

ISBN 0-315-61829-9

A STUDY OF PATRICK MORRIS'S POLITICAL RHETORIC

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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A STUDY OF PATRICK MORRIS'S POLITICAL RHETORIC

by



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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

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September 4, 1987

St. John's

Newfoundland

ABSTRACT

Patrick Morris (1789-1849) was a prominent figure in the mercantile, literary, and political life of nineteenth-century Newfoundland. From ordinary beginnings as an immigrant-Irishman, he rose to become one of the leading merchants in the Irish-Newfoundland passenger and provisions trade and a major political and official figure in the colony. In the 1820s he joined William Carson in the fight for representative government and promoted this and other causes through a series of nine pamphlets, published between 1824 and 1847.

This thesis focuses on the political rhetoric of Morris's pamphlet literature. It examines the context, nature, and purpose of his rhetoric, its major characteristics, his pivotal arguments, and the rhetorical strategies and devices he employed in his efforts to persuade administrators in the colonial office and elsewhere of the validity of his arguments.

Chapter 1 presents a biographical account of Morris's life with emphasis on his mercantile and political careers. Chapter 2 summarizes the pamphlets and places them in the context of Newfoundland history. An attempt is made to relate the pamphlets to the social, political, and economic events of the period, since without such a context Morris's arguments and strategies cannot be properly interpreted or

assessed. Chapter 3 is an analysis of the arguments and devices that form the substance of Morris's rhetoric. The main intent of Chapter 4 is to compare Morris's rhetoric with that of other notable political spokesmen of his day, and to trace briefly his influence on future Newfoundland historians and commentators.

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PREFACE

Scholarly investigation into the political rhetoric of twentieth-century Newfoundland has recently commenced. The rhetoric of the colony's political propagandists of the nineteenth century has, however, remained virtually an unexplored area. This study, in focusing on the rhetoric of the pamphleteer Patrick Morris, endeavours to illuminate a subject which has not been comprehensively examined before.

Despite its varied meanings throughout history, the term "rhetoric" has been most often used to mean the art of persuasion, and I am guided by this definition in my discussion of how Morris argued. My study is limited to a consideration of the pamphlet literature, and I make little attempt to incorporate or analyze Morris's speeches or contributions to newspapers. In placing Morris's pamphlets in the context of Newfoundland history, I have relied on scholars whose works I have acknowledged. This thesis is not intended to be an exhaustive study, but it may attract notice to an important dimension of nineteenth-century Newfoundland that has so far received only limited attention.

I wish to thank my supervisor, Dr. Patrick O'Flaherty, for his encouragement and guidance during the researching and writing of this thesis. His criticisms and advice were

invaluable. I am grateful to Dr. John Mannion, who willingly shared with me his personal files on Morris. I thank Dean F.A. Aldrich of the School of Graduate Studies for financial assistance, and the R.C. School Board of St. John's for granting me leave to complete this degree. I would like to acknowledge the assistance I received from the staffs at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Provincial Reference Library at the Arts and Culture Centre, St. John's. I am appreciative of the work of Cathy Murphy, who typed this thesis. I offer special thanks to my husband and daughters who were always supportive.

CHAPTER 1

PATRICK MORRIS: A BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT

Patrick Morris was born in 1789 in Waterford, Ireland. He was one of four children: Mary, James, Simon, and Patrick.¹ Sometime after his arrival in Newfoundland at the age of eight,² he became apprenticed to Luke Maddock, a merchant and native of Waterford, in order to gain first-hand experience in the Irish-Newfoundland trade.³ His business acumen, accumulated capital, and transatlantic connections soon enabled him to organize his own business, and by the time he was twenty-one Morris was conducting a profitable and competitive trade patterned on that of his former employer. With his brother James and brother-in-law Robert Kent as partners back in Waterford, Morris developed a lucrative provisions trade, importing those items necessary for life in the colony: pork, beef, butter, biscuit, flour, oatmeal, and manufactured goods "consisting of Soap, Candles, coarse Cloths, Slops, Shoes, Leather, Stationery, Paper, Glassware, and a great variety of other articles."⁴ In the fall of 1814 he acquired his first deep-sea vessel for transatlantic trade, and the following spring he established a passenger trade of his own.⁵ For a time, Morris was "probably the

leading merchant in the lucrative Irish-Newfoundland passenger and provisions trade."⁶

In 1814 he married the daughter of Thomas Foley, a successful Irish merchant in Harbour Grace with whom Morris had had some business transactions. She died the following year after Morris's first daughter, Mary Foley Morris, was born. By the mid 1820s Morris had acquired five coastal schooners for delivering supplies and collecting fish and oil, predominantly in the Roman Catholic areas of Conception Bay and along the coastline between Bay Bulls and Trepassey, known as the Southern Shore. In later years he was actively involved in the seal fishery. In 1823 Morris procured a ninety-two acre property called "the Cottage Farm" on the north side of Quidi Vidi Lake near St. John's. It consisted of "an elaborate cottage, gardens, and grounds, extensive outbuildings and a capacious frost-proof cellar." By 1836 he reportedly had "fifty acres in a high state of cultivation," and here were grown some of the potatoes and other produce which he advertised in the papers of the day.⁷ Thus Morris rose from an obscure background to become a member of the Catholic gentry of Newfoundland.

From the beginning Morris's life in Newfoundland reflected a deep interest in public and social issues. He joined the Benevolent Irish Society (B.I.S.) in 1806, the year it was founded, and became its first Roman Catholic president in 1823, a position he held for fifteen years. The society

later acknowledged its debt to Morris for his efforts and financial contribution towards the building of the Orphan Asylum School, an institution established for poor children in St. John's by the B.I.S. in 1826.⁸ Throughout his life he displayed a sincere concern for the unfortunate and destitute and was generally regarded as a true humanitarian. At the time of his death the Patriot recalled that his donations to charitable institutions were "bounteous in the extreme."⁹ Throughout his life he served on numerous committees and held various important positions. He was, at different periods, president of the St. John's committee for the relief of the distressed, vice-president of the first Newfoundland agricultural society (1842), commissioner for building a House of Assembly, commissioner of roads and bridges, commissioner of pilots, commissioner of lighthouses, governor of the St. John's Academy, justice of the peace (1834), grand juror, governor and cashier of the Savings Bank, member of the House of Assembly for St. John's and Ferryland (1837-40), and colonial treasurer and Councillor (1840-49).

Clearly Morris's mercantile career formed the basis of his prominence in Newfoundland as a man of wealth and importance. However, it is chiefly as a politician that he is remembered, particularly as a pamphleteer attempting to arouse the British government's interest in the colony's affairs. Morris was first drawn into the political arena in 1820, when he chaired

a committee of inhabitants in St. John's to protest the brutal lashing inflicted on two Conception Bay fishermen, James Landergan and Philip Butler, by the surrogate judges David Buchan and Rev. John Leigh. Judging by style and the nature of the arguments presented, it seems likely that Morris wrote parts of the printed report of the proceedings and possibly also the petition to the King which followed.¹⁰ In all these proceedings Morris was a central character and an apparent close associate of the reformer William Carson, a Scottish doctor who had immigrated to Newfoundland in 1808. He went to London in March, 1824, to help William Dawe, an attorney in the Butler-Landergan affair and secretary of the committee, to plead the colony's cause for judicial reform and to influence the drafting of new laws coming before Parliament.

The results of this agitation came in June, 1824, with the passing of three acts: the Judicature Act (5 Geo. IV. Cap. 67), "An Act for the better Administration of Justice in Newfoundland"; the Marriage Act (5 Geo. IV. Cap. 68), "An Act to regulate the Celebration of Marriage in Newfoundland; and the Fishery Act (5 Geo. IV. Cap. 51), "An Act to repeal several Laws relating to the Fisheries carried on upon the Banks and Shores of Newfoundland." As a result of these legislative measures, the surrogate courts -- long a target of attack by the Newfoundland reformers -- were replaced by circuit courts with civilian judges. The governor was also

empowered to grant charters for the incorporation of towns. In addition, there were provisions for the disposal of ships' rooms and the granting of waste lands. By virtue of the Fishery Act, the fishery was to be "freely enjoyed by His Majesty's subjects -- who may cut down trees for building and do everything useful for their trade." Clearly some important concessions had been granted, but they did not satisfy the demands of the reformers, who soon increased their pressure for a local legislature as the best and only way to foster the internal development of the colony. They were greatly assisted in their campaign by the political writings of Morris. It was while he was in London that he wrote his first pamphlet, Observations on the Government, Trade, Fisheries and Agriculture of Newfoundland (London, 1824).¹¹

In 1825 an Executive Council was introduced to Newfoundland in the commission issued to Sir Thomas Cochrane (governor, 1825-34). "It was to be an appointed body rather than an elected one, but it was intended that the Council should both frame legislation at the local level and provide official local advice to the governor." Morris and two other Roman Catholics were among those recommended by Cochrane as Councillors. However, the oath of supremacy and the test act declaration against transubstantiation required of all members of the Council immediately proved an obstacle to the appointment of Roman Catholics to this body. Since it was

considered "constitutionally impossible" to proceed without these oaths, the Catholic nominees were excluded from office.¹²

In August, 1826, Morris left St. John's for Cork and spent the next five years in Ireland.¹³ "He divided his time between mercantile interests in Waterford and political business in London concerning the granting of a local legislature to Newfoundland.¹⁴ He continued to write political tracts about Newfoundland, decrying the colony's lack of progress and pressing for "the boon of representative government." These were Remarks on the State of Society, Religion, Morals, and Education at Newfoundland (London, 1827) and Arguments to Prove the Policy and Necessity of granting to Newfoundland a Constitutional Government (London, 1828).

During the years 1826-31 Morris, living in Ireland, allied himself with Daniel O'Connell in the cause of Irish emancipation.¹⁵ The historian D.W. Prowse has given a somewhat comical version of the circumstances under which O'Connell publicly rebuked Morris;¹⁶ however, it has recently been suggested that the 1830 petition of St. John's Catholics seeking inclusion in the provisions of the Catholic Relief Bill of 1829, may have been a more likely cause of the rift between the two.¹⁷ On January 26, 1832, a letter to the editor appeared in the Newfoundlander, accusing Morris of not carrying out instructions regarding the January 28, 1830 petition. The writer said that the petition had been forwarded to Morris in Ireland "as a mark of respect." He had been requested

to forward it to the Marquis of Lansdowne and to O'Connell, who in turn were to present it to both Houses of Parliament. There Morris's duty ceased, said the writer, but instead he chose to open a correspondence with the undersecretary, R.M. Hayes, without any communication with Lansdowne or O'Connell. Fully confident in his own ability to have the matter dealt with speedily, Morris had not enlisted the support of Lansdowne or O'Connell as directed. The writer added that a copy of the letter to O'Connell from the St. John's Catholics was published in one of the Newfoundland papers, and that the paper found its way into O'Connell's hands in London. The writer claimed that O'Connell "was more than once heard to express his astonishment and surprise at not receiving the original." Despite Morris's assurances that the petitions had been granted, the writer said, the Catholics of Newfoundland had not been informed about what measures the government actually adopted. The controversy surrounding Morris's handling of the petition was apparently short-lived. In March, 1832, he was once again elected president of the B.I.S.¹⁸ This was one of the rare occasions in which Morris's activities on behalf of St. John's Catholics came in for adverse criticism.

In 1829 Morris purchased a piece of property called "Springfield" in County Kilkenny, three miles from Waterford. The estate, consisting of 100 acres, was located on the Suir River and was described as "a beautiful situation, excellent

land, well-wooded and watered."¹⁹ On August 14, 1829, Morris threw a party on board his ship at Passage, Cork, for "250 ladies and gentlemen of first rank and respectability in Cork city."²⁰ This may very well have been an engagement party for in the following year he married Frances Bullen, the daughter of a Cork doctor.²¹ Morris had six children by this marriage,²² and it perhaps bears noting that while his two nephews, John Kent and Edward Morris achieved political prominence in Newfoundland, neither of Morris's four sons followed him into the "paltry raffle of colonial politics."²³ It was while residing in Springfield that Morris wrote Six Letters, Intended to Prove that the Repeal of the Act of Union, and the Establishment of a Local Legislature in Ireland are Necessary to Cement the Connection with Great Britain (Waterford, 1831).

The Newfoundlander of October 6, 1831, noted Morris's presence at a public meeting in St. John's to petition for a local legislature. Eulogizing Carson, Morris said he was proud to have been "one of his disciples" and that he was back now in the colony after an absence of five years to help Carson in the cause of reform. He promised that no expense or effort would be spared to forward that cause and that he hoped to proceed without offending anyone. Representative government was granted to Newfoundland on August 27, 1832. Morris did not stand as a candidate in the fall election called to choose the colony's first representative

assembly. On July 24, 1832, he left for Ireland and did not return to St. John's until August 29, 1833, thereby missing the election and the events which marked the commencement of sectarian politics in Newfoundland.²⁴

On April 3, 1835, Morris came under attack in St. John's from Henry Winton, editor of the Public Ledger, who denounced him as "a coadjutor" of the Roman Catholic Bishop in St. John's, Michael Anthony Fleming. He dismissed Morris's claims about "abuses" in Ireland, and said that the people of Ireland "have been rendered distracted, as the people of this country have been, by such turbulent characters as [Morris] is." This was possibly Winton's first assault on Morris. In 1827 he had urged Morris to be "content with the fortune he has acquired" and to take up his pen to improve "the intellectual and physical condition of this long-neglected country." He implied that no other advocate could match him.²⁵

In the fall of 1836, as the colony faced its second general election, Morris began actively campaigning for a seat in the Assembly, pledging himself as "friend of Catholic and Protestant alike."²⁶ He was publicly supported by the Roman Catholic clergy, who used their influence to ensure the return in St. John's of the three reform candidates: Carson, Morris, and Kent. When this contest was declared invalid because of the alleged informality of the writs, a second election was held in June, 1837, and the reformers won control of the House with eleven of the fifteen seats. The

Patriot reported that Morris entered the House as "the most popular man in Newfoundland."²⁷

On August 25, 1837, Morris rose from his seat in the House to deliver a lengthy speech later entitled On Moving for a Committee to Enquire into the Administration of Justice. Howley wrote that "the words of Patrick Morris on this occasion have a ring about them worthy of O'Connell, his great prototype."²⁸ The speech was a fiery condemnation of "the polluted state of the administration of British justice in Newfoundland," and of the chief justice, Boulton, under whom, said Morris, "the degradation of the judges and the prostration of justice commenced." He was also critical of the high sheriff, Benjamin Greer Garrett. The speech was ordered printed by the House, a decision deplored by Winton, who objected to appropriation of £22 to cover the printing expenses. "The vanity and egotism of the author are conspicuous throughout the work," he wrote.²⁹ As the 1837 session of the House drew to a close, Boulton and Garrett sued Morris for libel, basing their suit on statements made in his August 25 speech. On October 14, 1837, the House appointed a delegation consisting of Carson, Morris, and John Valentine Nugent to go to London to plead for Boulton's removal from Newfoundland. Nugent was a native of Waterford who had come to St. John's in 1833 and set up a private school. He soon turned to journalism and was a strong voice on behalf of the colony's Irish Catholics. In November the St. John's Times reported

that Garrett had been awarded £40 damages for "the abusive and defamatory language" Morris had used against him.³⁰

Morris departed for Ireland in November, 1837, but did not arrive in London to discuss the Boulton affair until the first week of March, 1838, because of "ill health."³¹ When he arrived he found that the Assembly's charges against Boulton had already been referred to the judicial committee of the Privy Council, a development which the Newfoundland delegation had not anticipated. The delegates had not been prepared to submit a formal case against Boulton; consequently Morris, anxious to ensure that the colony's grievances were properly represented and that the colonial secretary was in full receipt of the facts, composed the letter entitled "Memorial and Representation of Patrick Morris to the Right Honourable Lord Glenelg" (London, 1838).

The friction between the Council and the Assembly had been one of the major problems facing the reformers after they won control of the House in 1836. It was also one of the issues that the 1838 delegation had been instructed to discuss. It was on this issue that Morris wrote the pamphlet Legislative Councils proved to be the Root of all the Evils of the Colonies: in a short address to the Right Hon. the Earl Durham, High Commissioner and Governor of the British North American Colonies (London, 1838). The pamphlet was criticized as "imprudent" by Kent, who said that since Morris had not done much work for the London delegation he had no right to

send the address to Durham without the delegates' consent. Morris countered that it was his friend, Sir Thomas Wyse, M.P., who had recommended that he write the pamphlet. It was shown to Lord Durham by Wyse before publication and Durham had seen nothing "imprudent" in it.³² The members of the delegation of 1838 achieved some of their objectives, primarily the removal of Chief Justice Boulton from Newfoundland and the closing of the Council to the Bench of the Supreme Court.

On January 3, 1839, Morris sailed for Cork with his nephew and agent, Edward Morris.³³ Patrick Morris was winding down his firm in the 1830s and liquidated it in 1839, a consequence of the collapse of the Irish-Newfoundland trade during the thirties.³⁴ Meanwhile, back in Newfoundland the Chamber of Commerce of St. John's had felt compelled to lay before the "Royal Council, with earnest entreaties for relief, the almost intolerable wrongs they endure," primarily from the proceedings of the House of Assembly in the Kielley vs. Carson affair of 1838.³⁵ The December, 1838, petition of the Chamber of Commerce was presented to the House of Lords on April 26, 1839, by Lord Aberdeen. The charges of the petitioners provoked a reply from Morris, a printed letter entitled To the Most Noble the Marquis of Normanby, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies (Liverpool, 1839). This was quickly followed by A Short

Reply to the Speech of Earl Aberdeen, on the State of
Newfoundland (Liverpool, 1839).

In February, 1840, Morris was appointed colonial treasurer and became the first Roman Catholic to take a seat in the Executive Council. As early as 1835 Governor Henry Prescott (governor 1834-41) had described him as "worthy of recognition" and a man "able, if willing, to reconcile the extreme elements in the two parties" in the colony.³⁶ In 1840 Prescott informed the colonial office that he "hoped this selection from the popular party would promote tranquillity."³⁷ The reaction to Morris's appointment was a predictable mixture of commendation and criticism. The Newfoundlander was "pleased" because the appointment clearly acknowledged the eligibility of Catholics for offices of emolument under the Crown. The Patriot, always supportive of Morris, also praised the appointment. The Public Ledger condemned it as a conciliatory move by the colonial office, and the St. John's Times spoke of Morris as "an alien in creed" and therefore "unfit and undeserving."³⁸ By May, 1840, Morris had gone up to the Council, vacating his seat in the Assembly and making a by-election necessary. Morris had wanted to retain his seat in the representative branch of the legislature, but the Assembly had declared the holding of places in both the legislature and the Executive Council to be unconstitutional. One of his loudest opponents was Carson, who vowed to resign as Speaker of the House if Morris attempted to take his seat.³⁹

On April 18, 1840, the Patriot published a letter from Morris to the electors of his district in which he complained of the "illegal" efforts of the House to expel him for attempting to take his seat. He referred to Carson's attempts over the years to denigrate his contribution to the colony, especially to a remark attributed to Carson in 1820 to the effect that "Morris thinks himself of great importance but he little knows that he is merely acting as my tool." Carson hotly retorted that Morris had a mind "ill-modified, and never designed or fitted to act a part in freedom's cause."⁴⁰ The bitter altercation between the two tended to erode the position of the reform party since it revealed divisions within its own ranks. However, the enmity does not appear to have endured, at least on Morris's part. Two years later he served as vice-president of the first agricultural society in Newfoundland, with Carson as president. As late as 1846 Morris was still deferring to the opinions of the man he called his "master in politics."⁴¹

In 1843 the editor of the Newfoundlander, angry over Morris's adverse reaction to the proposal that the Newfoundlander should print the journals of the House, implied that Morris had become inconsequential.⁴² In August, 1844, the Patriot declared that there were not many who were competent to delineate Morris's character, and called him "one of the oldest, one of the best-tried, one of the most constitutional

and best-read public characters now in Newfoundland; and to all these must be added ... undeviating political honesty."⁴³

In 1846 the Patriot expressed its indignation at Governor John Harvey's (governor, 1841-47) attempt to "inflict" a militia on the colony, and chastized Morris for his support of it.⁴⁴ The "expansionist mood of the United States during the eighteen-forties" had prompted Britain to urge the setting up of local defence forces in her North American colonies. Governor Harvey was anxious to bring in a militia bill providing for "the registration of male inhabitants, for an annual one-day muster, and for emergency call-up. It provided also for various penalties and for court martial."⁴⁵ The Patriot, recalling how Morris, in the time of Governor Cochrane, had strongly opposed the hint of a "small militia," now made a pointed reference to "fiery democrats" buckling to the "dicta from government house."⁴⁶ On March 25, 1846, Morris wrote a long letter to the Patriot outlining his reasons for supporting the bill. In giving it his support in the House of Assembly, he said, he was doing "that which would promote the interest and raise the character and importance of the country." He little thought he would be denounced as "a traitor and a renegade." He added that he was "anxious that the loyal people of the Colony should at once respond to the call from the parent government." The people of the colony felt otherwise. Ten thousand names were attached to a petition against it, and warning placards

were posted against Morris and another of the bill's supporters in the Assembly, Kent.⁴⁷ It was clearly not a position calculated to win popularity. In the debate on the subject in the House on March 30, 1846 (reported in the Newfoundlander, April 2, 1846), Morris retreated from his previous stand and said he would now agree only to "a measure that would provide for the enrolment of the people and for places of rendezvous." There was to be no drilling, no court martial, no heavy fines. He stressed that the associations should be voluntary. Furthermore, he believed he still had the confidence of the people who, though they may have felt he was mistaken, never doubted his honesty. There were two attempts to draft a militia bill, but both were defeated and the motion had to be abandoned before the close of the session.

In 1847 Morris wrote his last pamphlet, A Short Review of the History, Government, Constitution, Fishery and Agriculture of Newfoundland (St. John's, 1847). He died two years later, on August 22, 1849, at the Cottage Farm in St. John's. The Patriot reported that "in the whole course of his life, Mr. Morris lived less for himself than for the welfare of his adopted country," and called his funeral "without exaggeration the most numerous concourse of people that ever attended a similar ceremonial in Newfoundland." The St. John's Times regretted his death, "not for what he has done for the country because the editor does not accept that it is now any better off," but for "his sincerity and goodness

of heart." The Public Ledger reprinted the obituary from the Newfoundlander, which praised Morris for his "kind and obliging demeanour," for the "warm interest he took in the welfare of the community," and for his "official endeavours to mitigate the severity" of public crises.⁴⁸

In October, 1849, Governor Gaspard LeMarchant (governor, 1847-52) wrote to Earl Grey, the colonial secretary in London, to inform him of an apparent deficiency of £6000 in the colonial treasury. He added that an examination was being conducted into the late treasurer's affairs which, he said, had been "left in a very confused and embarrassed state."⁴⁹ On February 11, 1850, the governor transmitted to the House of Assembly the auditors' examination and report in which they stated that "upon investigation it was ascertained that the Treasurer (of whose fidelity and integrity no previous suspicion had been entertained) was a Defaulter in his joint capacity of Treasurer and Cashier of the Savings Bank to the very large amount of £6,610.19.5 stg." LeMarchant added that the government had initiated proceedings to enforce the payment of his defalcation from Morris's estate as well as from his sureties.⁵⁰ Legal action was commenced by Governor Ker Baillie Hamilton (governor, 1852-55) against Mrs. Morris and the securities of her late husband in April, 1850. The court case terminated on April 26 "in a compromise of the claim of the Crown on the estate of Mr. Morris and his sureties for the sum of £4000 stg. to be paid in six yearly

installments without interest." As part of the agreement, Mrs. Morris received £150 a year out of the rents of her husband's properties to ensure the reversion of his property to his family.⁵¹ By 1852 she and "her large young family" had returned to Ireland.⁵²

CHAPTER 2

MORRIS IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Patrick Morris arrived in Newfoundland at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Napoleonic Wars (1796-1815) had already begun the process of eroding the transatlantic migratory fishery, which for centuries had been carried on by the West Country merchants whose ships sailed for Newfoundland each spring and returned home in the fall. By 1812 the governor observed that the fishery had become "decidedly sedentary," the chief occupation of the resident population that had sprung up.¹ Mainly because of the Napoleonic Wars, fish prices had soared in the wealthy European markets of Spain, Portugal, and Italy, and this had resulted in high wages to fishermen. Whether driven by political and economic uncertainty at home or by the prospect of prosperity in Newfoundland, large numbers of young Irish immigrants began arriving in the island. "Between 1801 and 1816 the Irish Catholics of Newfoundland grew from 6,465 to 20,800. They were by then one-half the total population."² The profitable war years also witnessed the rise of a resident merchant class and the rapid transformation of St. John's from a fishing village to a town that had become the administrative centre of a growing trade.

In 1815 the war ended, bringing to a close the remarkable period of prosperity Newfoundland had enjoyed. It did not end the influx of immigrants, who continued to swell the population of the island until 1830. "Civil strife in most of the salt fish importing countries together with new nationalist measures and higher duties on the import of Newfoundland fish combined with increasingly successful competition from Scandinavian fish products to create what by 1830 must have been seen as an eternal depression in the fishery. Production was broadly maintained but prices declined, and Newfoundland was increasingly forced to send much of this catch to the poorly paying West Indian markets." The years between 1815 and 1830 were "ones of hardship, starvation, bankruptcy and depression in Newfoundland."³ The period 1815-18 was particularly remarkable for a number of disastrous fires in St. John's, widespread famine, and severe frosts.

The history of Newfoundland during the first three decades of the nineteenth century reveals a continuous struggle of the people against economic hardship and natural disasters. However, it would be misleading to ignore the fact that progress had been made. Morris's tracts were written during decades of economic hardship and uncertainty; but they were filled with the memory of prosperous years in the recent past, and with the hope of a return to that condition. Prosperity was no pipe dream to Morris. He had experienced it. The fact that he had experienced it so

recently may account for his eagerness to come up with "solutions" to the problems of the colony. Newfoundland by the 1820s had become more than a mere fishing station. There were signs of an emerging established society, signs that were making official recognition of Newfoundland's colonial status inevitable. In 1817 Newfoundland received its first year-round governor, an official acknowledgement of a resident population. Although Newfoundland still lacked any form of elective government, year-round government had existed from the late eighteenth century, "an informal and to some extent voluntarist structure comprising (below the governor and his immediate naval and personal entourage) magistrates, resident surrogates, sheriff, deputy sheriffs, constables, a collector of customs and his deputies, other officials, plus a sizeable military garrison [of about 700 troops]." In addition, there was "an elaborate and statutory judicial system, comprising Courts of Session, Surrogate Courts, a Court of Vice-Admiralty, and the Supreme Court."⁴ The latter had been established in 1792.

The first school on the island had been founded by Henry Jones, in Bonavista in 1725. He was a missionary from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (S.P.G.). Methodism was brought to Newfoundland in 1766 by Laurence Coughlan.⁵ The appearance of early Roman Catholic priests in the colony was noted in 1755; in 1779, on instructions from Governor Richard Edwards (governor,

1779-81), Catholics were permitted the free exercise of their religion.⁶ The beginnings of the Anglican Church in Newfoundland go back ever further, to the late seventeenth century.⁷ "After 1800, missionaries of all denominations arrived in increasing numbers and with them appeared more schools as well as churches."⁸ Notwithstanding the variety of religious sects, the Harbour Grace Journal noted in 1829 that "none of the civil or religious distinctions which so unhappily exist in the Mother Country are to be found or traced in even the remotest parts of the island."⁹ Governor Cochrane also remarked on the harmony between Catholics and Protestants, although he perceived it as an uneasy peace and felt convinced that "a small spark could excite a flame not easily subdued."¹⁰

The first newspaper, the Royal Gazette, had been established in St. John's as early as 1807.¹¹ By 1827 there were four newspapers in St. John's alone. Others soon followed in Harbour Grace and Carbonear. There was a reading room in St. John's, and in the 1820s a lending library was formed in Carbonear.¹² By 1814 a hospital had been completed and Carson was named as a medical attendant.¹³ In 1813 the governor had been empowered by the British authorities "to grant Cases of small portions of land to industrious individuals for the purpose of cultivation." A ruling by a chief justice in 1819 confirmed the right of the inhabitants to own their own land.¹⁴ During Governor Cochrane's term of office "the first main road, from St. John's to Portugal Cove, that was

ever made in the Island," was undertaken and completed.¹⁵ In 1824, as we have already seen, three acts were passed in the British Parliament for Newfoundland, bringing a number of reforms, among them the abolition of the surrogate system and provision for municipal government.

Morris's 1824 tract, Observations on Newfoundland, was a series of four letters addressed to the colonial secretary, Earl Bathurst, and offered conveniently at a time when the laws and government of Newfoundland were under review by the British government. In it Morris ridiculed what he termed the "undeviating system of misrule"¹⁶ which had been inflicted on Newfoundland since its discovery by Cabot in the reign of Henry VII. He directed his literary shafts at the West Country merchants and adventurers, the fishing admirals, naval governors and surrogates, and pointed to abuses previously denounced by Carson in his two pamphlets some ten years earlier.¹⁷

The West Country merchants, said Morris, were the first to acknowledge the great importance of the Newfoundland fishery and quickly formed a monopoly. Through "a little borough influence," they duped the imperial government into believing that only a migratory fishery such as they themselves conducted would promote England's trade and foster seamen for the British navy. In order to secure their political and economic control, they represented the soil as barren, the climate as inhospitable, and the island as unsuitable

for settlement. This, to Morris, was the great hoax perpetrated by these merchants. They opposed every effort by the inhabitants to introduce law and order into the colony, and finally recommended that all settlement be discouraged as detrimental to the trade. As a result, the fishing admirals, who were the merchants' servants in Newfoundland, burned houses, destroyed fishing stages, and resorted to "every violent means" to drive the inhabitants away.

The fishing admirals were the early rulers in the harbours of Newfoundland. Morris called them "needy, unprincipled" men who possessed absolute power and exercised it "with more than eastern despotism." They "flogged and plundered the people at their pleasure." As for the naval governors and judges who came to Newfoundland under authority of King William's Act of 1699, Morris said that "not one in ten could write their own names." In 1792 a Judicature Act (32 Geo. III. Cap. 46) entitled "An Act for establishing courts of judicature in the island of Newfoundland, and the islands adjacent" was passed in the British Parliament. Under its authority a supreme court was established in Newfoundland, a chief justice was appointed, and surrogate courts (lower courts of civil jurisdiction) were instituted. But, said Morris, the surrogate commissions were bestowed on captains, lieutenants, and even sailing masters. In entrusting the administration of justice to these naval judges, Newfoundland had been made "the theatre of experiments." Finally, it was

to the desolating effects of this system of maritime government that Morris attributed the colony's "present unimproved and impoverished state -- without a Government efficient for any local purpose, without a police, without roads, without establishments for the education of the people -- in short, without any of those institutions which are necessary for the well-being of every civilized country." Morris made it clear that his words were not to be interpreted as a criticism of the British government; the blame for Newfoundland's retarded state he placed squarely on the shoulders of the West Country merchants.

Nevertheless, there was in the pamphlet mild criticism of the imperial government's inertia in dealing with the colony's fisheries, for it had passed over the best parts of the island to the French and ceded to the Americans the right to fish on the Labrador coast. These concessions, said Morris, gave the "death blow" to Newfoundland in 1815-17; they toppled the resident merchants and reduced the population to pauperism. Furthermore, the Newfoundland fishery, which made England a great maritime power, was now, he said, mainly serving to increase the naval strength of her rivals. With the local merchants bankrupt, the inhabitants must either starve or emigrate to America, taking their skill and expertise in the fishery with them.

Morris reminded the British government of the "withering policy" that had imposed "unnatural restrictions on the

cultivation of the soil." Characteristically, in a curious blend of indictment and vindication that would become a pronounced feature of his rhetoric, he traced this policy to "mercantile cupidity" rather than to "any indifference on the part of the Parent Government to its wealth and prosperity." Morris insisted that the country had great agricultural potential, which must be developed in order to preserve what was left of the British fisheries. In his unbridled enthusiasm, agriculture became a panacea for all ills: it would not interfere with mercantile interest, it would increase British manufactures, stem the tide of emigration, "check the rising strength of that haughty republic," the U.S., and give rise to increased wealth and population in Newfoundland. Finally, he said, all this could only take place under the fostering care of some constitutional form of local government; without it, it would be folly to think that agriculture or any other internal improvements could be encouraged.¹⁸

The 1827 pamphlet, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, was primarily a rebuttal of the "disgusting charges" brought forward by the orators of the Newfoundland School Society against the people of the colony at a meeting held at the Freemasons' Hall on May 15, 1827. In the same month the Lord Bishop of Chester, speaking at a meeting of the S.P.G. at the Freemasons' Hall, also created several "unfavourable and erroneous impressions" about the people of Newfoundland which Morris felt obligated to remove. Morris was fully

aware that it was not in the best political interests of the colony to allow the unsettling accounts of vice, ignorance, and immorality to go unchallenged; hence he was anxious to place the true character of the people before Lord Bexley, to whom his letter was addressed. Lord Bexley (Nicholas Vansittart) had presided at the meeting at which the derogatory statements were made. He was also chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster. Morris quickly saw how his influence might affect any decision to grant Newfoundland a local legislature:

For if the people of Newfoundland are in the savage, besotted state in which they are represented to be, without religious or moral character, it would be the extreme of folly to grant them those institutions which they are seeking for and your Lordship would be fully warranted in opposing any such measure.

Morris's main aim was to show that morals and good government were somehow connected, and that in Newfoundland "the one advanced in an exact ratio with the other." In the "olden time," he said, the colony was in a wretched and unhappy state, excesses were committed, and hideous immorality prevailed. The blame for this, he argued, must lie with the "hordes of adventurers," blundering surrogates, tyrannical West Country merchants, and despot'c fishing admirals who ruled like "Persian Satraps or Turkish Bashaws." They "blasted the moral energies" of the people.

Then in 1824 new laws were passed for Newfoundland and "a new era" commenced, he said. Impartial justice became

the right of rich and poor alike. The government gained the confidence of the people, and since that time their moral character had continued to improve. There was an absence, he noted, of public crime and religious bigotry. An ecumenical spirit flourished among the various denominations and "sectarian hostility ... is not observed amongst them." He praised the efforts of the various sects to establish schools, and the work of charitable institutions, both in St. John's and in the outports, to alleviate the distress of the poor. "Nowhere," he wrote, "is charity more generally practised than it is by the generous inhabitants of that country."

In Morris's brief reference to the great privation being suffered by the poorer classes and to the growing lawlessness in some of the outports, we feel that he must have been aware of the grave social ills existing at this time but that he deliberately chose to ignore them. The whole pamphlet is essentially another opportunity for Morris to expound on his favourite theme, the need for self-government, for he concluded by saying that the people of Newfoundland are "ripe for and in a fit situation to receive those enlightened and liberal institutions which have been granted to colonies of much less importance in their neighbourhood."¹⁹

The 1828 pamphlet, Arguments on Constitutional Government, was a letter addressed to the colonial secretary, William Huskisson. Once again Morris could not resist a jibe at his usual targets -- the surrogates, fishing admirals, and Poole

merchants -- as he outlined Newfoundland's long history of neglect, monopoly, and barbarous treatment. Through it all, he said, this long-suffering servant remained "loyal and submissive" to England. He argued that Newfoundland was Britain's oldest and most valuable colony, and was therefore deserving of better treatment. This he supported by some extravagant claims on behalf of Newfoundland; he considered her fisheries "the greatest in the world," her soil "capable of giving sustenance to millions," and her climate as "possibly more favourable to the health of the human species than most others on the face of the globe."

Morris now maintained that the French and Americans controlled two-thirds of Newfoundland's best fishing areas, and that they were fully sensible of the commercial and naval advantages to be derived from Newfoundland; yet England appeared to be totally indifferent. For the want of an imperial policy to encourage settlement, agriculture, trade, and the fisheries, the colony was becoming a "stepping-stone" to America. By continuing to turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to Newfoundland, he said, Britain was promoting the naval ascendancy of her rivals. The time had come for England to rectify the injury inflicted on Newfoundland, and to help her advance in wealth and population. Predictably, the best way, in Morris's view, was through the grant of a local constitutional government.

In meeting the objections that had been raised towards such a concession, Morris merely reduced them to trifles. He maintained that the colony could certainly afford the expenses of a local government. The inhabitants of St. John's alone, he claimed, remitted annually at least £20,000 for rents to persons residing in Great Britain. "Can it then be doubted," he asked, "that a people who pay such large sums to absentee landlords, who do not contribute in the slightest degree to the support of the country, could pay the expenses of a civil government?" As to the charge he had somewhere heard that an Assembly in Newfoundland would necessarily consist of merchants or of those elected through their influence, Morris did not deny that this would probably happen, and argued that such mercantile influence would not be to the detriment of the rest of the colony. He considered that "a little calm reflection will be sufficient to convince those persons that there is no ground whatever for their apprehension." Another significant objection raised by the opponents to the granting of a local legislature was that colonial governments were often troublesome and inconvenient. In a serious misreading of the colony's potential for political discord, economic chaos, and religious controversy Morris claimed that "the same elements of strife do not exist at Newfoundland as in other colonies."²⁰ The pamphlets of the 1820s all reflect Morris's dogged pursuit of local government, his exaggerated claims for the island's

agricultural potential, his condemnation of the merchants and adventurers who allegedly kept Newfoundland in their "thralldom," and his buoyant hopes for a new era of prosperity.

In 1831 while residing in Ireland Morris, turning now to Irish politics, wrote Six Letters on the Repeal of the Act of Union. The letters were addressed to Sir John Newport, who had been the M.P. for the city of Waterford for the previous twenty-eight years. The pamphlet was provoked by Newport's claim that "the Union has conferred vast benefits on Ireland."

In 1782 Britain gave up its claim to legislate for Ireland. The British "Renunciation Act" of 1783 acknowledged the exclusive right of the Irish parliament to legislate for Ireland and the exclusive jurisdiction of Irish courts. These rights, however, were greater in theory than in practice, and the weaknesses of the constitution became apparent during the eighteen years it was in existence. The constitution of 1782 did not remove the political disabilities on Irish Roman Catholics, nor did it settle the problem of Anglo-Irish relations on a permanently satisfactory basis. After 1782, as before, Ireland was ruled by a lord lieutenant, who was appointed by and responsible to the British cabinet. Following an uprising of the United Irishmen in 1798, debate commenced on the union of the Irish and English parliaments. In 1800 the Irish parliament as a separate existence came to an end, and legislation was passed providing for the parliamentary union of England and Ireland.²¹

Morris argued that the Union of 1800, which Newport and the other advocates considered "a boon," had brought down "destruction upon Ireland's manufacturers, ruin upon her trade, and desolation upon her wretched agricultural population." The lamentable state of Ireland Morris blamed on "the insatiable maw of the monied Monopolists," all of whom were supported and upheld by the imperial government. He lambasted absentee landlords, the Bank of Ireland, the Church Establishment, tolls and customs, the tax levied on the people by Grand Juries and Vestries, and the necessity of supporting an armed police in time of peace. Furthermore, he said, the Irish were obliged to pay more for their sugar, tea, and timber in order to support the "hideous monopoly" of the East India Company, the West Indian Company, and the North American monopolies. These were the "benefits" Ireland had received from the Union!

Ireland rapidly advanced under her free constitution of 1782, Morris said, but since the Union Irish manufactures had been completely superseded by British ones, Irish trade had been almost annihilated, and farmers and labourers had been reduced to destitution. Every Irishman, he complained, was clothed in British manufactures, the produce of his labour was shipped out of the country while he himself remained in want, and his only trade was across the Channel. What could be the reason for the low state of agriculture, manufacture, and commerce in a country "overflowing with every necessary

for the comfort and maintenance of man"? The answer, according to Morris, was the imperial government's incompetence to legislate for Ireland's local wants. British legislators had neither the time, knowledge, nor sympathy with Ireland to deal with her affairs, yet they perversely refused to allow the Irish to attend to it themselves, he said. He insisted that if a Union had been formed in 1800 giving Ireland autonomy over its local concerns, "Ireland would now be prosperous and contented and not crying out for its repeal." Those seeking a repeal, he said, want to dissolve the present Union "only to form another, on a more equitable basis." Only a local government, he said, could possess the confidence of the people, competently legislate for Ireland, and raise her from her present "depressed and impoverished state."²² In Morris's evocation of an unhappy and ill-used people who were England's "most zealous supporters," his deep admiration for the British connection, his firm belief in agriculture as the foundation of all internal improvements, and his roseate view of the "miraculous power" of local government, the reader can catch the echoes of a rhetoric previously sounded in the pamphlets of the 1820s.

In March, 1832, news reached Newfoundland that it had been granted a local legislature. As the colony prepared for its first general election, an unhappy transformation was already beginning to manifest itself. The united front which had been presented to the imperial government rapidly

disappeared as the struggle for power became an internal one. Factionalism appeared, and the latent hostility between fisherman and merchant, Irish Catholic and English Protestant, and St. John's and the outports, was aroused.²³ Civil and religious harmony readily gave way to jealousy, bitterness, and rivalry. Ironically, the granting of the "boon" marked the commencement of sectarian politics in Newfoundland.

The animating spark came in September, 1832, when Kent, one of the St. John's reform candidates, had his qualifications questioned by Winton of the Public Ledger. Kent unwisely referred publicly to an "irresistible influence" that would carry him into the House, a pointed reference to Bishop Fleming. Instead of disavowing Kent, the bishop issued a statement supporting him. Winton retaliated by hotly condemning clerical intervention in politics and urging Fleming to withdraw his influence from the election. At a mass meeting at the Roman Catholic chapel in St. John's, Winton was denounced for his attacks on the Church and Fleming was thanked for his efforts on behalf of the people. It has been argued that the 1832 episode involving Winton, Kent, and Fleming was merely the culmination of a series of events in the decade leading up to 1832 in which British government policies had aroused Catholic jealousy by favouring Protestant interests.²⁴ At any rate, Kent was elected, and in 1833 the bishop once more successfully exerted his influence in St. John's politics, this time on behalf of Carson in a by-

election. The election of Kent in 1832 convinced the Catholic clergy of their power in securing the election of particular candidates, and clerical intervention increased until they were accused of attempting to create a Catholic ascendancy. The mixture of politics, priests, and press continued to be a highly combustible one for the next thirty years.

Racial and ethnic violence reached a climax in the spring of 1835 when Winton had one ear cut off and the other mutilated on a hill outside Carbonear by a band of disguised ruffians believed to be Catholics. Although a reward was offered for information about the attackers, their identity was never discovered. Winton's scathing attacks on the church had made him an object of animosity among the Catholics of the colony. Another enemy, hated and feared by Catholics and the early reformers, was the chief justice, Henry John Boulton. He had arrived in the colony in 1833 and had immediately rendered himself odious by altering the rules for the empaneling of supreme court juries, thereby enabling merchants to select juries of their own class. "The effect of the change," it has been said, "if not the motive behind it, was almost to eliminate Roman Catholic jurors who were likely to be of radical persuasion, for the Sheriff was instructed to constitute the juries by ballot and subsequent strike-off from a restricted Grand Jury list for which few but merchants and Protestants could qualify." But far more notorious were Boulton's attempts by a series of judicial

decisions "to revolutionize the credit arrangements under which the fisheries had long been conducted ... His decisions, by lessening the confidence with which fishermen hired themselves to impoverished planters, earned for him a place among the oppressors of Newfoundland."²⁵ On the other hand, he was popular with the merchant class. Political feeling in the colony was further intensified by Boulton's treatment of R.J. Parsons in June, 1835. Parsons, editor of the Patriot, had been fined for contempt and sentenced to three months in prison by Boulton, who acted as prosecutor, judge, and jury. A constitutional society was formed with the purpose of freeing Parsons. Morris was a member and led the constitutional society march of two hundred protestors. In the end, on instructions from London, Parsons was released and the fine repaid.²⁶ Winton's fate and fears for his personal safety following the release of Parsons subsequently drove Boulton to England to press for his own removal from the colony. He begged, unsuccessfully, for an appointment in Ceylon.²⁷ "In July, 1838, the judicial committee of the Privy Council recommended that it would be 'inexpedient' to allow Boulton to return to Newfoundland," and he was forced to return to private practice in Upper Canada.²⁸

As we have already seen, Morris did not present himself as a candidate in the first general election of 1832, when a predominantly Protestant and mercantile Assembly was chosen. He was returned in the epoch-making election of 1836 (and

the election of 1837) in which the reform party won control of the House by an overwhelming majority. With Carson as speaker, the new Assembly (1837-41) came to be characterized by a general spirit of combativeness, intractability, and self-assertion. The most significant event of their term of office occurred in August, 1838, when Carson, acting on behalf of the Assembly, incarcerated an assistant judge, George Lilly, the sheriff, and the surgeon, Edward Kielley, for alleged contempt of the House following an altercation between Kielley and Kent in the streets of St. John's.

"Thus began the case of Kielley vs. Carson (and others) in which the issue was simply the Assembly's right to commit for contempt, a right which Carson argued it possessed by reason of its analogy to the House of Commons." The case was decided in 1843 by the judicial committee of the British Privy Council in favour of Kielley, and the Assembly's power was effectively restrained. The Kielley affair and the campaign against Boulton solidified the antagonism felt towards the Assembly by the merchants and the press. "There can be little doubt that the contentious activities of the House in the period 1836-9 helped to bring representative government into disrepute and paved the way for the Amalgamated Assembly [1842-8]."29

As noted earlier, Morris wrote four pamphlets during the period 1836-9. The first of these was the speech he delivered in the House on August 25, 1837, entitled On

Moving for a Committee to Enquire into the Administration of Justice, and later ordered printed by the House.³⁰ For the last four years, he said, Newfoundland had been kept "in a continued state of agitation;" the people had been "thrown upon a trackless ocean without helm or compass." The reason for the ferment he believed to be a loss of faith in the tribunals of justice. The chief justice, Boulton, he charged with exhibiting "great partiality on the bench." He added that his adjudications were "biassed by strong party prejudices" and that his judgments were "unjust, arbitrary and illegal, opposed to the mild and merciful principles of English law." In the proceedings following the November election of 1836, said Morris, the high sheriff, Garrett, was equally guilty of a maladministration of justice when, following Boulton's instructions, he selected a jury from one political party for the purpose of trying another one for political disturbances. As a result "trial by jury was completely laid prostrate ... Juries in Newfoundland were made the engines of worse than eastern despotism." He accused the judges of "usurping the power of the law" and of trampling upon private rights. He concluded that justice in Newfoundland was "a monstrous perversion of English law and English justice."

The 1838 letter entitled "Memorial to Lord Glenelg" enlarged upon Boulton's legislative and judicial misdeeds. It proposed to call the British colonial secretary's attention to several repressive bills introduced by Boulton in his capacity as

president of the colony's Legislative Council. Morris also recited a litany of prominent law cases in which Boulton had used the bench for party vengeance. In all these efforts, said Morris, Boulton figured as "a criminal legislator as well as a criminal judge." It was, however, his adjudications on the "law of current supply" and the "law regulating servants' wages" which led to "more violent changes and more disastrous results than any other of his legislative or judicial acts." Boulton's decisions, said Morris, "inflicted an immense mass of misery on the poor planters and fishermen of Newfoundland."³¹ John Mannion has said that "The Judicature Act of 1824 had confirmed ancient custom giving servants prior rights to fish and oil for their wages in the event of a planter's insolvency, and current suppliers prior claims over past creditors. Bolstered by mercantile support Boulton, arbitrarily revoked these and other rights and customs of the fishery."³² Morris argued that the pervasiveness of the servants' liens and the custom of current supply, rooted in the law of bottomry, had regulated the fishery and protected the merchants and planters since earliest times. These "laws," said Morris, were brought to Newfoundland by the early adventurers (the same "lawless and unprincipled men" he vilified in the pamphlets of the 1820s). With more goodwill towards Newfoundland's early maritime government than he had hitherto expressed, Morris said "it would appear that the sole object of government, Governors, Surrogates' Courts,

and Judges, and all, was to protect the fishermen and seamen from the oppressions and injustice of the merchants." But now Boulton had "flung away with contempt the system that had so long prevailed in the courts."

In consequence of his decisions, said Morris, "the legal rights and the means of subsistence of the major part of the whole community were taken away; hundreds were deprived of their just earnings, thrown into beggary and starvation; whole families flung from their houses into the streets; and hundreds, I may say thousands, of the able-bodied fishermen of Newfoundland had to fly the country to offer their labour and skill to the commercial and naval rivals of England." These were familiar arguments, but now Morris had found a new target for his anger. This time it was not the West Country merchants, the fishing admirals, or Newfoundland's lack of a legislature, but her chief justice, who was to blame for the colony's "present unsettled and unhappy state."³³

Early in 1838 "Radical Jack" Durham (John Lambton, first Earl of Durham) had been appointed governor general of all British North America. He resigned after five months, but he stayed long enough to investigate the causes of the rebellion of 1837 and to suggest remedies, which he submitted in the famous Report of 1839. The uprisings of 1837 reflected dissatisfaction with British colonial policy and were significant events in the struggle for responsible government in Upper and Lower Canada, led by William Lyon Mackenzie and Louis

Papineau. The growing pro-American attitude posed a serious threat to continuing British rule in the colonies. Morris's purpose in writing the 1838 pamphlet Legislative Councils Proved to be the Root of All the Evils of the Colonies was to bring to Durham's attention "what I consider to be the cause of the present discontents in the colonies and to suggest such remedies as may lead to a permanent settlement of those unhappy differences."

Morris argued in this tract that no one could legislate wisely for the colonies except the colonists themselves. It was England's meddling policy and a lack of local control, he said, that drove the American colonists to "remonstrance, disaffection, resistance, rebellion and revolution."³⁴ He clearly did not advocate this course for the Canadas. Never one, like Carson, to threaten rebellion,³⁵ he declared himself against anything that would imperil the British connection. He fully believed that patience and negotiation would rectify any wrong. He was critical of the "ill-advised and almost unjustifiable resistance of the Canadians," but he was convinced that their dissatisfaction was not with the British government; "the resistance is not against the Supreme government, it is against the local misgovernment, and the constitution of the Colonial Councils; the evil lies there deeply seated." The problem with the Colonial Council, he said, was that it united the executive and legislative bodies and that its members were all appointed by the Crown.

"The interests of the Colonial Councils are not the interests of the people," he argued. They were composed of "placemen, officials, of persons whose residence in the colonies is temporary, birds of passage and birds of prey." The Newfoundland Council he called "the most intractable and the most unreasonable of all the Colonial Councils." In the meantime, he said, only the reform or abolition of the Councils could prevent the separation of the colonies from the mother country.

In the 1820s and 1830s men like Robert Baldwin in Upper Canada and Joseph Howe in Nova Scotia had been promoting responsible government as the answer to the political problems of the British North American colonies, but this not appear to have been Morris's solution to the "great mass of discontent" that existed there. His recommendation for Newfoundland was a separation of the Council into executive and legislative branches, the latter to be elective rather than appointed by the Governor. In arguing that the only way to make the Legislative Council responsive to public opinion was to make it elective, he concurred with the Upper Canada rebels and with Charles James Fox, who had advocated such a measure in 1790. Morris himself had argued for a Legislative Council elected by the people as early as 1828. Notwithstanding his previous comments in favour of elective Councils, Morris said he now tended to prefer the plan of the colonial secretary, Lord Goderich, for a consolidation of the two legislative bodies, i.e. the Council and the Assembly, into a single

House, with three officials of the Crown meeting with the elected members. Goderich (Frederick John Robinson) specified that these should be the colonial secretary, the attorney-general, and the chief officer of the customs. This proposal had been made to Governor Cochrane on July 27, 1832, and had been hastily rejected in 1833 by both the Council and the House of Assembly. Morris admitted that the Assembly "now think very differently on that head." One of his grievances now was that representative institutions had been granted to Newfoundland too late. "Free and new institutions were granted to an old country," he wrote. "What should have been done centuries ago is only now commencing."³⁶

In December, 1838, the Chamber of Commerce of St. John's sent a petition to the Queen to complain of the proceedings of the Assembly.³⁷ The members of the House the Chamber viewed as "mainly persons of little property, hardly any education, and no standing in society." The Chamber accused the House of exercising "an unlimited power," of forcing out Boulton, "a most admirable and experienced Justice," of an alliance with the Upper Canada rebels, and of patronage, nepotism, and peculation. It was critical of the "coercive" political role assumed by the Roman Catholic clergy in elections, and accused the Assembly of atrocious and illegal conduct in their treatment of "a certain medical gentleman," i.e., Kielley. They decried the granting of representative government, saying it had been conferred "in

an evil hour." They prayed for the abrogation of the legislature, and requested instead an administration consisting of a governor and an appointed Council. This petition was followed in February by a similar one from the merchants of Conception Bay. The autumn of 1838 had already seen the merchants of Liverpool, Poole, and Bristol petitioning for a solution to the island's problems.

Morris attempted a refutation of these charges and a defense of the House in the 1839 pamphlet entitled To the Marquis of Normanby. While he dismissed most of the charges advanced by the Chamber of Commerce, he could not, he said, deny that the influence of the Roman Catholic clergy in Newfoundland was considerable. However, he denied that they used coercion to exert political sway. "As a Roman Catholic," he declared, "I boldly assert that it is not the people who follow the priests but the priests who follow the people in political matters." He admitted that the "only clear and tangible charge" against the Assembly was the regrettable Kielley-Carson affair. "It is to be lamented," he wrote, "that the House of Assembly should have found it necessary in defence of their privileges to act as they did." He added that "after taking the first step, it was difficult for them to recede." As for the kind of government requested by the Chamber, Morris denounced it as "despotic" and "the most objectionable government that could be inflicted on a free British colony."³⁸

In presenting the petition of the Chamber of Commerce to the House of Lords on April 26, 1839, Lord Aberdeen (George Hamilton Gordon) referred to "the wretched and distracted" state of the colony. "He was not," he said, "ready to support the prayer for abolition of the Legislature, but he thought there were ample grounds for an enquiry, and that no remedy could be expected from the Government ... He said that he would not enquire into the motives of those who had introduced this constitutional experiment, but he was sure they must now wish to amend it."³⁹ Aberdeen's comments vexed Morris and provoked a further response in the 1839 pamphlet A Short Reply to Earl Aberdeen. He said all Aberdeen's charges about "a tyrannical House," a "society in chaos," and a country "verging on rebellion" constituted "one tissue of falsehood and misrepresentation." He implied that Aberdeen had been led astray by the "calumnies" of the petitioners. He argued that if the charges were true, the late colonial secretary (i.e., Lord Glenelg) ought to have been charged with a gross dereliction of duty.⁴⁰

Shortly after the publication of these last two pamphlets by Morris, another pamphlet, printed in London and signed "A Colonist," appeared in circulation. It was entitled A Letter to the Most Noble the Marquis of Normanby, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, in reply to the statements of a "Member of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland" (London, 1839). It was reprinted in the St.

John's Times on August 21, 1839, and consisted principally of a personal attack on Morris. Morris, the author said, was a man "naturally of a kind disposition, and of ordinary abilities, but of no education." He was "inordinately vain," his pamphlets were "effusions" written in a "boasting style of bravado." Morris must have known the full extent of the Roman Catholic clergy's participation in the political affairs of the colony, contended the author, since Morris was obliged to humble himself to the present bishop's influence in getting elected to the House. On July 3, 1839, the St. John's Times reprinted an article from The Liverpool Mail also condemning Morris's letter to Aberdeen as "a bare-faced and impudent attempt to imbue the people of England with false impressions relative to the conduct and motives of the Popish party in the Island of Newfoundland."

In June, 1840, a by-election was held in St. John's to fill the seat vacated by Morris, who had been elevated to the Council. The seat was contested by the merchant James Douglas, who was a Scottish Presbyterian liberal and "firm supporter of Catholic rights."⁴¹ He was nominated by Kent, Nugent, and Morris's second cousin, Laurence O'Brien.⁴² In a surprising move Bishop Fleming urged O'Brien to declare himself for election, and Kent and Nugent subsequently shifted their support to O'Brien, who was elected, said Winton, because of the machinations of "wily and cunning priests." There was by now a growing body of independent

Catholics who were not afraid to ignore the dictates of their bishop, and they, along with Carson, Parsons, and others, supported Douglas as the superior candidate. The split between the rival Catholic groups led to tension and violence, and clearly indicated that the solidarity of the reform party was in jeopardy. The election riots which took place in Conception Bay, also in 1840, in which both candidates were Roman Catholic and belonged to the reform party, were also damaging.

Ever since the Kielley-Carson affair and the campaign against Boulton, there had been mounting opposition to the reformers and a strengthening of the mercantile case against the Assembly. A British enquiry into the state of the colony resulted in a decision to suspend the constitution of 1832. The enquiry was conducted in a hasty and informal manner. The Newfoundland delegation appointed by the Assembly failed to reach England before the enquiry was concluded on May 25. On August 12, 1842, a bill calling for "the abolition of the Legislative Council and the establishment of a single chamber of twenty-five members, ten of them nominated by the Crown," received royal assent.⁴³ Thus began "the peculiar constitutional experiment" of the amalgamated legislature, which would last until 1848.⁴⁴ As the colony awaited the restoration of its former constitution in 1848, Kent began actively promoting the cause of responsible government, having no doubt been encouraged by the recent establishment

of that form of government in two of the mainland colonies of British North America. The struggle to lead Newfoundland into responsible government, begun by Parsons in the Patriot as early as 1839, was not successfully concluded until 1855.

Throughout the 1840s, the island was beset by a series of disasters. On June 9, 1846, 12,000 of the 19,000 inhabitants of St. John's were rendered homeless by a devastating fire that reduced the population to great distress and crushing poverty.⁴⁵ A partial failure of the fishery, a destructive gale, and a potato blight in the fall of 1846 added further to the island's misery. The government tried to alleviate the condition of the destitute by doling out cornmeal, without which, wrote a Bay de Verde merchant, "hundreds would have died of starvation ere this."⁴⁶ In June, 1847, Governor Gaspard Le Marchant (governor, 1847-52) implied that he was being urged to appeal to the British government to alleviate the distress.⁴⁷

In 1847 Morris wrote his last pamphlet, A Short Review of Newfoundland. It consisted of three letters addressed to the colonial secretary, Earl Grey, who, as the former Lord Howick and parliamentary undersecretary, had helped to prepare the Newfoundland constitution of 1832. Morris's object was to attract imperial attention to the anomalous position in which the British fisheries of Newfoundland had been placed by the competition of foreigners, as well as to "the unwise and impolitic neglect of the settlement and

colonization of Britain's most valuable transatlantic colony."

His discussion of the fisheries contained little that was new; once again he railed about "ruinous" French treaties, the "injurious" bounties of the French and Americans, and the growing naval supremacy of England's rivals. He doubted whether the treaties would lead to any kind of lasting peace, and urged the British to rectify their past neglect of Newfoundland by allowing the French and Americans free entry into the island's bays and coasts if they, in return, would abandon their system of bounties.

On the subject of colonization, he said that Newfoundland failed to develop normally because it did not receive the fostering care and encouragement afforded to all the other colonies. Until 1792, he claimed, "it was a penal offence for a British subject to reside in Newfoundland or to turn up a clod of earth." The fishing admirals drove the inhabitants from their houses and fishing rooms, women were banished, and the early merchants and adventurers amassed great fortunes in Newfoundland and then departed, investing none of their wealth in the country where it had been realized and leaving behind no lasting improvements or benefits. If Newfoundland had been treated like the other British colonies, he argued, if settlement and agriculture had been encouraged, if her fishing rights had not been bartered away, if she had received "just a tithe of what has been expended in Canada," she would this day be "the most wealthy, the most populous, and

the most powerful colony in North America." He complained that England had allotted great sums to colonies which repaid her by becoming independent states or by joining the American federation. "Devoted, neglected, much injured Newfoundland" was always passed over; and yet, despite England's ill-treatment, she had always remained loyal. The whole of Morris's suggestions for the colonization of Newfoundland were contained in "the simple proposition of granting a loan to Newfoundland for the opening and making of roads, and the construction of bridges." Later in the pamphlet he specified a sum of £40,000 to promote the fishery so as to prevent its falling into the hands of the French and Americans, and as a means of sustaining themselves.

It was somewhat anachronistic for Morris to be talking in 1847 about schemes for colonizing and settling the island. He could not have been unaware of the emerging fight for responsible government that was gathering momentum in the colony, yet his only concession to the topic was to say that "many able statesmen and patriots have recommended separation of the colonies from the Mother Country." but that if England were to comply, "she would surrender all her fisheries" and "it will be a sign of the decline of her maritime supremacy, and of the transfer of it to that ambitious American Republic."⁴ Responsible government did not find an advocate in Morris who, on a number of occasions, declared that he had spent a lifetime "cementing the connection" between England and the

colony. Consequently, the pamphlet was composed of arguments of little relevance to the political discussions of the day. He attributed Newfoundland's failure to gain prosperity, population, and wealth, not to the recent natural and commercial disasters, but to Britain's protracted neglect of the colony's fisheries and her continuing indifference to colonization and settlement.

CHAPTER 3

HOW MORRIS ARGUED

Throughout history many words have been used to define "rhetoric" -- e.g., oratory, eloquence, elocution, persuasion, and propaganda. Some have carried with them connotations of esteem; others have been used contemptuously. In ancient Greece and Rome language was thought to assume three main aims: literary (expressive), persuasive (rhetorical), and the pursuit of truth (dialectical). In the classical tradition, rhetoric meant the art of persuasion and the ability to move the emotions of one's listeners by the astonishing power of eloquence. In the Middle Ages declamatory speech fell into disuse, and dialectic, with its emphasis on "definition, disputation, and determination," came to be a much more pervasive force. The Renaissance witnessed a resurgence of the Greek and Roman ideals, and eloquence was reasserted. Despite its varied meanings, the term "rhetoric" has been most often used to apply to a study of persuasion.

The purpose to which Morris put language in his political pamphlets of the nineteenth century was persuasion. Kinneavy has defined persuasion as "that kind of discourse which is primarily focused on the decoder [listener] and attempts to elicit from him a specific action or emotion or conviction."

This kind of rhetoric relies heavily on personal appeal, seeking adherence through emotional biases. The listener is as important as the reality being expounded on. Following in the Aristotelian tradition, the speaker concerns himself with "apparent proof," the "approximately true," and "seeming probability."¹

An exacting dialectician Morris was not, but he understood his role as rhetor and he knew the views of those he was addressing. Since ends rather than means were of the utmost importance, he relied on arguments which were expedient though often contradictory, and resorted to a variety of rhetorical devices and strategies as they suited his purpose. This chapter will examine the major characteristics of Morris's rhetoric, his pivotal arguments, and the rhetorical devices he employed in his efforts to persuade administrators in the colonial office and elsewhere, and readers generally, of the validity of his arguments.

As a public speaker Morris seems to have been perceived as the Irish orator at his best -- sarcastic, fluent, flattering, and witty. An entry in the Public Ledger for October 25, 1838, referred to his witty and humorous speech-making during which audiences in the gallery of the Assembly were convulsed with laughter. However, it must be remembered that only one of the pamphlets outlined in Chapter 2 was ever delivered as a speech; the rest were intended to be read. It is frequently forgotten that not only speeches but

everything written is addressed to an audience, a fact to be mindful of as we examine the nature and purpose of Morris's rhetoric in his pamphlet literature.

The pamphlets of the 1820s in particular are remarkable for Morris's attempts to establish himself as a credible spokesman for the colony. This is an aspect of his rhetorical strategy that strikes the reader quickly: his effort to gain the reader's confidence in him as an arguer. Morris was not a man of any considerable formal education, yet he appears to have been well-read. He tried to establish his credibility as a spokesman, in part, by rather self-conscious use of literary allusions. In Observations on Newfoundland, Morris pledged himself as an eyewitness to the levelling of new and repaired homes in the area of St. John's through the "capricious mandates" of the governors of the past eighteen years. He borrowed a phrase from King Lear -- "the pelting of the pitiless storm" -- to evoke sympathy for the colony's inhabitants who, he said, were denied permission to build. Quoting from Hamlet, he threatened to "tell the secrets of the prison-house" and "a tale unfold" unless some redress was made.² In Remarks on the State of Newfoundland Morris declared that institutions for promoting religion and education should "like Caesar's wife be beyond all suspicion," and that religious bigotry should be consigned to oblivion, to the "tomb of all the Capulets."³ He also quoted from Alexander Pope's Essay on Man (1734). In describing the "good Bishop

O'Donnel" Morris said he possessed "as much of the milk of human kindness" as any man that lived, quoting a line from Shakespeare's Macbeth. He compared O'Donnel as well to the village preacher eulogized by Oliver Goldsmith in his poem The Deserted Village (1770).⁴ In discrediting the statements made about Newfoundland by a Poole merchant, Morris, in his 1828 pamphlet, concluded that the author must have been like the Dutchman Rip Van Winkle, "in a profound dose" for the past seventeen years, to have remained unaware of the progress that had occurred in the colony.⁵ In 1839, when the Newfoundland constitution seemed in danger of being suspended Morris wrote in his Short Reply to Earl Aberdeen that "I may say, I sat by its cradle; and indeed it would be to me a bitter day if I should live to follow its hearse," echoing a sentiment expressed by Henry Grattan in a speech on the Catholic question in 1805.⁶

In addition, the pamphlets are studded with allusions to Greek mythology -- e.g. Promethean fire, the thunder of Jove, Scylla and Charybdis, and the Stygian lake.⁷ In ridiculing the folly of having the British government legislate for local affairs, Morris said it operated like "the persecution of Perceustas: -- 'if too short, stretch it -- if too long, lop it,'" a reference to the mythical innkeeper who thus ensured that all his guests would fit their beds. He declared that the fledgling legislators of a representative government in Newfoundland, if guided by the beacon of the British

constitution, would have little need for a Solon or Lycurgus. Nor need they fear the "cruelty of a Draco or the tyranny of a Decemvir."⁸ In 1847 in A Short Review of Newfoundland Morris likened the "selfish, heartless, mercantile monopoly" which had allegedly held sway over Newfoundland for three hundred years to the Draconian code -- "these laws may be said to be written in blood."⁹ This use of allusion, reference, and quotation may be viewed as an attempt by Morris to create an interlocutory confidence, to earn for himself the attributes of a man of refinement and learning, and in so doing to render himself deserving of the esteem of his listener.

Keeping in mind Aristotle's dictum that "it is to persons of good character that the hearer is most apt to pay attention," it is little wonder that every speaker seeks to establish his own competence, impartiality, and good character.¹¹ Morris fully understood the value of this. In 1827 he wrote: "I may be permitted to state that I am a merchant carrying on business at Newfoundland and that I am deeply interested in the prosperity of the trade." Apparently he saw himself as a different species of merchant from the "monied monopolists" whom he never ceased to upbraid in his writings. In the same pamphlet he gleefully recounted an anecdote about an M.P. in England whom he once bested in an argument about the purpose of roads in Newfoundland. Clearly Morris wished to distance himself from those merchants who, upon amassing great fortunes in Newfoundland, immediately

retired to their country seats in the west of England without ever contributing to the internal development of the colony. He saw himself -- or at least pictured himself -- as a resident merchant, as one committed to improving life in the colony, even though he in fact purchased a large estate in Waterford and lived in Ireland for a five year period. However, the fact that Morris returned to Newfoundland and passed his last eighteen years in public service is evidence of his enduring interest in the welfare of the colony.

Morris was as well an untiring advocate of the agricultural potential of the island. He had purchased a ninety-two acre property in St. John's in 1825. In Remarks on the State of Newfoundland he modestly noted, "I have got a small estate in the neighbourhood of St. John's, part of which I farm."¹¹ This enabled him to adopt a confident stance and the convincing tone of someone who knew whereof he wrote. This kind of conditioning of his reader may have helped to render believable some of Morris's more outrageous assertions on behalf of the Newfoundland soil. Again, in 1839 when he wished to counteract the charge of "illegal activities" brought against the Newfoundland House of Assembly by the St. John's Chamber of Commerce, Morris expediently pledged himself as "magistrate and a member of the grand jury" to the veracity of his own rebuttal.¹²

Carson once said of Morris that "self-trumpeting and blarney" were two of the most noticeable features of his

literary productions.¹³ In truth, the pamphlets are replete with references to Morris's own accomplishments, to the prominent role he had taken from his youth in the public affairs of the colony, to his efforts to bring about free institutions, to his copious writings on the subject of Newfoundland, and to his personal sacrifices of life and property to secure the constitution of 1824. How are we to interpret this? Demosthenes considered that the praising of oneself in public could be a profitable practice if not motivated by vanity. If used to promote communion and to gain adherence to one's arguments, then justification could be found.¹⁴ To all sophists, it is the end not the means that is important. Perhaps that is why Morris did not shrink from gasconade on the one hand and mendacious self-effacement on the other. Affected ignorance or incompetence, together with apologetic remarks and statements that played down his rhetorical skills, may be seen as attempts by Morris to present himself as a moderate man, or to save himself from the accusation of using rhetorical devices and thereby of being insincere. Consequently in his pamphlets he would refer to "his humble effort," his "crude opinions," his "limited abilities," and his "too intemperate" language.¹⁵ In Arguments on Constitutional Government he wrote: "I have expressed opinions in the course of this letter which a more cautious man possibly would have thought it prudent to restrain." They were uttered, he said, in the exuberance of

his feeling. Such protestations may have been helpful in creating an impression of sincerity.

Morris did not neglect the strategy of flattery in the conditioning of his audience. In Arguments on Constitutional Government, addressing Huskisson, he wrote: "without attempting a compliment, I can assure you, Sir, that you are the last man in the empire whom I would attempt to impose on by false reasoning or false facts."¹⁶ He praised Lord Bexley for his generosity in promoting the cause of education in Newfoundland in Remarks on the State of Newfoundland,¹⁷ and in the "Memorial to Lord Glenelg" he apologized for using language not suited to "the dignified individual" he was addressing.¹⁸ In reluctantly opposing the views of Sir John Newport in Six Letters on the Repeal of the Act of Union, Morris said he had always regarded Newport as "a guide that could not mislead him." He had always found him "the able advocate of every liberal and enlightened measure -- the enemy to oppression at home -- the advocate of liberty abroad."¹⁹ He repeatedly extolled England as "the most mighty Government in the World" and as "Mistress of the Oceans." Her laws and institutions were "the greatest of all human blessings."²⁰

Morris knew the ideas and opinions of those he was addressing, and he governed his speech accordingly. Newfoundland, he said, was "a distant and unprotected Colony, depending for its welfare and existence upon the will of a great and powerful nation." He seemed to believe that

avowals of loyalty, submission, and attachment to Britain would attract attention and even reward in imperial circles. In 1827 he wrote that "if, as I hope to be able to prove, [the people of Newfoundland] are a religious and moral people, remarkable for their peaceable demeanour and submission to the Laws and constituted Authorities," this fact should have been a great inducement to the British government to grant them those rights, privileges, and liberal institutions which they were seeking.²¹ Morris undoubtedly sought the favour of his superiors. His obsequious tributes to the benevolence of the monarch and the British government seem to have been offered in prospect of continued and greater concessions.

Conditioning the audience, then, is a prerequisite for effective persuasion. Perhaps Morris's most notable attempt to do this was his use of argument from authority. The prestige argument, as it is also called by Perelman, enlists the opinions of eminent persons in support of a thesis.²²

In Arguments on Constitutional Government Morris wrote:

"let skeptics consult the opinions of some of the best writers and greatest men of England, France, Holland, and America on the great importance of Newfoundland, and if, afterwards, they say that I am in error, they must acknowledge that I have erred in right noble good company."²³ While the effectiveness of such an argument depends upon the opinion

held of the authority as a man of honour, the prestige argument can help to influence an audience.

The image which Morris consistently brought to the fore of a misunderstood, misrepresented, and neglected Newfoundland he derived from John Reeves's book, History of the Government of the Island of Newfoundland. Reeves was a London lawyer who had arrived in Newfoundland in 1791 as the colony's first chief justice. His History of Newfoundland was completed in April 1793 and was "the first comprehensive account of the Island's past."²⁴ It was also, argued noted historian Keith Matthews, "the first published identification of the West Country merchants with villainy."²⁵ Reeves's book became the definitive authority for Morris's interpretation of Newfoundland's past history and formed the basis of his arguments concerning the colony's failure to prosper. Concerning Reeves, he wrote: "I will quote the words of one whose wisdom, learning, and high character must give weight to his opinions and assertions;" and again, "These are not altogether my own opinions; they are also the opinions of one whose authority will not be questioned by your Lordship."²⁶

In general, there is to be found in Morris's ideas more of repetition than any abundance of originality. Many of the arguments advanced by Morris in his pamphlets of the 1820s were first adumbrated by Carson in his two tracts of 1812 and 1813, but aside from a reference to him in the 1827 pamphlet as "an individual to whom Newfoundland is indebted for her

agricultural and other improvements more than to any other," there is little recognition paid him in Morris's writings.²⁷ Carson was much too vitriolic to be considered a moderate man by the colonial office. Consequently there was perhaps little to be gained by citing him as an authority.

Morris consistently argued that Newfoundland was the most valuable branch of England's trade, and he found weighty support for his views in the speeches of Edmund Burke. Like Burke, Morris exhorted Britain to adopt a system of "wise and salutary neglect" towards the colonies and to let the colonists legislate for themselves in local affairs. In 1838 Morris was critical of "the foolish presumption of men, three thousand miles distant attempting to tamper with the local concerns of the colonists." It was England's ancient policy, he said, to leave local concerns to the colonists themselves, and as a result the colonies "advanced in wealth, population, civilization, and power, with a rapidity unparalleled; and, what is more to my present object, they [the Elective Councils of these colonies] kept the colonies under their rule, firmly and devotedly attached to the English government."²⁸ A lack of liberality, Morris warned, would lead to disaffection. In 1847 he argued that if the people of Newfoundland "were allowed to manage their local affairs in their own way, if the parent Government pursued towards them, that system of 'wise and salutary neglect'" extended to other American colonies, Newfoundland would have

become wealthy and powerful, and, unlike the American colonies, she would "most certainly have remained united to the parent state." Morris set out to convince the colonial office of the naval ascendancy, commercial profit, and political strength that England might derive from Newfoundland, but he would never, he admitted, put forth opinions of his own "until he found them sanctioned by the highest authorities," by "Chatham, Burke, Fox, Pitt and Huskisson." These were "the greatest men, the most able ministers, the most profound legislators and philosophers whose names adorn the pages of English History."²⁹ Occasionally, though, Morris did rely on his own ipse dixit as sufficient authority for his statements. For example, he said of the country's revenue in 1828 that "I believe it would be quite adequate" to support a local legislature; and again, "I state as a fact ... that the colony is a stepping-stone to the United States of America."³⁰

The themes which Morris continually brought to the fore in the 1820s were the need for a local legislature and the agricultural potential of the island. The most important idea he advanced up to 1832 was that the granting of a legislature would bring prosperity to the colony. As late as 1838 he would write: "I was the second person that became an advocate for a representative government in Newfoundland; to obtain it was one of the great objects of my life."³¹ One can see even in his arguments on this pivotal idea, however, that his rhetoric was often characteriz-

by contradictions, inconsistencies, and specious reasoning. The image of the colony which Morris evoked in his pamphlets sometimes varied with his purpose in each. As has been noted, he wavered between two views of Newfoundland. Whenever he wished to commend the colony, he would remind the colonial office of Newfoundland's role in creating England's maritime greatness, of the "eldorado" of her fisheries, of her harbours, which he called "the safest and finest in the world," of her climate -- "the most healthy in the world" -- of "the proximity of Newfoundland to the parent state,"³² and of her "millions of acres" capable of supporting "millions of inhabitants."³³ The other view he occasionally advanced was of seeing Newfoundland in "a state of beggary and want,"³⁴ still languishing from three hundred years of mercantile despotism, and withering for want of a local legislature to encourage and promote internal improvements. In Observations on Newfoundland, Morris disregarded the progress that had been made in the colony and misrepresented the true state of affairs because he wished to show that wealth, population, and improvement were contingent upon the fostering care of a local government. Outlining the progress that had taken place without such government clearly would not help his cause. In Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, when he wished to counteract the lurid aspersions cast upon the character of the people of Newfoundland, Morris evoked a rather paradisiacal image of a colony whose present state

had assumed a "cheering and pleasing prospect," where the inhabitants "loved one another," and where housebreaking and street or highway robbery were crimes unheard of. But in the same pamphlet he complained about Newfoundland's lack of roads!

He also made it a grievance that the two thousand miles of ocean separating the colony from the parent government made it impossible for England to legislate effectively in local matters. He charged the British government with indifference towards the concerns of "a few people residing two thousand miles distant, of whom they know -- I would almost be inclined to say, for whom they care -- nothing." Paradoxically, in the same pamphlet he begged England to attend to the growing population of Newfoundland -- "upwards of 100,000 British subjects with manners as much British as if they were one people." A number of inconsistencies like this one jar the reader of the pamphlets of the 1820s, yet Morris seemed unabashed about "flinging himself rashly into the field of conflicting opinions," to use his own phrase.³⁵

In 1828 Morris wrote that the country was in a state of "useless waste" and the people reduced to "beggary and want," all for the lack of a local legislature. Yet lest anyone should think that the residents were rude and unfit for representative institutions, Morris described the wondrous metamorphosis that had taken place once the inhabitants had renounced the hold the West Country merchants had over them.

Typically he was vague about when this actually took place, but he was pleased to report in the same pamphlet that the colony had miraculously become a land of plenty and independence, boasting churches, schools, enlightened judges, and accomplished people enjoying the opulence of fine wines and sumptuous foods in their richly furnished homes. Clearly, he said, the colony could afford the expenses of a local government, since "the residents are rapidly increasing in wealth."³⁶ This kind of unwitting paradox is characteristic of Morris's method of argumentation. It is a further example of the "field of conflicting opinions" which he himself was wont to create. While the above argument detracts from his major premise that a country could not make much progress in wealth, population, and internal improvement without a local government, it is also an unsatisfactory attempt to answer two serious objections which had been raised to the granting of representative institutions in Newfoundland: namely, that the colony could ill afford the expenses of a civil government, and that there were too few qualified men of sufficient ability and integrity to form a representative body.

Morris monomaniacally pursued the idea of representative government throughout the pamphlets of the 1820s, connecting it with everything from moral rectitude to agricultural advancement. He blamed, he praised, he fawned, and he threatened. He blamed the lack of a local government for the colony's failure to prosper and for the massive exodus

of "forty to fifty thousand" of Newfoundland's best seamen to the United States over the past twenty years.³⁷ He clearly looked on that "haughty republic" with a jaundiced eye.³⁸ He claimed that America would one day dispute with England her dominion over the seas, and accused that "rising power" of "clandestinely spiriting away" from Newfoundland the skilled seamen who found themselves without a means of support in the colony. These were British subjects, Morris warned, who would contribute to the naval ascendancy of America. His hostility towards America continued unabated throughout his pamphlets. The extent of this bitterness is well illustrated by a reference in the 1847 pamphlet to "the swarms of American ships and shallops that infest [our] shores."³⁹ He clearly observed their presence as a pestilence. Morris usually attempted to convince the colonial office that Newfoundland was the most faithful and the most valuable of all his Majesty's colonies, and therefore deserving of a local legislature. On a few occasions he resorted to threats. To illustrate, two examples may be cited, one from the 1827 pamphlet and the second from Arguments on Constitutional Government:

- 1) Then before it be too late let [Newfoundland] be placed under the care of its natural guardians.
- 2) Newfoundland is a neglected country and the injury is not alone felt by that neglected country, but it also reverts back upon the parent state and is in its consequences much more ruinous and

alarming than, I fear, I shall be able
to make you, Sir believe.⁴⁰

His argument here was that Newfoundland's able fishermen were transferring the advantages of their experience and knowledge to the Americans, to prosecute their fishery and to man their navy. He implied that Britain was contributing indirectly to the naval and commercial power of her rival. The remedy, he said, was to make settlement in Newfoundland desirable by encouraging the internal resources of the country. He argued that this would be best achieved by giving the inhabitants the power to legislate their local affairs.

Morris's argument that England did not have the time or interest to attend to Newfoundland's local concerns was in fact a good argument. In 1827 Morris cited an example "to prove the absurdity of legislating for a distant colony without a knowledge of its localities." Following the destructive fires of 1816 and 1817, a memorial requesting the British parliament to provide regulations for the rebuilding of the town was forwarded to England. Two or three years later, said Morris, the act of parliament arrived, but by then a great part of the town had been rebuilt in contravention to the provisions of the act.⁴¹ (Later it would be politically expedient for Morris to minimize this distance and to speak of Newfoundland's proximity to the parent government -- "separated not more than ten days sail.")⁴² Edmund Burke

had already acknowledged the obstacle of distance in his Speech on Moving the Resolutions For Conciliation with the Colonies (1775): "Three thousand miles of ocean lie between you [the British government] and them [the American colonists]. No contrivance can prevent the effect of this distance in weakening government. Seasons and months pass between the order and the execution; and the want of a speedy explanation is enough to defeat a whole system."⁴³

Burke had been speaking of England's relationship with the American colonies; in Morris's hands distance became an argument applicable, not only to Newfoundland, but to Ireland and India as well. The Public Ledger for April 30, 1830, reprinted a letter from Morris to the editor of the Weekly Waterford Chronicle, in which he ridiculed "the farce of having 24 men in Leadenhall St., London, invested with the government of India," at a distance of eight or ten thousand miles and with a most profound ignorance of the country as one of the "grossest absurdities ever to be adopted in the misgovernment of a country." In Six Letters on the Repeal of the Act of Union Morris criticized the English parliament for supporting all the monopolies which had crushed Ireland and inflicted suffering on her people. The British government, he said, was "utterly incompetent" to legislate for Ireland. The point he wished to make was that the British had perversely refused to allow the Irish to govern themselves; this was "an untried experiment."⁴⁴ Similarly, Newfoundland had

become "a theatre of experiments."⁴⁵ In Arguments on Constitutional Government Morris referred to the three kinds of colonial governments outlined by Blackstone in his Commentaries, and quipped that "The sort of Government adopted for Newfoundland is one with which this great constitutional lawyer was either unacquainted or for which he could not devise an appropriate designation."⁴⁶

There was, in Morris's pamphlets, a repetition of phrases as well as of ideas. Whenever he wished to impart some sense of the ultimate in despotism, he would resort to a comparison with Turkish bashaws and Persian satraps. In 1828 he called the surrogate system of Newfoundland "an admirable system with a Persian Satrap or a Turkish Bashaw."⁴⁷ In Six Letters on the Repeal of the Act of Union he blamed British policy in Ireland for stifling public opinion on the question of the repeal of the Union and of appealing to religious prejudices to divide the people. Morris said they were exercising a power "much more consonant to that delegated to a Persian Satrap or a Turkish Bashaw than that which ought to be placed in the hands of a British Peer by a British King."⁴⁸ The satraps and bashaws in Newfoundland history were, of course, the blundering surrogates, tyrannical West Country merchants, and despotic fishing admirals. It is fair to say that there was some substance to Morris's argument on behalf of representative government. However, it is difficult to establish a connection between the acquisition

of a local legislature and the advent of prosperity, and in fact Morris did not demonstrate it.

We turn now to an examination of Morris's second pivotal argument -- the agricultural potential of the island. Morris believed that the fisheries alone could not sustain Newfoundland's population. He well knew that without some auxiliary means of support, settlement was impossible, and that without settlement the kind of government he so ardently extolled would be unnecessary; hence the confluence of his arguments. There is no doubt that Morris's claims on behalf of the Newfoundland soil were greatly exaggerated. He spoke of "millions of uncultivated acres" capable of giving sustenance to "millions of inhabitants." The climate he considered "the most healthy climate in the world." In 1828 he spoke of a climate "possibly more favourable to the health of the human species than most others on the face of the globe."⁴⁹ In 1847 Morris argued that the soil was "generally found to be from one foot to three -- composed of decayed vegetable matter."⁵⁰ Relying on his own ipse dixit, he stated "without fear of contradiction that in no one instance where labour, skill and industry have been used in cultivating the soil have they failed in amply repaying the husbandman's toil." Perhaps Morris felt it necessary to counteract the erroneous impressions that were circulated regarding the colony. In Remarks on the State of Newfoundland he referred scornfully to "those who are in the habit of associating Newfoundland

with eternal frost and snow, and know nothing but that the dogs are excellent."⁵¹

It has been said that "the orator has something about him of the prophet, something of the actor, [and] a touch of the charlatan,"⁵² and there is something of all three apparent in Morris as he set out to repudiate the charges against the severity of Newfoundland's climate, her poverty, and the sterility of her soil. There is a good bit of the storyteller in Morris too, and this was primarily the technique he employed in his arguments on behalf of Newfoundland's agricultural potential; he relied on anecdote and optimistic predictions. In 1827 he cited the example of Messrs. William and Henry Thomas (his neighbours) who had received a land grant of 200 acres, and "tho' they only commenced clearing it in October last there will be fifty acres of it under cultivation this present year."⁵³ This hopeful statistic with its emphasis on what will be as opposed to what is or has been, must be contrasted with the labours of John O'Brien. John Mannion relates that it took O'Brien three decades to clear fourteen acres of densely wooded land near St. John's, using primitive tools, the only ones available to him: "Generally the natural soil was no more than six inches deep, and it took a generation of careful husbandry and intensive fertilizing to bring it to a satisfactory state." Furthermore, the O'Briens "typified the experience of the Irish who came to St. John's in the early nineteenth century

and made a living off the land."⁵⁴ Morris always contended that agriculture had to be developed as an auxiliary to the fishery. In support of this, he liked to recount the story of an old man from Staffordshire who was reduced to misery and distress as a result of the fishery having failed. He and his granddaughter procured the means to grow potatoes and "from that hour famine and necessity have been strangers to his humble cottage." From then on, said Morris, they could both be seen "basking in the sunshine of comfort and of plenty, with a moral certainty of never again suffering those dreadful calamities to which they had so nearly fallen victims."⁵⁵ This oracular pronouncement makes good use of emotionalism, but it is not really conclusive in proof. It remains as just an isolated, perhaps even fictional incident, too fanciful to be credible.

Morris was unrelenting in his efforts to combat arguments that the soil and climate posed insurmountable obstacles to cultivation. In his enthusiasm he clearly overstated his case. He argued: "that the soil is capable of great improvement is evident from the fact that it has been improved."⁵⁶ He submitted that this was "the best argument that could be adduced"⁵⁷ on behalf of the Newfoundland soil. This is certainly optimistic, but again it is not really convincing. It is tantamount to claiming that a poor man is capable of becoming rich simply because he is now earning enough to keep body and soul together. This very well may follow, but

it is by no means "evident" that it will. But perhaps this sort of argument does not depend on logic at all for its success. Adherence is achieved not by any process of ratiocination, but through psychological manipulation. When Morris summarily stated that "no person with a scintilla of common sense combined with common honesty"⁵⁸ would dispute the advantages of agricultural development, or that anyone with a "ray of reason"⁵⁹ would see the truth of what he said, he was appealing to the self-evident as his authority. Although lacking in real proof, this strategy gains adherence if only because the self-evident (or what is said to be self-evident) is something to which every normal mind is inclined to yield.

The promissory nature of Morris's rhetoric is illustrated in his A Short Reply to Earl Aberdeen when he said: "Agriculture has improved, cultivation has increased; the annual agricultural produce is now worth more than £170 p.a. In twenty years it will be five times that amount."⁶⁰ Once again he was playing the clairvoyant. However, the year before, in 1838, he made it a grievance that agriculture had not been developed in the colony. In 1828 he was forced to admit that "the causes which operated in the early stages of the fishery to prevent the cultivation of the soil have long since passed away;" but Morris refused to let them go.⁶¹ These resurrected phantoms served a purpose. As late as 1847 he was still talking about "the barbarous prohibitions" to agriculture

which had impeded Newfoundland's progress in wealth and population.⁶²

The use of careful omission is another important dimension of this discussion. Naturally Morris advanced only those arguments which were advantageous to his cause. Consequently, there was nothing to be gained from mentioning the official English settlements of Guy (1610), Sir William Vaughan (1617), or Calvert (1621), all of which had foundered. They failed for a number of reasons, one of which was their failure to realize that the conventional plantation with an agricultural base "was not feasible in a northern country with a primarily fishing economy."⁶³ To this day farming has never been a major pursuit in Newfoundland. Coaxing vegetables from stony, shallow soil is a challenge. When Governor Prescott retired from the colony in 1841 he wrote that "an uncongenial climate and rocky soil" rendered Newfoundland undesirable for emigration.⁶⁴ Morris refused to believe this and rightly so. His exaggerated claims for agricultural advancement, and his buoyant proclamation of a soon to commence new era of prosperity, continued to echo through his writings. In 1847 he still insisted that "in all probability, before another quarter of a century passes over the heads of the present generation the agricultural capital of Newfoundland with other products of industry will constitute many times the amount of any capital invested in the fisheries.

One of the most interesting aspects of Morris's rhetoric was his reluctance to define the enemy. He felt on safe ground when he was denouncing something impersonal and marginal; for example, "a system." In 1847 he praised Chief Justice Forbes for exposing and condemning "the system which placed ignorant and incompetent men as Judges to dispense the abstruse science of the law." He magnanimously absolved the surrogates Buchan and Leigh from any "malicious intention" in the 1820 whipping of Butler and Landergan; "the system, not the men, was to blame."⁶⁵ There are no scurrilous attacks on individuals in Morris's pamphlets. He called individuals to account, but then he let them off the hook. In Remarks on the State of Newfoundland he wrote: "My Lord Casterlereagh when concluding these treaties ... was not aware of the disastrous consequences that were to flow from [them]."⁶⁶ This is how Morris accounted for the British government's folly in sacrificing the Newfoundland fisheries to the French and the Americans. In like manner, Chief Justice Boulton "was not conscious of the manifold evils and sufferings he brought upon the poor planters and fishermen of Newfoundland."⁶⁷ Having censured the cruelty and capricious mandates of the governors in Newfoundland in Observations on Newfoundland, he then retreated to a more moderate position by saying that the late governors (since 1806) were "humane and benevolent men" who had been led astray by "certain individuals not possessing a single distinct idea abstracted

from their own interest."⁶⁸ He permitted those individuals to remain anonymous. Similarly in 1827, he wrote that "in denouncing the conduct of Surrogates in Newfoundland I wish to be particularly understood as alluding to other persons of dubious character appointed to fill that office and not to the gentlemen of the Navy." This partial exoneration of the naval surrogates is hard to swallow after repeated objections to them as "ignorant and incompetent men." In 1847 he blamed "wicked ministers" for severing the American colonies from British dominion, and in 1831 he criticized the advisors of His Majesty's representative in Ireland for igniting religious prejudices there. Morris might have blamed the ministers of the Crown directly but he was extremely reluctant to take such a risk. Inveighing against the fallibility and folly of the mortals who manipulated the machinery of government was one thing; denouncing the beacon of British justice, the blessing of English laws, and her "matchless constitution" seemed reprehensible to him.

However, he came close. In 1827 he wrote that "every act hitherto enacted for the local purposes of Newfoundland has most miserably failed in its object,"⁶⁹ and in 1831 he accused the English parliament of supporting all the monopolies which had crushed Ireland. In 1847 he asked: "Will it be believed at this time of day that the most enlightened Government of the world gave up her most valuable colony to a few merchants?" However, not wishing to appear too extreme

in his denunciation, he concluded on a more conciliatory note: "The Parent government have acted, though late, generously, wisely, and justly towards Newfoundland."⁷⁰ In Six Letters on the Repeal of the Act of Union he confessed: "No overzeal to support the cause which I conscientiously believe to be a just one shall ever induce me to make unfounded charges against the general Government who, I verily and sincerely believe, to the best of their ability have been since the Union acting with great impartiality towards Ireland."⁷¹ Of course, Morris never relented in his castigation of the West Country merchants and "the heartless withering monopoly" that kept Newfoundland in its "thralldom" for three hundred years. Perhaps these were sufficiently remote and indistinct to serve as a target for his anger.

As previously noted, Morris derived his melodramatic interpretation of Newfoundland's past from John Reeves's book History of Newfoundland. A consideration of a few of the major premises adopted by Morris from Reeves may help us to see how Morris distorted history in order to score rhetorical points. Reeves implied, incorrectly, that the prohibitions against settlement and agriculture approved by the Western Charter and the regulations of 1671 and 1675 had been enforced. In Observations on Newfoundland Morris boldly stated that "the most wanton acts of violence were committed, the houses of the inhabitants were burnt and destroyed, and every other violent means resorted to, to force them from the country."⁷²

It has been pointed out that "no evidence has been produced showing that any person or family was ever evicted from Newfoundland by British authorities acting under the regulations and orders of 1671 and 1675."⁷⁴ Very likely the elusive nature of settlement in Newfoundland's bays and coves made the enforcement of these extreme measures impossible.

In Remarks on the State of Newfoundland Morris extended what he found implied in Reeves and stated that the inhabitants of Newfoundland were not permitted to cultivate the soil or to build houses. In Arguments on Constitutional Government he adopted a more moderate view and wrote that "the restrictions on the improvement of the soil were almost equal to a prohibition" and that residents "might be driven out."⁷⁵ By 1847 he had reverted to his former stance and was once again arguing that "residence within the Colony was made a transportable offence. The cultivation of the soil a felony."⁷⁶ Typically, Morris was vague on the period of Newfoundland's history to which these statements applied. He made as little as possible of the fact that in 1813 Governor Richard Keats (governor, 1813-15) had been instructed to make land grants, and that others before him like Sir Erasmus Gower (governor, 1804-06), and Governors John Holloway (1807-09) and John Duckworth (1810-12) had also granted land for private use. The records show that "in 1813 there were 4,444 'private Houses' in Newfoundland."⁷⁷ Even though statements about the illegality of settlement were no longer:

true, they were useful to Morris because they helped him to explain why Newfoundland had failed to advance in wealth and population.

As for the fishing admirals of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Newfoundland Morris said in 1824: "I shall not detain your Lordship with a disgusting detail of their proceedings; suffice it to say that not one in ten of these Governors and Judges could write their own names." The naval governors who followed, he said, may have desired to improve Newfoundland, but they were impeded by self-seeking advisors and a lack of constitutional authority. The inhabitants, said Morris, "view the Governor, and those in authority under him, merely as persons whose sole object is to make as much as possible by their offices, and then leave the country, if not in a worse, not in a better situation than they found it."⁷⁸ Perhaps Morris was unaware of their proceedings, or else he regarded as prejudicial to his argument the fact that "it was during the regime of the naval governors that the scientific mapping and study of Newfoundland were commenced, exploration of the interior was encouraged, Labrador was opened up to English enterprise, and efforts were made to protect the dwindling Beothuck population."⁷⁹ At any rate, he made no mention of these accomplishments. Ironically, the earliest request from the colony for some sort of local government came from the naval

governor of the day, Admiral James Gambier (governor, 1802-03), in 1802.

The picture of Newfoundland that emerges from a sequential study of the pamphlet literature shows some variation. Nevertheless, Morris persisted in exploiting past evils and woes, and in representing Newfoundland as repressed, retarded and unappreciated by Britain. After all, this was one way of attracting attention. In 1824 he wrote that "in respect to internal improvements the country is in little better state than it was three hundred years ago."⁸⁰ In 1847 he found Newfoundland "still in a state of almost pristine barbarism, little more advanced in internal improvements than when discovered by Cabot."⁸¹

The familiar theme of Newfoundland oppressed and abused by "mercantile cupidity and monopoly" Morris reinforced by metaphorical language. Fearful of attempts by the new generation of West Country merchants to oppose constitutional government for Newfoundland, Morris in 1828 warned: "they have all the will to keep us in bondage and barbarism ... [but] ... they can no longer bind Newfoundland in chains of worse than feudal despotism." Emancipation from the thralldom of mercantile despotism was close at hand. He asked: "Shall men, who for ages have been their vassals, the blind, helpless, and devoted slaves of their omnipotent will, impiously attempt to shake off the yoke?"⁸² He compared Newfoundland's "unhappy history" of the past three centuries to the injustices

committed in ancient Rome "in her worst days and under the most barbarous of her praetors."⁸³ He sometimes represented Newfoundland as a sick patient subjected to "quackery," dying from "neglect," and languishing for want of an infusion of "a little of the wholesome blood of the Constitution." Another familiar metaphor was of seeing England as "an indulgent parent" freely giving to all her "wandering children" the liberty of forming their "infant governments" on the basis of her own matchless constitution. England had given encouragement and financial support to her other "foundling colonies," even to the "small rock of Bermuda."⁸⁴ Why then had England disowned Newfoundland?

As we have seen, Morris relied upon a variety of techniques to achieve his rhetorical ends. He resorted to overstatement and understatement, calculated omissions, anecdote, the "incontrovertible evidence of facts," metaphor, sarcasm and ridicule, promises, threats, the distortion of history, misrepresentation, emotionalism, and the use of the marginal (and perhaps fictitious) enemy. He could magnify or diminish an issue as it suited his purpose. Morris's penchant for exaggerating the agricultural potential of the colony has been noted, but he could also understate some very real problems. As stated earlier, he attempted in 1828 to reply to a legitimate concern that an assembly in Newfoundland would be almost entirely composed of merchants, by insisting that "the interests of all classes are the same; the prosperity

of the one leads naturally to the prosperity of the other."⁸⁵ However in 1824, he condemned the West Country merchants who "were influenced by the same principles which had invariably governed merchants, in every age and country, to sacrifice every other interest to their own."⁸⁶ "Wouldn't a predominantly mercantile assembly promote their own interests before those of the country?" asked Morris's opponents. "Certainly not!" was Morris's resounding answer. "All the harm they could do would be of a negative quality; they may prevent good but they cannot do evil." A more flimsy and ridiculous argument cannot be imagined. It is doubtful whether Morris was successful in quelling fears in the colony that such an Assembly, decidedly mercantile in character, would not simply be a local version of the West Country hegemony it sought to replace. Again in 1828, in response to an objection that a sufficient number of qualified persons could not be found for such an Assembly Morris feebly retorted that "they wouldn't have any very difficult subjects to legislate on," simply making roads and bridges, encouraging trade and agriculture, and so forth!⁸⁷ Morris adopted the view that representative government would promote the interests of all classes in society, and be mutually beneficial to Newfoundland and England. He argued that any efforts by a local government to improve the fisheries "must, as a matter of course, be equally advantageous to agriculture and every other interest connected with it." Thus he insisted on the paramountcy of

common interests. In 1827 he wrote: "Local government would arouse Newfoundland's dormant energies and at the same time promote the interest of the Mother Country, the merchants and the inhabitants; there are no conflicting interests."⁸⁸ In other words, what is good for the fisherman is good for the merchant, what is good for Newfoundland is good for Britain. These are clearly troublesome arguments when one considers their corollaries.

Morris was not good at answering charges. He tended to sidestep the real issues. In To the Marquis of Normanby he said in response to the charge that the Roman Catholic clergy exerted an "inordinate influence" over the people in political affairs that "It is not my intention to defend the Catholic priests or people of Newfoundland ... The gross character of the charge carries with it its best refutation." Clearly, he had no defence. But Morris could be effective in his use of sarcasm and ridicule to undermine the influence of his opponents. In countering the charge by the Chamber of Commerce of a seditious alliance between the members of the House of Assembly and the rebels of Upper and Lower Canada, Morris mockingly congratulated them on bringing the correspondence to light. If gone undetected, he said, it might "like the Gunpowder Plot, have blown up British power and Protestant ascendancy together."⁸⁹ Thus he diminished the charge and made it risible by assigning it a significance it never had. In 1827 he good-naturedly took exception to a

suggestion by Francis Forbes (a man whose opinions on Newfoundland "deserve the greatest consideration") that the fisheries rested on a rickety foundation since the consumption of fish in Catholic countries was rooted in religious observance. Amused at the idea that the existence of the Newfoundland trade and fisheries depended on the will of the Pope, Morris remarked: "The well-beloved Ferdinand has taken much more effectual means to prevent the consumption of fish in Spain than if the Pope were fulminating bulls for eternity; he has laid a very high import duty on it from 15s to 20s per quintal." Occasionally, his growing impatience at Britain's attitude toward the colony would prompt a sarcastic outburst like the following example from Remarks on the State of Newfoundland: "When two or three of the Judges with their clerks and ministerial officers are wrecked or lost on the coast of Newfoundland, on some stormy November day, it may awaken the attention of Government, and we may possibly then get roads."

In one of earlier pamphlets Morris remarked that "orators, as well as poets are allowed sometimes to take romantic flights."⁹⁰ The following example shows how Morris used coloured language to misrepresent the true state of affairs in hopes of wheedling out of a situation potentially harmful to the liberal candidates. The St. John's Times gave an account of a "mob" which, on October 12, 1836, proceeded west from St. John's to the Waterford Valley where they were harangued

on the forthcoming election by Morris. They returned to the town at 5:30 p.m. with drums beating, fiddles and wind instruments playing, and colours flying. A number of persons associated with the liberal party, including Morris, were charged with disturbing the peace. In "Memorial to Lord Glenelg" Morris recalled this "fine Sunday afternoon in autumn" and conjured up an idyllic scene reminiscent of Christ's sermon on the mount. Strategically downplaying the preponderance of Catholics in attendance, he referred only to "a mere casual meeting" of "a vast number of the townspeople." They had assembled, said Morris, "in a large meadow romantically situated on the bank of a rapid river." "It was not a political speech I made," he said; "my address to the meeting was more in the nature of a sermon, calling the attention of the assembled multitude to the blessings they saw smiling around them." At his request, he said, the inhabitants returned peaceably to their homes "in the same orderly and quiet manner in which they came to the meeting."⁹¹ This example illustrates the use which Morris made of "romantic flights" in his own rhetoric.

In conclusion, the sober realm of dialectic does not appear to have been Morris's strong suit. He seemed to rely more on emotional appeal and psychological manipulation than on conviction through intellectual persuasion. The paucity of rigorous thought and the banality and incompatibility of some of his arguments would seem to have made this a wise

decision. However, he understood his role as rhetor and went to great lengths to establish his own credibility and thereby to confer valuable prestige upon his own opinions and "facts." This is the thinking that lay behind the technique of threatening or promising to tell more, to provide proof if necessary, and to adduce other examples if required. The following examples illustrate this tendency: "I have ample evidence to prove [this], if necessary," "and it is a fact that can be proved," "I could, if necessary, bring such a host of evidence to prove the truth of this statement that the sceptics themselves would believe."⁹² For almost thirty years Morris was unremitting in his efforts to persuade the sceptics and to attract attention to the political and commercial affairs of the colony. What he may have lacked in complexity of ideas and force of argument he made up for, in part, in sincerity and commitment to public causes.

CHAPTER 4

MORRIS AS RHETORICIAN: AN EVALUATION

It may prove instructive in this chapter to compare Morris's rhetoric with that of two other leading political spokesmen of his day -- William Carson and John Valentine Nugent. Morris once referred to himself as one of Carson's "earliest, one of his first disciples;"¹ it is therefore not surprising that the two should concur on many of their major arguments. Morris and Carson both professed to have an unshakable faith in the British constitution, condemned the inhibiting influence of the adventurers and West Country merchants, and extolled the "miraculous power" of a local legislature to produce wealth, population, and internal development in the country. Newfoundland, they predicted, with her strategic position, the richness of her soil, her "salubrious" climate, and her vast natural resources was destined to become "rich, populous and powerful." Her "extensive" fisheries provided "inexhaustible sources of wealth," and if attended to by the British government would contribute to England's naval, commercial, and political supremacy.² It was a rhetoric of grievance, blame, plentitude, quick solution, and promised prosperity.

Here the similarity between Morris and Carson ends. Patrick O'Flaherty has characterized Carson as possessing "a

warfaring spirit" and "a dangerous, extremist tendency."³ Carson held controversial opinions and fearlessly voiced them. He publicly remonstrated with governors, judges, archdeacons, colonial secretaries, enemies, and friends. In an open letter to Boulton, published in the Patriot of December 16, 1837, Carson called the chief justice "an ambitious tyrant" who was guided by "revenge, pride, prejudice, and personal feeling." He rued the day Boulton had been permitted "to contaminate our shores." The following excerpt from his letter shows the fearlessness and directness that were consistently features of his rhetoric:

The puisne Judges [Boulton] has chained to his chariot wheels. The Executive and Legislative Councils, are the servile creatures of his will. The Bar are obedient to his nod. [sic] The Special Juries, by a man of his own creation, are selected political partizans. He has lately aimed a deadly blow against the usefulness and respectability of the medical profession. Through his ascendancy in the Councils and on the judicial Bench, he has endeavoured to burke the rights and privileges of the people.

Carson never relented; he never recanted, and he rarely forgave. How unlike Morris! In his "Memorial to Lord Glenelg" Morris modified his castigation of Boulton by saying "I do not mean to charge him with maliciously inflicting these sufferings; God forbid! I have no such intention, no matter how such an admission may affect the whole case between the Judge and the country, I consider it my conscientious

duty to make this avowal to your Lordship."⁴ This is but one example of Morris's stepping back from extreme judgments on public figures, in an effort to achieve a more balanced view or, perhaps, to disarm criticism. He was by nature a peacemaker and mollifier.

As was previously noted, there are no scurrilous attacks upon individuals to be found in Morris's pamphlets. Such attacks are characteristic of Carson's writing. The Public Ledger of September 10, 1832, contains a letter from Carson exclaiming against the Anglican Archdeacon of St. John's, Edward Wix: "What crime has Newfoundland committed that it should have been punished by an especial visitation so afflicting as the Archdeacon -- a scourge more terrible than the Cholera itself! I would ask the venerable clergyman -- if I thought he had sufficient intellect to comprehend me -- by what miracle he was created an Archdeacon?" In 1840, when Carson and Morris parted ways, Carson peevishly remarked that he could not remember "having suffered greater inflictions than being obliged to listen to Mr. Morris's speeches and to read Mr. Morris's pamphlets."⁵ Morris accused Carson of attempting to belittle his contribution to the colony by saying if Morris wrote pamphlets, "nobody read them."⁶ Carson's rhetoric was accusatory, and it was inflammatory. After his political tracts of 1812 and 1813, Carson was threatened with legal action for libellous remarks concerning Governor Francis Pickmore (governor, 1817-18), whose conduct and policies

Carson had deemed "calculated to injure the best interests of the Colony."⁷ Although such proceedings were not initiated, Carson was removed by Governor Duckworth from his position as district surgeon. It was a retaliatory measure which affected Carson bitterly.

Whether or not Morris learned caution and compromise from the official reaction to Carson's pugilistic brand of rhetoric is difficult to determine. It seems to be in his nature to be moderate, compromising, and conciliatory. At any rate, these characteristics emerge as distinctive features of Morris's rhetoric. The St. John's Times of August 22, 1838, contains a letter to the editor in which the writer wished that Morris were in the speaker's chair instead of Carson, and called Morris "A man who always has with him a sweet stick of a wood of such precious pacifying virtues, that, with it, he can still the most troubled waters into a most perfect calm."

Carson, by contrast, was an agitator, and up to the very hour of his death was exhorting the people to continue to agitate for their rights and liberties. "Submission," he wrote, "never gained a point in politics."⁸ O'Flaherty has noted that Carson "publicly stated on a number of occasions that certain acts of the British government justified resistance."⁹ Carson would encourage physical force, if necessary, rather than submit to despotic treatment or suffer any infringement upon the constitutional rights of the people. Subservience was clearly foreign to his nature.

Sounding much less provocative, Morris in his 1827 pamphlet wrote: "It is, then, the evident interest of the Irish at Newfoundland to be orderly and peaceable; they can as quickly discern their interest as most people."¹⁰ This, to Morris, seemed to be the way to extract concessions from the British government. He again urged submission in the Memorial to Lord Glenelg (1838) when he claimed that he had advised the victims of Boulton's legal adjudications "quietly to submit: for they had a gracious Prince, a just and paternal government to appeal to, who, in the end would do ample justice to them and to the outraged laws of the country."¹¹ It seems clear that Carson and Morris, though united in a common cause, possessed quite different characters, and this partly accounts for their differing political philosophies as revealed in their rhetoric.

In his article "Bishop Fleming and the Politicization of the Irish Roman Catholics in Newfoundland, 1830-1850," Phillip McCann reminds us that one real grievance of the period was that Protestants held all important positions in the colony even though in the 1830s more than half the population were Roman Catholics.¹² John Mannion, also writing on the period before 1830, says: "Catholics were not allowed to hold office, and all surrogates, magistrates, justices of the peace, constables, jurors, customs officers, and other officials were drawn from the Protestant class."¹³ Morris seemed to accept the fact of Protestant domination and

Catholic subjugation in the political and judicial affairs of the colony, at least in his pamphlets. It must be restated that during his stay in Ireland, from 1826 until 1831, Morris was active in the cause of civil and religious liberty. While there he was "a member of the strategic Catholic Association committee in Waterford and Chairman of a support group, the Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty."¹⁴ As noted earlier, in 1825 Governor Cochrane nominated Morris and two other Roman Catholics to the newly established Executive Council. When the colonial office failed to act upon these recommendations, Morris wrote a memorial to the British government on behalf of the Roman Catholics of Newfoundland, requesting the same rights and privileges that were enjoyed by Catholic subjects in other North American colonies. The Catholic inhabitants of Newfoundland, he said:

labor under many and great grievances and are in a far worse situation than persons professing the same religion in the neighbouring Colonies -- where they are freely admitted members of His Majesty's Councils and of the provincial assemblies, Magistrates, and to other situations of trust and honour whilst at Newfoundland they are not eligible to hold the most important civil situation.¹⁵

Still, these grievances were not voiced in Morris's pamphlet literature. Apart from a single statement in Remarks on the State of Newfoundland -- "I am one of that class of Christians (Roman Catholics) whose admission to political and religious rights his Lordship so eloquently and so unjustly opposes"

-- the pamphlets are remarkable for their lack of a stated sense of grievance on behalf of the Catholic population. Instead he emphasized the happy harmony existing among the inhabitants, who were "above the paltry distinctions of countries or of creeds."¹⁶

The man who best articulated the grievances of the Roman Catholics in Newfoundland during this period was John Valentine Nugent, a writer for the Newfoundland Patriot and (later) editor of the Newfoundland Vindicator, a publication which openly supported the Irish Catholic element. Soon after his arrival in the colony, he became a leading exponent of the liberal cause in Newfoundland. His radical rhetoric led his political enemies to regard him as "a hot-headed, fiery, restless agitator who systematically attempted to array Catholics against Protestants."¹⁷ "In Newfoundland," he wrote, "the brand of slavery is upon the forehead of the Catholic. -- He is a political Paria. -- He is excluded from all that is of honor or emolument." In a series of articles printed in the Vindicator in January and February of 1842, Nugent pointed out that there were no Roman Catholics on the supreme bench, and that no Catholics were clerks of the court, coroners, or attorneys. There was only one Catholic among the fourteen stipendiary magistrates and but two Catholics out of all the officers of the custom throughout the entire colony. Of the £20,000 annually administered in public salaries and raised by a predominantly Roman Catholic

population, he said, only £800 was paid to Catholics.¹⁸ Two years previously, Morris had been appointed to the position of colonial treasurer "with a salary of £400 a year, the highest in government."¹⁹

Nugent's lengthy and cogent analysis of the composition of juries up to November 18, 1840, revealed that while there was 1 Protestant juror for every 57 of the Protestant population, there was only 1 Catholic juror for every 1777 of the Catholic population. These statistics, he argued, reflected the atrocious system which "makes men's creed in Newfoundland the sole cause of exclusion from that fair and equal participation in the administration of Justice." Like Carson, he advised the Catholic community to "continue to agitate, agitate, agitate" until they succeeded in obtaining equal representation with Protestants in the official positions of government. Many a Catholic reader must have been stirred to a sense of outraged indignation at the following piece of rousing rhetoric: "Is it possible that there exists within the Shores of our Island a single Catholic so degraded, so abject, so servile, so low as not to be startled at his own subjugation?"²⁰ By contrast, Morris scrupulously avoided raising "the war-whoop of religious feud" and rejected the use of violence. In Six Letters (1831) he denounced religious dissensions as "the greatest curse that possibly can fall on any Nation or People."²¹

What substantial analysis is evident in Morris's pamphlet literature? How accurate was he in his arguments about Newfoundland? In retrospect, it is clear that both Morris and Carson erred in their predictions of the advantages to be derived from the "boon" of a local legislature and the development of agriculture. Time failed to produce the prosperity, population, and advancement they so confidently foretold. As early as 1838 Morris offered this candid admission that the extravagant hopes he had conceived for Newfoundland's future had begun to fade: "In the enthusiasm of my youthful imagination I thought that if a Representative Constitution was granted to Newfoundland, all would be 'harmony within and without.' After a long struggle, it was granted in the most ample manner ... My youthful dream soon vanished. I formed no estimate of the difficulties that stood in the way, or the obstacles that had to be surmounted in the establishment of a representative government in Newfoundland."²² Similarly Morris's arguments on agriculture were the product of imagination rather than cool observation, though of course Newfoundland has had limited success in certain areas of agriculture since his day.

It is difficult to determine what, if any, effect Morris's pamphlets had on his listeners in London. They may have been successful in helping to dispel the prevalent mistaken notions of Newfoundland as an inhospitable ice-land or dangerous frontier peopled by ignorant and lawless

inhabitants. As well, he correctly identified as a problem the loss of capital from the country to the West Country merchants who, despite their newly acquired wealth, had made little investment in the welfare of Newfoundland:

Cities, towns, and whole districts in England have been raised to wealth and importance by the capital there accumulated; vast fortunes were made by persons who came to the country without a shilling, and were soon enabled to retire and live in splendour in other countries. The only return they have since made to those by whose labour, skill, and industry they were raised from insignificance to importance, has been to libel and calumniate the people, mislead the parent government, and misrepresent the resources, soil, and climate of the country.²³

Nugent also remarked, with some acerbity, that the governors and merchants departed from Newfoundland and left nothing behind -- "with the exception of a fish flake they once occupied or some such trifling landmark, or some prohibitory Edict of the person governing for the time being, which should be taken as the law of the land, preventing the country's improvement, while they expended in a foreign land the immense sums drawn from the native industry of our country."²⁴ Both Morris and Nugent seem to have been accurate in their observations on this matter. In Reports from the Committee on the State of the Trade to Newfoundland (1793) the testimony is recorded of Richard Routh, collector of customs on the island of Newfoundland, on the question of the decline of the Newfoundland fishery: "it is known for a

fact to be one of the best trades carried on from His Majesty's dominions, and that the principal adventurers to a man opulent in it." He referred to the Poole merchants who had succeeded in the Newfoundland trade, in particular to Benjamin Lester's "immense fortune" and to the mercantile houses of Spurrier, Jeffrey, Street, Slade, White, Neave, Clarke, Waldron, Young and Garland. "It is well known," he said, "that all the great fortunes at Poole, Dartmouth, and other towns have been made in the Fishery."²⁵

It would be unfair to allow Morris's achievements as a writer to stand overshadowed by the failure of representative government to reach the ultimate goals of wealth and power promised in his rhetoric. His rhetoric was echoed in the literature of future writers and the speeches of his successors. The melodramatic interpretation of Newfoundland's past history, which Morris derived from Reeves and embellished with his own fictions and inventions, was adopted by John McGregor (1797-1857) in his historical work, British America (1832). McGregor's book shows "the extent to which the distorted picture had been accepted even by eminent foreign authorities." The sentimental view of a Newfoundland held in the thralldom of merciless monopolists and despotic rulers also influenced a later compilation, An Historical and Descriptive Account of British America (1839), by Hugh Murray (1779-1846). Another history, Newfoundland in 1842 (1842), by Sir Richard Bonnycastle (1791-1847), relied upon the theories of Reeves and Morris

to explain Newfoundland's failure to prosper.²⁶ Moses Harvey (1820-1901) helped to propagate some of the distortions he found in Morris. "It speaks volumes for the injustice with which the colony had been treated," he wrote, "when, notwithstanding all the wealth drawn from its fisheries, 242 years lapsed from its annexation to the British Crown by Sir Humphrey Gilbert till the construction of the first road."²⁷ This is very like Morris. Like Morris, he also insisted that, despite past afflictions, Newfoundland was bound for importance and prosperity. O'Flaherty has pointed out in The Rock Observed that Harvey's "historical writing was founded on no new research and had no significance, except in so far as it repeated and further entrenched the myths begun by Reeves and Morris."²⁸ In 1895, the Newfoundland-born historian D.W. Prowse (1834-1914) published A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial, and Foreign Records. Morris's progressivist and nationalist rhetoric was never far from Prowse's memory as the following example will show: "With her vast resources, her temperate climate and her unique position, the future of this ill-used and down-trodden country should be brighter than it has been of yore."²⁹

Another Newfoundland-born writer who was influenced by Morris's imaginative rendering of Newfoundland's past history was Philip Tocque (1814-99). He also tended to overstate the agricultural potential of the island and the advantages

of her climate and natural resources.³⁰ Morris consistently spoke of Newfoundland's fishing grounds as mines of immeasurable wealth. In 1827 he wrote that Newfoundland "has fully proved the wisdom and truth of a great French writer, who states that 'her fisheries are mines of national wealth, superior to those of Mexico and Peru.'" Later in the pamphlet he attributed the opinion to the Abbé Raynal. In A Short Review of Newfoundland Morris stated that "Newfoundland was resorted to by thousands of British, French, Spaniards, and Portuguese, and countless millions were drawn from her mines far more valuable than those of Mexico and Peru."³¹ This proverbial comparison predates Morris's writing and is of obscure origin. Tocque borrowed the analogy from Morris and made it a feature of his own writing.³² Even Charles Pedley (1820-72), who cautiously interpreted the fabrications of the nationalists in his attempts to explain why Newfoundland had been impeded in her progress, could not escape the influence of Morris as a phrase-monger.³³

More than one hundred and fifty years have elapsed since Morris wrote his first pamphlet. Many of the arguments which animated his rhetoric in the first half of the nineteenth century have since ceased to be urgent and relevant; yet a significant part of his rhetoric is still current and topical. For one thing, Morris's penchant for blaming the woes of Newfoundland on others seems to have survived with undiminished fervour in the rhetoric of local politicians and social

commentators. Throughout his pamphlets Morris consistently blamed the French presence in Newfoundland for undermining the British fishery and hampering the colony's progress. The French system of bounties, in particular, was threatening to the Newfoundland economy, but it is doubtful that the French presence was as detrimental as Morris imagined it to be. The enduring nature of this issue became evident in 1986-7 when the Canadian government granted the French further fishing concessions off Newfoundland's coast in an effort to promote diplomatic accord between the two countries. Similarly, Morris repeatedly alleged that outsiders were reaping the benefits of her human and natural resources. But perhaps the most infectious aspect of his rhetoric was its optimism -- holding out to inhabitants the promise of a greatly improved Newfoundland. Morris's buoyant proclamations have continued to reverberate through the rhetoric of his successors.

NOTES

Notes for Chapter 1

¹John Mannion, "Patrick Morris and Newfoundland Irish Immigration," in Talamh An Eisc: Canadian and Irish Essays, ed. Cyril J. Byrne and Margaret Harry (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing Co., 1986), [187].

²Public Ledger, October 9, 1838; Mannion says Morris arrived in Newfoundland by 1805 at the latest; Gertrude Gunn gives the date as 1800 in The Political History of Newfoundland 1832-1864 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), [217].

³Public Ledger, November 3, 1837.

⁴Patrick Morris, Six Letters, Intended to Prove that the Repeal of the Act of Union, and the Establishment of a Local Legislature in Ireland are Necessary to Cement the Connection with Great Britain; and containing a Short View of the Trade, Manufactures, and Agriculture of Ireland (Waterford: Printed by Thomas Hanton, 1831), 55.

⁵Mannion, "Patrick Morris and Newfoundland Irish Immigration," 192, 193.

⁶Mannion, [personal notes].

⁷Mannion, "Patrick Morris and Newfoundland Irish Immigration," [187], 189, 198.

⁸Benevolent Irish Society, Centenary Volume: Benevolent Irish Society of St. John's, Newfoundland. 1896-1906 (Cork: Guy & Co. Ltd., 1906?), 52, 54, 92 .

⁹Newfoundland Patriot, August 25, 1849.

¹⁰In July, 1820, Butler and Landergan were found guilty of the charge of contempt of court and were sentenced to 36 lashes with a cat-o-nine tails. They were pressed by Carson and others to take legal action against the two surrogates in the supreme court in November. The surrogates were acquitted, but they were also rebuked for administering an unusually harsh punishment. A public meeting was held in St. John's on November 14, 1820, during which such arbitrary proceedings by the surrogates were condemned, and a resolution was passed to seek a repeal of the law authorizing surrogate courts. A petition to the King followed, calling for judicial reform and emphasizing the need for a local legislature. The petition of the inhabitants was presented in the House of Commons by Sir James MacKintosh on July 5, 1821. Lord Holland presented it to the House of Lords.

¹¹This pamphlet is signed "Colonus;" Morris acknowledged himself as author in Newfoundlander, April 2, 1846.

¹²Raymond J. Lahey, "Religion and Politics in Newfoundland: The Antecedents of the General Election of 1832" (A lecture delivered to the Newfoundland Historical Society on March 15, 1979), 18, 20.

¹³Newfoundlander, October 6, 1831; Centenary Volume: Benevolent Irish Society, 76.

¹⁴Centenary Volume: Benevolent Irish Society, 76.

¹⁵Mannion, [personal notes].

¹⁶D.W. Prowse, A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial, and Foreign Records (London: Macmillan and Co., 1895), 425.

¹⁷Mannion, [personal notes].

¹⁸Public Ledger, March 6, 1832.

¹⁹Mannion, [personal notes]; also "Patrick Morris and Newfoundland Irish Immigration," 200.

- ²⁰Public Ledger, September 18, 1829.
- ²¹Mannion, "Morris, Patrick," [Mannion papers].
- ²²Mannion, "Patrick Morris and Newfoundland Irish Immigration," [187]. The six children were: Kathleen (183-?), James (1831-62), William (1834-1901), Cairin and Patrick (1835-?), and Frank (183-?). William worked as an Oratorian priest in the slums of London. His obituary appeared in the Evening Telegram, April 10, 1901.
- ²³The phrase is Morris's, in Newfoundland Patriot, April 18, 1840.
- ²⁴Mannion, [personal notes]; also, "Morris, Patrick," [Mannion papers].
- ²⁵Public Ledger, August 17, 1827.
- ²⁶Public Ledger, October 11, 1836.
- ²⁷Newfoundland Patriot, November 26, 1836.
- ²⁸M.F. Howley, Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland (Boston: Doyle & Whittle, 1888), 381.
- ²⁹Public Ledger, October 20, 1837.
- ³⁰St. John's Times, November 21, 1837.
- ³¹Patrick Morris, "Memorial and Representation of Patrick Morris to the Right Honourable Lord Glenelg, Her Majesty's principal secretary of state for the colonies," in Journals and Proceedings of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland (St. John's, Printed by William R. Shea, 1838), [87]-105.
- ³²Public Ledger, October 26, 1838.
- ³³Mannion, [personal notes].

³⁴James K. Hiller, "Morris, Edward," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. XI, ed. Frances G. Halpenny and Jean Hamelin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 615.

³⁵Petition of the Chamber of Commerce of St. John's, printed in Public Ledger, December 28, 1838; also, C.O. 194/102, ff. 413-16.

³⁶Gunn, History, 30; also C.O. 194/91, Prescott to Glenelg, November 28, 1835.

³⁷Gunn, Ibid., 66; also C.O. 194/108, Prescott to Russell, March 7, 1840.

³⁸In order quoted: March 5, 1840; March 7, 1840; March 31, 1840; March 4, 1840.

³⁹Newfoundland Patriot, April 18, 1840.

⁴⁰Newfoundlander, April 23, 1840.

⁴¹Ibid., April 2, 1846.

⁴²Ibid., February 2, 1843.

⁴³Newfoundland Patriot, August 7, 1844.

⁴⁴Ibid., March 18, 1846.

⁴⁵Gunn, History, 102.

⁴⁶Newfoundland Patriot, March 18, 1846.

⁴⁷Newfoundlander, April 2, 1846; Gunn, The Political History, 102.

⁴⁸In order quoted: August 25, 1849; August 29, 1849; August 24, 1849; August 23, 1849.

⁴⁹C.O. 194/132, f. 50.

⁵⁰JHA, February 11, 1850; Bishop Fleming pledged himself as surety for Morris in April, 1840, and changed his mind in November. See Newfoundland Patriot, November 28, 1840. The Bishop asked to be released as one of Morris's securities now that Morris had been appointed treasurer. Morris angrily retorted that "there is not a Protestant or Catholic whom I would ask to become my surety that would not have cheerfully come forward in my behalf."

⁵¹C.O. 194/139, f. 49.

⁵²C.O. 194/137, f. 299.

Notes for Chapter 2

¹Peter Neary and Patrick O'Flaherty, Part of the Main: An Illustrated History of Newfoundland and Labrador (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1983), 55.

²Raymond J. Lahey, "Religion and Politics in Newfoundland," 6.

³Keith Matthews, "The Class of '32: St. John's Reformers on the Eve of Representative Government," Acadiensis, VI, 2 (1977), 84.

⁴Patrick O'Flaherty, "Francis Forbes in Newfoundland" (a lecture delivered to the Newfoundland Historical Society on September 26, 1985), 3, 4.

⁵Patrick O'Flaherty, The Rock Observed: Studies in the Literature of Newfoundland (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 22, 49.

⁶Lahey, "Religion and Politics in Newfoundland," 3-4.

⁷Neary and O'Flaherty, Part of the Main, 49.

⁸G.M. Story, "Newfoundland: Fishermen, Hunters, Planters, and Merchants," in Christmas Mummings in Newfoundland: Essays in Anthropology, Folklore, and History, ed. Herbert Halpert and G.M. Story (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 25.

⁹Harbour Grace and Carbonear Weekly Journal and General Advertiser for Conception Bay, February 12, 1829.

¹⁰Lahey, "Religion and Politics in Newfoundland," 2-3.

- ¹¹Neary and O'Flaherty, Part of the Main, 63.
- ¹²Story, "Newfoundland: Fishermen, Hunters, Planters, and Merchants," 25.
- ¹³O'Flaherty, "Carson, William," [O'Flaherty collection].
- ¹⁴O'Flaherty, "Francis Forbes in Newfoundland," 8, 10.
- ¹⁵Patrick Morris, A Short Review of the History, Government, Constitution, Fishery and Agriculture, of Newfoundland. In a Series of Letters addressed to The Right Honourable Earl Grey, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies (St. John's: Printed by J. Woods, 1847), 81.
- ¹⁶Patrick Morris, Observations on the Government, Trade, Fisheries, and Agriculture of Newfoundland; in a Series of Letters addressed to The Right Honourable The Earl Bathurst, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies (London: W. Simpkin and R. Marshall, 1824), 7.
- ¹⁷William Carson, A Letter to the Members of Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, on the Address of Merchants and Inhabitants of St. John's, in the Island of Newfoundland, to the Prince Regent (Greenock: William Scott, 1812); Reasons for Colonizing the Island of Newfoundland in a Letter Addressed to the Inhabitants (Greenock: Printed by W. Scott and sold by Sir R. Phillips, London, 1813).
- ¹⁸Morris, Observations on Newfoundland, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, 19.
- ¹⁹Patrick Morris, Remarks on the State of Society, Religion, Morals, and Education at Newfoundland; in Reply to the Statements made at the Newfoundland School Society, and also to a part of a Speech delivered by the Bishop of Chester at the Meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, held at the Freemasons' Hall, on the 25th of May last. In a Letter Addressed to the Right Honourable Lord Bexley (London: Sherwood, Gilbert, and Piper, 1827), 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, 13, 17, 23, 24.

²⁰Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 40, 60, 75, 76, 90.

²¹J.C. Beckett, A Short History of Ireland, 5th ed. (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1973), 119-129.

²²Morris, Six Letters on the Repeal of the Act of Union, advertisement, 9, 11, 17, 64, 66, 100.

²³Peter Neary, "'Wabana, You're a Corker!': Two Ballads with some Notes towards an Understanding of the Social History of Bell Island and Conception Bay" (a paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association of Kingston in June, 1973), 22.

²⁴Lahey, "Religion and Politics," 25-26.

²⁵Gunn, History, 22, 25

²⁶Leslie Harris, "Parsons, Robert John" in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. XI, ed. Frances G. Halpenny and Jean Hamelin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 673-74.

²⁷O'Flaherty, "Carson, William."

²⁸Gunn, History, 45.

²⁹O'Flaherty, "Carson, William."

³⁰All references to the August 25 speech are taken from pages 26-33; only an extract is available, and it is included in C.O. 194/103, ff. 351-55.

³¹Morris, "Memorial to Lord Glenelg," 90, 98, 104.

³²Mannion, "Morris, Patrick."

³³Morris, "Memorial to Lord Glenelg," 88, 99, 103, 104.

³⁴Patrick Morris, Legislative Councils Proved to be the Root of All the Evils of the Colonies: in a Short Address to the Right Honourable The Earl Durham, High Commissioner and Governor of the British North American Colonies (London: Printed for the author by A. Handcock, 1838), 3, 33.

³⁵Patrick O'Flaherty, "In Search of William Carson" (a paper delivered to the Newfoundland Historical Society, April 30, 1981), 19.

³⁶Morris, Legislative Councils Proved to be the Root of All the Evils of the Colonies, 3, 21, 27, 43-46.

³⁷Printed in Public Ledger, December 28, 1838.

³⁸Patrick Morris, To The Most Noble The Marquis of Normanby, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies. (Liverpool: Printed by E. Smith and Co., 1839), 12, 15, 19.

³⁹Gunn, History, 57.

⁴⁰Patrick Morris, A Short Reply to the Speech of Earl Aberdeen, on the State of Newfoundland (Liverpool: Printed by Egerton Smith and Co., 1839), 4, 7.

⁴¹Gunn, History, 67.

⁴²Mannion, "Patrick Morris and Newfoundland Irish Immigration," [187].

⁴³Quoted by Gunn in History, 69, 78, 79, 86.

⁴⁴O'Flaherty, "Carson, William."

⁴⁵Gunn, History, 103.

⁴⁶O'Flaherty, The Rock Observed, 69.

⁴⁷Gunn, History, 106.

⁴⁸Morris, A Short Review of Newfoundland, iii, 13, 14,
50, 103, 107, 111.

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¹James L. Kinneavy, A Theory of Discourse: The Aims of Discourse (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), 8, 10, 211, 219.

²Morris, Observations on Newfoundland, 17.

³Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundliand, 10, 43; "Memorial to Lord Glenelg," 101.

⁴Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 32, 44, 49.

⁵Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 22.

⁶Morris, A Short Reply to Earl Aberdeen, 7.

⁷Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 48, 90, 105; Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 10.

⁸Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 48, 55.

⁹Morris, A Short Review of Newfoundland, 5.

¹⁰Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation, trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 496.

¹¹Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 39, 55.

¹²Morris, To The Marquis of Normanby, 12.

- ¹³Newfoundlander, April 23, 1840.
- ¹⁴Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric, 276.
- ¹⁵Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 3; A Short Review of Newfoundland, 38; "Memorial to Lord Glenelg," 88; Arguments on Constitutional Government, 12.
- ¹⁶Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 4, 99.
- ¹⁷Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 23-24.
- ¹⁸Morris, "Memorial to Lord Glenelg," 105.
- ¹⁹Morris, Six Letters on the Repeal of the Act of Union, 4.
- ²⁰Morris, Observations on Newfoundland, 11, 19, 21.
- ²¹Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 4.
- ²²Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, The New Rhetoric, 305.
- ²³Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 100.
- ²⁴peter Neary, "Reeves, John," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. VI, ed. Frances G. Halpenny and Jean Hamelin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 637.
- ²⁵Keith Matthews, "Historical Fence Building: A Critique of the Historiography of Newfoundland," Newfoundland Quarterly, LXXIV, 1 (1978), 22.
- ²⁶Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 12; Observations on Newfoundland, 3.
- ²⁷Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 40.

²⁸Morris, Legislative Councils Proved to be the Root of All the Evils, 16, 34.

³⁹Morris, A Short Review of Newfoundland, 13, 14, 40.

³⁰Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 75, 87.

³¹Morris, Legislative Councils Proved to be the Root of All the Evils, 43.

³²Morris, A Short Review of Newfoundland, 26, 34, 68, 104.

³³Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 51, 53.

³⁴Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 60; "Memorial to Lord Glenelg," 88; A Short Review of Newfoundland, 4-6.

³⁵Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 10, 14, 17, 20, 41, 49, 50, 60, 70.

³⁶Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 17-19, 40, 87.

³⁷Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 52.

³⁸Morris, Observations on Newfoundland, 19.

³⁹Morris, A Short Review of Newfoundland, xii, 32.

⁴⁰Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 55; Arguments on Constitutional Government, 87.

⁴¹Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 48-49.

⁴²Morris, A Short Review of Newfoundland, 50.

⁴³Edmund Burke, "Conciliation with The Colonies," in Irish Orators and Oratory, introd. Professor T.M. Kettle (Dublin: The Talbot Press, n.d.), 43-65.

⁴⁴Morris, Six Letters on the Repeal of the Act of Union, advertisement, 77.

⁴⁵Morris, Observations on Newfoundland, 6; Arguments on Constitutional Government, 85.

⁴⁶Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 6.

⁴⁷Ibid., 29; Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 10.

⁴⁸Morris, Six Letters on the Repeal of the Act of Union, 5.

⁴⁹Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 90.

⁵⁰Morris, A Short Review of Newfoundland, 63.

⁵¹Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 39, 50.

⁵²Professor T.M. Kettle, Introd., Irish Orators and Oratory (Dublin: The Talbot Press, n.d.), ix.

⁵³Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 40.

⁵⁴John Mannion, "O'Brien, John," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. VIII, ed. Frances G. Halpenny and Jean Hamelin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 659.

⁵⁵Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 67.

⁵⁶Morris, Observations on Newfoundland, 19.

⁵⁷Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 38.

- 58 Morris, Observations on Newfoundland, 19.
- 59 Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 50.
- 60 Morris, A Short Reply to Earl Aberdeen, 7.
- 61 Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 60.
- 62 Morris, A Short Review of Newfoundland, 49.
- 63 Story, "Newfoundland: Fishermen, Hunters, Planters, and Merchants," 12-13.
- 64 [Captain Henry Prescott], A Sketch of the State of Affairs in Newfoundland (London: Saunders and Otley, 1841), 21.
- 65 Morris, A Short Review of Newfoundland, 9, 79.
- 66 Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 63.
- 67 Morris, "Memorial to Lord Glenelg," 102.
- 68 Morris, Observations on Newfoundland, 18.
- 69 Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 30, 48.
- 70 Morris, A Short Review of Newfoundland, 5, 13.
- 71 Morris, Six Letters on the Repeal of the Act of Union, 24.
- 72 O'Flaherty, The Rock Observed, 52-53.
- 73 Morris, Observations on Newfoundland, 4.

- 74 O'Flaherty, The Rock Observed, 53.
- 75 Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 63, 86.
- 76 Morris, A Short Review of Newfoundland, 5.
- 77 O'Flaherty, [personal notes].
- 78 Morris, Observations on Newfoundland, 5, 28.
- 79 Neary and O'Flaherty, Part of the Main, 44.
- 80 Morris, Observations on Newfoundland, 47.
- 81 Morris, A Short Review of Newfoundland, 4.
- 82 Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 11, 16.
- 83 Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 80.
- 84 Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 5, 6,
85.
- 85 Morris, Observations on Newfoundland, 30; Arguments
on Constitutional Government, 60.
- 86 Morris, Observations on Newfoundland, 26.
- 87 Morris, Arguments on Constitutional Government, 38, 70.
- 88 Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 24.
- 89 Morris, To The Marquis of Normanby, 13, 16.
- 90 Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 33, 60,
75.

⁹¹Morris, "Memorial to Lord Glenelg," 94.

⁹²Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 23, 39,
41.

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- ¹Newfoundlander, October 6, 1831.
- ²Carson, A Letter to the Members of Parliament, 19, 20.
- ³O'Flaherty, "In Search of William Carson," 9, 19.
- ⁴Morris, "Memorial to Lord Glenelg," 104.
- ⁵Newfoundlander, April 23, 1840.
- ⁶Patriot, April 18, 1840.
- ⁷C.O. 194/60, ff. 130-143.
- ⁸Patriot, November 3, 1835.
- ⁹O'Flaherty, "In Search of William Carson," 19.
- ¹⁰Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 46.
- ¹¹Morris, "Memorial to Lord Glenelg," 105.
- ¹²Phillip McCann, "Bishop Fleming and the Politicization of the Irish Roman Catholics in Newfoundland, 1830-1850," in Religion and identity: the experience of Irish and Scottish Catholics in Atlantic Canada, ed. Torrence Murphy and Cyril J. Byrne (St. John's: Jesperson Press, 1987), 82.
- ¹³John Mannion, "Irish Merchants Abroad: The Newfoundland Experience, 1750-1850," in Newfoundland Studies, II, 2 (1986), 181, 183.

- ¹⁴Mannion, "Morris, Patrick," [Mannion papers].
- ¹⁵C.O. 194/76, ff. 221-2.
- ¹⁶Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 15, 33.
- ¹⁷Elizabeth Wells, "Nugent, John Valentine," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. X, ed. George W. Brown et al (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 552-53.
- ¹⁸Newfoundland Vindicator, February 19, 1842.
- ¹⁹Mannion, "Morris, Patrick," [Mannion papers].
- ²⁰Newfoundland Vindicator, February 19, 1842; January 22, 1842; February 12, 1842.
- ²¹Morris, Six Letters on the Repeal of the Act of Union, 7, 8.
- ²²Morris, Legislative Councils Proved to be the Root of All the Evils, 43.
- ²³Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 6-7.
- ²⁴Newfoundland Vindicator, August 21, 1841.
- ²⁵Reports from the Committee on the State of the Newfoundland Trade (1793), 445, 446.
- ²⁶O'Flaherty, The Rock Observed, 58, 59, 67.
- ²⁷Quoted in J.R. Smallwood, Dr. William Carson, the Great Newfoundland Reformer: His Life, Letters and Speeches (St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publishers (1967) Ltd., 1978), 16.
- ²⁸O'Flaherty, The Rock Observed, 74, 76.

²⁹Prowse, A History of Newfoundland, 20-21.

³⁰O'Flaherty, The Rock Observed, 78.

³¹Morris, Remarks on the State of Newfoundland, 6, 57;
A Short History of Newfoundland, iv.

³²G.M. Story, "Bacon and the Fisheries of Newfoundland:
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