

Integration and Other Developments in Newfoundland Education 1915-1949. Ralph L. Andrews. St. John's: Harry Cuff Publications, 1985. xvii, 392 p. \$17.50. *Post-Confederation Developments in Newfoundland Education 1949-1975.* Ralph L. Andrews. St. John's: Harry Cuff Publications, 1985. xvii, 434 p. \$17.50. *Pictorial History of Newfoundland School Architecture.* Fred Buffett. St. John's: Creative Printers and Publishers, 1985. v, 76 p. \$6.95. *A History of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association 1890-1930.* Harry A. Cuff. St. John's: Creative Publishers, 1985. ix, 116 p. \$8.25.

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The history of education derives its importance from the fact that it describes a process which almost every person (in developed countries) undergoes for a significant portion of his or her life. To the extent that educational history reveals the structure and content of educational systems, the economic and ideological influences on them and, above all, the effect of ten or more years continuous schooling upon the attitudes and actions of individuals, it is a useful, not to say indispensable, means of understanding the lineaments of contemporary society. In Newfoundland, where an educational revolution is said to have taken place in the last thirty-five years, an understanding of the recent educational past is crucial to any assessment of the present situation and future policies. Did a "revolution" take place? Did the amalgamation of 1968 weaken or strengthen the denominational system? Are current schools, curricula and methods necessarily superior in every respect to those of the pre-Confederation era? These and other questions can be answered only by objective and thorough historical inquiry. Unfortunately, beyond the pioneering efforts of Senator F. W. Rowe, little has hitherto been done in the field of Newfoundland educational history. The four books under review, however, mark a change in the situation and throw a great deal of light on the development of education during the last eighty or ninety years.

Ralph Andrews' two volumes are a vast compendium of information on almost every aspect of the administration of Newfoundland education since the 1890s. Harry Cuff's book is a brief and elegant history of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association from its foundation in 1890 to 1930. Fred Buffett's equally slim volume consists mainly of photographs of schools of

the last hundred years, with minimal text. Taken together they add considerably to our knowledge of important aspects of the educational scene during the period.

Andrews' sources are almost all primary, and few appear to be in libraries or archives. The author has based much of his narrative on the minute books of various school boards, the Diocesan Synod Education Committee, the Bureau and Council of Education and the Executive Council and Commission of Government. No historian of Newfoundland education has used such a wide range of primary sources, nor covered so wide a field in such detail. Many readers will feel, however, that Andrews has not sufficiently analysed his material nor synthesised it into an easily-readable narrative. Facts are set down in strictly chronological order under largely standardised headings, and much of the data is quoted verbatim, often to the length of a page or more. Interspersed with this is an account of Andrews' own distinguished career as a teacher, supervisor and administrator. At times this reviewer wished that Andrews might have built his narrative around the autobiographical theme and relegated much of the raw data to appendices or perhaps a separate volume. Nevertheless, nearly all of his material is new and fascinating, and the two volumes are a monument to Andrews' unremitting labours, carried out since his retirement.

The work is essentially a history of the administration of education, treating developments "from above" rather than in an all-round fashion which might have allowed scope for examining the forces of collective action and public opinion as well as some assessment of the effect of structural changes upon teachers and parents. If there is a villain in Andrews' book, it is Lloyd Shaw, the Prince Edward Islander and Secretary of Education under the Commission of Government, who attempted, in the mid-1930s, to dismantle or severely modify the denominational system by legislative means. Though Andrews is no supporter of the proliferation of denominations, the reader senses that he would have preferred Shaw and the Commission to have left well alone and allowed sensible churchmen to have made their own modifications in their own time. In this sense Andrews is very much a Burkean in outlook, seeing change "broadening down from precedent to precedent," and coming about in small increments following rational discussion in small but influential assemblies.

The theme of Harry Cuff's book, on the other hand, is the organisation of collective action. His history of the N.T.A. shows that teachers, even in the early years of the Union, were able to exert pressure on governments to increase educational expenditure and improve conditions of teachers, par-

ticularly with regard to pension schemes. It is clear that the presence of even a small but united pressure group was a factor in the development of educational policy. Cuff's book is the forerunner of a larger and more detailed study of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association which he plans to have ready for the centenary in 1990. In this present volume he has done an excellent job of constructing the early history of the organisation through diligent research of relatively sparse material. He shows that the Union began in 1890 as the successful resolution of a struggle between two visions of an association of teachers—that of Canon Pilot, Church of England Superintendent, who favoured an institute-type body which would discuss and disseminate matters of general educational interest, and that of Frederick Bancroft, teacher, who advocated a protective union which would take collective action in the economic and professional interests of teachers. Bancroft's views prevailed in practice even after he had left the organisation, particularly when the union was revived, after periods of desuetude, in 1898 and 1908. Though Cuff is well aware that the history of a union cannot be written in isolation from wider social movements, more might have been said about the effects of developments in the economy and the labour market, literacy levels, and unionisation in other professions.

Despite various omissions, these four volumes provide the reader with the main lines of development in twentieth-century Newfoundland education. The forty years from 1890 to 1930 can be seen as an era of innovation and creativity. This period saw the founding of the N.T.A. in 1890, the establishment of the Council of Higher Education three years later, the legislation defining amalgamated schools in 1903, the establishment of non-denominational schools of a superior type in the company towns during the following decade, the great increase in government educational expenditure following the 1916 Education Act, and the formation of a Department of Education with a Minister in charge in 1920, a Normal School the following year and Memorial University College in 1925.

The next phase was ushered in by the Great Depression of the late twenties, the effects of which hit Newfoundland so hard that the grants for education, and consequently teachers' salaries, were cut by half in 1932—without, amazingly, provoking a general strike by the teachers. The Commission of Government, largely British, which ruled Newfoundland from 1934 to 1949, attempted both to restore the status quo ante and to rationalise the system. They were successful in the former and went on to raise teachers' salaries, improve the curriculum and introduce free and compulsory education in 1942; their attempts to dismantle the denominational

system met with opposition from the Churches and were abandoned.

The third phase, from Confederation in 1949 to the present day, is characterised by the influx of Canadian dollars, which, among many other factors, radically transformed the structure of Newfoundland education, in particular the size and design of school buildings. Much of this is shown visually in Fred Buffett's book, which gives numerous examples of the one-room school and the modern high school. Though the one-room school buildings at first looked like churches, and only later took on a secular appearance, such schools were always too small, badly lit and ventilated, and cold in winter; their whole ethos was in ironical contrast with that of the cultivated gentlemen who administered the system from St. John's. Buffett's survey is, one hopes, a preliminary to a more detailed sociological analysis of Newfoundland schools, in which the interaction between architectural structure and teaching method might be considered.

These books, though greatly extending our knowledge of educational history, also raise some important questions, particularly concerning the relationship of education to socio-economic developments. One wonders, for instance, if the relatively higher rate of educational financing in the early twentieth century had any connection with the policy of direct foreign investment pursued by governments in this era. Was it the influx of transfer payments of all kinds after 1949, and the resultant emphasis on modernisation and centralisation, which made the more archaic features of the denominational system untenable? Many similar problems remain to be faced; only further research can provide the basis for their solutions.

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