

- a) Parsing and analysis of simple and short complex sentences.
- b) To form English nouns, adjectives and verbs from each other.

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21551 Beddgelert British

21552 Nantgwynant Board

21553 Rhyd Ddu Board

21554 Carneddi British

21555 Cefnfaes British

21556 Gerlan National

21557 Llanllechid National

21558 Llanllechid British

21559 Betws Garmon Board

21560 Betws y Coed National

21564 Boduan National

21565	Botwnnog National
21566	Bryncroes Board
21567	Roe Wen British
21569	Caernarfon National
21570	Caernarfon British
21571	Caernarfon Board
21574	Clynnog National
21575	Pantglas National
21576	Conwy National
21580	Cricieth Board
21581	Cwmstradllyn Board
21582	Penmorfa Board
21585	Prenteg Board
21587	Dolwyddelan National
21589	Ederm National
21591	Llanaelhaearn Board
21592	Trefor Granite Company
21593	Llanarmon National
21595	Llanbedrog National
21596	Llanbedr-y-Cennin Board
21597	Dolbadarn Board
21599	Bethel Board
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21603	Llandinorwig National
21607	Bodfeurig National
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21609	Llandygai National (girls)
21612	Ty'ntwr [^] National

21615	Llandudno National
21620	Lloyd Street Board
21621	Llandudno National (infants)
21622	Bronyfoel National
21624	Llandwrog National
21627	Penfforddalen Board
21628	Llanengan British
21629	Llanengan National
21633	Llanfairisgaer National
21636	Gyffin National
21637	Llangian National
21638	Llangwnadl National
21639	Llangystennin Board
21640	Glanwydden Board (Llangystennin)
21644	Llangybi Board
21646	Llaniestyn National
21648	Nebo Board
21649	Penygroes Board
21650	Talysarn Board
21652	Llannor National
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21656	Caeathraw Board
21657	Ceunant Board
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Caernarfon School Board	1871-1884
Caernarfon School Board	1884-1895
Caernarfon School Board	1895-1900
Conwy School Board	1892-1903

Gricieth School Board	1871-1886
Eidda School Board	1897-1903
Llanbeblig School Board	1871-1883
Llanbeblig School Board	1883-1903
Llanberis School Board	1899-1903
Llanaelhaearn School Board	1896-1903
Llanddeiniolen School Board	1871-1880
Llanddeiniolen School Board	1881-1888
Llanddeiniolen School Board	1895-1900
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Llanddeiniolen School Board	1901-1903
Llandudno School Board	1877-1888
Llandudno School Board	1897-1903
Llandudno School Board	1903
Llandwrog School Board	1882-1897
Llandwrog School Board	1897-1903
Llanfairisgaer School Board	1888-1903
Llangybi School Board	1874-1903
Llanllyfni School Board	1892-1894
Llanllyfni School Board	1894-1903
Llanllyfni School Board	1903
Llanrug School Board	1871-1899
Llanrug School Board	1899-1901
Llanrug School Board	1901-1903
Maenan United District School Board	1874-1887
Maenan United District School Board	1896-1903
Nefyn School Board	1889-1903
Pistyll United District School Board	1895-1903

Pwllheli School Board	1871-1896
Trefriw School Board	1898-1903
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Bethel Board School	1864-1891
Bethel Board School	1891-1909
Bryncroes Board School	1882-1907
Caernarfon Infants Board School	1879-1904
Caernarfon Girls Board School	1880-1898
Caernarfon Girls Board School	1898-1907
Caernarfon Boys Board School	1863-1881
Caernarfon Boys Board School	1881-1896
Caernarfon Boys Board School	1896-1910
Caernarfon Evening Continuation School	1894-1899
Caernarfon Board Ragged School	1890-1898
Cricieth Board School	1871-1891
Cricieth Board School	1891-1912
Deiniolen Infants Board School	1886-1901
Deiniolen Infants Board School	1901-1929
Deiniolen Girls Board School	1892-1915
Deunant Board School	1880-1902
Deunant Board School	1902-1938
Dolbadarn Girls Board School	1874-1897
Dolbadarn Boys Board School	1863-1889
Dolbadarn Infants Board School	1874-1910
Llanaelhaearn Board School	1874-1894
Llanaelhaearn Board School	1894-1908
Llannor National School	1888-1915
Lloyd Street Board School, Llandudno	1873-1913
Lloyd Street Infants Board School, Llandudno	1883-1914

Llithfaen Board School	1875-1911
Maenan Board School	1875-1905
Morfa Bychan Board School	1880-1908
Nantlle Board School	1874-1899
Nantlle Board School	1899-1917
Nantmor Board School	1873-1928
Penmorfa Board School	1869-1895
Pennant Board School	1876-1896
Pennant Board School	1896-1912
Pentrefelin National, later Board School	1872-1905
Penygroes Boys Board School	1873-1910
Penygroes Girls Board School	1879-1906
Penygroes Infants Board School	1877-1904
Portdinorwic Board School	1876-1891
Portdinorwic Board School	1891-1902
Portdinorwic Board School	1903-1949
Snowdon Street Boys Board School, Porthmadog	1878-1889
Snowdon Street Boys Board School, Porthmadog	1889-1909
Chapel Street Girls Board School, Porthmadog	1879-1892
Troedyrallt Boys Board School, Pwllheli	1874-1906
Troedyrallt Girls Board School, Pwllheli	1874-1908
Rhiwlas Board School	1874-1903
Rowen Board School	1864-1896
Rowen Board School	1896-1917
Talybont Board School	1877-1888
Talybont Board School	1888-1906
Talysarn British, later Board School	1863-1886
Talysarn British, later Board School	1887-1939

Talysarn Girls Board School	1877-1904
Talysarn Infants Board School	1883-1902
Talysarn Infants Board School	1902-1903
Trefriw British, later National, later Board School	1866-1894
Trefriw British, later National, later Board School	1894-1920
Trefor Welsh Granite Company, later Board School	1878-1900
Trefor Welsh Granite Company, later Board School	1900-1909
Waunfawr British, later Board School	1863-1890
Waunfawr British, later Board School	1891-1907
Waunfawr Infants Board School	1877-1902

(4) Other Papers

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The Moriah Chapel Papers.

The Vaynol Papers.

(e) THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

National Society School Files

Aber

Aberdare

Aberdaron

Abererch

Aberystwyth

Bangor

Beddgelert

Bethesda

Betws Garmon

Betws y Coed

Blackwood
Boduan
Bontnewydd
Botwnnog
Bron y Foel
Bryncroes
Caernarfon
Capel Curig
Clynnog
Conwy
Cricieth
Crumlin
Dolwyddelan
Edern
Eglwysrhos
Gerlan
Glan Ogwen
Glasinfryn
Gyffin
Llanarmon
Llanbedrog
Llanberis
Llandudno
Llanddeiniolen
Llandwrog
Llanengan
Llanfairfechan
Llanfairisgaer
Llangelynnin
Llangian

Llangwnnadr

Llanllechid

Llanllyfni

Llannor

Llanrug

Llanwnda

Llanystumdwy

Merthyr

Nant y glo

Nefyn

Newport

New Tredegar

Penmaenmawr

Pentir

Pentre

Pentrefelin

Pontlottyn

Porthmadog

Pwllheli

Sarn Meillteyrn

Tregarth

Tremadog

Twthill

Vaynol

Waunfawr

Record Book of Schools in Union, 1828

Application for Grants Book

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Reports of the North Wales Training College.

Reports of the North Wales Scholarship Association.

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Cronicl Cymru

Y Cymro

Daily News

Y Genedl Gymreig

Y Goleuad

Herald Cymraeg

Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald

Catholic Times

Llandudno Register and Herald

North Wales Chronicle

North Wales Press

Western Mail

(b) Periodicals

Cymru

Educational Record

Y Diwygiwr

Y Drysorfa

Y Dydd

Y Dysgedydd

Y Geninen

Yr Haul

Seren Gomer

The Dominican

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1814, 1860, 1878.

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| HENRY GRIFFITHS | <u>An Address on the importance of Training Teachers and of having a Normal school in Wales</u> (Brecon 1845). |
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