

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF NEWFOUNDLAND METHODISM
1765-1855

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF NEWFOUNDLAND METHODISM

1765 - 1855

by

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requirements for the degree of Master of
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I NEWFOUNDLAND - EARLY METHODIST MISSION FIELD	I
Introduction	
Spread of Methodism in the British Isles	
Methodism in North America	
The Newfoundland Mission established 1765	
Social and economic conditions in the island	
II THE NEWFOUNDLAND MISSION ESTABLISHED	13
Lawrence Coughlan and the Harbour Grace Mission	
Opposition to Coughlan's ministry, 1770 - 1773	
The Church of England and Conception Bay Methodism.	
Local preachers continue the Methodist movement.	
The Old Perlican mission begun, 1774.	
III ORGANIZATION OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND DISTRICT; 1785 - 1815	35
The first missionary appointed 1785	
The visit of William Black 1791	
Methodism moves North; 1795 - 1797	
State of the mission at 1800	
The need for local administration; 1805 - 1814	
Formation of the District; 1815	
IV EXPANSION AND LOCAL MISSIONARY WORK, 1815 - 1855	56
The new Methodist community	
Beginnings of a local missionary society 1816	
The mission to the Indians, 1819 - 1828	
Organization of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 1823	
Missions to the south-west and north-east coasts, 1839.	
Difficulties facing Newfoundland District	
V OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS	78
The right to perform the marriage ceremony.	
The Marriage Acts of 1817 and 1824	
Financial problems	
Demands of the Missionary Committee	
Local financial support	

CHAPTER	PAGE
VI CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION	94
Early attempts to provide instruction	
Methodists and the Newfoundland School Society	
Methodist School system established, 1823	
Early Education Acts: 1836, 1843, 1850	
Denominational education	
Secondary education	
VII UNION WITH EASTERN BRITISH AMERICA 1855	130
First objection to union, 1843	
Discussions on benefits of union, 1852 - 1854	
Eastern provinces object to Newfoundland union	
Special considerations for Newfoundland, 1855	
Results of the union	
Conclusion	
Appendix 'A' Petition of the inhabitants of Harbour Grace to S.P.G. -----	148
Appendix 'B' Proclamation of Governor Edwards	150
Appendix 'C' Extent of Religious Services in Newfoundland 1816	152
Appendix 'D' Statistics on Newfoundland Methodism 1855	153
Appendix 'E' Number of winter inhabitants in Conception Bay, 1770 - 1779 -----	154
Appendix 'F' Proposed distribution of Education grant, 1851.	155
Appendix 'G' Abstract of census and returns of electoral districts of Newfoundland, 1836 -----	156
Appendix 'H' Abstract of state of education in Newfoundland, 1849 -----	157
Bibliography -----	158

THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF NEWFOUNDLAND METHODISM

1765 - 1855

ABSTRACT

Few people realize the importance and full effects of the Methodist movement which began in the mid-eighteenth century. It is true that it gave rise to a new religious denomination but it was much more than that. It meant new hopes and new values as well as moral and spiritual buoyancy for its many followers. Nowhere was there a greater need for this than on the island of Newfoundland.

Methodism was brought to the new world in the 1760's by a group of Irish immigrants who settled in Eastern North America. It was introduced in Newfoundland in 1765 by Lawrence Coughlan, who established the movement in Conception Bay. Although there was a dearth of religion in the island, the movement made very little headway at first. In addition to facing serious economic problems and the opposition of the Church of England, Newfoundland Methodism lacked the guidance and assistance of either the British or American Connexions during its early years. It was not until 1815 that the Newfoundland mission showed signs of organization and independence. However, with the formation of the Newfoundland District in 1815, and a general improvement in the island's economy, the movement became more progressive. It soon developed the missionary spirit of English Methodism and began to extend its religious services

to all isolated areas. By 1845 Methodism had been extended to the main inhabited areas of the island and had been making a substantial contribution toward the improvement of the island's social and moral structure. In spite of the financial difficulties that beset the movement, the Methodists succeeded in establishing an educational system that became an effective weapon against illiteracy in the island. Although the Methodists continued to extend their services to the inhabitants, they were continually under the care and support of the Missionary Society in England. This was a relationship that the Newfoundland Methodists tried desperately to retain. However, the parent society was not in a position to continue to finance the Newfoundland mission, and in 1855 it insisted that the mission become a part of the new Connexion of Eastern British America. This was Newfoundland's first permanent link with the mainland of North America, and subsequent events have shown that it was the beginning of a new era for Newfoundland Methodism.

PREFACE

The United Church of Canada is today the third largest religious denomination in Newfoundland. Prior to church union in 1925 this position was held by the Methodist Church of Canada, which in Newfoundland was the largest single denomination to enter union. The effect that Methodism has had on the social and political life of the island is ample justification for a detailed study of its development. The Methodist movement played no small part in moulding the early settlers into a law-abiding, God-fearing people. The present study has been undertaken for the purpose of tracing the development of this movement chronologically from its beginning and of evaluating its efforts to raise the moral and social standards of the inhabitants. Although, the work of the Newfoundland Methodists has often been referred to, no history of the movement has hitherto been written.

This thesis covers the period 1765 to 1855. These are logical dates with which to begin and end since in 1765 Methodism was first introduced to the island and in 1855 the Newfoundland Methodists became part of the newly formed Methodist Church of Eastern British America. In the preparation of this work the records of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society have been the main source of material. The original records are located in London but microfilm copies are available at the Victoria University Archives in Toronto and the Newfoundland Archives in St. John's. The collection of minute

books, ledgers, diaries and similar documents in the United Church Archives in St. John's has been very valuable, although it is incomplete for the period under consideration.

I wish to express my appreciation to the Canada Council for awarding a pre-master's grant, which enabled me to carry out my research. I am greatly indebted to the staff at the Dominion Public Archives, Ottawa; Victoria University Archives, Toronto; Nova Scotia Archives, Halifax; Newfoundland Archives and the United Church Archives in St. John's. I would like to thank also the Librarians and staff at Mount Allison University, at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, and at the Gosling Memorial Library in St. John's, who have always been ready to assist me in my research. Mr. H.N. Burt, formerly United Church Archivist for Newfoundland, readily made available to me both the material in the Archives and his own invaluable collection of books and pamphlets on early Methodism. His keen interest in, and extensive knowledge of this work has been a guide to me. I am grateful also for the constructive criticism and helpful suggestions of Dr. G.O. Rothney and Dr. G.M. Schwarz, under whose supervision much of this thesis was prepared.

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ABREVIATIONS

- C. O. - Records in the Colonial Office series, Public
Record Office, London, England.
- W.M.M.S. - Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society
- S.P.G.F.P. - Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in
Foreign Parts

CHAPTER I

NEWFOUNDLAND - EARLY METHODIST MISSION FIELD

Although Wesleyan Methodism was not meant to have sectarian tendencies, it very rapidly became a distinct and forceful movement in England. The movement begun by John and Charles Wesley was designed to revitalize the Established Church from within. It was only after the course of events forced them outside the confines of the church that the movement became independent.¹ The holding of the first conference of clergy and lay-preachers in 1744 gave Methodism its initial start as a separate religious movement. The rapid spread of Methodism throughout the British Isles can be explained by the missionary spirit that pervaded the movement. The oft-quoted phrase of John Wesley, "The world is my parish", indicates the unlimitedness of his work and his burning desire to bring salvation to all people. Moreover, his theory that society could only be improved by improving the individual gave him a driving desire to do for England what revolutions had done for other countries.²

Wesley's desire to bring 'salvation' to the masses led him and his followers on preaching tours throughout the British Isles. During these preaching tours Wesley was most impressed with the Irish. On his visit to Ireland in 1752 he found the people in a "more teachable spirit than in most parts of England".³

1. WESLEY, J., A Short History of the People called Methodists. (London, no date), pp. 6 - 10

2. EDWARDS, Maldyn., John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century. (London, 1955, revised edition) pp. 146 - 164

3. LECKY, W.E.H., A History of England in the Eighteenth Century. (London, 1921), vol. 3, p. 11

The frequent references to the Irish in his Journal indicate the genuine interest that Wesley had in these people. They appear to have been very susceptible to his preaching although the Methodist societies there showed much instability.⁴

Methodism spread rapidly in Ireland in spite of persecution and riots, and before the end of the eighteenth century the Irish movement could supply its own itinerants.⁵ The most important segment of the Irish following was a group of people, South of Limerick, often referred to as the 'Palatines'. These were German Protestants who had come from the Palatinate in South-West Germany in the early part of the eighteenth century.⁶ Wesley's preaching had awakened them from their religious lethargy and they became firm believers in the Methodist doctrine.

The spread of Wesleyan Methodism to Newfoundland and the mainland of North America came as a result of economic and social conditions in Europe, rather than as a conscious attempt to promote a new religious denomination. While Wesley was propounding the doctrine of 'salvation by faith', trade between England and the New World was increasing. The Newfoundland fishing fleet sailed from South-West England each spring and returned each autumn. Trading ships plying between England and the North American colonies formed a link between the two continents. The location of Southern Ireland made it a stepping

4. Idem.

5. TOWNSEND, W.J. A New History of Methodism. (London, 1909), vol. 2, pp. 10 - 11

6. FINDLAY, G.G. and HOLDSWORTH, W.W. The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. (London, 1921), vol. 1, p. 206.

stone on these trade routes, directly in the flow of east-west traffic. The economic and social conditions of the Irish during this period and the availability of transportation encouraged the flow of immigrants to America. The presence of west-bound ships in Irish ports seeking supplies and cheap labour provided the Irish with ready transportation. Among those who took advantage of these conditions were the German Protestants, or 'Palatines' of South Limerick. A group of these came to America in 1760, followed by a second group in 1765.

Methodism appeared in the New World almost simultaneously in three places. On the continent both Maryland and New York have laid claim to being the first Methodist Mission ground in America. Newfoundland also can justifiably claim this distinction.⁷ The nucleus of American Methodism was formed by the band of 'Palatines' who landed in New York in 1760.⁸ Among those was Philip Embury, a carpenter by trade, who had been converted to Methodism in 1752.⁹ But Embury did not continue his religious activities in the New World for some time after his arrival. It was not until a second group came in 1765 that Barbara Heck, finding some of the colonists playing cards, reproached Embury and implored him to preach to them. In October 1766 Embury preached the first Methodist sermon to a small congregation of

7. Ibid., p. 259.

8. TOWSEND, W.J., op. cit., vol. 2, p. 36. .

9. STEVENS, Abel (LL.D). The History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. New York, 1867), vol. 7, p. 206.

friends.¹⁰ Captain Thomas Webb, a British soldier stationed in Boston, joined forces with Embury and by 1768 Methodist societies were formed in New York and Philadelphia. In the same year a new church, called Wesley Chapel, was erected to replace the old rigging loft that Embury first used as a place of worship.¹¹

Unable to direct the growing movement, Embury sought help from John Wesley who made the following reference to the work in his diary: "On Thursday I mentioned the case of our brothers in New York, who have built the first Methodist preaching house in America and who are in great want of money".¹² The arrival of two English preachers in 1769 officially brought the American movement under Wesley's influence and made it an extension of the British Connexion. The work begun by Embury in 1766 remained under the direction of the British Connexion until after the American War of Independence in 1783. In the following year Dr. Coke, acting under Wesley's instructions convened a conference of American preachers at Baltimore and formed the Methodist Episcopal Church of America.

Among the Irish immigrants who came to America in the 1760's was Robert Strawbridge. He was converted to Methodism in Ireland about the same time as Embury and on his arrival in America settled in Maryland. Dr. Abel Stevens, quoting from a Mr. Shillington, whom he regards as an authority on Methodist history

10. WAKLEY, J.B. (D.D.) Lost Chapters recovered from early American Methodism. (New York, 1889), chapter 17.

11. FINDLAY and HOLDSWORTH, op. cit., p. 208.

12. WESLEY, JOHN., Journal of John Wesley. Abridged and Edited by Nora Ratcliff M.A. (London, 1940), p. 347.

in America, gives his dates as, "not earlier than 1764 and not later than 1765".¹³ J.B. Wakley, who made a study of the question, presents a statement from a person who claims that his father embraced Methodism under Strawbridge in 1764.¹⁴ It appears that Strawbridge came to America in 1760 but did not begin preaching until 1764.¹⁵

The important thing to note here is the fact that the Strawbridge movement was completely independent. Whereas Embury sought help and guidance from Wesley, Strawbridge assumed the role of an ordained minister and proceeded without any connexional organization. Since this procedure was entirely contrary to Wesley's ecclesiastical policy, the Strawbridge movement was not Wesleyan Methodism. In fact the northern Methodist Missionaries had to repress the Strawbridge ideas and bring the movement under the same Methodist rules and conditions that governed the societies in New England.¹⁶ Wesleyan Methodism on the continent of North America began with Embury in 1766. It was only after years of negotiations that the Strawbridge movement was brought in line with Methodist policy and united with the movement of Embury.¹⁷

13. STEVENS, Abel, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 71 -72 (footnote).

14. WAKLEY, J.B.: op. cit., pp. 158 - 159.

15. "METHODISM". Encyclopedia Britannica, Twelfth edition, (Chicago, 1957), vol. 15, pp. 359.

16. FRENCH, GOLDWIN, Wesleyan Methodism in Upper Canada and the Maritime Provinces. The Heroic age 1780 - 1855. Ph.D. thesis, unpublished University of Toronto, April 14, 1958. p.8.

17. FINDLAY and HOLDSWORTH, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 236 - 242

Wesleyan Methodist services had been conducted in Newfoundland a year before Embury's preaching in October 1766. The arrival of Lawrence Coughlan in Newfoundland in 1765 does not appear to have been related to, or influenced by the beginning of Methodism on the continent. Although Coughlan had been more closely linked with Methodism in England and had begun the movement here before Embury had on the continent, the most significant factor in the growth of Newfoundland Methodism is the conditions and environment in which it was cradled.

The anti-colonial policy of Great Britain in dealing with Newfoundland had succeeded in giving the island a unique appearance, socially and politically. The island's only importance lay in the wealth of its fishery and the use of that industry as a valuable training ground for British seamen.¹⁸ As far as the British Government was concerned Newfoundland existed only for the five or six months of the fishing season. The Western Charter of 1634 with its subsequent renewals and the 'Act of King William' of 1699 were enacted solely to regulate the British fishery in Newfoundland. These not only discouraged settlement but reflected a determination to keep the island uninhabited and at the disposal of the merchants of South-West England¹⁹ The supremacy of the British ship fishery and the preventing of settlement continued to be the basic principles of British policy toward Newfoundland until 1824. Although the harsh rule

18. MCLINTOCK, A.H. The establishment of Constitutional Government in Newfoundland 1713 - 1832 (Toronto, 1941)
p. 4 - 6

19. Ibid., p. 5 - 6

of the Fishing Admirals gradually weakened and some vestige of civil government appeared, there was no change in the attitude toward settlers. There was not even recognition much less protection for the winter inhabitants. By 1764 the permanent settlers in the island totalled 15,981.²⁰ To avoid interference with the British ship fishery and the risk of being detected by the naval authorities these were forced to live in isolated coves and harbours scattered along the coastline. Although this isolation meant protection in summer, it became a significant factor in the degeneration and complacency of the settlers.²¹ The anti-settlement laws prohibiting land grants and the erection of permanent buildings caused the settlers to live in uncertainty and perpetual fear of being driven from their crude shelters. Unable to cultivate the soil or engage in any activity except fishing, the settlers spent most of the year in idleness, misery and poverty. The following excerpts suggest the vice and debauchery that existed in the eighteenth century.

They [the inhabitants] were perfect savages, strangers to all good order, government and religion, averse to and unfit for labour.... it was a common thing for men and women to live together without marriage and to change partners at pleasure, and the problems were not lessened when common fishermen took it upon themselves to baptize and marry.²²

The moral tone of the colony was adversely affected by the large consumption of rum and other liquors. A harsh environment forced inhabitants to become ingenious, self-reliant and industrious. A livelihood and basic

20. C.O. 194/21. As statement of the Newfoundland Fishery in the following years taken from Returns of Admirals who commanded the station.

21. MCLINTOCK. op. cit., p. 14.

22. KERR, W.B. "Newfoundland in the period before the American Revolution". The Pennsylvania Magazine. January 1941, p. 61.

necessities for life itself were the more immediate concerns of islanders. Medical care, education and spiritual welfare were important only after problems of survival had been met.²³

These deplorable social and economic conditions were encouraged by local merchants. Their main concern was to become rich as quickly as possible. Rather than attempt to improve conditions it was in their interests to maintain the status quo. The operation of the credit or truck system left the settlers completely at the mercy of the merchants. Each spring they would advance food and supplies to the fishermen and in the autumn take the complete voyage of fish to pay for the goods advanced the previous spring. Food for the winter would then be given to the fishermen on the strength of the next year's catch. Since the merchant was free to charge high prices for the goods supplied and to give low prices for fish and oil, the fisherman was rarely out of debt. The merchant "became the overlord of the struggling society exercising an unrestrained and tyrannical power"... "in every outport or distant harbour and wherever settlement existed at all, he or his agent dominated a primitive and almost mediaeval society".²⁴ In 1799 Governor Waldegrave complained about the power of the merchants and held them responsible for the plight of the fishermen. He described the fishermen as, "a set of unfortunate beings working like slaves and even hazarding their lives, when at the expiration of the term, however successful their exertions

23. CHRISTENSEN, Ruth. "The Establishment of S.P.G. Mission in Newfoundland 1703 - 1783". The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church. June 1951. p. 209.

24. MCLINTOCK, op. cit., p. 121

they find themselves not only without gain but as deeply indebted as to force them to emigrate or drive them to despair".²⁵

It must be remembered that such deplorable conditions were the result of unfortunate circumstances rather than the depravity of the inhabitants. The laws restricting settlement left them with no legal status. Although civil governors were appointed to the island in 1729, they brought no hope for the settlers. On the contrary, most governors were hostile to the settlers and on several occasions attempted to remove them by force. Governor Palliser began renewed efforts to rid the island completely of its unwanted settlers. During his four years as governor 1764 - 1768, the recorded population was decreased by 68 percent.²⁶ Lord North, Prime Minister of Great Britain 1770 - 1782 epitomized the British policy toward Newfoundland settlers when he said, "Whatever they loved to have roasted he [the governor] was to give them raw, and whatever they loved to have raw he was to give them roasted".²⁷

Such a policy was embodied in the Act of 1786 which was to regulate Newfoundland trade during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. In referring to the Act of 1786 William Grenville admitted, "Newfoundland is in no respect a British colony and is never so considered in our laws".²⁸ Acting under those instructions the Governors were duty bound to oppose anything that might improve the condition of the settlers. Nor

25. C.O. 194/23, 471 Governor Waldegrave to Portland 1799.

26. LOUNSBURY, Ralph G. The British Fishery at Newfoundland. (New Haven, 1934), p. 331.

27. MCLINTOCK, op. cit., p. 25.

28. Ibid., p. 24.

could the inhabitants expect justice from the courts set up in 1750 and 1791. These were instituted to maintain law and order during the summer fishing season and to protect the rights of the English fishermen. Although justices were appointed for the whole year they were without support during the winter and did not attempt to carry out their duties. Moreover, these justices were usually merchants "who did not hesitate to turn the course of justice to their own ends, and who reigned unchallenged as absolute despots".²⁹ It was under such conditions that the governor and his surrogates returned home in late summer leaving the inhabitants to protect themselves in whatever manner they chose. There were few attempts to improve these conditions until 1825 when the British fishing interests had gradually lost their hold on the Newfoundland trade. Sir Thomas Cochrane, governor 1825 - 1834, gave the island its first real civil administration. Boldly he began a road-building programme, encouraged the cultivation of the soil and persuaded the British Government to grant the island local government. Newfoundland was finally recognized as a British colony and in 1834 was given its first legislative assembly.

The earliest attempts to introduce social and religious improvements to Newfoundland were very meagre. The effort was so weak and the conditions so hostile that the results were almost negligible for the greater part of the eighteenth century. This work was undertaken and supported by the newly-formed Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

29. Ibid., p. 59.

The Society, organized in 1701, was designed to fulfil the three-fold purpose of maintaining "orthodox clergy" in the overseas colonies, ensuring the propagation of Gospel in the colonies and plantations, and financing its own work.³⁰ The first contact with Newfoundland was in 1703 when the Society gave assistance to the only Minister of the Gospel in the island --- Mr. Jackson, who was chaplain to the garrison at St. John's.³¹ The S.P.G. missions became continuous in 1725 when Rev. Henry Jones became the first resident minister at Bonavista.³² Although the S.P.G. had begun their work in the island they did not show any great desire to increase it. When Lawrence Coughlan arrived in 1765, Jones was the only other clergyman in the island. The isolation of the settlements and extreme difficulty of travel minimized the influence and religious activity of the S.P.G. missionary. The demands made on a missionary and the conditions under which he had to work made success almost impossible. This is vividly expressed by Dr. Spencer, Newfoundland's first Anglican Bishop, as late as 1842.

He [the missionary] must have the strength of constitution to support him under a climate as rigorous as that of Ireland; a stomach insensible to the attack of seasickness; pedestrian powers beyond those of an Irish gosson; and an ability to rest occasionally on a bed of a fisherman or the hard board of a woodman's tilt. With these physical capabilities he must combine a patient temper, an energetic spirit, a facility to adapt his discourse to the lowest grade of intellect, a ready power of illustrating and explaining the

30. PASCOE, C.F. Two Hundred Years of S.P.G. (London, 1901), vol. 1, p. 7.

31. Ibid., p. 88.

32. CHRISTENSEN, Ruth. op. cit., p. 215.

leading doctrines of the Gospel and the church to the earnest, though dull and ill-tempered inquirer, and a thorough preparation for controversy with the Romanist together with the discretion and charity which will induce him to 'live' as far as may be possible, peaceably with all men.³³

Such were the conditions and difficulties that faced the missionaries in Newfoundland. In addition to these the Methodists were confronted with other problems peculiar to their own sect. Most of the island's inhabitants and summer fishermen came from southern Ireland and the countries of Devon, Dorset and Cornwall in South-West England.³⁴ Since these areas were not Methodist strongholds, the people had either not met Methodism prior to their coming to Newfoundland, or had come with a strong feeling against it. It is significant, too, that the Established Church enjoyed government recognition and official support, something no other denomination could expect. These difficulties coupled with the financial problems which constantly faced the Methodist Missionaries made their position an unenviable one. However, with the development of the political and social structure, Methodism evolved as an independent movement that played an important part in the development of the colony.

33. Ibid., p. 207

34. FAY, C.R. Life and Labour in Newfoundland. (Toronto, 1956), chapters 1 and 2.

CHAPTER II

THE NEWFOUNDLAND MISSION ESTABLISHED 1765 - 1785

Methodism in Newfoundland, as on the mainland of North America, was begun by the Irish. The first forty years of the Newfoundland movement was dominated almost entirely by Irish leaders. Lawrence Coughlan, who introduced it to the island, was converted by John Wesley's preaching and in 1755 was accepted as an itinerant preacher, serving in the Irish and later in the English Connexion.¹ Coughlan was an ardent and energetic itinerant who possessed remarkable ability as a preacher. Wesley's reference to him in his Journal December 29, 1758, indicated his efficiency in holding together Methodist societies.

I found the society at Colchester had decreased since L - C - went away, and yet they had had full as good preachers; but that is not sufficient. By repeated experiments we learn that though a man preach like an angel, he will neither collect nor preserve a Society which is collected, without visiting them from house to house.²

Coughlan continued with the connexion until 1765, after which his name no longer appears in the list of conference appointments. The reasons for his break from the British Connexion and his appearance in the island of Newfoundland in 1765 are not definitely known. T.W. Smith supports the theory that Coughlan and other preachers were ordained by a Greek Bishop in 1764, but Charles Wesley did not agree with

1. FINDLAY, G.G. and HOLDSWORTH. W.W. op. cit., vol. 1, p. 259.

2. JOHN WESLEY. Journal of John Wesley. Ed. Ernest Rhy, (London, 1906), vol.2, p. 435.

the ordination and those receiving it were asked to renounce the title and rights thus granted or leave the Connexion.³ Whatever the actual causes, Wesley's letter to Coughlan in August 1768 clearly indicated that Coughlan had broken from Wesley prior to his coming to Newfoundland.⁴

There is no evidence to show that Coughlan had any particular motive for his coming to Newfoundland. He may have been influenced to sail westward by the emigration of contemporary Irishmen. Unlike Embury, Strawbridge and Webb of New England, Coughlan was not engaged in any trade or employment other than his ministry. Unlike the Church of England missionaries in Newfoundland at that time, Coughlan was not sent by any society or humanitarian organization. In a later account of his work in the island he writes: "Nor is it to be wondered, that so much simplicity should be seen in the following accounts, seeing that, in this part of Newfoundland, they never had a minister, until the providence of God sent me there".⁵ The possibility of his being sent by John Wesley is also discounted in a letter from Wesley to Coughlan in which he states: "By a various train of providences you have been led to the very place where God intended you to be, and you have every reason to praise him that, he has not suffered your labour there to be

3. SMITH, T.W. History of Methodist Church in the Conference of Eastern British America. (Halifax, 1877), vol.1, pp. 44 - 45.

4. JOHN WESLEY, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 346 -348.

5. COUGHLAN, L. An Account of the Work of God in Newfoundland North America. (London, 1776), p. 13.

in vain".⁶

At the time of Coughlan's arrival the number of inhabitants in Newfoundland was just over 15,000, of which 9976 were adult males.⁷ Among this group Coughlan found that the Christian religion was almost non-existent.⁸ Although the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (S.P.G.) had supported missions in the island since the early part of the eighteenth century, missionary activity was not extensive. Two missionaries, 200 miles apart, could hardly have been effective among a people who "live as mere savages without religion, without marrying or christening their children... who spend the Lord's Day in idleness and debauchery, every one living as he likes."⁹ The apparent inability or complacency of the S.P.G. missionaries in such a situation prompted Coughlan to write of them:

Those who are called Ministers, but are not sent of God ... if they have their salary and their income answers their expectations all is well with them, they desire no further proof of their being sent from God, but this will not content a true evangelical minister.¹⁰

Coughlan, therefore, did not regard himself as a missionary of the Church of England; and his Methodist preaching, coupled with his religious beliefs, were soon to have an effect on his hearers.

Coughlan was the only missionary in the Conception Bay area at the time. He established himself at Harbour Grace, a

6. WESLEY, JOHN. Works of Rev. John Wesley A.M. Fifth edition. (London, 1869), p.340.

7. C.O. 194/16 Palliser to the Admiralty 1765.

8. TOWNSEND, W.J. A New History of Methodism. (London, 1909), vol. 2, p. 206.

9. C.O. 194/17 Palliser's Remarks on Instructions 1764.

10. COUGHLAN, L. op. cit., p. 8.

busy fishing settlement in Conception Bay, frequented by fishermen from England, Ireland and the Channel Islands. Palliser's reports for 1764 and 1767 show that the Conception Bay region of Harbour Grace, Carbonear and Bay-de-Verde was the most densely populated area of the island.¹¹ In spite of adverse social conditions, Coughlan began his work in true Methodist fashion of going from house to house four times each week, reading and expounding the scriptures.¹² Although it was three years before he had any appreciable following, he soon organized his followers into classes.

Coughlan began his missionary work completely independent of any organization but the unstable financial conditions of the island soon changed the situation. One year before Coughlan's arrival the people of Harbour Grace had started to build a church and indicated that they were willing to support a minister.¹³ Whether Coughlan's appearance in such propitious circumstances was coincidental or the result of his knowledge of the situation is uncertain. The church was completed during the first year of Coughlan's ministry and the people agreed to retain him as their resident minister and to provide him with a salary sufficient for his support.¹⁴ However, a poor fishing season prevented the people from contributing to his support and to ensure a salary for their clergyman,

11. C.O. 194/16 Palliser's Report to Colonial Office 1764.
194/18 Palliser's Report to Colonial Office 1767.

12. COUGHLAN, L. op. cit., p. 9.

13. LANGMAN to S.P.G. Secretary, St. John's, Nov. 6, 1764.

Transcripts of Letters to S.P.G., p. 94.

14. Ibid., Petition of the Inhabitants of Harbour Grace 1766, See Appendix A.

help was sought from the Mother Country. The Methodist Missionary Society had not yet been established and Wesley did not support Methodist Societies or extensions beyond the British Isles. Hence, the only source from which help could be sought was the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. A petition, dated October 30, 1766, was sent by the residents of Harbour Grace recommending Coughlan as their minister and asking that he be given a stipend.¹⁵ Coughlan returned to England and presented the petition to the General Meeting of the S.P.G. on December 19, 1766.¹⁶ The request of the people of Harbour Grace was granted by the S.P.G. W.J. Townsend claims that Coughlan was ordained by the Bishop of London at that time.¹⁷ Consequently, Coughlan came under the auspices of the Church of England, although he was a Methodist at heart and continued to organize his followers according to Methodist rules and doctrine.¹⁸

Coughlan attained his greatest success after his return from England in autumn of 1767. His evangelical preaching in the Irish tongue attracted large numbers of hearers and many accepted his doctrine. Such religious enthusiasm, unique in the island, could not be confined to Harbour Grace and reports soon spread throughout Conception Bay that, "the people of Harbour Grace and Carbonear are going mad."¹⁹ People came

15. Idem.

16. Minutes of General Meeting of S.P.G., Dec. 19, 1766. Proceedings of the S.P.G. at its General Meetings 1747 - 1835, vol. 15 - 17, ff. 209 - 210.

17. TOWNSEND, W.J. op.cit., vol. 2, p. 36.

18. Letter from Coughlan to Wesley, Harbour Grace, Nov. 4, 1772. Arminian Magazine, Sept. 1785, p. 490.

19. COUGHLAN, L. op. cit., p. 16.

fifteen and twenty miles to attend services at Harbour Grace and invited Coughlan to conduct services in their settlements.²⁰ Thus Coughlan extended his labours to places as far north as Blackhead, eighteen miles by water from Carbonear. New chapels were erected at Carbonear and Blackhead in 1768. Regular services were held in these places, conducted either by Coughlan or by lay readers whom he selected and supplied with sermons to read.²¹

By 1770 Coughlan had met with a storm of opposition which came from two sources. The first and least serious came from those who recognized him as an evangelical and who opposed both his doctrine and method of preaching.²² Many of the inhabitants and transients came from the south west of England where Wesleyan Methodism had not received much support. On one occasion Coughlan was openly confronted in one of his services by a man who protested that "he was for the Church; and that he was sure the clergy in England did not preach up that people must go to Hell except they be born again".²³ Coughlan's theology of repentance and of 'being born again' was not in accordance with the doctrine of Church of England Clergy in England. The other source of opposition came from the merchants and traders who notified Coughlan that if he did not change his way of preaching they would withdraw their subscriptions for his support. Coughlan relates "since they could not stop me from preaching

20. Idem.

21. COUGHLAN, L. op. cit., p. 19.

22. Ibid., p. 10, 22.

23. Ibid., p. 22.

they were determined to starve me".²⁴ When this had no effect on Coughlan they sent a series of petitions to Governor Byron accusing Coughlan of refusing to perform his duties as a Church of England clergyman and asking to have him removed.²⁵ The merchants opposed Coughlan because he attempted to prevent them from carrying on their business on Sunday. Coughlan's attempt to enforce the observance of the Sabbath and to increase church membership were justifiable from his position as minister of the Gospel and as a justice of the peace for the region.

The opposition of the merchants appears to have had little effect on his work or position. He was arraigned before the local magistrate but the following extract shows the failure of attempts to remove him from either of his positions.

It cannot be made to appear that the Rev. Mr. Coughlan did absolutely refuse any person the Holy Sacrament on account of not attending private meetings. But he has signified it to many that they should do it and in default of which would be refused. This is acknowledged by Coughlan. The accusation that Coughlan took away five pounds (of a fine) from Power of which he swore falsely that McCarthy sold liquor could not be proven.

The refusal of the inhabitants to contribute to Coughlan's support was probably their most effective weapon. However, since they had agreed to provide him with his salary they were morally, if not legally, bound to support him. On July 18, 1770

24. Ibid., p. 14.

25. SMITH, Warrick, An address on Rev. Lawrence Coughlan March 20, 1924 from records of Harbour Grace Court House (unpublished, Gosling Memorial Library)

26. Idem.

Governor Byron issued the following statement reminding them of their obligations:

Whereas I am informed that the Rev. Mr. Coughlan is the minister so procured and residing amongst you, and that, so far from your paying him cheerfully the stipend aforesaid, great numbers of you have refused to contribute towards it, insomuch that he is annually much in arrears to the disgrace of religion and dishonour of yourselves: I do therefore desire and command you and every one of you as aforesaid to pay him with what sums are in arrears, and that you also comply with your said agreement in paying him annually his salary of 100 pounds, everyone of you according to your abilities.²⁷

Failing to stop Coughlan, his enemies "laid a scheme to get the Doctor to give me a dose, which would put an end to my existence".²⁸ However, the doctor revealed the scheme to Coughlan and advised him to be 'upon my guard'.²⁹

Unfavourable reports soon reached the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and at the General Meeting of 1772 a complaint from Commodore Shuldham, Governor of the Island, was presented. The complaint stated the "Mr. Lawrence Coughlan had on two instances refused to baptize children of inhabitants, and in other respects had given great offense to the gentlemen settled in the parish whereupon the Commodore earnestly requested that Mr. Coughlan be removed".³⁰ The Society, at the same time granted Coughlan's request to go to England but insisted that he appear before the Secretary of the Society to answer charges laid against him.³¹ Coughlan was either aware of, or expected such charges for in a letter to John Wesley in

27. PROWSE, W.D. A History of Newfoundland. (London, 1896), p. 331.

28. COUGHLAN, L. op. cit., p. 10.

29. Idem.

30. Minutes of S.P.G. General Meeting 1772, Proceedings of the S.P.G. at its General Meetings, 1747 - 1835, vol. 18-19 ff. 345

31. Idem.

November of the same year he explained:

Our married men meet apart once a week, and the married women do the same. This has given great offence so that repeated complaints have been Made to the Governor... The Society [S.P.G.] I make no doubt, have many complaints about me, but in this I commit all to God.³²

In spite of the accusations and opposition, Coughlan had begun a great work in the island. In six years he had made more religious and social improvements than all the previous missionaries. Three churches had been built and were opened regularly for worship. He had opened a day school and had engaged a school master to carry on the work.³³ By 1772 Coughlan reported a total of 200 communicants, whereas the other missionaries had seldom reported over 25.³⁴ The reports and accusations of his critics show that Coughlan's zeal and ability as a preacher were responsible for his success. In his first correspondence to the S.P.G., he reported that a large number of Irish papists came to hear him preach in their native tongue and that many of them accepted his religion and became ardent followers. His dynamic personality and his Irish background gave Coughlan a decided advantage over the other S.P.G. agents. The "warmth of his preaching compared with the more ritualistic approach of most Anglicans", must have attracted many to his services.³⁵ His efficient organization

32. Letter Coughlan to Wesley, Harbour Grace, Nov. 4, 1772. Arminian Magazine, Sept. 1785, p.490.

33. See chapter VI.

34. CHRISTENSEN, Ruth. "The Establishment of S.P.G. Missions in Newfoundland 1703 - 1783". Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church. June 1951, p. 224.

35. CHRISTENSEN, Ruth. op. cit., p. 24.

of class meetings and personal visitation secured the simple fisherfolk to his doctrine. The class meeting and the itinerancy of the Methodists gave them the advantage of close contact with their followers. Walsh, in his book The Christian Church in Canada, regards these as being most effective in the advance and establishment of Methodism on the frontier of Canada. It was these same personal contacts that aided Coughlan's work in Newfoundland.

Coughlan's reports to the S.P.G. in the latter years of his service indicate that the moral and religious conditions of the colony had improved.³⁶ The decrease in drunkenness and Sabbath breaking which he reported and the continual increase of church members were no mean achievement in a land which was earlier described as 'barbaric'. The constant increase of inhabitants and the many transients of summer fishery added to the problems of a missionary. In 1768 Coughlan reported to the S.P.G. 5620 people in Conception Bay and in 1771 he reported 3449 English and 3348 Irish - a total of 6792.³⁷

The arduous struggle against irreligion and the hostility of his enemies eventually had its effects on Coughlan's physical strength.³⁸ The rigours of climate and the almost impossible conditions of travel required more of a missionary here than in most countries. Then, too, his 'dreadful apprehensions' of the sea, which was his main medium of travel, made his life almost a martyrdom. In 1773 Coughlan resigned his missionary

36. COUGHLAN to S.P.G. 1770. Extracts of S.P.G. Reports 1711 - 1729. (unpublished).

37. COUGHLAN to S.P.G. Dec. 3, 1771. Transcripts of original letters to S.P.G. from North America 1702 - 1799. pp. 195 - 197.

38. Letter to Wesley Nov. 4, 1772. Arminian Magazine, Sept. 1785, p. 90.

post and returned to England where he was, for a while, minister of Cumberland Street Chapel in London.³⁹

There is little information about his later life. He did not rejoin the ranks of Wesley's itinerants although Atmore contends that Coughlan did apply for restoration.⁴⁰ Wilson suggests also that he cast off his Christian principles and slipped back into the ways of 'sin'.⁴¹ The only basis for such an assumption, however, is contained in a letter of John Wesley February 25, 1785.

The last time I saw Mr. Coughlan he was ill in body but in a blessed state of mind. He was utterly broken in pieces, full of contrition for his past unfaithfulness. Not long after I went out of town God removed him to a better place.⁴²

The resignation of Coughlan in 1773 marked the beginning of difficulties and opposition between the Church of England and Methodists in this island. When James Balfour arrived in 1775 from Trinity Bay to replace Coughlan, Harbour Grace was no longer a Methodist stronghold. Many of Coughlan's followers readily adhered to the Anglican doctrines of Balfour.⁴³ But this situation did not occur in Carbonear and the settlements to the north. Coughlan's letters from his followers in those places substantiate the fact that Wesleyan discipline introduced by Coughlan was continued.⁴⁴ When Balfour visited the settlements in 1775 he was immediately faced with opposition

39. FINDLAY and HOLDSWORTH. op. cit., p. 262.

40. ATMORE, Charles. The Methodist Memorial. (London, 1871), p. 46.

41. WILSON, William. Newfoundland and its Missionaries (Cambridge, 1866), p. 143.

42. Letter from Wesley to Stretton, Feb. 25, 1785, Wesleyan Methodist Magazine. vol. 11, series 3, 1824, p. 307.

43. COUGHLAN, L. op. cit., p. 77.

44. Ibid., pp. 50 - 141.

from those whom he described as "dissenters and Methodists who wished for a teacher of their own persuasion".⁴⁵ Balfour clearly recognized this new religious group in his report to the S.P.G. in November 1775:

At Carbonear which belongs to this mission and about four miles by land from Harbour Grace, they refused to admit me to perform church services in their little chapel, and desired that I would permit a Methodist or Presbyterian, to preach to them that their meeting house (as they called it) was their own and that they would do with it as they pleased...I was permitted, however, to perform Devine Services to them...If this thing was allowed it would occasion a continued civil dissention here. So troublesome is enthusiasm already that families will hardly speak to one another on account of differing religion.⁴⁶

Balfour's reference to 'civil dissention' does not mean that there was civil disorder. No mention was made of these groups in the Governor's report for the year. Balfour did not oppose them openly but in a letter to the S.P.G. in December 1775 he describes their actions:

They are fond of holding private conventicle two or three times a week, in sentiments unfriendly to the civil government and give the magistrates sometimes a good deal of trouble. Were there numerous and enterprising men to head them, they would exactly resemble the Americans on the continent. But happy for us our people of property here are strictly loyal. It is only our lower classes that affect those things. I act with greatest moderation because to oppose religion as they term their enthusiasm would kindle a fire. They are scheming to have a Methodist preacher recommended to them by their former missionary, or a Presbyterian which would render their neighbours of a different way of thinking very uneasy and create a great deal of

45. Balfour to S.P.G., 1775, Extracts of S.P.G. Reports 1711-1779. (unpublished)

46. Balfour to S.P.G. Nov. 8 and 15, 1775. Transcripts of original letters to S.P.G. from North America 1702 - 1799. pp. 195 - 197.

trouble and which I hardly think the government would allow. However, I hope in time to soften them and bring them into better order.⁴⁷

Carbonear was not the only place that gave Balfour opposition. Although the people of Harbour Grace were mainly Church of England, Balfour could raise only one-fifth of the subscriptions which Coughlan raised.⁴⁸ Moreover, it was with some difficulty that he got possession of the mission house; even then, unlike his predecessor, he was expected to pay rent.⁴⁹ Balfour also continually reported a smaller number of communicants than did Coughlan. In 1775, the year of his arrival he reported one hundred and forty for Harbour Grace and Trinity Bay, whereas Coughlan had reported two hundred from Harbour Grace area alone.⁵⁰

During the three year period between Coughlan's departure and Balfour's arrival the Church at Carbonear was kept open by Coughlan's followers who continued to hold classes as he had done. In Harbour Grace lay preachers of the Church of England and sometimes the magistrates held services according to the Church of England ritual, preaching such sermons as; "The Respect, Obedience and Homage the People ought to pay magistrates".⁵¹ When Balfour arrived in Carbonear to hold services he was refused the use of the building, but was permitted to hold services after the inhabitants insisted that the building

47. Balfour to S.P.G. Dec. 4, 1775. Ibid., p. 226.

48. Balfour to S.P.G. Dec. 3, 1776. Ibid., p. 228.

49. Idem.

50. Ibid., p. 218.

51. COUGHLAN, L. op. cit., p. 80.

belonged to them and that the Church of England had no claim on it.⁵² Balfour had no success in Conception Bay except at Harbour Grace. On October 26, 1785 he reported to S.P.G.; "at Carbonear and the North Shore [of Conception Bay] they are a sort of Dissenters and Methodists and the rest Roman Catholics".⁵³ A further report in 1785 states:

I am sorry to inform you that I am involved in a great deal of trouble by means of hot headed enthusiastic people. I applied to the Governor the last day of June on account of an insult offered me the 16 January before; against a John Stretton and Clements Noel that when in the middle of the chapel at Carbonear, Noel pointed to the said Stretton who suddenly and rudely ascended the Pulpit behind me without assigning any reason or cause for so doing. Upon which for fear of a riot on Sunday, I quietly left the place...⁵⁴

Balfour sought and received support from Governor Edwards in 1775 and the magistrates of Conception Bay were ordered:

to prevent any person from marrying, burying, baptizing or preaching within said mission in future except such persons as may be appointed by said Rev. James Balfour to do same and to take care that the said two chapels built for the service of the Church of England within said Mission are not made use of by the Methodists or any sect whatsoever.⁵⁵

However, suppression of the Methodists was not a policy of the British Government. Article 21 of Governor Palliser's instructions, 1764, read; "you are to permit a free exercise of religion to all persons except Papists so that they be contented with a quiet and peaceable enjoyment of the same

52. Balfour to S.P.G. Nov. 8, 1775. Transcripts of original letters to S.P.G. received from North America. 1702 - 1799, p. 218.

53. Balfour to S.P.G. Oct. 26, 1785. Ibid., p. 272.

54. Ibid., pp. 273 - 275.

55. Copy of Proclamation of Governor Edwards Aug. 31, 1779. Letters to S.P.G. vol. B6, p. 242 - 243.

not giving offence or scandal to the Government".⁵⁶ Moreover, in 1785 when Balfour sought help from Governor Campbell because he was driven out of Carbonear Church, he received none. The surrogate reprimanded Stretton and Noel for their bold action, but the Governor, "looked upon the building as private property and ordered them to shut the door against me, if I came there without their consent." ⁵⁷ This was a severe blow to Balfour and left him without any support against the Methodists. In a letter to the S.P.G. expressing the hopelessness of his endeavour, he wrote:

I hope the Society will give proper instructions to the ensuing Governor and remit me what is recorded; otherwise I cannot stay here as the people in general are so much inclined to enthusiasm and sectaries...⁵⁸

There are no statistics to show the actual strength of either the Church of England or the Methodists. Balfour reported the number of communicants each year but this was by no means the only adherents of the Church of England. Since there was no Methodist missionary in this area from 1773 - 1784 no reports on the Methodists were sent to the British Conference. Although there was a general decrease in the population of Conception Bay during this period, the main reason for the decline in Church of England strength was the separation of the Methodists after Coughlan left and their continued activity under their lay preachers. The reports of Balfour to the S.P.G. show clearly that the Methodists offered strong competition and that the Church of England strength was

56. C.O. 194/17, Palliser's Remarks on Instructions 1764.

57. Balfour to S.P.G. Oct. 26, 1785 Transcripts of original Letters to S.P.G. received from North America 1702 - 1799. p. 274.

58. Idem.

limited almost entirely to Harbour Grace.⁵⁹ The decline of the Church of England is further substantiated in his report on December 8, 1784; "our Church will soon have little footing here on account of the Methodists and Papists."⁶⁰

The Methodists in Newfoundland were now a distinct religious group. They were recognized by Balfour as opposing Church of England doctrine and had been recognized by the Governor as having property rights distinct from the Church of England. From 1774 to 1785 Methodism in the Harbour Grace - Carbonear area was kept alive by several faithful followers of Coughlan, led by John Stretton and Arthur Ghomey [also Tomey]. John Stretton was a merchant from Limerick where he and other members of the Stretton family were converted to Methodism by John Wesley.⁶¹ John Telford, editor of Letters of Wesley; maintains that Stretton came to Carbonear in 1770 and in 1771 moved to Harbour Grace and built a Methodist Chapel at his own expense.⁶² William Wilson in his book Newfoundland and its Missionaries states the opposite: that he came to Harbour Grace and moved to Carbonear.⁶³ However, a letter of Wesley in 1785 is addressed to John Stretton, Harbour Grace.

Stretton, with his two helpers, Arthur Thomey, a merchant of Harbour Grace, and Thomas Pottle, a merchant's clerk of

59. Balfour to S.P.G. Oct. 26, 1785. see p. 26.

60. Balfour to S.P.G. Dec. 8, 1784. S.P.G.F.P. "C" Series 1752 - 1858. Box 1.

61. Letter from Wesley to John Stretton, Harbour Grace, Feb. 25, 1785. Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, vol. 3, series 3, 1824, p. 204.

62. Letters of John Wesley. Editor John Telford, Standard Edition. (London, 1931), vol. 3, p. 260. (Editor's note).

63. WILSON, Rev. William. op. cit., pp. 145 - 146.

Carbonear, was instrumental in keeping alive the Methodist movement.⁶⁴ After Coughlan's return to England his letters from Thomas Pottle of Carbonear and Arthur Thomey of Harbour Grace verify the part played by these men in the Methodist movement. The following excerpt from a letter by Thomas Pottle to Coughlan in December 1774 indicates that he was the regular preacher. "This is the fourth Sabbath that the Lord has enabled me to make my own sermons and assist me to speak also".⁶⁵ It was during the Ministry of pottle that Methodism was introduced to the Channel Islands by Pierre Le Sueur. Le Sueur was a regular fisherman to Harbour Grace and became converted under Pottle's preaching.⁶⁶

While the Methodist laymen were busy consolidating the work in Carbonear and Harbour Grace, a new movement was about to begin in Old Perlican, some sixty miles to the north. In 1774 John Hoskins landed in Trinity with the hope of setting up a school to make enough money to move on to New England.⁶⁷ Although Hoskins had been converted to Methodism in 1746 in Bristol, he had no intentions of becoming a Methodist Missionary.⁶⁸ Following the advice of the S.P.G. Missionary at Trinity, Hoskins crossed the Bay of Old Perlican where some fifty families received him gladly and asked him to "read prayers and a sermon on Sundays, there being

64. FINDLAY and HOLDSWORTH, op. cit., p. 263.

65. COUGHLAN, I. op. cit., p. 263.

66. FINDLAY AND HOLDSWORTH. op. cit., p. 263. and MOORE, R.D. Methodism in the Channel Island. (London, 1952), pp. 24-26.

67. Letter from Hoskins to Wesley. Oct. 15, 1781. Arminian Magazine, Jan. 1785, pp. 24-26

68. Ibid., p. 26.

no manner of public worship there".⁶⁹ Here again, as did Coughlan in Harbour Grace, Hoskins found a people destitute of religion and began to minister to them. Ther services varied. Hoskins read church prayers and Wesley's sermons and sang Wesley's hymns.⁷⁰ It is quite inconceivable that people who "did not know how to behave in devine service; not even to kneel in prayer but would stand at a distance and look at me as if I had been a monster"...⁷¹ paid much attention to the forms or theology of either the Established Church or the Methodists. Yet it was inevitable that Hoskins would conduct religious services and teach the scriptures according to his own religious beliefs. He began by teaching "some parts of the Common Prayer, the articles of the Church, and the more essential parts of the religion of the heart; such as repentance, remission of sins, and holiness. I insisted on the necessity of conversion".⁷² Soon many of Hoskins' listeners thought seriously about his plan of salvation, and a group began to meet each week in what Hoskins called 'Salvation Meetings'.⁷³ This was the counterpart of Wesley's class meeting which had been adopted by the Methodists in England and which became a distinguishing feature of the Methodist religion. The same type of meetings had been organized in Harbour Grace and Carbonear by Coughlan.

Hoskins, like Coughlan, sought the benevolence of the

69. Idem.

70. Idem.

71. Idem.

72. Idem.

73. Idem.

Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. In 1779 he wrote to the S.P.G., explaining conditions in Trinity and emphasizing the need for religious teachings.⁷⁴ In the same year a petition was sent to the S.P.G. from the residents of Old Perlican, asking to have Hoskins appointed as their missionary.⁷⁵ In the autumn of 1779 Hoskins went to England in the hope of receiving ordination from the Bishop of London.⁷⁶ Whether or not the Methodist work of Coughlan influenced Dr. Lowth (Bishop of London) to refuse Hoskins' request can only be speculated. Wesley however took strong exception to the refusal. In his letter to Bishop Lowth on August 10, 1780, Wesley wrote:

I do not know that Mr. Hoskins had any favour to ask of the Society. He asked the favour of your Lordship to ordain him that he might minister to a little flock in America. But your Lordship did not see good to ordain him. But your Lordship did see good to send into America, other persons who knew something of Greek and Latin but who knew no more of saving souls than of catching whales.⁷⁷

Hoskins returned to Newfoundland in the spring of 1780 to continue his work in the Old Perlican area.

By 1785 Methodism had been well established in Newfoundland, although there was no organized church. In addition to the societies in the Harbour Grace - Carbonear area, large societies were formed at Old Perlican, Trinity Bay, and Lower Island Cove in Conception Bay.⁷⁸ Churches had been built at both places, and

74. Hoskins to S.P.G. Dec. 28, 1779. Reports of S.P.G.F.P. "C" series, 1772 - 1787. (original manuscripts).

75. Idem.

76. Idem.

77. The Works of Rev. John Wesley. (London, 1861), Fifth Edition, vol. 3, p. 142.

78. Letter from Hoskins to Wesley. Aug. 10, 1780. Arminian Magazine. March 1785, p. 143.

preaching tours were conducted by workers. Arthur Thomey of Carbonear began these tours while on business trips to Old Perlican, but they soon increased and spread to other areas.⁷⁹ On several occasions Hoskins went to Trinity and although he met with severe opposition at first, he eventually secured a hearing as well as the protection of the magistrate.⁸⁰ He visited Bonavista in the autumn of 1784 and planned to begin a school and mission there in the spring.⁸¹

The extension of the work to Old Perlican and Lower Island Cove made it much more difficult for the lay workers whose business prevented them from devoting all their time and energy to the movement. Moreover, the death of Thomey in 1784 and the increase of Roman Catholics in Conception Bay placed a heavier burden on the shoulders of Stretton and demanded more extensive work to combat the increased Roman Catholic activity.⁸² The population of Conception Bay had been considerably decreased during the War of American Revolution, but the proportion of Roman Catholics was increasing.⁸³ Balfour reported a decrease of three thousand in the bay for this period.⁸⁴ This increase in Catholicism at the expense of the Methodists, (for it was mostly north of Carbonear where they were strongest) caused Stretton to seek help from England. In 1784, he wrote to

79. Ibid. February 1785, p. 85.

80. Letter from Hoskins to Wesley, August 10, 1780. Ibid., April 1785, p. 195.

81. Letter from Hoskins to Mr. Squire, Nov. 1784, Ibid., Sept. 1785, p. 90.

82. Balfour to S.P.G. Oct. 26, 1785. Transcripts of Original Letters to S.P.G. received from North America. 1702 - 1799. pp. 271-272.

83. See Appendix E.

84. Balfour to S.P.G. Oct. 26, 1785, Ibid., p. 253.

Wesley explaining the situation and asking for a preacher who could devote himself wholly to the work.⁸⁵

Newfoundland Methodism was established and nurtured by individual effort; only after twenty years did it seek the co-ordination of an official Methodist preacher. During the same period, the movement in the Eastern States of America had been fully organized under a definite plan and in 1784, held its first Conference. By 1784, Methodism in the Maritimes was four years old, and the energetic William Black had secured two full-time ministers for his work. Two years later when Newfoundland had one full-time minister Nova Scotia had six stationed on four circuits.⁸⁶

The lag in the Newfoundland work was caused by several factors. As in the case of most aspects of the island's growth, organized religious progress was hampered by the unique colonial policy applied to it by the Mother Country. The attempts to keep the island uninhabited and to neglect all its resources, except the fishery, succeeded in keeping population at a minimum and in a condition little better than the native Indian. Most of the inhabitants were hostile to religion and in no way anxious to improve the social or religious conditions. Thus the Methodist laymen, after Coughlan, could not boast of such success and organization as Black of Nova Scotia could. Wesley's immediate answer to Stretton's request for a full-time minister

85. FINDLAY and HOLDSWORTH. op. cit., p. 266.

86. FRENCH, Goldwin S. op. cit., p. 109.

provides evidence of Stretton's hesitance in seeking help and Wesley's readiness to give it. On February 25, 1785 he wrote:

You did well in breaking through that needless diffidence, if you had written sooner you would have heard from me sooner... If that deadly enemy of true religion Popery is breaking through upon you, there is indeed no time to be lost; for it is far easier to prevent the plague than to stop it. Last autumn Dr. Coke sailed from England and is now visiting the flock in the midland provinces of America and settling them on the New Testament Plan... A day or two ago I wrote and desired him before he returns to England to call upon our Brethern also in Newfoundland and perhaps leave a preacher there... you shall want no assistance that is in the power of your affectionate Friend and Brother.⁸⁷

Although Dr. Coke did not visit Newfoundland, the year 1785 is significant since in October of that year the first official Methodist Missionary arrived from London. In the London Conference minutes of that year, Newfoundland appears in the list of stations as being supplied with two missionaries, but only one came. More important, however, is the fact that the Newfoundland movement was now taken under the wing of the British Connexion and would, henceforth, receive the help and attention to organize itself into a separate Connexion.

87. Letter from Wesley to Stretton, Feb. 25, 1785.
Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, vol. 3, series 3, 1824, p. 307.

CHAPTER III

ORGANIZATION OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND DISTRICT 1785 - 1815

The organization of the Newfoundland Methodist movement evolved slowly and reluctantly. The island had no native evangelist to spearhead the movement and provide it with the leadership and inspiration that William Black gave the Methodist movement in Nova Scotia. The few early missionaries were content to labour independently rather than to co-ordinate their efforts and seek organization. Yet, it must be remembered that semi-isolation of the missionaries, caused by the rugged terrain and harsh climate, made it impossible for the missionary work to be as effective as it was on the mainland. Moreover, the unstable economy and the transient population of the country were serious obstacles in the way of organization and growth.

By 1780 Methodism in North America, especially in the New England region, had presented Wesley with the problem of providing preachers. The refusal of Bishop Lowth in 1780 to ordain a minister for Newfoundland convinced Wesley that Methodism would have to provide its own clergymen for the New World.¹ The appointment in 1784 of "Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America" was to apply to Newfoundland as well as to Nova Scotia and the United States of America.² Previous to this appointment Wesley had made known his intention of including Nova Scotia and Newfoundland in his

1. FINDLAY and HOLDSWORTH, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 240 -248.

2. Wesley to Coke, Asbury and the brethren in North America, Sept. 10, 1784. Findlay and Holdsworth, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 248.

plan for American Methodism.³

The organization of North American Methodism in 1784 had no effect on Newfoundland. Neither Coke nor Asbury, as superintendents of American work, had any direct connection with Newfoundland. Although Wesley asked Dr. Coke to visit the island and leave a preacher or two, Newfoundland got no help from the newly formed American Connexion. In 1785 the British Conference minutes contained the names of two preachers for Newfoundland, but one of these went to Nova Scotia instead.⁴

John McGeary, who came to Newfoundland in October 1785, was the first Methodist missionary sent by the British Conference. The Newfoundland Methodist movement was still weak and needed a strong organizing force. In spite of the fact that McGeary had been a missionary in America for two years, it soon became apparent that he was not suited to the Newfoundland Mission.⁵ From 1785 to 1788 he laboured in the Carbonear region, but with little success.⁶ Had he received the two helpers which were appointed to Newfoundland by the Methodist Conference in 1786 conditions might have improved, but these were diverted by a storm to the West Indies and McGeary was still alone.⁷

The departure of McGeary in 1788 is not to be attributed entirely to discouragement and an unfortunate marriage.⁸ Probably

3.. FINDLAY and HOLDSWORTH, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 291.

4. Minutes of Methodist Conference London 1785. (London, 1795).

5. FINDLAY and HOLDSWORTH, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 267.

6. Wesley to Black. Letters of John Wesley. John Telford (Ed.) (London, 1931), vol. 7, p. 371.

7. FINDLAY and HOLDSWORTH, op. cit., vol., p. 371.

8. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 268.

the main reason was his failure to win the co-operation and support of the lay preachers. In a letter to William Black of Nova Scotia on February 20, 1787, Wesley wrote:

Poor John McGeary appears to be utterly discouraged, not only through want of success but through want of bare conveniences, yea necessities of life. Truly, if I could have supposed that those who made me fair promises would have suffered a preacher to want bread, I should have sent him into other parts where he would have wanted nothing.

But this non-co-operation was not against McGeary only. There appears to have been a general lack of unity among all the Newfoundland lay preachers. Following McGeary's return to England, Wesley wrote to John Stretton on February 27, 1789:

What concerns me most is that I cannot find any union between you northern preachers. John Hoskins, John McGeary and John Stretton I should imagine would all have acted in concert; on the contrary each seems to be afraid of the other. How is this? What is the true ground for this shyness?¹⁰

Although there is no evidence to indicate the cause of this discord, it appears to have been between John Hoskins and John Stretton. In a letter to Stretton March 19, 1788 Wesley wrote, "I have confused remembrances of some objections against you last year, made I think by John Hoskins. I hope if there was once some foundation for them, it is now removed".¹¹ In a letter to William Black March 19, 1788, Wesley referred to this situation and suggested, "If there is any ground for them [objections against Stretton] should you not freely and lovingly talk to

9. TELFORD, op.cit., vol. VI, p. 371.

10. Ibid., vol. VIII, pp. 119 - 120.

11. Ibid., vol. VIII, p. 48.

Brother Stretton".¹² Stretton appears to have assumed leadership of the Methodist movement after Coughlan left. It was he who sought a missionary from Wesley in 1785 and he continued to correspond with Wesley regarding the Newfoundland mission. Such a situation could have been the basis for disunity. There is little doubt that the whole thing was caused by the loose organization of the Newfoundland mission. McGeary was not the strong-willed determined person that Coughlan was and he could not co-ordinate the work of the lay preachers. If McGeary had had the organizational ability of Coughlan or the leadership qualities of William Black, there is little likelihood that this disunity would have arisen.

McGeary returned to Newfoundland in 1790, but there was little if any improvement in his work. He made little impression on the people and was not able to make any appreciable increase in church membership. In an attempt to improve these conditions and to help McGeary, Wesley asked William Black, superintendent of the Methodists in Nova Scotia, to "do all you possible can to keep our brethern in peace with each other and your pains will not be lost on poor John McGeary".¹³

Nova Scotia had its problems of organization also but the influence and determination of William Black kept the movement from deteriorating to the extent it did in Newfoundland. The ordination of Black by Coke and Asbury in 1789 gave Nova Scotia

12. Idem.

13. Idem.

a native champion for the Methodist movement.¹⁴ His later appointment as superintendent of the Nova Scotia mission and his close connection with Wesley gave Nova Scotian Methodism unity and linked it directly with English Methodism.¹⁵ The correspondence of Wesley and Black from 1787 to 1790 indicates that Newfoundland also was under Black's superintendency. However, with the exception of a visit by Black in 1791 and the inclusion of Newfoundland under Nova Scotia in the British Conference minutes, the Newfoundland mission was not affected.

The visit of William Black to Newfoundland in 1791 re-vitalized the Methodist movement. He found McGeary in despair and ready to abandon the mission a second time.¹⁶ Although two chapels and a preacher's house had been built during McGeary mission, the once flourishing society was almost non-existent. Where Coughlan had a society of over two hundred members, Black found in 1791, "no regular society, only fifteen women meet among themselves".¹⁷ From August 9th to September 11th Black conducted preaching tours in Conception Bay from Port-de-Grave to Blackhead. His preaching was very successful. Hundreds gathered to hear him and new societies were formed in each place. He wrote in his Journal:

I preached to about three hundred in Port-de-Grave in the open air; and in the afternoon to about two hundred and fifty at Bay Roberts.
I preached twice and held a love feast in the church

14. LATOURETTE, K.S., A History of Expansion of Christianity. (New York, 1943), vol. V, p. 27.

15. CLARKE, S.D., Church and sect in Canada. (Toronto, 1948), pp. 192 - 194.

16. KNIGHT, Richard, "Memoirs of the Late Rev. William Black", Wesleyan Methodist Magazine. Series 3, vol. XVI, July 1837, p.487.

17. "Black in Newfoundland", The Arminian Magazine, March 1792, p. 122.

at Blackhead. This also was a quickening time. There are now about forty resolved to meet in class.¹⁸

It is difficult to assess the real value of Black's mission to Newfoundland. He regarded it as the most interesting and most useful part of his missionary life.¹⁹ His Journal records many evangelistic meetings and the period of his visit was a great Methodist 'revival'. The numbers he converted to Methodism considerably increased the Methodist following, and his inspiration and organization of new societies gave new hope to the struggling movement. This revitalization of the Methodist movement is the main contribution of Black's visit. It gave Newfoundland Methodism the impetus to overcome its difficulties and survive the lack of leadership until it was to have permanent missionaries in 1796. The acquisition of a deed for the Carbonear Church and dwelling gave the movement some degree of permanency. The church built during the ministry of Coughlan was used exclusively by the Methodists. When Balfour succeeded Coughlan as S.P.G. missionary the Carbonear Methodists claimed the church as their property and refused admittance to the S.P.G. agent.²⁰ Since Governor Campbell supported the Methodists in claiming the church to be their private property, Black merely had to have the deed to the property registered with the British Conference.

18. Ibid., March 1792, p. 22; April 1792, p. 233.

19. KNIGHT, "Memoirs of the Late Rev. William Black".
op. cit.,

20. See Chapter II p. 25

There is no doubt that Black's visit was the most important event since the arrival of Coughlan in 1765. Yet, one fails to understand why the comparatively successful society at Old Perlican was not included in his visit. He states in his Journal that he did not go there for fear of missing passage to Halifax.²¹ There appears to have been no attempt to combine the efforts of Stretton at Harbour Grace, McGeary at Carbonear, and Hoskins at Old Perlican, or to settle the differences to which Wesley referred in a letter to Black in 1788.²² No provision was made to continue the work that Black had revived or to supply preachers for the struggling societies. His visit was an evangelizing rather than an organizing tour. Newfoundland was still included in the Nova Scotia District and for the next twenty-four years was listed in the British Conference reports under the superintendancy of Black.

After Black's visit the Methodist movement was again without leadership. McGeary returned to England in 1792 and the work was left to local converts. Again Stretton sought help from England, but his position now was different. Wesley was dead and Stretton had no correspondent in the Methodist Conference of England. The appointment of George Smith in 1794 was a result of the close connection of the Newfoundland

21. "Black in Newfoundland", op. cit., April 1792, p. 233.

22. Ibid., March 19, 1788. and Telford. op. cit., vol. VIII, p. 48.

fishery with the town of Poole in South West England, rather than the work of the British Conference. The following extract from Smith's Journal makes this clear:

Some of the men who had heard us preach at Poole, and afterwards sailed to Newfoundland, spoke of our proceedings with approbation to Mr. Stretton; a gentleman of Harbour-de-Grace who wrote to Mr. Brackenbury a pressing letter, to come over or send a preacher as soon as possible. Mr. Brackenbury communicated the letter to me; and as I found a strong desire to go; which Dr. Coke, to whom Mr. Brackenbury also imparted the letter soon afterwards in London, powerfully enforced.²³

George Smith, born in Nottingham in 1766, began his Methodist ministry in 1791 as an assistant to Robert Car Brackenbury, squire and Methodist preacher, who had spread Methodism in the West Country.²⁴ Smith's two-and-a-half years with Brackenbury, not only gave him training in Missionary work but brought him in close contact with the Newfoundland fishermen. When Smith landed on the island in 1794, possibly in May since he left England on May 1, 1794,²⁵ he probably had a better knowledge of conditions than his predecessor had and he was better suited to the work.

Smith's ministry which extended to the end of the eighteenth century, was most effective. He began his work in the region of Conception Bay, visiting "the small coves on the coast where there were a few settlers".²⁶ Smith was very active in his work

23. "Memior of Rev. George Smith", Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, series 3, vol. XII, 1833. p. 7.

24. Ibid., p. 7.

25. Ibid., p. 8.

26. Ibid., p. 8.

and soon aroused the antagonism of the S.P.G. missionaries. The missionary at Harbour Grace reported to the Society in November 1795. "The Methodists have been very industrious in disseminating their tenets among the ignorant which has done very considerable mischief in the [Conception] Bay".²⁷

Smith did not confine his activity to Conception Bay. A year and a half after his arrival he visited places in Trinity Bay and Bonavista Bay where he preached and formed societies as far north as Greenspond.²⁸ His visits to these appear to have been in the early part of 1795. John Clinch, the S.P.G. missionary at Trinity, reported to the Society on November 16, 1795: "A Methodist preacher has been disseminating his tenets in Conception Bay and Trinity, and had lately paid two visits to Bonavista".²⁹

Smith probably visited places in Conception Bay and the south side of Trinity Bay in the autumn and winter of 1794. Since these bays are adjacent, he could travel by land. The opening of the 1795 fishing season would have enabled him to visit the more northerly places of Bonavista and Greenspond by water.

Like Coughlan and Hoskins, Smith found life in Newfoundland hard and insecure. The poverty of the inhabitants and the failure of the English Methodists to supply his needs caused Smith to seek ordination in the Church of England. His Journal

27. Jenner to S.P.G., Minutes of General Meeting of S.P.G. January 22, 1796, vols. 25 - 28. ff. 3.

28. "Memoir of Rev. George Smith". op. cit., p. 8.

29. Clinch to S.P.G., Minutes of General Meeting of S.P.G. op. cit., ff. 6.

explains his action.

To remedy this inconvenience [lack of support] as well as to have it my power to relieve the necessities of the poor which were very urgent in the cold season, I resolved to return to England to obtain ordination from the Archbishop of Canterbury, the President of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; being recommended by the friends at Bonavista, who with the magistrate at the head of them had signed their names to a certificate of my good behaviour and who entreated the archbishop to ordain me pastor to that church. The annual stipend was seventy pounds, from which, as well as from my letters of ordination I expected (if the Lord should favour my design) to derive singular advantages, not for my own sake, but for the cause of Christ and the precious souls for whose sake I went thither.³⁰

Opposition to Smith's plans appears to have originated with the S.P.G. missionaries, although they were stationed at places many miles from each other and from Bonavista. A petition from a number of inhabitants of Bonavista, requesting that Smith be sent to them as a missionary, was rejected by the S.P.G. in favour of a counter-petition also from Bonavista.³¹ A letter from a Mr. Blane, justice of the peace of Bonavista, to the S.P.G., November 16, 1795, stated that Smith's petition was, "at the request of the most respectable planters", but "that the application of Smith has given much offence to some of the orthodox members of the church, who have sent thither a counter-petition to obtain signatures".³² Blane informed the S.P.G. that he "witnessed no powerful effects from the

30. Memoir of Rev. George Smith, op. cit., p. 8 - 9

31. Minutes of General Meeting of S.P.G. Jan. 22, 1796, op. cit., ff. 8.

32. Ibid., ff. 98 -99.

labours of those paid for disseminating Christian knowledge", but that, "the practice of exterior piety most abounds in that country amongst the dissenters."³³ He also pointed out that the jealousy and personal desires of the S.P.G. missionaries were behind the counter-petition but his letter had no effect on the Society's decision. The minutes of the meeting held January 22, 1796, read:

The Society is decidedly of the opinion induced also by representations of the three very respectable missionaries in Newfoundland... that the petition in favour of George Smith be rejected, as it appears that he is an illiterate unordained Methodist preacher and had already occasioned great confusion in that colony.³⁴

Smith's short ministry had been very effective. He had spread Methodism north into Bonavista and had made the British Conference more conscious of Newfoundland's needs. The Methodist Conference of 1796 did more for Newfoundland than any previous conference had done. For the first time the island was given two missionaries - George Smith, who had already spent a year and a half in Newfoundland, and William Thoresby, who had served the connexion in England for eleven years.³⁵ It is highly probable that the presence of Smith at the 1796 Conference and his recent attempt to obtain help from the S.P.G. influenced the conference in its decision.

The presence of two missionaries in Newfoundland aided the growth and spread of Methodism greatly. Thoresby worked

33. Idem.,

34. Idem.,

35. FINDLAY and HOLDSWORTH, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 270.

among the older societies in Conception Bay and Smith continued his work in the Bonavista area.³⁶ Although Smith's work was hampered by social and economic conditions, he successfully pioneered Methodism in the northern settlements. During the winter of 1796 he opened a school at Bonavista and encouraged the inhabitants to prepare material for the construction of a church.³⁷ However, sickness and want of money forced him to abandon his work and return to England in May, 1797.³⁸

By the close of the eighteenth century Methodism had been firmly established in the island, mainly in Conception Bay and Trinity Bay. The pioneering spirit of Smith had spread Methodism to new regions and had given hope to the older societies. The number of Methodists, as published in the minutes of the Methodist Conference each year, had risen from two hundred at the time of Black's visit in 1791 to five hundred and ten at the end of Smith's ministry in 1798. It must be remembered, however, that the numbers reported each year did not include all whom Methodism served. They were the people who 'found salvation'. In addition, Methodism had many adherents who were regarded as part of the Methodist Connexion but who were not members of the Methodist societies. The extent of such a group is suggested by a Mr. Lampen,

36. "Memoir of Rev. George Smith", op. cit., p. 9.

37. Ibid., p. 10.

38. Idem.

schoolmaster for the S.P.G. at Harbour Grace, who wrote in 1891: "We are surrounded in this Bay by a set of Methodists." 39 Again in 1804 James Bulpitt, Methodist missionary at Carbonear reported to Dr. Coke: "There are about six thousand who sit under my preaching." 40 It may be concluded therefore, that the fluctuations in the number of Methodists published in Conference Minutes do not mean any large decrease in adherents. They may be interpreted rather as the failure of members to adhere to the strict rules and discipline of the societies. This was caused by the inability of the missionaries to visit societies regularly and frequently.

At the opening of the nineteenth century Newfoundland was the most disorganized and backward Methodist Mission in the New World. The minutes of the British Conference for 1800 show twenty missionaries in the West Indies - eleven in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and one in Newfoundland. The West Indian Mission reported between fifty and sixty thousand adherents and about fifty negro preachers in the field.⁴¹ Whereas there were many reports and a large volume of correspondence from the West Indies and the New Brunswick and Nova Scotian mission fields, there was practically none from Newfoundland. However, Newfoundland was in no way comparable to these places economically, socially or politically. Newfoundland Methodism was insecure and fluctuating as were

39. Lampen to S.P.G. S.P.G. Manuscripts, 'C' series. A-180.

40. COKE, Thomas (Rev.) An account of the rise, progress and present state of the Methodist Missions. (Methodist Conference Office, London, 1804) p. 30.

41. "A Short Account of the Success of Methodist Missionaries in the West Indies" Methodist Magazine, series 3, vol. X, Jan. 1800, p. 42.

the economy and social conditions of the island itself.

The organization of the Methodist Movement in Newfoundland improved in the early years of the nineteenth century. This improvement was due largely to better administration by the British Conference of its foreign missions. Since Wesley's death in 1791, Dr. Coke had been responsible for overseas missions. The increasing complexity of the work and the constant need for financial support led to the creation of a series of committees.⁴² The extension of the work to India and the death of Coke in 1813 presented a financial and administrative problem to the Methodist Conference. Leeds had formed a society in 1813 to raise money for missions, and in 1814 the Conference recommended the establishment of a Methodist Missionary Society in every district.⁴³ This system of financing missions led to the formation of a general Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society in 1817.⁴⁴

The new administrative and financial arrangements soon affected the Newfoundland field. A new regulation of Conference required missionaries abroad to have the same qualifications as those employed in regular circuits in England. This meant a more experienced and capable missionary force in the island. The increase and improvement in the volume and nature of the correspondence from the Newfoundland missionaries indicate

42. FINDLAY and HOLDSWORTH, op. cit., vol. 7, pp. 68 - 71.

43. The Twenty First Annual Report of the Missionary Society of Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada. May 31, 1846. pp. 3 - 11

44. Idem.

that missionaries and Conference took a more positive approach to the island's problems. Reports were regular, giving an appraisal of the work rather than being factual. The report of 1810 pointed to the scarcity of ministers and places of worship as the main obstacles to progress.⁴⁵ A regular succession of missionaries, most of whom had spent one to three years in the English or Irish itinerancy, and prolonged terms of service in Newfoundland gave the work a greater permanency. Gradually a distinct Methodist community developed in parts of the island. The nucleus of such a community had been formed in the Carbonear area by 1800. The adherence of local merchants to Methodism gave it an improved social status as well as much needed financial assistance. John Gosse, Merchant of Carbonear, became a devoted friend of the cause and an important figure in its organization.⁴⁶ The ministry of John Bulpitt from 1799 to 1801 had two significant achievements. His ministry, was concentrated mainly in one area - the Carbonear region. He also opened a Methodist school, which he operated during practically the whole of his ministry.⁴⁷

In 1805, John Remington, missionary at Harbour Grace, made the first attempt to solve the mission's most serious problem - poverty. Hitherto, no financial assistance had been given the

45. Annual Report of Missions under Methodist Conference for year 1810. (London, Printed at Conference Office, 1811) p.14.

46. Bulpitt to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, June 1805, Incoming Correspondence.

47. See Chapter VI.

Newfoundland field, except for small sums to individual missionaries. Having realized that the fishermen were too poor to erect church buildings, Remmington urged the Wesleyan Missionary Society to aid with money. Remmington assured the Society that if money was provided, the inhabitants would share half the cost of buildings and would meet maintenance expenses.⁴⁸ In a firm tone he pointed out the responsibility of the Society to the Newfoundland Mission:

While I advance simple truths I hope it will have weight with men who have long endeavoured to promote the truths of the Gospel and have a blessed effect in causing them to awake to the spiritual wants and penitential groans of the needs of the inhabitants of that island Newfoundland. To be silent on such a subject at this period I believe would be a sin against the Father of Mercies. I am astonished that the Indian Missionaries are attended to with so much care while the decedents of your own country now inhabiting the coasts of Newfoundland are so neglected.⁴⁹

Although Remmington's appeal was not successful it presented the Newfoundland problem clearly.

John Remmington's ministry from 1804 to 1810 marks the beginning of a succession of devoted men who were concerned more with the organization and welfare of the Methodists than with outward piety and enthusiasm. In 1808 William Ellis and Samuel McDowell joined Remmington, and for the first time the island had three missionaries. Remmington was mainly concerned with Trinity Bay and Bonavista, where he continued the work begun by George Smith. With the support of Magistrate Blane, he requested

48. Remmington to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.
 Aug. 23, 1810. Incoming Correspondence, item 61.
 49. Idem.

the Methodist Conference to send a resident missionary to Bonavista.⁵⁰ Remmington also visited St. John's where he was "graciously received" by the governor and established a Methodist Society there.⁵¹ At the close of his mission Remmington sent a report to the Missionary Society in which he outlined three proposals for the Newfoundland field:

1. A building fund to be provided for the island.
2. Closer contact to be maintained between the Society and the Newfoundland missionaries.
3. McDowell, having travelled three years in Ireland, to be made superintendent of the work.⁵²

Although no immediate action was taken on these proposals, they pointed out the needs of the country and suggested a form of local organization.

By 1812 a new era began for Newfoundland Methodism. The island had now four missionaries, each working in a particular area. In 1810 William Ward had been sent to Bonavista, the most northerly mission station. In 1812 Richard Taylor was made resident preacher and schoolmaster at Carbonear.⁵³ McDowell and Ellis, who had had more experience in itinerating, visited the smaller societies in Conception Bay and Trinity Bay as well as in St. John's. Ward was sent to Bonavista by the Methodist Conference, but the decision to station Taylor at Carbonear was made by Ellis and McDowell who now, to a certain extent, guided the Newfoundland missions and reported

50. Blane to Coke, Sept. 18, 1809. The Methodist Magazine Feb. 1810. vol. XXXIII, p. 85 - 86.

51. Extract Remmington, McDowell and Ellis to Coke Oct. 21, 1809. op. cit., Incoming Correspondence.

52. Remmington to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. August 23, 1810, op. cit., Incoming Correspondence, item 61.

53. Taylor to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. June 2, 1812, Incoming Correspondence, item 62.

jointly to the Missionary Society.

This specific stationing of missionaries was the first semblance of organization. The events of the next two years pointed out the need for organization of the Methodists into an autonomous body. In a letter to the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society on June 2, 1812, Richard Taylor outlined the specific needs of the Newfoundland Mission:

1. Better qualified preachers.
2. Official correspondence with merchants who aid preachers.
3. Insistence by the Methodist Conference that each preacher submit a report showing a statement of his income, opportunities for improvement and the progress of genuine godliness.⁵⁴

Such an arrangement, according to Taylor, would "have a tendency towards giving a system to our operations and stamp a characteristic value upon the preachers and the cause they are endeavouring to establish".⁵⁵ Taylor's idea of efficient administration was both timely and essential to Newfoundland, and it was unfortunate that it was not made a reality.

Disciplinary action which was taken against William Ward in 1812 by McDowell and Ellis shows that they acted in the capacity of a superintendent although no such position existed. The suspension of Ward, pending the decision of the Missionary Committee, demonstrated the need for some form of local authority.⁵⁶

In the following year Taylor, in a manner more outspoken

54. Idem.

55. Idem.

56. McDowell, Ellis and Taylor to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Sept. 20, 1812. Incoming Correspondence, op. cit., item 64.

than any previous preacher had shown, emphasized the need for closer relationship between the Missionary Committee and Church members and enumerated the following weaknesses:

1. There has never been anything like system acted upon since the first labourers came out.
2. The property in trust had never been attended to but left at random.
3. The people in general are as ignorant of our rules as if nothing of the kind existed.
4. The mode of labouring among them is never likely to yield. Running up and down without plan for fear of being burdensome is the only way to defeat the intention you have in view in sending us here.⁵⁷

Taylor's criticisms appear to be those of an observer rather than of a missionary. His attempt in 1812 to be ordained in the Church of England suggests a lack of devotion to Methodism.⁵⁸ Moreover, in July 1813, McDowell reported that Taylor had been dismissed from the ministry because of drunkenness and defamation of character.⁵⁹ Taylor accused the Missionary Committee of having neglected him and in this he was partly justified. McDowell, in a letter of January 10, 1814, complained of the scarcity of letters from the committee, the last one being received in June 1812.⁶⁰ It is unfortunate that Taylor was lost to the Methodist work in Newfoundland. His short ministry appears to have been fruitful and his desire for organization would have made him an asset to the mission in the next five years of organization.

57. Taylor to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Feb. 1, 1813. Ibid., item 66.
 58. McDowell to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Oct. 21, 1812, Ibid., item 65.
 59. McDowell to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, July 8, 1813. Ibid., item 67.
 60. McDowell to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Jan. 10, 1814. Ibid., item 72.

In 1813 the Missionary Committee in London renewed its interest in Newfoundland. In the Conference minutes of that year the island was no longer included in the District of Nova Scotia but was listed as a separate district.⁶¹ Any hope that may have existed of making the mission part of the British North American Organization was destroyed. By 1814 the missionaries were again increased to four - Ellis in his seventh year of service; Sampson Busby, who replaced Taylor in 1813, and John Pickavant and John Lewis stationed at Port-de-Grave and Lower Island Cove respectively. The departure of McDowell in 1814 made Ellis the senior missionary.

The Newfoundland Mission began to show signs of organization and maturity. In December 1814, Ellis asked for two more missionaries and suggested "as the island has no connection with British North America perhaps it would be best to form it into a separate district".⁶² The annual report sent to the Missionary Society in January 1815, showed the four missionaries assigned to separate stations. Six other stations were reported as unsupplied, but an assurance was given that each could support its own preacher.⁶³ The report reflected financial improvement, for it expressed the hope that in future the Newfoundland Methodists would be able to defray their own expenses.⁶⁴

61. Minutes of Methodist Conference, Seventieth Annual Conference, 1813. (London, 1813) p. 34.

62. Ellis to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Dec. 20, 1814, Incoming Correspondence, op. cit., item 76.

63. Ellis to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Jan 6, 1815. Ibid., item 71.

64. Idem.

With the number of missionaries increased to four and a need for six others, the Newfoundland mission could not function efficiently without some form of local administration. Moreover, the action taken against William Ward and Richard Taylor indicated the need for an authoritative position. This need was emphasized when McDowell and Ellis were forced to act in this capacity, subject to the approval of the Missionary Committee. The action of those missionaries and the possibility of the mission becoming self-supporting were persuasive arguments for local administration. The mission had outgrown its infancy and was ready to accept the responsibilities of its own action. The Missionary Committee recognized this and in 1815 made it a separate district under the chairmanship of William Ellis. With this important step, the mission was ready to carry on its work of expansion.

CHAPTER IV

EXPANSION AND LOCAL MISSIONARY WORK 1815-1855

The early years of the nineteenth century mark the beginning of progress for Newfoundland. The opening of the first post-office, the publication of a newspaper and the agitation for a local legislature gave the St. John's settlement at least, the appearance of an organized society. The governors of the period were more sympathetic to the plight of the Newfoundland settlement and encouraged the recognition of it as a British colony. It is significant too, that economic conditions were considerably improved. The unprecedented prosperity experienced during the American War of 1812 - 1814 was reflected in the general conditions of the island.

During this period the Methodist Mission in Newfoundland began its expansion. The following report to the Methodist Missionary Society in London in 1813 reflects the progress of the mission as well as its optimistic outlook:

In several places new chapels have been erected which are filled with numerous and attentive hearers. In others, chapels are now building and in these also, appearances are equally promising. With these enlivening prospects before us we have much to hope from the success of our missionaries and nothing to fear from legal interruption.¹

In the following year Ellis, Busby and Pickavant reported a total of seven chapels under construction.² Although this

1. Annual Report of Methodist Missions - 1813, (London, 1813), p. 14.

2. Extract, Ellis, Busby and Pickavant to the Missionary Committee, Nov. 14, 1814, Methodist Magazine, May, 1815, vol. XXXVIII, pp. 396 - 7.

included the number reported under construction in 1813, it is an indication of the determination of the Methodist people who had only four missionaries to provide guidance for the financial and building operations.

In addition to progress in building, advances were made in other phases of the work. The Methodist movement had never lost its missionary aspect but continually sought new fields. In 1814 Ellis revived the work begun in Bonavista by George Smith at the close of the eighteenth century. He reported that there were twelve hundred Protestants in Bonavista with no means of public worship.³ During the winter of 1813 - 14, he organized a Methodist Society and completed the construction of a chapel, which was begun earlier.⁴ This was merely a foothold, but Bonavista became a base from which Methodism was carried into other settlements in Bonavista Bay as well as in adjacent bays to the north.⁵

Prior to 1815 St. John's had no regular Methodist Missionary. An S.P.G. missionary, the Roman Catholic priest and the Congregational Church had taken care of the religious instruction of the inhabitants since the eighteenth century.⁶ The Methodists were content to visit the town to preach and to hold

3. Extract, Ellis to the Missionary Society, Nov. 26, 1814, Methodist Magazine, April, 1815, vol. XXXVIII, pp. 318 - 19.

4. Idem.

5. Idem.

6. PROWSE, W.D. op. cit., p. 653.

meetings in private homes. In this manner a society was built up, which, in 1813, reported that it intended to build a chapel.⁷ After failing to obtain a land grant for a building site from Governor Keats, the Methodist Committee, under the direction of William Ellis, leased a piece of land from William Freeman, one of their own members.⁸ In 1815 John Pickavant was removed from Port-de-grave to become the first resident Methodist missionary in St. John's.

St. John's at this time was predominately Roman Catholic. Out of a population of 10,018 only 2468 were Protestants.⁹ With such a comparatively small number to form the membership of three religious groups, it is not surprising that the Methodists reported only fifty in Society four years later in 1819.¹⁰

The year 1815 was very significant for Newfoundland Methodism. The prosperity of the period was reflected in the Methodists' reports for the years 1814 and 1815. There was a demand for more missionaries; hopes were expressed of defraying expenses; substantial collections were made for the mission fund, and a local Missionary Society was formed.¹¹

With the mission made into a separate district Newfoundland Methodism began to emerge into an organized church. Although the Missionary Committee in London had made it a separate

7. McDowell to Methodist Missionary Society, July 8, 1813. Incoming Correspondence, op. cit., item 67.

8. G.W. Eastaff to Methodist Missionary Society, Nov. 1, 1814, Incoming Correspondence, op. cit., item 74.

9. PROWSE, W.D. op.cit., p. 701.

10. Wesleyan Missionary Report, 1819. (London, 1819), p. 18.

11. Ellis, Busby, and Pickavant to Missionary Committee, Nov. 14, 1814. Incoming Correspondence, op. cit.,

district in 1815, the Newfoundland missionaries were notified of it too late to convene a district meeting that year.¹²

The first District Meeting was held on September 30, 1816 at Adam's Cove, Conception Bay, under the chairmanship of Rev. William Ellis. Although there is nothing in the chairman's report to indicate the feelings of the preachers on this important occasion, the business dealt with clearly points out the main problem of the District. Their first concern was the transfer of missionaries to the mainland of North America. Previously applications for such transfers were made to the Missionary Committee in London, but the District Meeting maintained that henceforth, all applications would be made to the Newfoundland District. It also agreed that the Missionary Committee would not act upon any such applications unless sanctioned by the Newfoundland District. It was further agreed that the same conditions would apply to requests for leave to marry.¹³ The Meeting indicated that although the Missionary Committee sent the station lists of preachers the District Meeting felt free to make any changes it deemed necessary because of local circumstances. The recommendations to the Missionary Committee for more preachers to fill the vacant circuits and to add new circuits indicate that the District Missionaries had begun to organize their work and to

12. Busby to the Missionary Committee, Adams Cove, Dec. 8, 1815. Ibid. item 80

13. Ellis to Methodist Missionary Committee, Sept. 30, 1816. Ibid. item 87.

promote the missionary aspect. The District Meeting of 1816 recommended the opening of the Fortune Bay circuits and soon a missionary was available to send.¹⁴

The numbers of the Methodists compared favourably with those of both the Roman Catholic and members of the Church of England. Information sent to the Colonial Office for the period of October 10, 1815 to October 10, 1816, shows the following distribution of religious leaders:

Methodists ----- 9 (The British Conference lists 10 for 1816)

Roman Catholics ----- 9

Church of England ----- 5. ¹⁵

During the same period the Church of England supported sixteen places of worship, excluding private homes and court-houses which were used for that purpose, and the Roman Catholics and Methodists supported ten each.¹⁶ Six of the nine Methodist preachers and seven of the ten places of worship were in Conception Bay, and four of the nine Roman Catholic priests were in St. John's and vicinity.¹⁷

Although no figures are available for Methodist adherents, the governor's report for 1820 shows a clear delineation between Roman Catholic and Protestant regions.¹⁸ Of the eleven regions included in the report, the six from St. John's to Burin were predominately Roman Catholic, whereas the Protestant ones included

14. Idem.

15. See Appendix "C".

16. Idem.

17. Idem.

18. Hamilton to Colonial Office. C.O. 194/62 Returns of the Fishery and Inhabitants of Newfoundland Oct. 10, 1818 - Oct. 10, 1819.

Fortune Bay on the south coast and those from Conception Bay north to Fogo. The five Protestant regions had a population of 25,942, whereas that of the other six was 18,444. The most densely populated regions were St. John's, Conception Bay, Trinity Bay and Bonavista. The latter three were overwhelmingly Protestant. The Methodists were active in all districts north of St. John's except Fogo, and St. John's and Burin had been given regular Methodist preachers in 1815 and 1818 respectively.¹⁹

It is unfortunate that the conditions into which the new Methodist District of Newfoundland was launched in 1815 were not permanent. Economic collapse came even before the preachers met for their first District Meeting. The end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 enabled many European countries to return to the cod-fishery and prices of the Newfoundland product became extremely low again. In addition to low prices the scarcity of fish and seals in 1816 and 1817 reduced very many of the inhabitants to starvation.²⁰ The plight of the Methodist District in such conditions is shown by the report of the District Meeting to the British Conference in September, 1816.

Understanding from the brethren who came here last year that you expect little or no money to be called for to this island in consequence of various reports to the richness and benovolence of this people and the respectable manner in which you have been informed we are supported. We think it our duty to inform you that we are still missionaries in every sense of the word, that Newfoundland is still to be considered as dependent upon you as any other foreign mission

19. Minutes of Methodist Conference of British Connexion 1744 - 1824. (London, 1825), pp. 107 - 108.

20. McLINTOCK, op. cit., p. 125; and PROWSE, op. cit., p. 405.

and that we shall be considerably embarrassed at our next District meeting in consequence of the failure of so many merchants, to the great injury of the people and the amazing fall in the price of fish.²¹

Reports from individual missionaries stationed in various parts of the island reflected similar conditions.²² The following report from the Rev. J. Pickavant in Conception Bay shows the conditions more clearly:

Such a sudden and effective change that has lately taken place, from prosperity to adversity from affluence to poverty and want is truly affecting ... Such is the present distress of the country, that I fear out of nearly 500 pounds [sterling] which was subscribed for the same purpose last spring, in Conception Bay, not 100 pounds will be collected.²³

The economic depression and the burning of the new St. John's chapel made progress laborious and slow. The lack of money constantly faced the preachers both individually and collectively.²⁴ Yet, the work of expansion had begun and continued, although hampered. The local Methodist Missionary Society, formed in 1815, and which met in Carbonear January 7, 1816, under the chairmanship of John Gosse, set forth the following resolutions to the Missionary Committee in England:

21. Ellis, chairman of Newfoundland District to Methodist Missionary Society September 30, 1816. Incoming Correspondence, op cit., item 87.

22. Lewis to Marsden, July 7, 1817. Methodist Magazine, Nov., 1817, vol. XXXX, pp. 872-874. Cubit to Rev. James Wood, Oct, 25, 1817, Methodist Magazine. January 1818. vol. XXXXI. p. 78. Cubit to Methodist Missionary Society, June 6, 1817, Incoming Correspondence, op. cit., item 175. And Cubit to Marsden, January 17, 1818, Methodist Magazine, August, 1818, vol. XXXXI, p. 65.

23. Extract Pickavant to Methodist Missionary Society, Dec. 2, 1816, Methodist Magazine, April 1817, vol. XXXX, p. 24.

24. See Chapter V, p. 87-93

1. That it is considered to be absolutely necessary that a missionary should be sent to the Harbour of Trinity and that it should be requisite he should occasionally visit the several harbours in Trinity [Bay].
2. That this meeting have heard that there are about 5,000 inhabitants in Fortune Bay, nearly all of them protestants who are now and ever have been without a minister or preacher of any denomination and it is the wish of this meeting that a missionary should be sent there early in the ensuing spring.
3. This meeting, taking into consideration the number of protestant inhabitants in the Harbour of Burin in Placentia Bay who are also without a minister to recommend to the Parent Society in London to send a missionary there as soon as they conveniently can.
4. That the Harbour of Bay Roberts and Spaniards Bay being destitute of a minister, this meeting consider it their duty to request the Parent Society to send a missionary to that place as soon as possible.
5. This meeting take leave to observe to the Parent Society that besides the places above mentioned there are many other harbours where they believe much good would be done if missionaries were sent out viz. New World Island and Ferryland.
6. That each member of the Committee be required to use his utmost exertions in promoting subscriptions in aid of this Society and that the next meeting be held at Mr. Gosse's house on the 15th of February next at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.²⁵

These resolutions are significant. The Newfoundland District was determined to place ministers in all the most populated regions. The parent Society in London, apparently convinced of the need, immediately dispatched four new missionaries, making a total of ten.²⁶ This increase made it possible for the Society

25. Bushby to Methodist Missionary Society. Jan. 10, 1816, Incoming Correspondence, op. cit., item 82.

26. Minutes of Methodist Conference of British Connexion, 1744 - 1824, op. cit., p. 214.

to function more effectively. In 1817 the two large circuits of Harbour Grace - Carbonear and Blackhead - Western Bay were divided into four separate circuits, each with its own preacher. But of much greater importance was the establishment of the three new circuits of Hant's Harbour, Trinity Harbour, and Fortune Bay. In 1817 also a second Methodist circuit was begun on the South Coast when the Newfoundland District sent John Lewis as a missionary to Burin in Placentia Bay.²⁷ The people in this area appear to have been either Roman Catholics or loyal members of the Church of England, since many of the inhabitants refused to attend his services because he was not a member of either denomination. In a letter to the Methodist Missionary Society July 7, 1817, Lewis reports: "My prospects here are not so pleasing as they at first appear, many people prefer staying at home rather than to come to hear me because I am not a minister of the Church of England..."²⁸ In spite of the local opposition, Burin as well as Fortune Bay continued to be a regular circuit and by 1820 reported a society of 33 members.²⁹

From its home base in Conception Bay Methodism spread both North and South. The new circuit of Fortune Bay, with Grand Bank as its centre, eventually was extended further west along the south coast. The establishment of a permanent station in the north at Trinity made it possible for missionaries to extend

27. Lewis to Methodist Missionary Society, July 7, 1817, Incoming Correspondence, op. cit., item 177.

28. Idem.

29. Report of Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 1821, (London, 1821), p. 105.

their journeys to join with the circuit of Bonavista-Catalina.

In addition to expanding to new areas in Newfoundland, the Methodists began missions to the Indians of Labrador. Contact was first made with these natives in 1819 when a group of them were brought to Brigus. William Ellis reported to the District Meeting in 1819 that he had baptized six and was teaching them to read. He also informed the Missionary Society in London that he would send them back to their tribe in the spring with a Bible and the ability to read it.³⁰

In the summer of 1824 Rev. Thomas Hickson began the Labrador mission. He set up headquarters at Esquimaux Bay where, with the help of an interpreter, he preached to the natives and married six couples.³¹ Hickson reported his visit to the Methodist Missionary Society in London and pointed out the necessity of settling the natives in small villages.³² The Society, acting on Hickson's report, suggested to the Newfoundland District that the circuits of Carbonear and Harbour Grace be united, but with two preachers so that one would be available for work in the Labrador Mission. At the same time it urged that the missionaries, "ascertain whether the natives will be prevailed upon to fix themselves in anything like villages during the winter as the success of the mission seems to depend very much on this one thing"³³

30. Ellis to Methodist Missionary Society, Nov. 1818, Incoming Correspondence, op. cit., item 103.

31. Rev. T. Hickson's Journal, Methodist Magazine, Jan. 1825, vol. XXXXVIII, pp. 58 - 62.

32. Letter from Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, to Rev. W. Croscrombe, March 18, 1825. Outgoing letters, Sept. 1814 to Dec. 1867, vols. 1 - 8.

33. Idem.

In the summer of 1825 the mission was visited by the Rev. Richard Knight who reported difficulty in locating the main tribe and interpreting their language. However, his church services were well attended and he realized the need for a permanent missionary among the natives.³⁴ In 1826 - 27 the Rev. George Ellidge became the first permanent missionary in Labrador, but the habits of the natives could not be adapted to any form of permanent settlement. Their migrations made it extremely difficult for the missionary to work effectively among them. In 1828 the Rev. Charles Bates suggested that the Labrador mission be discontinued until the natives adopted a more permanent mode of living.³⁵

At the end of 1828 the District chairman of the Newfoundland mission, the Rev. John Pickavant, made a re-appraisal of the Labrador mission and submitted a comprehensive report to the Missionary Society in London. He first set out the arguments for continuing the mission:

1. The Indians are willing to receive instructions and in the highest sense teachable, perhaps beyond any other class of heathens.
2. The children manifest a striking aptitude for learning the English language and those who have been placed under the care of the missionaries have made progress equal to European children generally.
3. Its proximity to and connection with Sandwich Bay where the missionary can have access (during summer months) to several hundred people, Americans and Newfoundlanders.

Pickavant then turned to the main difficulties of the mission:

34. Journal of the Rev. R. Knight, Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, vol. V, series 3, 1826, pp. 131 - 134.

35. C. Bates to Methodist Missionary Society, Nov. 18, 1828, Incoming Correspondence, op. cit.

1. One great difficulty attending this mission is the scattered state of the Esquimaux. They can but seldom be visited as they are over an extent of country not less than 200 miles.
2. Their migratory habits is another great difficulty. The Indians seldom remain more than five months in one place from November to April and they are scattered in all directions so that the missionaries can obtain no access to them.
3. The smallness of their numbers is another discouragement.

Indian adults (male and female)	43
Children (of above)	34
Half Indians	53
European Settlers	17
Children of Europeans	7
Servants	12.36

Pickavant suggested two plans for the Labrador Mission. . . He suggested that the mission be connected to a mercantile establishment, preferably to the business of a Mr. Couzens in Esquimaux Bay. The missionary would take advantage of the Indians converging on this location to trade. Alternately he suggested that the mission be provided with two permanent posts - one at the Indians' summer location and the other at their winter one. In this way the missionary could follow the Indians on both their summer and winter migrations.³⁷ The second plan would have been both costly and difficult to administer for the Newfoundland District at this time. Neither plan was adopted and the Newfoundland District members waited for an Indian settlement to evolve around the firm of Couzens. Thus the Labrador mission was discontinued after 1828.

36. Pickavant to Methodist Missionary Society, Dec. 31, 1828, Incoming Correspondence, op. cit.

37. Idem.

Considerable changes came to the Newfoundland scene in 1820. the 1820's and 1830's. The agitation for local government finally led Great Britain to recognize the island as a colony in 1824. The setting up of circuit courts with a chief Justice and two assistant judges brought a marked improvement in the administration of justice, particularly in the outports.³⁸ The setting up of an office for the registration of marriages and permission for persons, other than those in Holy Orders, to perform marriages began improvements in social conditions. The sweeping changes brought about by Governor Cochrane in 1825 - 34 were significant in the struggle for local government. He immediately began a program of reform that started the colony on the road to political independence. The program of road - building, cultivation of the soil and the building of a new Government House gave employment to the many idle inhabitants and promoted the development of agriculture. These changes and improvements increased the demand for constitutional government which finally came in 1832. Newfoundland was given the same form of representative government that was given Nova Scotia in 1758. It consisted of a Governor, a Council and an elected General Assembly.³⁹

For the next twenty years Newfoundland history is dominated by political storms. The problems of a two-house legislature,

38. McLINTOCH, A.H. op. cit., p. 155.

39. Ibid. pp. 185 - 190.

the beginning of political and sectarian strife and the class division of wealthy merchants and poverty stricken fishermen made it impossible for the new government to work smoothly. However, the amalgamation of the two houses in 1842 made the system of government workable and improved the political situation temporarily. Economic conditions were also looking brighter. A successful codfishery and an expanding sealfishery had brought prosperity to the colony. The Newfoundland reformers were demanding more independence and on May 1855 the British Government granted the colony Responsible Government.

Missionary work in the island became better organized in the 1820's. Although a Methodist Missionary Society had met in Carbonear as early as 1816, the idea did not spread.⁴⁰

The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society formed in 1823 was the first official missionary organization for the Newfoundland District.⁴¹

The executive or committee was made up of all the missionaries plus a number of lay representatives from various parts of the island.⁴²

The formation of the Society was an important step in the raising of funds locally. Three years after formation it had raised nearly 220 pounds sterling for missionary work.⁴³

By 1836 the Society had expanded and provided instruction for the south-west and north-east coasts.

40. See page 63

41. The Mercantile Journal, Nov. 9, 1826.

42. Minutes of District Meeting of Newfoundland Methodists 1824. (unpublished).

43. Mercantile Journal, Nov. 9, 1826.

The Society undertook to support completely two preachers for these areas and asked the Missionary Committee in London to supply two men for the purpose.⁴⁴ In the same year the Presbyterians and Methodists united in a missionary effort and Robert Job began a fund for the support of missions in remote places.⁴⁵

In 1840 the Newfoundland Methodist Missionary Society was re-organized. A similar re-organization took place throughout the whole Methodist Connexion, including the Parent Society in England.⁴⁶ The changes were small. The Newfoundland Society now became the Newfoundland Auxiliary Wesleyan Methodist Society. It had a General Committee composed of all the ministers, eighteen other men, and the secretaries and treasurers of the St. John's and other branch societies.⁴⁷ Members were to pay a fee of ten shillings each year, but only those who subscribed one pound or more annually could be on the Committee. Each branch had a number of collectors who were to solicit subscriptions. The Society now laid more emphasis than its predecessor on raising funds. By 1840 it had increased its annual collection to just over 300 pounds sterling.⁴⁸

The re-organization of the Missionary Society and the increase in finances gave an impetus to missionary work in the island. The south coast from Grand Bank to Cape Ray, generally

44. Chairman of Nfld. District to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. May 29, 1837. District Meeting of Newfoundland Methodists for the year 1837.

45. Ibid.

46. England and Faulkner to W.M.M.S. Incoming Correspondence July 2, 1840.

47. Report of the Wesleyan Methodist Auxiliary Missionary Society for Nfld. District 1840. St. John's.

48. Ibid.

known at that time as the Western Shore, and the north east coast were still destitute of religious services. Although the District members were concerned with these areas for some time, little was done until 1839. The District meeting of that year resolved:

That the brethern on stations of Grand Bank, Burin, and Bonavista should visit to a greater extent than they had been accustomed to do of late years; for the expenses attending which visitations, it has been agreed to make some provisions from the Auxiliary Missionary fund.⁴⁹

In the same year William Marshall was appointed visiting missionary in the Hermitage Bay area, and on June 8, 1839, he left St. John's to begin the work.⁵⁰

Marshall provided the first regular religious services in the area. With the exception of Archdeacon Wix, who visited the region in 1835, he was the first clergyman many of the inhabitants had seen.⁵¹ Marshall visited regularly from Hermitage Cove to Cape Ray. Travelling was difficult and was usually in open boats, and vessels belonging to the Newman, Hunt Company, which maintained a whaling and mercantile business along the coast.⁵² From August 4, 1840, to October 15, 1840, he visited a total of thirty-four places along the 200 miles of coastline.⁵³ His missionary work continued until May, 1842, being interrupted only by his annual attendance at the Newfoundland District Meetings.

49. Official letter of President of Nfld. District, Nfld. District Minutes, 1839, (unpublished).

50. Journal of William Marshall, 1811 - 1846 (unpublished).

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Marshall to Methodist Missionary Society, Oct. 15, 1840. Incoming Correspondence, item 44.

It is difficult to evaluate the work of Marshall in such a large area and in such a short time. His infrequent, if regular, visits made it impossible for him to give effective class leadership. This undoubtedly accounts for the small numbers in society reported in the area. However, the Methodist Mission was established; societies were formed; Sunday Schools were begun; and the great need for religious instruction was made known to the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society of England as well as the Newfoundland District. Marshall realized the ineffectiveness of one person in such an area and emphasized the need for two missionaries. He recommended that one should work in the region of Hermitage Bay, visiting thirty settlements containing 1700 inhabitants and that the second should work in the eighteen to twenty places west of Burgeo, containing 1,000 people. He also suggested visits to Bay St. George and Bay of Islands.⁵⁴ The Newfoundland District could not finance, nor did they have an additional preacher to implement Marshall's recommendation. The Methodist Mission in the area ended with the removal of Marshall in 1842 and was not re-opened until 1855. Although this region had no regular missionary after Marshall left in 1842, it was visited occasionally by the missionary of the Grand Bank circuit.⁵⁵ Statistics for the region were included in the Grand Bank reports.

The Methodist work on the north east coast was more permanent. In 1840 John Addy, missionary on the Bonavista-Catalina circuit,

54. Report of the Work of God and several Stations in the Nfld. District commencing May 1840, (unpublished).

55. Ibid.

reported that he had visited sixteen places in Bonavista Bay, travelling as far north as Cape Freels.⁵⁶ The following year, at the request of the District Meeting, he visited Notre Dame Bay and recommended Twillingate as a base for missionary work.⁵⁷ Twillingate appears to have been the most densely populated island in Notre Dame Bay and for many years had a resident clergyman of the S.P.G.⁵⁸ Other islands were frequented and settled by people from Brigus and Cupids in Conception Bay.⁵⁹ It is possible that the request from this region for a Methodist Missionary came from Conception Bay Methodists. In compliance with the request, William Marshall was transferred from the south coast to Notre Dame Bay in 1842.⁶⁰ Reports for the year 1842-43 show the erection of a chapel at Twillingate and the formation of societies in several other places in Notre Dame Bay. Marshall travelled extensively, as he had done on the south coast, and in his first year visited the whole expanse of Notre Dame Bay, from Fogo to Green Bay. The new Green Bay circuit begun in 1842 by William Marshall continued to have a minister until 1855. The circuit report for the year 1846-47 pointed out the need for three additional missionaries and by 1851, 230 members were reported in society and eight chapels had been built.⁶¹

By 1845 Methodist Missions extended along all the coastline of the island controlled by Britain except Ferryland on the Avalon Peninsula and St. Mary's Bay on the South Coast. The

56. Ibid.

57. Brewister to Methodist Missionary Society, Sept. 4, 1850. Wesleyan Missionary Notices, 1851, vol. IX, p. 44.

58. Report of Work of God in Nfld. District, op. cit.

59. Newfoundland District Minutes 1843, (unpublished)

60. Brewister to Methodist Missionary Society Sept. 4, 1850 Wesleyan Missionary Notices 1851, op. cit., p. 36.

61. Report of the Work of God in the Nfld. District, op. cit.

only other areas outside their influence were those on the French Shore, which extended from Cape St. John, the northern boundry of the Green Bay circuit, North to Cape Norman and south along the west coast to Cape Ray. At this point the Western Shore circuit began and ran east to Hermitage. The spread of Methodism and the increase in adherents were not accompanied by an increase in ministers. Missionaries continued to travel, increasing the extent of their districts and creating new ones. The constant pleas to the Missionary Society in London for additional ministers were seldom successful. A request of the Newfoundland District Meeting in 1840 for four additional ministers at no extra cost to the London Society was not met.⁶² The Newfoundland circuit appointments from 1841 to 1855 show that there were fifteen circuits, but that only on four occasions did the number of missionaries reach to fourteen. Each year one or more circuits were left vacant or adjacent circuits were combined under one minister.

With the spread of Methodism the problem of getting missionaries became more acute. Unable to get enough from England to fulfil their needs, the Newfoundland District sought ways of helping themselves. This shortage was considerably relieved by local or lay preachers. Although it is very difficult to evaluate their work, there is enough evidence to show that the lay preachers kept

62. Faulkner to Methodist Missionary Society. Sept. 4, 1840. Incoming Correspondences, item 40.

the movement going in the absence of the regular missionary. Every settlement had its own local preacher who made sure that the work of the itinerant missionary was not forgotten. Charles Lench records the names of many of these people who gave yeoman service to Methodism in their particular area.⁶³

Although the lay preachers held church services and met societies, they did not provide the leadership and inspiration of the full time missionary. In 1838 the Newfoundland District sought candidates locally. Iasiah Brown from Scotland and Samuel Sprague from England, both employees of local commercial firms, were unanimously recommended for the ministry.⁶⁴ Brown's name does not appear on any later station lists, but Sprague continued as a regular preacher for many years. In 1847 the District meeting sought to introduce assistant preachers. The practice of using assistants had been well established in other Methodist districts. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had employed them since 1837.⁶⁵ In 1847 the Newfoundland District Meeting notified the London Committee:

We are of the opinion that assistant missionaries would be well adapted to these new stations of Sound Island and Change Islands and several other similar places in this colony, and if the committee will sanction the plan in this district we should be able to supply two pious men well qualified to engage in the work in that capacity.⁶⁶

63. LENCH, CHARLES (Rev.). The Story of Methodism in Bonavista. (St. John's, 1919), pp. 53 - 68. and The History of the Rise and Progress of Methodism on the Western Bay Circuit. (St. John's, 1911), p. 13.

64. Minutes of Newfoundland District Meeting 1839.

65. Summary of Mission, Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, vol. XVI. p. 62.

66. Minutes of District Meeting of Newfoundland Methodists, 1847.

In the same year Thomas Fox, local preacher and schoolmaster, was employed as the first assistant minister with a salary of 90 pounds. Fox was first employed on the Old Perlican circuit and the following year at Grand Bank under the supervision of the Rev. J. Brewister of Burin.⁶⁷ The practice of employing assistant ministers was limited since there were few in the island who were eligible for such a position. However, it was more successful in the Newfoundland District than in Nova Scotia.⁶⁸

The late 1840's were difficult years for Newfoundland Methodism. While the Methodist Missionary Society was preparing to unite the Methodist Districts in Eastern British America into a independent Connexion, Newfoundland was facing one of its worst depressions. In 1848 - 49 the cod fishery failed and the local potato crop was ruined by disease. Reports from every circuit for those years tell of poverty and sickness and of the missionaries acting as 'poor commissioners'. Many of the inhabitants had nothing to eat except Indian meal, salt cod-fish and molasses which were provided by the government and shared out by the clergymen of the various groups.⁶⁹ Missionary work for those years was at a standstill. The Missionary Society in England could not increase its grant to the District and local support was impossible.

67. Ibid.

68. SMITH, T.W. op. cit., pp.431 -450.

69. Brewister to W.M.M.S. April 13, 1849. Methodist Magazine, Dec. 1849, vol. LXXII, p. 1331.

As conditions gradually improved, the Methodist continued their task of providing missionaries particularly for the north-east and south-west coasts. The Newfoundland Methodist Missionary Auxiliary Society had raised enough money in 1850 to support a travelling missionary for four years.⁷⁰ During this year too, the Methodists received help from the colonial government. A sum of 200 pounds was voted to Methodists for the rebuilding of the Harbour Grace chapel which had been destroyed by fire. This was the first time that government help was offered to the Methodists for the erection of church buildings.

The Newfoundland Methodists were slowly winning their battle against isolation, adversity and ignorance. They were constantly reminded by the Missionary Committee to keep their expenses at a minimum and they were never sure of local contributions. Yet they clung tenaciously to this rather than become part of a larger organization of the Methodist Districts in eastern British North America. They were conscious of their dependency and were unwilling to be regarded as second rate in a union which they feared would not understand their position nor be sympathetic to their needs.

70. Faulkner to W.M.S. February 15, 1850, Methodist Magazine, August, 1850, vol. LXXIII. p. 895.

CHAPTER V

OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS

The rapid growth of Methodism from a single missionary in 1765 to the organization extending from Fortune Bay along the south-east coast to Green Bay was not without its problems. Many of the difficulties facing the Methodists have been dealt with as they confronted the movement. There were, however two major problems which plagued the Methodists almost incessantly. The right of the Methodists to solemnize marriage was a bone of contention until the 1830's. Without this right even to marry their own adherents, the Methodists were usually regarded as an inferior group and could not enjoy the independent and secure position of the Church of England clergy. The financial problem was more serious. It was the main factor upon which progress depended, yet it was so interwoven with the country's economy that the missionaries could do very little about it.

When Lawrence Coughlan came to the island in 1765 marriages, either religious or civil, were rarely performed. An attempt was made in 1764 to correct this situation. Article 24 of the instructions to Governor Palliser stated; "You are to take special care that a table of marriages, established by the Cannons of the Church of England be hung in every orthodox church or chapel and duly observed".¹ Palliser reported that marriage

1. C.O. 194/17. Remarks made in obedience to the General Articles of His Majesty's instruction to Governor Palliser relating to trade and Fishery in Newfoundland 1764.

ceremonies were celebrated where there was a minister, and by justices when asked, but "the greater part of the inhabitants live as mere savages without religion, without marrying or christening their children".² The inhabitants cannot be held completely responsible for these conditions, since with only two missionaries in the island Christian rites were not available. The desire to obtain these rites was evidenced in 1771 by Coughlan's marrying twelve couples and christening thirty-eight infants and forty-one adults.³ These instructions to Palliser regarding the celebration of marriages appear to be in accordance with Lord Hardwicke's marriage Act of England of 1754. According to this Act a legal and valid marriage was one celebrated by a Church of England Clergyman after due publication of the banns.⁴ It is difficult to see the logic in applying this Act to Newfoundland where there were only two Church of England clergymen. Even with the provision that in the absence of the clergy the ceremony could be performed by the Justice of the peace, it was still very difficult for many of the inhabitants to become legally married. Although this was the procedure laid down by Palliser, there is little wonder that it was not "strictly and conscientiously observed".⁵

The Methodist missionaries, in ministering to their adherents, performed marriages, as they did burials, christenings and other

2. Idem.

3. Coughlan to S.P.G., Harbour Grace, Dec. 3, 1771. Calendars of original letters of S.P.G. received from North America 1702-1799. vol. B6.

4. JOYCE, G.H. Christian Marriage. (London, 1948), p.142-143.

5. C.O. 194/39 G.C. Jenner to Gov. Waldegrave, St. John's, August 26, 1797.

religious rites. The S.P.G. missionaries resented the Methodists' performing marriages, since it deprived them of their fee and took away the priority which they held under Palliser's instructions. In November 1796, Charles Garland, Justice of the Peace for Harbour Grace, issued a warning to any "who perform the ceremony of matrimony without being legally authorized thereto"⁶ Although Garland did not say who 'legally authorized persons' were, it is obvious that the purpose of the notice was to prevent the solemnization of marriage by anyone except the Church of England clergy and the Justices of the Peace. The Methodists paid no attention to the warning. In 1797 Governor Waldegrave received reports from two S.P.G. missionaries that unauthorized persons, including a dissenting minister, were performing the marriage ceremony in Conception Bay.⁷

In an effort to stop this practice, Governor Waldegrave sought legal steps from Chief Justice D'Ewes Coke.⁸ The Chief Justice informed Waldegrave that the Marriage Act of England did not 'extend beyond the seas' and that "offenders cannot be punished here agreeable to this Law."⁹ However, he pointed out that offenders could be punished under certain powers of the Supreme Court and suggested that a Proclamation be issued to that effect.¹⁰ The Proclamation of Governor Waldegrave, October 24, 1797, prohibited the solemnization of marriage by any person

6. C.O. 194/39 Notice of Charles Garland, J.P. Nov. 12, 1796.

7. C.O. 194/39 Harris and Jenner to Gov. Waldegrave, August 25 and 26, 1797.

8. C.O. 194/39 Gov. Waldegrave to D'Ewes Coke, St. John's August 29, 1797.

9. C.O. 194/39 D'Ewes Coke to Gov. Waldegrave St. John's August 29, 1797.

10. Idem.

that "is not lawfully authorized to read and perform the same."¹¹

The Proclamation also stated that any marriage contracted by such a person would be regarded as null and void; children would be illegitimate and would not be considered as the rightful heir. Moreover any man who became married by a person 'not lawfully authorized' would be regarded as a nuisance to Society and would be sent back to England.¹² It was rather presumptuous on the part of Waldegrave to declare that marriages were to be celebrated "according to the legal and established ceremonies heretofore practised in the island, and which alone can be considered legitimate before God and man..."¹³ Constitutionally there had not been a decision as to what constituted a lawful marriage in Newfoundland. In 1789 William Grenville, Secretary of State, officially stated, "Newfoundland is in no respect a British colony and is never so regarded in our Laws".¹⁴ Again on August 29, 1797 Governor Waldegrave was advised by the chief justice D'Ewes Coke, that the marriage Act of England of 1754 did not extend beyond the seas. There was certainly a dire need for some form of regulation in the solemnization of marriages, and Governor Waldegrave was fully aware of it. However there were no existing laws and the Governor did not have the authority to institute them.

The question of the right to celebrate marriages appeared to be settled. Under the conditions of Governor Waldegrave's

11. C.O. 194/39 Proclamation of Governor Waldegrave, October 24, 1797.

12. Idem.

13. Idem.

14. McLINTOCK., A.H. op. cit., p. 24.

Proclamation a couple could not risk being married by anybody except a Church of England clergyman. No other instances of Methodists performing marriages were reported to the Governor, although it is quite likely that this occurred in regions not served by a clergyman of the Church of England.

In 1817 the whole question was again revived. George Cubit, Methodist Missionary at St. John's, married a couple on September 25, 1816. The Church of England minister promptly informed Governor Pickmore that "the Methodist minister have lately taken upon themselves to solemnize the rites of matrimony in this town".¹⁵ Governor Pickmore's action left no doubt as to who could solemnize marriage. George Cubit, Methodist Missionary, and James Sabine, minister of Congregational Church, were called before Governor Pickmore and told that the marriage of protestants by "any other person than a clergyman of the Established Church, where such a minister was actually resident" was illegal "although the Acts of Parliament on the subject might not be constituted to extend to Newfoundland".¹⁶ He also warned them that they were to enjoy the right of religious worship only on condition that they maintain "peaceful quiet behaviour and giving no offence to government".¹⁷ The dissenting ministers were ordered not to perform the marriage ceremony where there was a clergyman of the Established Church.

Governor Pickmore forced a solution to the marriage question

15. C.O. 194/59. Rev. David Roland to Governor Pickmore, September 28, 1816.

16. C.O. 194/59. Governor Pickmore to Earl Bathurst, January 7, 1817.

17. Idem.

when he reported the problem to the Colonial Office and asked that action be taken against George Cubit.¹⁸ The Colonial Secretary, Earl Bathurst, submitted the case to the law officers to determine if such marriages celebrated by Newfoundland Methodists were legal and valid. On February 4, 1817, Bathurst was advised that marriages thus celebrated in Newfoundland were valid. The report stated that since marriages in Newfoundland and other settlements of English Protestants were valid when there were no persons in holy orders among them, "the subsequent residence of a person in holy orders would not make marriages celebrated by laymen after such residence void".¹⁹ However, on March 3, 1817, Bathurst was advised that, whereas a report made by the Attorney and Solicitor General on May 11, 1812, on the subject of marriage in Newfoundland stated that the "general principle of the Law of England was stated as requiring the celebration of marriage by religious ceremonies for perfect regularity of the marriage contract", the marriage performed by George Cubit on September 25, 1816 was not legal and valid.²⁰ The report expressed the belief that although the person celebrating the marriage could not be penalized under Ecclesiastical Law, it was a misdemeanour for him to assume public functions and might be punished under law proceedings of the settlement.²¹ Those conflicting interpretations pointed more strongly than ever to the need for special regulations regarding the celebration of

18. Idem.

19. C.O. 194/60. W. Garrow and S. Sheppard to Earl Bathurst February 4, 1817.

20. C.O. 194/60. T. Robinson to Ear Bathurst, March 3, 1817.

21. Idem.

marriages in Newfoundland.

The Newfoundland Marriage Act of 1817 was an attempt to bring order out of chaos but it was no solution. The language and terms of the Act were so elusive and vague that it was almost meaningless. Although it stated that only marriages celebrated by persons in 'holy orders' would be considered valid, except where such persons were not available, there was no attempt to define 'holy orders'. The ministers of every denomination regarded themselves in holy orders.²³ The Methodists sought to find out from the Missionary Committee in London if their ordination into the Methodist movement gave them the right to claim holy orders.²⁴ Although the Committee gave no direct answer, it informed George Cubit that the Methodists should "leave marriages to be solemnized by the clergy of the Church of England".²⁵

The Act of 1817 was no solution. The Methodists were not sure if they had the right to marry or not. Although the Missionary Committee advised the missionaries not to perform marriages, they had no choice in places where Church of England ministers were not available. These situations went unnoticed, but disputes came from areas where the Church of England clergy were available sometime during the year.

The Act of 1824 was more definite although it did not give Methodists the full right to marry. Under this Act dissenting ministers and school teachers could receive a licence

23. SABINE, Rev. James, A view of the moral state of Newfoundland with a particular reference to the present state of religious toleration in the island. (Boston, 1818), p. 17.

24. Cubit to Missionary Committee, June 6, 1817. Incoming Correspondence.

25. Cubit to Missionary Committee, September 17, 1817.

Ibid.

from the Governor to perform marriages. However, those persons could marry only when transportation difficulties made it inconvenient for the woman being married to get to a church or chapel of the Established Church of England where devine service was regularly held.²⁶ The Act stipulated that such marriages could be celebrated only in the presence of two witnesses and that an official copy of the certificate, bearing the names of the couple married, witnesses and the officiating person, was to be delivered to the Governor or a **minister** of the Church of England.²⁷

Although the 1824 Act did not completely satisfy the Methodists, it made a tremendous improvement in social conditions. In addition to making all marriages legal, whether or not the officiating person was acting within the limits of his licence, the Act was much more definite than the previous one. Naturally, the Methodists were anxious to get the widest possible interpretation of the conditions under which a licensed person could marry. In 1826 John Corlett, Methodist Missionary at Trinity, made a test case of the Act. Corlett married a couple who had come to Trinity to be married by the Rev. Mr. Bullock, the Church of England minister. In defending his action Corlett explained to Governor Cochrane that Rev. Mr. Bullock was sixty or seventy miles away and it would have been inconvenient for the

26. A Collection of Public General Statutes passed in the Fifth Year of the Reign of His Majesty King George the fourth.
George IV. Cap. 68.

27. Idem.

woman to have returned home without being married or for her to wait at Trinity until the Rev. Mr. Bullock returned. He also pointed out that he did not regard the church at Trinity a place where 'Divine service is regularly performed' since the Rev. Mr. Bullock did not officiate at the service every Lord's Day.²⁸

This was a very broad interpretation of the Act. Corlett was claiming the right to marry because of conditions which could apply to practically every case where a Methodist solemnized marriage. Corlett realized this and pointed out to the Missionary Committee that he regarded this as an opportunity to see if Methodists could marry under such conditions.²⁹ Governor Cochrane disregarded these conditions and pointed out that "neither the letter nor spirit of the Act could warrant the celebration of a marriage at any place where there was an Established Church and a resident clergy".³⁰ With this interpretation of the marriage regulations and the lack of communications in the island, the Methodists were free to perform marriages wherever there was no resident clergyman of the Church of England. Although the Act did not seriously interfere with the Methodists' work, it did cause them to be regarded as a group inferior to the Church of England clergy. They still sought complete freedom to solemnize marriages, but this did not come until the island was given Representative Government in 1832.

The Methodists were anxious to have freedom to perform the marriage ceremony, mainly because they regarded it as their

28. Letter of Corlett to Governor Cochrane, Nov. 29, 1826.
Incoming Correspondence.

29. Corlett to Methodist Committee, July 9, 1827. Ibid.

30. Idem.

right. They pointed out to the Missionary Committee that without the right to marry they could not be of full assistance to the inhabitants. Moreover, the missionaries felt that having been denied the right to marry, they could also be denied the right to bury and christen. Although this whole problem was a question of basic rights for the Methodists, it did not have such an immediate effect on their work as did the money problem. Without the right to marry the Methodists lacked prestige; but without the money to support their work, they had to depend heavily on the Missionary Committee, or discontinue some part of their work. This is why the Committee became much more concerned with the financial problems of the Newfoundland missionaries than with their right to marry.

The problem of finances was a major handicap to the Methodist work. Apart from the difficulty of getting increased grants for more missionaries and teachers, the Newfoundland District could not develop a sound financial system. Each year the Missionary Society in London would express its dissatisfaction with the amounts drawn on the Society and with the failure of the District to contribute sufficiently towards its support. In an effort to make the District's finances more stable the Missionary Committee in London suggested in 1821 that definite allowances, made for board and lodging of preachers, should not be exceeded.³¹ At the same time the Committee set forth the following objectives for the Newfoundland District:

³¹. Missionary Committee to Newfoundland District, September 14, 1821. Out-going letters 1814 - 1867.

The two objects to be kept in view, therefore, are First, to make the Mission in Newfoundland support itself for an approach to this we expect every year; Second, to make that mission extend itself, for it is not probable that any new places however necessitous will be supplied at the expense of the Committee.³²

Although the Newfoundland missionaries objected to this on the grounds that the island was more limited in its resources than any other mission, the Committee did not make any special provisions. The Committee gave the mission a fixed allowance and insisted that they should cut expenses accordingly. In 1833 the Newfoundland grant was set at 850 pounds sterling and although the Mission's expenses exceeded that amount the Committee refused to increase it.

In 1837 the Committee raised the grant to 900 pounds and allowed the District to keep all the money collected.³³ The Committee intended this to be the solution to Newfoundland's financial problems and directed the Missionaries to distribute the money as follows:

This allowance you will not fail to distribute prospectively at your District Meeting, taking care to reserve a sufficient sum for contingencies which may arise during the year, that is to say, when you have ascertained how the preachers are to take their stations, you will appropriate to each station from the gross sum at the disposal of the District as may be deemed just and proper, and thus each Brother will know what he has to depend upon, and the people will know what they have to do in order to meet the expenditure of the station or circuit to which they belong.³⁴

This plan would have eliminated the yearly deficiency facing the Committee. Each missionary would have been responsible

32. Idem.

33. Letter to Newfoundland District, March 16, 1837. Ibid.

34. Idem.

for the finances of this circuit and expenses would have been kept within the limits of the money available. However, the plan did not work that way. The Newfoundland missionaries were reluctant to discontinue or neglect any part of their work. The circuits of the District continued to show deficiencies, and they kept asking the Committee for increased grants. The problem of finances continued to face both the Newfoundland Mission and the Missionary Committee. In fact, it was one of the main considerations in Newfoundland's union with Eastern British America.³⁵

The District's resources obtained locally were very limited and insecure. The operation of the 'credit system' precluded the use of money and placed high prices on commodities to be sold. The Missionary Committee was not fully aware of these conditions and their effects on the Methodists. In 1833 the Newfoundland District concisely explained to the Committee its source of income locally:

We beg here for the information of the committee to state that our income in this land is raised by three methods. The first is by cash received which is brought to the standard of the Spanish dollar...

The second method is by what is called in the commercial phrase of this country 'turnings in', that is, those of our congregation who have not cash at their command give unto the merchants' stores fish or oil and this is transferred to the credit of the missionaries and as it is produce taken from the planter in account current for the year and not as cash prices we cannot demand cash from the merchant. The third method (but much more limited than any of the former) is this, the missionary ever desirous of augmenting his income to the utmost takes whatever the circumstances of the people can bestow such as potatoes, cabbage, hay, wood or indeed anything which

35. See Chapter VII.

he can dispose of... The first method is small and limited; the second is a decided disadvantage and the third is sometimes an actual loss and in no case do we receive sterling as it respects money raised in our mission.³⁶

The missionaries were almost as dependent on the merchant as was the inhabitant. Contributions to the missionaries were either fish which was sold to the merchant, or an order which could be filled by the merchant only when the fisherman's account was balanced.³⁷ These contributions were received by "going from stage to stage to gather in their fish and see it shipped off for market, or go with list in hand from door to door and then convey it to the merchant".³⁸ The high prices of most commodities was a further drawback. In 1823 the District Meeting explained that the merchants placed an advance of 75 per cent on goods or supplies issued on the credit of the fishery. On goods issued in barter or on account for cash, an advance of 45 to 50 per cent was charged.³⁹ Such prices not only made the local subscriptions less valuable, but reduced the value of the money grant from the Committee. The Missionaries attempted to avoid these high prices by setting up a depot to supply themselves with cheaper goods. This would have been possible if the entire operation could have been carried out on a money basis. However, the missionaries received fish for subscriptions and no merchant would take it except in exchange for goods on which he had high profits. The missionary.

36. Minutes of Newfoundland District Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1829 - 1840. Minutes 1833.

37. Minutes of Annual Meetings of Newfoundland District, 1823 - 1855. Minutes 1827.

38. Idem.

39. Ibid., Minutes 1823.

therefore, was as dependent on the merchant as was the fisherman.

Under these conditions the missionaries faced prosperity or poverty with the fisherman. They could not regulate the finances for their circuits or budget for a year's work, yet they were constantly faced with the demand from the Missionary Committee to become self-supporting. Regular contributions from class meetings, chapel collections, and pew rents were an important part of Methodist financing, but these were almost useless in the Newfoundland Mission.

These problems had a far-reaching effect on Methodism in Newfoundland. The marriage question left the Methodist missionaries bewildered and to some extent helpless. The Marriage Acts of England of 1754 and 1817 did not extend to Newfoundland. According to Earl Bathurst, Colonial Secretary, marriages in Newfoundland were regulated by common law until 1824.⁴⁰ The action of Governor Waldegrave in 1797 and Governor Pickmore in 1817 to prevent the Methodists from celebrating the marriage ceremony was not based on any law or regulation of the Colonial Office. With the exception of places in which a Church of England missionary was stationed, the Methodist preachers were the only people who were available to perform the marriage ceremony. Yet in 1816 Governor Pickmore declared that the practice of the Methodists in solemnizing marriages "was and always has been absolutely unlawful - that persons married by us [Methodists] were living in adultery and that

40. Debate on Newfoundland Judicature Bill in House of Lords. April 13, 1824. Parliamentary Debates of England, (London, 1825), Vol. XI. p. 392.

the children were illegitimate".⁴¹ Such accusations by Governor Pickmore branded the Methodist preachers as immoral and lawless. It was on the basis of this that John Bell, Chairman of the Newfoundland District 1822, reported to the Methodist Missionary Society in England that because of the marriage laws three-quarters of the children born are illegitimate.⁴² The fact that the Methodists were not permitted to celebrate marriages relegated them to a position below that of the Church of England Missionary and tended to weaken their position.

The lack of sufficient funds had a more direct effect on the mission. The irregularity of finances prevented any long range planning. After the District was given a definite money grant by the Missionary Committee there was a deficiency almost every year. Although the Committee urged the missionaries to avoid this by budgeting in advance, they could not predict their local revenue. Since the local revenue changed from year to year so did the deficiency. William Faulkner, missionary at Carbonear explained the situation in 1843 when he reported to the Committee; "Money is not in circulation among our labouring people; we cannot therefore make congregational collections, as is done in other places".⁴³ The Missionary Committee in London was anxious to have the Newfoundland mission self-supporting and contributing to the general mission fund, but the unique conditions in Newfoundland

41. George Cubitt to Methodist Missionary Society. Sept. 16, 1817. Incoming Correspondence. op. cit., item 182.

42. Minutes of Methodist Missionary Society Committee, January 15, 1823.

43. Faulkner to Methodist Missionary Committee, Jan. 4, 1843. Methodist Magazine, April 1843, vol 66, p. 352.

prevented the Methodists from meeting those demands and the demands made on them in their District. This situation did not apply to the Methodists alone in Newfoundland, in all aspects of development the island could not financially look after its own needs -- A situation which lasted for decades.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION

Educational and missionary work by the Methodists in Newfoundland began simultaneously. From the very beginning of their ministry the Methodists were conscious of the need for educational services. Their contributions to the development of education in Newfoundland may be studied under the following divisions:

1. Their attempts to provide educational services prior to government aid in 1836;
2. Their stand on denominational education;
3. Their part in providing secondary education.

The concern of the early Methodist missionaries for education was a result of the emphasis placed on it by the Wesleys. As John Wesley visited the various parts of England, he became more and more aware of the need for formal instruction. Through day schools and Sunday schools, Methodism provided instruction for the youth of its parishes in the arts of reading and writing as well as in Biblical teaching. This genuine interest in education permeated the whole Methodist movement. Thus, the Methodist missionaries were continually conscious of the lack of instruction and endeavoured to provide it from their own resources or by help from the Methodist Missionary Society.

The earliest educational efforts of the Methodists began with Lawrence Coughlan and John Hoskins. Coughlan reported in 1767: "We have in this Harbour [Harbour Grace] about ninety children that are able to come to school, and as there was no schoolmaster I thought it would be well to get one in order to teach the poor children to read and write".¹ In 1771 Coughlan sent a petition to the S.P.G., asking for a stipend for the new school teacher.² Mr. John Griggs was appointed school teacher and in 1771 reported 80 scholars. It is true that Coughlan was working under the S.P.G. at this time, and the school was and continued to be operated by that Society. However, the Methodist influence and interest of Coughlan cannot be discounted.

John Hoskins began the first Methodist school at Old Perlican in 1774. In a letter to Wesley he wrote: "The people received me, and were glad of someone to teach their children, there being about fifty families in the place".³ Hoskins came with the intention of teaching school, but was also active in preaching and spreading Methodism to the nearby settlements. His letters to Wesley deal entirely with his preaching and have practically no reference to his teaching. Thus, it is impossible to evaluate his educational efforts.

1. Coughlan to S.P.G. Oct. 28, 1767, Transcript of Letters to S.P.G. op. cit.

2. Ibid.

3. John Hoskins to Wesley, Arminian Magazine, January 1785, p. 26.

With the appointment of regular missionaries to the island at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the educational service expanded to some extent. In some cases the missionaries began regular day schools and gave instruction in reading and writing. James Bulpitt reported from Carbonear June 12, 1805: "My wife has been in the habit of teaching from twenty to thirty children to read, write and work for near seven years past".⁴ In 1813 a school for girls was opened in Carbonear, again under the guidance of the missionary's wife, Mrs. Bushby. Reports from the missionaries during this period contain reference to children learning to read and to schools being held by missionaries or teachers whom they secured.⁵ But these early efforts of Methodists missionaries, however genuine, were sporadic. The frequent change of missionaries and the absence of a missionary in many circuits made continuous work impossible. However, the missionaries continued to operate schools wherever it was possible, and they never ceased to request help from the Missionary Society in England.

The great need for educational services appeared to be met in 1823 by the formation of the Newfoundland School Society. It was begun by Samuel Codner, an English merchant who carried on a business in Newfoundland, and was to provide free instruction for the inhabitants. The Society was begun

4. James Bulpitt or Dr. Coke, June 12, 1805, The Methodist Magazine, August 1806, p. 378
 5. James Hickson to Missionary Committee, January 10, 1822. Ibid. vol. 1, series 3, 1822, p. 270.

in England and financed by contributions solicited by branch societies which were formed in various parts of the British Isles.⁶ The Methodists welcomed the Society's efforts, and on June 24, 1823 the Methodist Missionary Committee resolved: "That a subscription of twenty pounds a year for at least three years be made to the committee of the Newfoundland School Society" on the assurance of the latter committee "that the children in Newfoundland schools be at liberty to attend at their respective places of worship to which their parents or friends may wish to take them".⁷

The Methodists soon became dissatisfied with the Newfoundland School Society. The fact that it was biased in favour of the Church of England must have made the Methodists suspicious.⁸ The Society's schools were not placed in areas where the Methodists were strongest, and did not directly serve their needs. Moreover, the Newfoundland School Society found it necessary to conduct its schools on Sundays, especially in summer. This was entirely unacceptable to the Methodists since it interfered with their own Sunday schools. In June 1825, the Methodist Missionary Committee resolved "that the application for twenty pounds for the Newfoundland School Society... be paid this year but

6. ROWE, Fred, op. cit., pp. 38 -39.

7. Minutes of Missionary Committee, London. (Extracts)
July 1814 - July 1851, vol. 4.

8. ROWE, Fred, op. cit., pp. 39 - 46.

before next year an enquiry be made into proceedings and management of said schools".⁹

Although the Methodist Missionary Society supported the Newfoundland School Society, the Methodists in Newfoundland continued to provide their own schools. The Newfoundland District Meeting of 1823 recommended that the Missionary Committee allow fifteen or twenty pounds to "a few persons of real piety and competent ability as schoolmasters".¹⁰ The recommendation was approved and on March 3, 1824, the Missionary Committee passed the following resolutions:

1. The Newfoundland District be allowed to employ three schoolmasters at an average allowance of twenty pounds but no increase in the number until the committee approved.
2. General regulations for schools be prepared by secretaries and reported.¹¹

The Methodists formally administered their first regular day schools in 1824. These were located at Blackhead, Bay Roberts, and Portugal Cove.¹² The location of the former two seems logical since both places were Methodist strongholds. However, the operation of the school at Portugal Cove under John Curtis has the overtones of early denominational competition. In 1819 the S.P.G. opened a school at Portugal

9. Minutes of Missionary Committee, op. cit., June 1, 1825, vol 4.

10. Minutes of Newfoundland District Annual Meetings 1823 - 1850. Meeting 1823.

11. Minutes of Missionary Committee, op. cit., March 3, 1824, vol.4.

12. Minutes of Newfoundland District Annual Meetings, 1823 - 1850. Meeting 1824.

Cove and paid John Curtis, the schoolmaster, the sum of twenty pounds.¹³ Although, in the employ of the S.P.G. Curtis was a very devoted and active Methodist, as the following excerpt shows

At Portugal Cove, Mr. John Curtis a respectable local preacher, and class leader receives from the S.P.G. a salary of twenty pounds a year as schoolmaster and reader, by which we have lost the management of his school, he has been placed under the superintendency of persons inimical to Methodism and been prevented from acting in his usual capacity among us. We are therefore of the opinion that the work of God in this circuit would be materially promoted were the committee to allow him the same sum which he receives now from the said Society, by which he would be brought back to the connexion.¹⁴

John Curtis continued to receive the schoolmaster's salary from the Methodists, and the school was included in subsequent reports of the Newfoundland District. In 1843 John Curtis left Portugal Cove to continue his work at Blackhead.

The Methodists regarded education as an important part of their work, and they endeavoured to maintain a high standard. The regulations laid down by the Missionary Committee were exacting both for teacher and pupil. Since these regulations are so basic to early Methodist education, it is worthwhile to include them in their entirety:

13. ROWE, Fred, op. cit., pp. 28 - 29.

14. Minutes of Newfoundland District Annual Meetings 1823 - 1850. Meeting 1823.

The committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Society having determined to employ you as schoolmaster on one of the stations in Newfoundland give you the following instructions by which you are to regulate your conduct in this capacity.

Personal Conduct

As it is highly expedient on many accounts that the schoolmaster employed by the committee of the Wesleyan Mission should be members of the Methodist Society it is expected that you will continue a steady and consistent member of the Society at the station to which you belong and evince in your conduct a growing attention to personal religion and an increasing love to doctrine, discipline and practice of the connexion nor can you expect to be employed by them any longer than you continue to act as becometh the Gospel School regulations.

The following are the regulations by which you are to be governed in the management of the school or schools under your care:

1. Your school is to be open to children of all denominations who are willing to conform to the established rules of the school.
2. In addition to the children for which you receive the usual school wages you are to collect as many poor children whose parents are unable to pay for their schooling, as you are able to superintend.
3. For those children whose parents are able to pay school wages you may receive a sum not exceeding 40 shillings annually for each child.
4. In addition to reading, writing and arithmetic the children must all be accustomed to read the scriptures as soon as they are capable and taught the first and second catechism of our connexion.
5. The school is to be regularly opened with singing and prayer suited to the minds of the children.
6. The hours of attendance are to be, in summer 9 o'clock a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 to 5 p.m; in winter one session 10 - 3.

7. On Sabbath days all the children under you are to be required to attend some place of public worship and such as are capable to communicate to you the following day, what they remember of the sermon and hymns which were delivered.
8. Tracts which will be furnished by the missionary are to be lent to the children who can read to be carried home and read to their parents and brought back to the school and exchanged for new ones.
9. Once a quarter or oftener, at the direction of the superintendent missionary, you are to require the children under your care to attend a public catechizing in the chapel nearest the place where it is conducted.
10. Particular attention is to be given to the morals of the children and every possible means used to reform them from wicked practise (sic) to instil into their minds the principles of true religion.
11. A regular account of the attendance, behaviour, improvement of the children is to be kept and an annual or quarterly report of the state of the school may be drawn up by the superintendent of the station.¹⁵

One cannot doubt the fact that these schools played a distinctive role in improving social conditions in Newfoundland. They were broad in scope, debarring no one who desired instruction. The fact that the payment of a fee was not compulsory was very significant, since very few parents possessed any money at all. Although no formal curriculum as such was outlined, several points are important. In addition to instruction in the three R's pupils were given extra reading assignments. The practice of having pupils take reading materials home improved their reading ability and helped create an interest on the part of the parents. The presence of reading matter in

15. Minutes of Newfoundland District Annual Meetings.
1823 - 1855. Meeting 1825.

the homes alone was a contributing factor toward cultural development. The concern for moral training indicates a desire for improved social as well as educational conditions, and at this period it is difficult to say which was more important.

Although religious training was included in the regulations for these schools, it should not be over-emphasized. The Methodists had been active in the colony for a quarter of a century. During that time two other agencies had operated schools - the S.P.G. and the Newfoundland School Society. The former was strictly a Church of England Society and the latter, although claiming to be non-denominational, became more and more biased toward the Established Church. In fact, it was partially for this reason that the Methodists withdrew their support. Consequently, one can more readily understand why the Methodists infused their educational endeavours with religious intent. The high standards set for the teachers indicate the importance placed on exemplary conduct. Moreover, the instruction given missionaries regarding the supervision of these schools gave the work an air of urgency and kept both teacher and missionary conscious of their duties.¹⁶

Although the Methodists had begun to provide day schools, progress was slow until 1836 when the local assembly began to

16. Instructions under which the missionaries are to act who are appointed to those stations where day schools are established, Ibid.

support education. However, formal instruction continued to be given in the Sunday schools. Missionary reports from 1820 to 1840 contain frequent references to the work of the Sunday school in combating illiteracy. Many of these took the place of regular day schools and taught the fundamentals of reading and writing. Missionaries who had no means of providing instruction faced the problem in various ways. In 1820 Ninian Barr reported from Trinity Bay that the need of instruction was met by "gratuitous teachers working on the Lord's Day". "This plan has been adopted in the place and attended with the best effects, at present our school contains nearly 101 children".¹⁷ Thomas Hickson reported in 1822 that the school at Trinity was under the direction of the magistrate's wife who was "very useful among the children on Sundays and Thursdays".¹⁸ A most impressive report from Blackhead in 1831 states that "many adults have come forward for tuition who before were altogether careless respecting instruction, or too high minded to seek it through the medium of a Sunday school. The numbers in school are males 91, females 54."¹⁹ Although the numbers reported in schools fluctuated from year to year, it is significant that in 1825, 1344 were receiving instruction in Methodist Sunday schools.²⁰

17. Ninian Barr to W.M.S. July, 1821 Incoming Correspondence, 1819 - 1822.

18. Hickson to Methodist Missionary Society, Trinity, Jan. 10, 1822. Wesleyan Methodist Magazine. vol. 1, series 3, 1822, p. 270.

19. Wesleyan Missionary Report op. cit., 1831, p. 92.

20. Ibid., 1825, vol. 3, pp. 91 - 97.

It is impossible to estimate accurately the extent to which the Methodists' work affected the general educational conditions of the island. However, there can be no doubt that it was a significant factor in combatting illiteracy. The many Sunday schools, as well as day-schools, taught children the rudiments of reading and writing. The fact that many of those who became active in the educational, political and mercantile development of the country came from areas where Methodism was strongest, suggests the importance of the work.²¹ From Conception Bay in particular came many people whose early education began in a Methodist school.

When Newfoundland was given its first elected Assembly in 1833 a pattern for education had already begun to develop. The Methodists, as previously described, had begun schools in the areas that they served. Similarly but more extensively the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Newfoundland School Society had established schools throughout the island. The S.P.G. was a direct agent of the Church of England and although the latter society was non-denominational in the beginning, by 1833 it had become so biased toward the Church of England that it too, was regarded as an agent of that sect. The Roman Catholics, heavily concentrated in the St. John's area, operated two schools in St. John's and one in Harbour Grace.²² In 1836 when the Newfoundland House of

21. LENCH, Charles, A Souvenir of the Brigus Methodist Jubilee, 1925, (no publisher) pp. 16 - 20.
 22. ROWE, op. cit., Chapters V, VI, VII.

Assembly decided to give financial aid to education, it could do little more than support the work already begun. The Committee of the House of Assembly set up to prepare the Education Act recommended:

That assistance be given by the Legislature by immediate grants of money to be placed at the disposal of the several societies and individuals who direct and govern, for the gratuitous education of the poorer classes, schools of such importance as to claim the attention of the Legislature.²³

Under this section of the Act the following money grants were made:

The Newfoundland and North American School Society		
[The Nfld. School Society] in St. John's	300	pounds
The Orphan Asylum School in St. John's	100	"
The Presentation Convent School in St. John's	100	"
St. Patricks Free School in Harbour Grace	100	"

The Presentation Convent School and the St. Patricks Free School were operated by the Roman Catholics. The Orphan Asylum School was begun by the Benevolent Irish Society and was non-denominational, but it soon came under the administration of the Roman Catholics with a complete Catholic enrolment. These financial grants therefore were given to the Church of England and Roman Catholic Schools.

The fact, that no such grant was provided for the Methodists may be explained if not justified. The educational grants in support of these schools listed in the Act were made to societies or associations rather than to the denominations.

23. An Act for the Encouragement of Education 1836.
Journal of the House of Assembly Sixth Session of the First
 General Assembly of Newfoundland, 1836.

The Methodist schools were operated by the Methodist sect and did not have any non-denominational founding society as did the other schools. Nevertheless, the Methodist schools were as non-denominational in their teaching and purpose as were the others. It may also be argued that the Methodists were a minority group, since in 1845 they constituted less than one fifth of the island's population. However in such places as Brigus, Carbonear, Blackhead and Old Perlican they had had an overwhelming majority and had maintained continuous educational services. Possibly a more logical explanation lies in the fact that the Methodists were in no way connected with politics. As yet there was no one to champion their cause in the House of Assembly; nor had any official of the Methodist District made representation to the House for a share of the educational grant. Had the Chairman of the District made such a request it would most likely have been granted, since a similar request from Bishop Fleming had been approved. On February 12, 1836, just two days after the Assembly had set up a Committee to prepare the Education Bill, the Roman Catholic Bishop petitioned the House for aid in support of the newly organized Presentation Convent School. The petition was referred to the Committee for the Education Bill and the request was included in the Committee's recommendations.²⁴ Since the Methodists failed to claim and receive any special grants from the Government, the only aid they received must have come

24. Idem.

indirectly under the second provision of the Education Act.

The Act went on to cite the need for elementary schools in the various outport settlements but added that sufficient funds were not available to meet this exigency. Consequently the Act stated that;

in those harbours wherein the inhabitants generally, or benevolent societies or individuals give practical illustration of their desire to promote education by the erection or establishment of school houses, a preference in the apportionment of the funds should be given as a reward for the past and an incentive to future exertion.²⁵

The Act provided for the setting up of a Board of Education in each of the nine electoral districts. Each board was to receive an allocation of funds in proportion to the population of the district.

The members of these boards were to be appointed by the Governor and during the summer and autumn of 1836 lists of persons constituting boards were sent to the respective districts. There were thirteen appointees for each board, and the person whose name appeared first on the list was asked to convene a meeting. Unfortunately the records do not show the religious affiliation of these members but the appointments of clergymen to these boards indicate that membership must have been in accordance with the strength of each denomination in the district. Methodist preachers were appointed to five of the nine boards. In the other

25. Idem.

four districts there were very few Methodist adherents and no regular Methodist preacher. The board for the Conception Bay District had in its membership two preachers from each of the three religious denominations - Church of England, Methodists and Roman Catholics. The boards in the other districts had one preacher from each major denomination. The following table shows the population of each district according to religious denominations and the proportion of the Education Grant allocated to each district. ²⁶

Districts	Protestant Episcopalians	Protestant Dissenters	Roman Catholics	Total	Portion of Education Grant
Conception Bay	6,819	6,333	10,063	23,215	400 pounds
Trinity Bay	4,098	1,639	1,066	6,803	125 "
Burin	671	1,095	1,374	3,140	100 "
St. John's	3,813	1,057	14,056	18,926	200 "
Bonavista	3,473	461	1,249	5,183	100 "
Twillingate & Fogo	4,022	45	819	4,886	125 "
Placentia & St. Mary's	710	6	3,985	4,701	200 "
Ferryland	313	-	4,798	5,111 *	125 "
Fortune Bay	2,821	-	308	3,129	125 "
Totals	26,740	10,636	37,718	75,094	1500 pounds

26. Census Returns 1836. Appendix to Journal of House Assembly 1836. op. cit.
And an Act for Encouragement of Education 1836. op. cit.

Although the Education Act of 1836 supported the previously established denominational schools, it was not the government's intention to promote denominational education. The second part of the Act which provided grants for the newly appointed boards indicated the government's desire to set up non-denominational schools. Each board was to draw up a set of bye-laws or regulations for the operation of schools under its jurisdiction and have them approved by the Governor. It is in the formation and adoption of these regulations that we find the first signs of denominationalism. The problem lay in the question of religious instruction and the use of the Bible in the schools. Since the solution to this problem influenced later educational policy a close examination will be necessary.

The Board of Education for St. John's had settled the question of religious instruction to the complete satisfaction of its members and the Governor. In fact the Governor frequently recommended the solution to other boards. The seventh bye-law of the St. John's Board stated:

That all ministers of religion shall have power to visit the schools under the control of the board, and from time to time withdraw the pupils of their communions for the purpose of imparting to them Religious instruction for which every facility shall be afforded by teachers, but no minister shall be permitted to impart such instruction in school.²⁷

27. Education Report for St. John's Board of Education
Journal of Legislative Council of Newfoundland 1836 - 43.
 Appendix to 1836 session.

In districts where the population was predominately of one religion the problem did not exist. In the district of Fortune Bay where the population was almost entirely Church of England there was no mention of religious instruction in the bye-laws. In the districts of Placentia - St. Mary's and Ferryland, where the population was very heavily Roman Catholic the boards stated that nothing of a sectarian nature nor any book having religious tendencies would be permitted within the schools. In the Burin district, where the Methodists and Roman Catholics were equally strong there was no disagreement. The eight bye-law stated that "no book shall be used except as approved by the Board whose aim it shall be to select books which cannot give any reasonable offense to members of any religious denomination".²⁸ The Board also adopted the seventh bye-law of the St. John's Board.

Dissension came mainly from the distracts of Bonavista, Trinity, Twillingate - Fogo and Conception Bay. With the exception of Conception Bay the population in these districts was predominately Church of England. However, dissension was not within the boards but between the boards and the Governor.

The sixth regulation of the Twillingate Board of Education stated:

In those settlements where the children to be taught in the same school are some of them of the Protestant and others of the Roman Catholic denomination, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament shall not

28. Education Report for the District of Burin.
Journal of the Legislative Council of Newfoundland 1836 - 43.
 Appendix to 1836 session.

be excluded from the former; and that children of the latter shall be taught to read in such books as their parents or guardians approve of.²⁹

The Governor refused to sanction this rule but the Board re-affirmed its refusal to change it.

The situation in the District of Bonavista was similar. Although no provision was made for religious instruction, the Governor objected to the use of the Bible and suggested that the Board adopt the seventh rule of the St. John's Board. The Bonavista Board objected to the Governor's demands since the Roman Catholic members of the Board did not object to the use of the Bible and Roman Catholic pupils attended schools where the Bible was used prior to the 1836 Act. The Governor finally permitted the Board to operate under its original rules but he insisted on the right to disallow the rule permitting the use of the Bible if it became necessary.³⁰

In the District of Trinity the Governor would not sanction the regulations of the Board of Education unless the use of the Bible was completely divorced from schools that Roman Catholic pupils might attend. As in the case of Bonavista the Governor agreed to allow the regulations on condition that the rule permitting the use of the Bible be rescinded if any difficulties should arise. The Board refused to accept the condition. The

29. Education Report for the District of Twillingate
Ibid.

30. Idem.

Governor replied that he regretted the determination of the Board and that, "he wished for the present to deprive the District of the benefits of the Education Act." 31

The question became much more controversial in the Conception Bay area. The Board of Education for that district stated in its eleventh bye-law:

That the authorized version of the Holy Scriptures (without note or comment) be added to the books already proposed and adopted by this Board, and that an hour (either before or after regular school hours) be appropriated for the reading of such by the children of the parents who desire it, and that after such time the scriptures shall be removed from the school room.³²

A letter of protest was immediately sent to the Governor. The letter pointed out that this was against Roman Catholic principles and totally unacceptable to the Roman Catholic members. It also stated that if this regulation was enforced the Roman Catholic pupils would have to be withdrawn from the schools and Roman Catholic members on the Board would be obliged to resign.³³ The letter was sent by four Board members, obviously Roman Catholic. Two of these were clergymen and two were members of the House of Assembly for Conception Bay. The Governor notified the Board that he could authorize expenditure only in accordance with the bye-laws

31. Education Report for the District of Trinity.
Journal of Legislative Council for Newfoundland 1836 - 1843.
Appendix to 1836 session.

32. Education Report for the Board of Conception Bay.
Journal of Legislative Council of Nfld. 1836 - 43.
Appendix to 1836 session.

33. Letter from Mackin, Dalton, Brown and Power to Governor Prescott, Harbour Grace. 1836. Ibid.

and suggested that the regulation in question be replaced by the seventh rule of the St. John's Board.³⁴ The Conception Bay Board passed a resolution expressing regret that the Governor refused the free use of the Bible to Protestant children. The Methodist preachers Rev. J. Pichavant and Rev. J. Haigh supported the resolution. The Protestants also declared that they would refuse to send their children to schools where the Bible was excluded.

This dissension between the Protestants and Roman Catholics brought a wider separation between the two groups. At the beginning of the controversy an unsuccessful attempt was made at a board meeting to divide the education grant for that district among the three religious groups. Again at a meeting held August 31, 1836 the Board resolved,

That the money voted by the Legislature under the Education Act. for the District be drawn by the Chairman, and that a memorial be presented to the Legislature for a division of the same, with any future sums that may be voted, between the Protestants and Roman Catholics according to the census.³⁵

It is not surprising that the Conception Bay Board took such a stand. Conception Bay was the most heavily populated district in the whole island. It was also the district in which the three religious groups were most evenly divided, and where each group was large enough to operate its own

34. Letter from Gov. Prescott to Rev. J. Burt Chairman of the Board of Education for Conception Bay. Ibid.

35. Letter from Mackin, Dalton, Brown & Power to Governor Prescott. Ibid.

school independently of the other two. Moreover, the distribution of population tended to encourage such a move. Each religious group was concentrated in a distinct region. The Methodists had an enormous majority along the north shore from Freshwater to Lower Island Cove. The Church of England were concentrated in Portegrave, Bay Roberts and Harbour Grace. The Roman Catholics were dominant in the area of Carbonear, Mosquito and Harbour Grace. These patterns had been established before most of the other districts were permanently settled. The Methodists and Church of England had been operating Sunday schools and day schools in these areas without having to give any consideration to the other group. Thus, while the Act of 1836 ~~based on non-denominationalism~~ gave no offense to the districts where educational systems were being organized, it could not have been imposed on the already denominational and sectarian institutions of Conception Bay without some reaction. As the largest single religious group in the district the Roman Catholics were upholding their religious principles and Church teachings. As a majority group the Protestants were reluctant to have their school policy and religious principles changed to accomodate Roman Catholic pupils who in many instances, would not be attending their schools.

The question of the use of the Bible in schools finally came before the House of Assembly. Unable to find a solution to the problem Governor Prescottt advised the Board of Education for Conception Bay that it was his intention, "to submit to the Legislature all the proceedings and correspondence which have taken place in connection with the Education Act, and to

recommend the subject for revision and most serious consideration." ³⁶
 The Board of Education for Bonavista received a similar notice from the Governor in December 1836.

The Amendment to the Education Act passed in 1838 re-affirmed the Government's intention to set up undenominational schools. The Amendment stated;

All ministers of Religion shall have power to visit the schools under the control of the Boards of Education. Provided, nevertheless that no minister shall be permitted to impart any religious instruction in the school or in any way to interfere in the proceedings or management thereof.³⁷

It also stated that "no book dealing with Religious Doctrines or peculiar tenets of any particular or exclusive church or Religious Society could be used in the schools."³⁸ This did little more than incorporate the Governor's ruling to the various boards. It did not settle the differences between the Protestants and Roman Catholics.

As might be expected strong protests came from the Conception Bay Board. At the first meeting of the Board after the 1838 Amendment the only five Protestant members present resigned. In a letter to the Governor they explained that they resigned from the Board because;

1. It [the Amendment] purports to be an exclusive enactment to the prejudice of the majority of the population in this District.

36. Education Returns, Journal of the Legislative Council 1833 - 41. Appendix to 1836 session.
 37. Amendment to the Education Act, 1838. Journal of the House of Assembly 1838.
 38. Idem.

2. Because a more efficient and liberal system might have been adopted; a system which would have placed every inhabitant on an equality of privilege, and which would have superseded every feeling of discontent, by meeting the peculiar sentiments of each denomination; i.e. by a division of the Colonial Grant of money according to the population, to be appropriated for the purposes of Education with due regard to the respective privileges of each, without the dictation or interference of one part of the community on the other.³⁹

Among those resigning members were the Rev. J. Burt, Episcopal Missionary and Chairman of the Board, and the Rev. J. Pickavant, Methodist missionary.

During the controversy in the Conception Bay district 1836 - 1843 the division was clearly between Protestants and Roman Catholics. The Methodist representatives on the Board of Education had followed the Church of England in their demands for some form of Religious Instruction in schools, and in their stand against the Amendment of 1838. It was not until March, 1843 that the Methodists of Conception Bay made representations to the Government as an independent group. Their petition expressed their dissatisfaction with the Act of 1836 because it attempted "to educate children of different and conflicting creeds under one general scheme of intellectual training" and that "it involved such a compromise of religious principles, such a tampering of things sacred as to render it entirely objectionable".⁴⁰

39. Education Report of Conception Bay Board. Journal of Legislative Council 1833 - 41. Appendix 1838.

40. Petition of Faulkner and the Methodists of Conception Bay to the House of Assembly, March 13, 1843. Journal of the General Assembly of Newfoundland 1843 - 1845.

The petition also maintained that more good would have been accomplished if the grant had been divided according to the religious bodies, and suggested that the division be made in the money to be voted for education in the 1843 session.

Although this petition was submitted by the Methodists it contained nothing more than the views expressed by the Protestant Members of the Board of Education in 1836. This was the view of a Protestant majority on an educational system in which the Government appeared to favour Roman Catholic demands. The petition of the Conception Bay Methodists, therefore, was a re-stating of the demands of the Conception Bay Protestants rather than a statement of Methodist educational policy. In view of the fact that the religious groups were so evenly divided in this area, a division in the grant would not have made much difference except that the Protestant schools would have been free to continue their Religious Instruction. However, in no other district nor in the island as a whole, would this have been so for the Methodists.

The Education Act of 1843 made provisions for denominational education. The grant was to be divided between the Protestants and Roman Catholics and a Board of Education for each was to be set up in each district. Although there was no division provided for in the Protestant grant, the rights and needs of the Methodists were safeguarded. Definite sums were to be allocated from the Protestant grant and paid to Methodists "upon indication of a certificate that a school or schools is or are in

operation under the management of the Wesleyan Methodists in each district respectively".⁴¹ The Act also stated that a clergyman of every religious denomination in the district would be a member of the Board and that "the remainder of the Board shall consist of Protestants of whom a majority shall be of the same religious persuasion as the majority of Protestants resident within the said district".⁴² The Act of 1843 was extremely generous to the Methodists. There is no doubt that this was partly due to the efforts of Richard Barnes, member of the Assembly for Trinity and to Joseph Noad, member of the Legislative Council. In their District Meeting 1844 the Methodists paid tribute to these men for their service "in promoting the interests of Wesleyan schools in the island".⁴³ The assistance received from the Act enabled the Methodists to expand their educational services considerably. Control of the schools lay with the Newfoundland District now rather than with the Methodist Missionary Committee in England. Regular reports on day schools were contained in the District Meetings and committees were set up to plan educational policy. In 1844 new schools were built at St. John's, Carbonear, and Old Perlican.⁴⁴ In addition to the regular sums provided in the Act, the Methodists also received special grants amounting to one hundred and seventy-five pounds for building schools.⁴⁵

41. An Act for the Encouragement of Education 1843. Journal of the General Assembly of Newfoundland 1843 - 45.

42. Idem.

43. Minutes of the Annual District Meeting 1844.

44. Minutes of Newfoundland District Annual Meetings 1823-55
Minutes of 1843.

45. Idem. And Resolutions of the Legislative Assembly 1844,
Journal of the House of Assembly, 1844.

The report of the Day School Committee to the District Meeting of 1847 outlined two important educational needs. For three years the Methodists operated six schools under the 1843 Education Act. The Committee reported that these were insufficient and too few to meet the needs of the people. It recommended that the number be increased to thirteen, some located on the north-east and south-west coasts. The second recommendation asked that two trained teachers from England be placed at St. John's and Conception Bay.⁴⁶ The Committee felt that two such teachers would raise school standards and provide guidance and inspiration for the local teachers.⁴⁷ This would increase the prestige of the Methodist schools and put them on a par with the schools of the Newfoundland School Society whose teachers were trained in England. Both these recommendations of 1847 were timely. The 1843 Education Act was to expire in two years, and the Methodists were making a bid for increased aid in the new Act of 1851.

The division of the educational grant between Protestants and Roman Catholics in 1843 caused little concern, but the possibility of a further division in the Protestant grant became a controversial issue in 1850-51. The idea of such a division had been expressed on previous occasions by members of the Conception Bay Board of Education. However the question did not become a real issue until a petition from the Church of England in the Burin district, requesting a division in the Protestant

46. Minutes of Newfoundland District Annual Meetings 1823-55.
 Minutes of 1843.
 47. Idem.

grant, was presented to the House of Assembly February 7, 1850.⁴⁸

A similiar petition from the Church of England Bishop, clergy members of the Church of England in St. John's was presented to the House of Assembly at the same session. The petition asked that, since a division had been made between Protestant and Roman Catholic, and since specific grants were allocated for Wesleyan Schools, the Protestant grant be divided between the Church of England and Dissenting Protestants on the bases of population.⁴⁹

The proposed division became a burning issue throughout the island as well as in the Legislature. The Church of England people were divided over the issue but a large majority favoured it. During the 1851 session of the Legislature seventeen petitions from the Church of England clergy and church members were presented supporting a division. Two petitions from Church of England communities opposed the division. It is interesting to note that one of these came from Harbour Grace and was supported by some of those who had asked for a division in the grant to the Conception Bay Board in 1836. However, the position of the Church of England was officially expressed by Bishop Feild in 1852. He explained that "the chief and special object of requiring for the Church its just portion of the legislative grant, is that the poor children in the church may be instructed among other things, in the religious belief of their parents without let or

48. The Newfoundlander. February 7, 1850.

49. Petition from the Bishop, Clergy and others, for a separate grant for schools in connexion with the Church of England. Journal of House of Assembly. 1850.

hinderance".⁵⁰ He indicated that the Church of England clergy desired to have complete control over their schools and pointed out that "since the Legislature permits religious instruction the Church of England desires its doctrines inculcated in schools".⁵¹

The position of the Church of England in supporting a division in the Protestant grant is clear. Since Bishop Feild was careful to point out at the beginning of his statement that, "my remarks are intended to apply particularly to this Colony and under its existing circumstances"; there is little doubt that he was endeavouring to get for the Church of England the same control over education that the Roman Catholics had. The 1843 Act gave Roman Catholics separate schools operated under their own boards. Moreover, the Roman Catholic Bishop indicated in 1843 that it was essential to the Catholic Church that he should have complete control over educational institutions. The Church of England, under Bishop Feild, were seeking the same position. It is significant also that they could afford such a stand on denominational education.. In ten districts the amount of the Protestant grant they lost as a result of the division, was almost negligible. In the districts of St. John's and Brigus they still held more than three fifths of the Protestant grant. Only in the districts of Carbonear and Trinity South did they get less than one-third of the Protestant grant.⁵² In supporting the division in the Protestant grant therefore, the Church of

50. Remarks on Sub-division of the Legislative grant for the encouragement of education in this colony by Edward Feild D.D. Bishop of Newfoundland. 1852. Reports to Society of Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. "D" manuscripts D-9.

51. Idem.

52. See Appendix F.

England were not losing much financially. Moreover, they were getting control of their schools and a free-hand to carry on their Church teachings.

The Methodists were quick to react to the proposal for denominational education. At a special District Meeting held on August 14, 1850 they drafted the following petition to present to the House of Assembly in 1851.

The petition of the members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and congregation and other inhabitants of Newfoundland: Humbly sheweth that as the law which makes provisions for the support of Elementary schools will expire at the end of one year from the time of its enactment your petitioners are led to apprehend that renewed efforts will be made to effect a further division of the sum granted for the support of Protestant schools.

That from all the information which your petitioners can obtain from others as well as from their personal knowledge they feel confident that any further division of the amount appropriated to the support of Protestant schools is quite unnecessary inasmuch as the law which has been in beneficial operation for nearly eight years cannot in their humble opinion be reasonably objected to by any Protestant in the land especially as in the organization of the District Boards the various classes of Protestants are fully represented and have control.

Your petitioners would most respectfully submit that further to divide the said grant would render these schools discouragingly inefficient and in many instances defeat the benevolent and patriotic design of your Honourable House, and in the event of such a division each Protestant Denomination would feel bound to do all in their power to impart religious and secular instruction to the children of their own people, there would be thus created a number of petty and rival schools; some of which would necessarily be of an inferior character, these evils, so greatly to be deplored would probably be most rife when the people have been least instructed and when social harmony

is essential to social progress and prosperity. Your petitioners do therefore most respectfully pray that in any measure which may be submitted to your Honourable House to make provision for the support of Elementary Schools, any proposition for a further division of the grant among Protestants, may not be entertained, and, also that a sum more adequate to the wants of the increasing population of the colony may be placed at the disposal of the respective Boards of Education whereby they might be enabled to build suitable schoolhouses and to afford a remunerative salary to competent teachers.⁵³

In addition to this petition from the Methodist District, protests came from the various Methodist communities including Conception Bay. It was agreed at the District Meeting of August 14, 1850 that "a sufficient number of copies of the petition be prepared and forwarded to our ministers on their respective circuits, so as to be circulated for signatures, to be presented at the next session of the Colonial Legislature".⁵⁴ Consequently, the House of Assembly received twelve petitions in 1851 from the Methodists. In every instance the petition protested the proposed division in the Protestant grant and asked for an increase in the amount for Protestant education.

The view taken by the Methodists on the denominational issue was realistic as well as far-sighted. The Act of 1843 gave them special grants for their schools already in operation. Although they were a minority group in practically every district, they could enjoy the educational facilities provided for the whole Protestant majority and have representation on the Boards of Education. Their complete satisfaction of this system was expressed in the following excerpt from the 1851 petition.

53. Minutes of Newfoundland District Annual Meetings. 1823-1855.
 op. cit., Minutes of Special Meeting. August 14, 1850.
 54. Idem.

The law which has been in beneficial operation for nearly eight years cannot in their [Methodists petitioners] opinion be reasonably objected to by any Protestant in the land especially as in the organization of the District Boards the various classes of Protestants are fully represented and have control.⁵⁵

A continuation of this system with increased grants to the districts would have been in the best interests of the Methodists. As a minority group it would have been difficult for them to stand alone with their proportion of the Protestant grant. The table showing the proposed distribution of the grant for education in 1851 give a clear picture of the Methodists position.⁵⁶ In ten of the fourteen districts in which they were represented, their share of the district grant was less than one hundred pounds. In five of these, where their portion was less than ten pounds, they would have to join with the Church of England or maintain their schools almost entirely at their own expense. Only in Carbonear and Trinity South would they receive a larger proportion of the grant than would the Church of England.

There is no reason to doubt the sincerity or validity of the Methodists' fears that the division in the education grant would "create a number of petty and rival schools"...which would be a detriment to education. However, it must be remembered that their stand against the division was also dictated by economics. In the many areas where they were a small minority,

55. Idem.

56. See Appendix F.

they would not enjoy the full benefits of the Government's aid to the same extent that they would have if there were no division. It is significant too, that subsequent conditions have borne out the Methodists' apprehensions of a divided Protestant grant. Recent developments have revealed the foresight and rational approach of the Methodists in educational matters. This stand taken by the Methodists in 1850 - 51 continued to be the attitude of the Methodists toward denominational educational.⁵⁷

The Government's aid to education in Newfoundland forced the Methodists to be more concerned with educational policy. Since the 1843 act provided specific sums to the Methodists on condition that they operate schools in the various districts, they were obliged to have their schools administered and regulated by their own Conference rather than by the Missionary Society in London. The Rules for Day Schools drawn up by the Newfoundland District Meeting in 1844 indicate that less emphasis would be placed on sectarianism. The regulations sent to the Newfoundland Methodists in 1825 for the operation of their schools were considerably slanted towards religious training. In addition to reading the scriptures, learning the catechism, and attending a public catechizing, the pupils were required to attend public church services on Sunday. The rules of the Newfoundland District in 1844 simply made provision for the resident preacher to give religious instruction once each week.⁵⁸

57. ROWE, Fred, op.cit., p. 93.

58. Minutes of Newfoundland District Annual Meetings 1823 - 55. Minutes 1844.

The Methodists therefore, were becoming more concerned with providing educational instruction than with sectarianism.

The Education Act of 1852 gave permission for a division of the Protestant grant. The boards in the various districts did not split along denominational lines immediately. Many boards were slow to take advantage of this and for several years after continued to operate as a Protestant board. Nevertheless denominational education was a reality and the Methodists began to play their part in the system. In 1851 the Wesleyan Methodist School Society was formed to administer all Methodist Schools.⁵⁹ Collections were taken in all circuits to supplement the government grant. Amounts for various schools were allocated by the Society, often on condition that certain improvements or additions be made to school property.⁶⁰

The Methodist School Society was confronted with many problems. The most difficult ones were raising standards and finding teachers. There were very few teachers available in Newfoundland. Attempts to recruit teachers from Ireland in 1852 had to be abandoned because "the low state of finances precludes the possibility of entering into engagements with any persons not resident in Newfoundland."⁶¹ The second attempt to get teachers was a progressive move. The Methodists began the first teacher training school. The Methodist Training School opened October 18, 1852 was under the direction of Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton

59. Wesleyan Methodist School Society. Minute Book.
1851 - 1874. (unpublished)
60. Idem.
61. Idem.

who were trained at the Glasgow Normal Seminary.⁶² In its first year of operation the Training School had ninety trainees. In 1853 the Government provided for the training of teachers and made available two hundred pounds to the Training School for instructing teachers.⁶³

The Methodists had done little towards secondary education before 1855. They appeared more concerned with providing elementary education for as many as possible, rather than providing higher education for a few. However, their reaction to the government's proposal to begin a college in St. John's indicates their readiness to become as active as the other religious groups. The government's attempt in 1843 to set up a Church of England and a Roman Catholic College was objected to by the Roman Catholics because the Bishop was not regarded as the rightful superior of the Roman Catholic College.⁶⁴ The Conception Bay Methodists protested the setting up of these two colleges on the grounds that:

1. It was unfair to the Methodists since they would have no effective influence in either
2. It was unjust to provide sums for the advantage of a small minority in St. John's while so many others in the island had no means of instruction at all.
3. It was financially unsound for the young colony to provide money for anything that was not absolutely necessary.⁶⁵

The government decided to set up a non-denominational academy

62. Idem.

63. Education Act of 1853. As quoted in ROWE, Fred op. cit., p. 107.

64. ROWE. op. cit., p. 79.

65. Petition from William Faulkner and others of Conception Bay against the College Bill. Journal of the House of Assembly. March 18, 1843.

in 1844, but it too, had very little success. On January 25, 1850 the master of the Academy reported that the system was not working "because of lack of religious instruction".⁶⁶ The report recommended the setting up of three schools along denominational lines. In 1852 the Academy was divided into three divisions; Church of England, Roman Catholic and general Protestant. The Protestant Academy opened on October 1, 1852. Its directors, one of which was James J. Rogerson ardent Methodist and member of the Legislative Council, protested the fact that the grant for the Academy was far less than that for the Church of England or Roman Catholic academies. The first master, Adam Scott reported in 1852 that forty pupils received instruction in English, History, Geography, Reading, Recitation, Arithmetic and Writing. Instruction was also given to some pupils in Latin, Greek, French, Geometry and Algebra.⁶⁷ The object of the Academy as expressed by the Master, Adam Scott was, "the literary scientific and general education of boys from eight to sixteen years of age, whatever may be their views in life!"⁶⁸ It was to provide education for all "who wish to manage their own affairs, or rise above the condition of lowest dependence". This was the forerunner of the Wesleyan Academy that was opened in 1859 and provided boarding facilities for out of town students.

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66. Journal of the House of Assembly. Appendix, 1850
 67. Report of the Directors of the General Protestant Academy. Journal of the House of Assembly. Appendix 1852.
 68. Idem.

When the Newfoundland Methodists became part of the Eastern British American Conference they were playing an important role in the colony's growth. In 1855 they operated fifteen schools providing instruction to 922 students. Although a minority group, the Methodists were sufficiently active to have a lasting effect on educational policy. They were more concerned with providing a sound educational system than with denominationalism. However, once that system was established the Methodists endeavoured to provide services and facilities wherever they saw the need. It is also significant that they continued to oppose the denominational system.

CHAPTER VII

UNION WITH EASTERN BRITISH AMERICA - 1855

The merging of the Methodist Districts of Eastern British North America into a self supporting and self governing connexion was part of the plan adopted by The Methodist Missionary Committee in London to make its missions independent. This Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society had kept the idea of such a connexion before the missionaries for a number of years prior to 1855. The possibility of such a union was foreseen in 1843.¹ Although no definite plan was submitted from England, the Newfoundland missionaries discussed the proposal at their Annual District Meeting that year and drafted the following protest to the Missionary Committee:

1. Resolution: That in the judgement of this meeting the union of these several districts into one General Conference, may be viewed as desirable in as much as it would be conformable to the connexional principles of our body, strengthen the bonds of union between the numerous and widespread branches of the Wesleyan Family in this part of the world, and might also tend to the increase and consolidation of the institutions of Wesleyan Methodism in B.N.A. [British North America]
2. Resolution: That while such a connexion might be rendered a great and permanent good to the other provinces of B.N.A. we are of the opinion that the district of Newfoundland could not with any certain or real advantage form a part of that connexion:-
 - a. Because our geographical position is so perfectly isolated and the communication (between) Newfoundland and the other colonies being both partial and uncertain, the travelling expenses and loss of time incurred by attendance on the yearly conferences would necessarily be very great.

1. Letter from Chairman of New Brunswick District, June 20, 1852, to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Incoming Correspondence, op. cit., and letter from Chairman of Newfoundland District, June 3, 1843, to Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Minutes of Newfoundland District Annual Meetings. op. cit., 1843 minutes.

- b. The peculiarities under which our work is carried on particularly as regards our financial arrangements.
3. Resolution: That however expedient the changes between this and the other North American Provinces may have been in the views of the committee we are sorry to record our judgement founded on experience, that scarcely any of them [Mainland Missionaries] have worked well owing to the varied unfitness of the brethren who have come from thence, to engage in toils and self-denials attendant on this mission.
4. Resolution: The sudden and singular reverses to which all classes of the inhabitants are constantly liable, owing to the vicissitudes to which its staple branches of trade and the modes of subsistence are subjected render it in our judgement wholly desirable that our connection with the Parent Society remain undisturbed.²

The idea of an independent conference for Eastern British America lay dormant for the next nine years. Following the 1852 conference of English Methodism more definite action was taken. The Missionary Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society notified the districts of Canada that they were to be made responsible for their own support and management. The Committee pointed out in a letter of April 10, 1852, that these North American Missions were "regarded by us as having passed the state of infancy".³ The Methodist districts of Western (Upper) Canada had already been organized into a separate and independent Connexion. The districts of Eastern (Lower) Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland were mission fields administered by the Methodist Missionary Society in England

2. Letter from the Chairman of the Newfoundland District to W.M.M.S., June 3, 1843, Incoming Correspondence, op. cit.,

3. Letter to the Nova Scotia District, April 10, 1852. Outgoing Letters. op. cit.,

and often dependent on it. In a letter to each mission district on April 10, 1852, the Missionary Committee outlined its plan for these regions.

The plan contemplated by the Committee is the formulating of the Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Canada East district into two or more distinct connexional organizations each having its own conference and being affiliated to the British Conference like the one in Western Canada... We incline to think that Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and New Brunswick ought to be included under the direction of one conference, but on this as well as on other questions, you will give your opinions.⁴

Negotiations regarding the proposed union were carried on between the Missionary Committee and the various districts for the next two years. On March 30, 1853 the Committee notified the Eastern Canada District:

The scheme which now seems to have greatest recommendations is that of adding the Eastern Canada District [Quebec] to the Upper Canada Conference [Ontario] and the formation of the lower provinces into another distinct connexion. If the former part of the scheme, - the union of all the Methodists in Canada under one conference (so desirable whether Canada be regarded politically or geographically) cannot be accomplished, then the next best plan would be to unite, for the present the Eastern Canada District, with the lower districts, in one connexion under one conference, and leave the question of a further territorial distribution to be determined in the light of experience which will be in a few years obtained".⁵

By March 1854 the plan was finalized. The suggestions and opinions received from the North American missions were submitted to Methodist Conference in England. Acting on these proposals

4. Letter to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and East Canada, April 10, 1852. Outgoing Letters. op.cit.
 5. Letter to the missionaries in the Eastern Canada District. March 30, 1853. Outgoing Letters. op.cit.

Conference approved a plan to unite Eastern Canada with the Canadian Conference and to unite the districts of Nova Scotia east, Nova Scotia west, New Brunswick and Newfoundland into a distinct connexion with an annual conference of its own.⁶ A similar plan had been worked out for the Wesleyan Missions in Australia. The Missionary Committee had developed a set of resolutions and principles on which the formation of an independent conference of those missions was to be based. A copy of these regulations was sent to the districts of Eastern British America, with the assurance that they could apply to that mission field also.⁷

The Newfoundland missionaries were not too concerned with the scheme for a British American union. During the period of negotiations 1852 -1854 the Newfoundland missionaries were more seriously concerned with their own future in such a union. The Committee's letter of April 10, 1852, was dealt with in the Annual District Meeting of Newfoundland held May 19, 1852. As in 1843 the missionaries approved in principle the uniting of all branches of Methodism, but strongly objected to being made part of a British American Conference. The objections put forward by the meeting generally fall into two divisions - geographical position and finances. The District members argued that the geographical position, rigorous climate, and difficult travelling conditions would make it almost impossible

6. Letter to Nova Scotia east, Nova Scotia west, March 20, 23, 1854. Outgoing Letters. op. cit.

7. Letter to Nova Scotia District, April 10, 1852. Outgoing Letters. op. cit.

and certainly expensive for the Newfoundland missionaries to attend the annual conference meetings. This would also necessitate the absence of a large proportion of missionaries at a time most favourable for their work.⁸

The financial aspect of union was an even more serious problem. The Newfoundland Mission had always depended on grants from the Missionary Society in England. Any change which might diminish these grants would necessarily mean a curtailing of the already limited work. The missionaries expressed the fear that when other districts of the proposed conference raised missionary funds their own demands would be met before Newfoundland's needs would be considered.⁹

Between 1852 and 1855 the question of Newfoundland's uniting with the mainland districts became the main issue in the island's correspondence with the Missionary Committee. The Newfoundland missionaries insisted that there were no benefits in union, and the Missionary Committee continued to point out that it did not intend to maintain Newfoundland as a single mission in America.

In a letter to the Newfoundland District on April 11, 1853, the Committee assured the missionaries that the difficulties put forth in their annual meeting of 1852 were not insurmountable.¹⁰ It also pointed out that because the Newfoundland work was of such a missionary nature, it would receive help from the mainland

8. Minutes of Newfoundland District Annual Meeting May 19, 1852. Minutes of Nfld. District Annual Meetings 1823 - 1855.
op. cit.

9. Idem.

10. Letter to Newfoundland District, April 11, 1853.
Outgoing Letters, op. cit.

brethren. The Committee emphatically stated that the Newfoundland work would be more

"effectively sustained by its union with the new connexion, which is to be formed upon the continent, than can be the case in its present relation to the Society in this country - a relation which we may add cannot much longer continue, for the reasons which require that the other North American Districts should be placed in the new circumstances..apply with equal force to Newfoundland".¹¹

Whereas the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Districts praised the Missionary Committee for its intention to proceed with the new conference, the Newfoundland missionaries continued their protests.¹² The Newfoundland missionaries, seeking an assurance of future aid, stated their case succinctly in their Annual Meeting of 1853:

What this District chiefly wants is an increased grant, more missionaries and school teachers. Unless these can be secured by the new arrangement, we do not know what the advantages are which it [The Newfoundland Mission] will derive from it, and for these, the Committee's letters afford us no ground to hope.¹³

It is not surprising that the Newfoundland Methodists objected to their being included in the British American Connexion. Continually faced with financial problems in a country whose only industry was unpredictable, the Newfoundland Methodists had become more dependent on the parent Missionary Society than had most missions. The minutes of the District Meeting of 1853 stated the inability of the missionaries to increase their local contributions in spite of the most strenuous efforts. In addition to a prospective deficiency of 300 pounds, the amounts collected for

11. Idem.

12. Extracts of Minutes of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Nfld. Districts 1853. Incoming Correspondence, op. cit.

13. Extracts of Minutes of annual Meeting of Nfld. District, May 18, 1853. Incoming Correspondence, op. cit.

1853 were less than those collected for the previous year.¹⁴ These were difficult times to accept any change that did not guarantee improved financial conditions. In fact, the Newfoundland Methodists did not clearly understand the differences involved between their being part of the new Connexion or remaining a mission district under the British Missionary Committee. The Newfoundland missionaries were never given any details of the plan for union, consequently they had no way of knowing what was expected of them in the proposed union. A copy of the plan on which the Australian Connexion was based, was sent to all the districts except Newfoundland. The fear of this lack of knowledge was expressed in the District Meeting of 1855. The missionaries regretted their not receiving a copy of the plan for the Australian Connexion and stated: "being altogether ignorant of that plan we have no means of judging either of the advantages or disadvantages likely to arise to ourselves or to our work by its application to this country".¹⁵ It is significant too, that the reluctance of the Methodists to become part of a mainland union was a reflection of the economic and political conditions in the island. Newfoundland had almost no connection with the mainland. Ten years later the Newfoundland people displayed the same attitude when they rejected the opportunity to join the Canadian Confederation. As G.O. Rothney expressed it; "The pull of the continent was not yet as strong as the pull of the ocean. She [Newfoundland] seemed

14. Idem.

15. Minutes of Newfoundland District Meeting. 1855.

to have much more in common with the United Kingdom".¹⁶

The financial insecurity and the uncertainty of their position in the new conference prompted the missionaries to impress on the Missionary Committee the seriousness of their situation. The annual District Letter of 1853 charged:

As we are persuaded that the proposed changes, if attended by the diminution of the grant to this District, will be inevitably followed by the weakening and decline of Wesleyan Methodism in this country, we wish the Committee to know that on them alone will devolve the responsibility of that mournful result.¹⁷

This was the strongest and final protest the Newfoundland missionaries made against union. The Committee's answer made it quite clear that their objections were in vain. A letter to the Newfoundland District on March 21, 1854 stated:

The subject of contemplated changes in our British American Missions was formally brought before the last conference held at Bradford, when the conference generally approved of the proposal to form the four mission districts of Nova Scotia west and east, New Brunswick and Newfoundland into one connexion having an annual conference of its own and the Committee was authorized to select a suitable deputation to visit these districts, and in consultation with the brethren and friends arrange the details of a plan for the accomplishment of this important object at as early a period as might be found practicable.

In the meantime, however, it must be distinctly understood that when the time comes to carry this measure into effect, Newfoundland will be comprehended therein. The committee cannot possibly entertain the idea of retaining that as a solitary mission under its own immediate care, when the other districts are formed into a separate connexion.¹⁸

16. ROTHNEY, G.O. Newfoundland from international fishery to Canadian province. (Ottawa, 1959), p.23.

17. Extracts of Minutes of Annual Meeting of Nfld. District, May 18, 1853. Incoming Correspondence, op. cit.

18. Extract of Letter to Nfld. District March 12, 1854. Outgoing Letters, op. cit.

The Committee pointed out that a similar arrangement was being carried out in Australia and the neighbouring islands. It explained that since the heathen islands of "Feejee" and New Zealand sought to be included in this connexion. "there remains not even a show of reason why Newfoundland should not be included in the New American Conference".¹⁹

The Newfoundland District resigned itself to union. The missionaries realized now that the only course of action was to make the best of an undesirable situation. The brief reference to it in the minutes of the annual meeting of May 17, 1854, clearly explained their position.

Nothing need be added to what we have already urged respecting the committee retaining in its immediate care the mission of Newfoundland. The course which the committee will pursue being decided on, it is needless to repeat our minutes of last year...We wait the postponed intensions of the committee on their grave proposal to form the New American Connexion.²⁰

The question of including Newfoundland in the New American Conference concerned the other districts as well. Although neither Nova Scotia nor New Brunswick offered any strong protests, they held the same opinion basically as did Newfoundland. In a letter to the Missionary Committee on June 20, 1852, the chairman of the New Brunswick District expressed some doubt as to whether or not that district was ready for independence. He strongly objected to the inclusion of Newfoundland in the proposed union mainly because of transportation difficulties on the island and the lack of communications with the mainland.²¹ At the same time

19. Idem.

20. Minutes of Nfld. District Annual Meeting, May 17, 1854.
Minutes of Nfld. District Annual Meetings, 1823-1855, op. cit.

21. Chairman of New Brunswick District to Missionary Committee, June 20, 1852, Incoming Correspondence, op. cit.

Rev. Ephraim Evans of Halifax, commenting on the proposed conference wrote: "I have doubts as to the propriety of associating either Newfoundland or Eastern Canada in the same conference with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, might not Newfoundland still remain for a time under your own exclusive direction as more convenient and advantageous".²² The following extract from a contemporary article describing the efforts of Dr. Beecham, representative for Methodist Missionary Society in England, in visiting the Districts of Eastern Canada indicates that opposition to Newfoundland was extensive:

In addition to the difficulties arising out of the state of things, he had others to contend with, in reference to Newfoundland. A strong objection, which for a time seemed to be almost invincible, existed generally in the Provinces against the incorporation of the Newfoundland mission.²³

In spite of the objections to the contrary, the British Methodist Missionary Committee was determined to include Newfoundland in the Eastern British American Connexion. The only reason given the Newfoundland District was that it had no other choice. With the spread of Methodism and the increasing number of Missions, the Methodist Missionary Committee was being over-burdened with financing these missions. It was not the intention of the Committee to support any mission indefinitely. This had been expressed to the Newfoundland missionaries on several occasions. As early as 1821 the Newfoundland District was told that it must support and extend itself. By 1852 when

22. Rev. Evans to Missionary Committee, June 24, 1852, Ibid.

23. "The visit of Dr. Beecham to British America."
Missionary Notices, vol. 2, series 3, 1855.

the new American Conference was being planned the Missionary Committee explained that it regarded the districts of British America as "having passed the state of infancy". In answer to the objections of the Newfoundland District the Committee replied; "The Committee cannot possibly entertain the idea of retaining that [Newfoundland] as a solitary mission under its immediate care"²⁴... It was clear that if Newfoundland was to receive continued financial support it would have to come from the British American Connexion. As far as the Missionary Committee was concerned Newfoundland was part of British North America and must be included in its Conference. Although the Missionary Committee agreed to subsidize the expense of Newfoundland and similar missions, it was to be done by diminishing grants which would eventually cease. Thus the new Connexion was given a chance to absorb this expense and the Missionary Committee would be relieved of the burden.

The culmination of negotiations for the new conference came in 1855. The missionaries of the Maritime Provinces had approved of the proposed union. Newfoundland missionaries had again received assurance from the Missionary Committee that "Newfoundland would be benefited by the anticipated new arrangement"²⁵. The Rev. Dr. John Beecham, chairman of the Missionary Committee, prepared to visit North America to organize the new conference. On March 29, 1855, he wrote to the chairman of the mainland districts explaining his plans to meet the

24. Letter to the Newfoundland District March 21, 1854
Outgoing Letters op. cit.

25. Letter from Rev. Botterell to Missionary Committee,
April 3, 1855, Incoming Correspondence, op. cit.

missionaries at the Annual District Meetings and to complete his work with a general meeting at Halifax in July, 1855.²⁶

The annual meetings of all the mainland districts in 1855 adopted resolutions expressing general agreement for the plan and accepting the proposals for the new conference.²⁷ The Newfoundland District meeting on May 16, 1855, informed the Missionary Committee that since they had not received a copy of the Proposals for Union they would withhold any comments until the general meeting which was to be held at Halifax. The missionaries indicated that their convictions, as stated in previous years, had not changed; but they expressed the hope that their representatives would not be deprived of any rights or privileges because Newfoundland was regarded as a "kind of mission station."²⁸ Apart from these rather casual remarks on the new conference, the Newfoundland missionaries in their 1855 district meeting concerned themselves with routine problems of finances, missionaries and schools. Although this was the month in which responsible government was introduced in Newfoundland under a Roman Catholic premier, the Methodist district meeting made no mention of the momentous political development in the island.

On July 2, 1855, a meeting of Methodist leaders, local preachers, and trustees was held at St. John's to consider the effects of the New Conference on Newfoundland: and three resolutions were drafted to present Newfoundland's case to the

26. Letter from Rev. Beecham to Dr. Richey, March 29, 1855, and to Maritime Districts. Incoming Correspondence, op. cit.

27. Letters from chairmen of Districts of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island to Dr. Beecham, Incoming Correspondence, op. cit.

28. Minutes of Nfld. District Annual Meeting May 16, 1855, Minutes of Nfld. District Annual Meetings, 1823-1855, op. cit.

proposed meeting at Halifax.²⁹ These resolutions asked for solutions to the problems that the District had presented to the Missionary Committee for the previous three years. The first asked that the New Conference make special provisions for the Newfoundland District in providing money to assist in its work. The second pointed out the necessity of an increased number of missionary agents to carry on the Methodist work in Newfoundland and Labrador. Their final request was that the Newfoundland missionaries might have the same rights and privileges as those of other districts and that the district be given a sufficiently large delegation to represent it.³⁰

The meeting of missionaries held at Halifax on July 17, 1855, adopted the proposals for the New Conference as submitted by the Missionary Committee. This has been regarded as the first meeting of the New Connexion under the name of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion or Church of Eastern British America.³¹ The Newfoundland delegation was composed of Thomas Angwin (Chairman of the District), Adam Nightingale, William E. Shenstone, John S. Peach, Thomas Smith, John S. Addey, Samuel Sprague and Elias Brettle - eight of the ten missionaries in the District.

The Newfoundland Missionaries had been successful in their attempts to get special consideration. Although Newfoundland was named with the districts of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Bermuda as being part of the new connexion,

29. Minutes of Meeting held in St. John's July 2, 1855, to consider the effects of union on Newfoundland. Incoming Correspondence, op. cit.

30. Idem.

31. Minutes of Methodist Conference. vol. XII, 1855-1857, pp. 90-91

it was also regarded as a special case. Part 11, Section 1, of Proposals for the Eastern British American Conference stated that because work in Newfoundland was still of a missionary character it would be regarded as a Home-Mission Circuit.³²

This meant that the district would receive special attention to its claims at the distribution of the contingent or Circuit Aid and Home Mission Fund. Section VI of the Proposals, dealing with the finances of the new Connexion, described the contingent fund as a means of providing money for contingent expenses of the Conference and for giving assistance to poor circuits. It was mainly "a circuit aid or Home Mission Fund".³³ The fund was to be built up from public collection and private donations but it was to receive a grant each year from the English Missionary Committee. These grants were to be gradually diminished and eventually discontinued. This money provided by the Missionary Committee had a special purpose. It could not "be applied in support of the regular and established work in the new Connexion but must be wholly appropriated in aid of the work in Newfoundland and at other stations as still largely (partake) of a missionary character".³⁴

There is little doubt that the Missionary Committee in England designed this grant specifically for Newfoundland. It would provide for Newfoundland's need without making it a

32. Proposals for the Eastern British American Conference. Incoming Correspondence, op. cit.

33. Idem.

33. Idem.

liability on the new connexion. Section VI of the Proposals, dealing with the appropriation of contingent Funds, stated that:

The committee especially formed to appropriate the fund shall first set apart such a sum as may be deemed requisite to meet the contingent expenses of the connexion and then divide the remainder among the several districts according to their relative claims, special attention being paid to Newfoundland, as a kind of Home Mission to the amounts of which the English Missionary Committee will have regard in making their annual grants.³⁵

The Missionary Committee of England, therefore, indirectly accepted responsibility for Newfoundland's financial needs until the new conference could absorb the cost or the Newfoundland District became independent.

With the completion of the Methodist Union in 1855, Wesley's original plan for Newfoundland was fulfilled.³⁶ Although Newfoundland was the oldest mission in the new Conference, it was not the most progressive. Nova Scotia had been organized into two distinct districts and New Brunswick into three, with a membership of 4814 and 4266 respectively. Newfoundland was still one district with only 2557 members.³⁷ This slow growth in Newfoundland was not peculiar to Methodism. The backwardness of Methodism reflected the general conditions in the colony. Newfoundland was trailing the other British colonies in all phases of development. Nevertheless, by the time Union came in 1855 the Methodists had already played an important part in the development of the colony. The missionary character of the Methodist movement kept its preachers moving northward to

³⁵ Idem.

³⁶ Page 39

³⁷ Minutes of several conversations between ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion or Church of Eastern British America 1856. Charles Churchill, Halifax, 1856.

more remote parts of the island. The organization of its adherents into class meetings and the regular visits of itinerant missionaries helped to overcome some of the disadvantages of geographical isolation. There can be no doubt that the Methodists contributed substantially toward an improvement of the moral and social conditions of the people. The determination with which they began providing educational services for the inhabitants earned for them the respect of the other religious denominations. Moreover, the stand they took on the denominational issue indicated that they were more concerned with providing a sound educational system than with using their schools to promote denominationalism.

It is significant that as the Methodists were beginning a new phase in their growth, Newfoundland was entering into the era of Responsible Government. Although the Methodists were not yet playing much part on the political scene, they were entering the field. They did not yet exercise much influence in politics. Their main interest was in saving souls, and in spite of the underprivileged social and economic position of most of their adherents, they did not tend toward radicalism. Judging from the representatives elected to the assembly in 1855 for the newly created Bay-de-Verde District, overwhelmingly Methodist in population, they were mainly Conservative and were inclined to vote as "Protestants" rather than as members of the "operative class". Responsible Government was the work of others. But when Governor Darling chose the members of the new Legislative Council created in 1855, one of those selected by him to form what was

expected to be "the opposition" in the upper house to the Liberal Ministry was a prominent merchant, James J. Rogerson, the first Wesleyan ever to be appointed to a Council (legislative or executive) in Newfoundland's history.

For the Newfoundland Methodists the union of 1855 marked the beginning of a new era. Reluctantly they severed connections with England and began to look toward North America. The influence of the young dynamic Methodist movement of the Maritimes, and eventually of all Canada, provided the Newfoundland Methodists, as it turned out, with new hopes and confidence, as well as with a solution for their financial problem. Although they had not been in favour of this church union, it was the first permanent link between a Newfoundland denomination and the rest of British North America.

Although Newfoundland was the first Methodist Mission field in North America, it was the most retarded when the Methodists of Eastern British America united in 1855. The present study has shown two basic reasons for this. During the formative years of the Newfoundland mission, from 1773 (the end of Coughlan's ministry) to 1804, it lacked the guidance and leadership so essential to any new movement. There were no regular missionaries to continue Coughlan's work and the competition of the Church of England reduced the Methodist following considerably. While the energetic William Black was recruiting ministers in England for Nova Scotia, the Newfoundland Methodists were kept together by two or three lay preachers. Although this situation improved after 1800, it was not until 1815, fifty years after its beginning, that Newfoundland Methodism had any form of local administration.

The second cause of retardation was the deplorable economic condition of the country. The Methodists were continually faced with financial problems and the Missionary Society in London was not too sympathetic. The fact that the Newfoundland Mission was so weak financially and so much behind other missions, accounts for the reluctance with which the Newfoundland Methodists approached union.

In addition to explaining the attitude of the Newfoundland mission toward union, this thesis is equally concerned with evaluating the contribution of the Methodists to Newfoundland's development. The ~~continuous~~ itinerating of the missionaries and the inspiration given the inhabitants through societies and class meetings did more for moulding character and defining values than any other single institution. Their invaluable work with young people in Sunday schools and day schools gave the Methodists a leading role in the island's social and cultural development. These contributions coupled with their broadmindedness and foresight in helping to build an educational system made the Methodists, not only the third largest, but one of the most progressive and most dynamic religious denominations in Newfoundland.

APPENDIX A

PETITION OF THE INHABITANTS OF HARBOUR GRACE
TO S.P.G. RE-APPOINTMENT OF A MINISTER, OCTOBER 30, 1766¹

To the Honourable Gentlemen of the Society for the Propagating of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The Petition of the Inhabitants of Harbour Grace, Carbonear and parts adjacent in the Bay of Conception, Newfoundland

Humbly Sheweth,

That your petitioners having the cause of God and Christ at Heart and in order to prevent Popery's getting a footing in those parts where so great a number of Roman Catholics are employed, did at a great expense erect a church, and desiring to have a Protestant minister settled among them, made a choice of the Rev. Mr. Coughlan for that purpose and unanimously agreed to allow him a salary sufficient for his support. But your Petitioners having had success in the Fishery which is very precarious find that they are not able to allow him what they so intended.

And your Petitioners being sensible of the laudable benefactions in cases of this sort, to the Protestant ministers settling in foreign Plantations,

1. Society for Propagation of Gospel. Calendars of original letters received from North America 1702 - 1799, no. 166, p. 111

humbly beg leave to recommend the said Rev. Gentleman to your consideration hoping, as his behaviour (as far as we have seen) has been always consistent with the sacred office he sustains, that he may obtain from your wonted clemency some stipend, such as you in your good judgement shall think fit, so that your Petitioners may be able to establish him among them and have the Gospel of Christ (which they have not had before) preached to them, to their great comfort and satisfaction.

[Signed by 31 inhabitants.]

APPENDIX B

PROCLAMATION OF GOVERNOR EDWARDS 31 AUGUST 1779²

By His Excellency Richard Edwards Esquire Governor
and Commander in Chief in and over the Island of
Newfoundland.

Whereas the Rev. James Balfour missionary for
Conception Bay has represented to me that several
unlicensed and lawless people in his mission take upon
themselves to marry, bury and baptize with a view to
defraud him of his prerequisites arising therefrom and
that he is frequently prevented from doing duty in two
chapels within his mission built for the service of the
Church of England only by Methodist preachers who take
possession of and practice in the same and requested me
to grant him such a redress as I should think proper.

You are hereby required and directed to use your
utmost endeavour to prevent any persons or person from
marrying as such marriages will not be deemed legal,
Burying, Baptizing or preaching within the said mission
in future except such person or persons as may be appointed
by the said Reverend James Balfour to do the same and to
take care that the said two chapels built for the service
of the Church of England within the said mission are not

2. Ibid. no. 213, p. 243.

made use of by the Methodists or any other sect
whatsoever.

Given under my hand on board His Majesty's ship
Proteus at St. John's, 31 August, 1779.

R. Edwards.

To Charles Garland and
Robert Gray Esquire
His Majesty's Justices
of the Peace for the
District of Conception Bay.

By order of the Governor.

APPENDIX C

Extent of Religious Services in Newfoundland - 1816³

District	No. of Ministers of each Religion in District	No. of Places of Worship	No. of Schools	Funds Maintenance of Schools
St. John's	1 Protestant 3 Dissenting Ministers 1 Catholic Bishop 3 Fathers	1 Protestant Church 1 Catholic Church 1 Catholic Chapel at Petty Harbour 2 Meeting Houses St. John's and Portugal Cove	1 Charity School by Subscription School Master and Mistress Protestant 3 Protestant Schools	One by Subscription Others paid by Parents
Bay Bulls	None- Visited by Catholic Priests	1 Roman Catholic building	None	None
Ferryland	1 Roman Catholic Priest	1 Roman Catholic	None	None
Placentia	1 Roman Catholic Priest	1 Protestant 1 Roman Catholic	None	None
Burin	1 Protestant Minister Roman Catholic Visits twice yearly	None of either Court House used by Protestants on Sundays	1 School at Burin and another recently opened both admit scholars without distinction	Parents pay for education
Fortune Bay	None	None except private houses	one	Voluntary pay given to master by Parents
Trinity Bay	1 of Established Church	7 Places - all Protestants	1 Protestant School	None
Conception Bay	1 Church of England 3 Roman Catholic Priest 6 Methodists	4 Protestant Churches 4 Roman Catholic Churches 7 Methodists	8 in all: Protestant and Roman Catholic Mixed. Protestant Masters and Mistresses	3 get support from S.P.G. Others Paid by Parents
Bonavista	No Church of England but a person who reads 1 Methodist, 1 Catholic, visits 4 or 5 weeks a year	1 Roman Catholic 1 Protestant 1 Methodist	1 Roman Catholic 1 Protestant	None
Fogo	1 Protestant Visited by Roman Catholic	1 Protestant Church 1 Protestant Church building 1 Dissenting Meeting house	None	None
Trepassey	1 Roman Catholic Priest	1 Roman Catholic	1 Roman Catholic	Subscriptions

APPENDIX D

Statistics of Newfoundland Methodism 1855 ⁴

Circuits	Chapels	Other preaching places	Missionaries	Catechists	Day Master	Sunday school teachers	Local preachers	Church members	Number on Trail	Sunday schools	Sunday scholars	Day scholars	Male	Female	Total	Number attending public worship
St. John's	4		2		4	29	3	301	17	4	214	183	177	162	339	2200
Harbour Grace	2	2	1			6		57		2	110				110	750
Carbonear	4	4	1		1	27	9	418		3	209	193	165	157	322	2400
Blackhead	3	7	1		1	34	1	504	70	4	324	84	175	177	342	1900
Old Perlican and Island Cove	4	4						197		2	222	70	86	86	172	850
Port-de-grave	1	2	1		1	18	1	74		2	156	49	88	72	160	510
Brigus	3	2	1		1	15	1	118	1	3	120	92	84	99	183	1300
Trinity Bay	2	2			1	6	no missionary				72	21	45	45	90	300
Bonavista	3	3	1		1	27	3	299	76	2	207	47	94	96	190	1200
Green Bay	4	4		1	1	11	7	199	30	1	55	22	38	39	77	1200
Burin	2	10	1		2	2	1	160		1	50	109	50	57	109	900
Grand Bank	2	1	1			15	2	170		2	133		60	73	133	650
Western Shore					2							52	32	20	52	
Hants Harbour	3	1	1			13	1	116	3	2	90		40	50	90	1000
	38	42	11	1	15	203	32	2613	197	28	1962	922	1134	1133	2374	15260

4. Minutes of the Newfoundland District Annual Meeting 1823-1855. Minutes 1855.

Number of winter inhabitants in Conception Bay 5

	1770	1771	1772	1773	1774	1776	1778	1779	1781
Masters	378	370	419	410	420	480	307	469	370
Men Servants	1820	1820	1990	2010	2411	1600	1200	409	730
Mistresses	322	322	418	405	445	430	400	1130	321
Women Servants	203	203	340	316	364	310	260	197	207
Children	1810	1840	1902	1960		2100	2300	1794	1870
	4533	4555	5069	5101		4920	4467	3999	3498

Number of Roman Catholics

Men	900	900	926	830	825	750	1200	1900
Women	143	143	151	120	109	80	72	70
Children	58	58	63	53	47	47	34	46
	1101	1101	1140	1003	981	877	1306	2016

5. CoO. 194/30, 31, 34. A General Scheme of the Fishery and inhabitants of Newfoundland.

APPENDIX F

Proposed distribution of Education grant - 1851⁶

Districts	Protestant Episcopalians	Amount (Pounds)	Other Protestants	Amount (Pounds)	Roman Catholic	Amount (pounds)	Total (Pounds)
St. John's	4226	316	1984	148	18986	1423	1887
Brigus	3151	236	1769	131	4815	361	728
Harbour Grace	4437	332	974	73	3026	226	631
Carbonear	1037	77	5088	381	3929	294	752
Trinity North	2616	196	971	72	635	47	315
Trinity West	1665	124	83	6	427	32	162
Trinity South	472	35	1709	128	221	16	179
Bonavista North	2552	191	18	-	218	16	207
Bonavista South	2129	159	717	53	1591	119	321
Fogo	1905	142	100	7	744	55	204
Twillingate	3111	233	499	37	384	28	298
Bay Bulls	18	-	-	-	2093	156	156
Ferryland	163	25	-	-	2306	172	197
St. Mary's	26	-	-	-	1620	121	121
Placentia	945	70	48	4	3839	287	351
Burin	1221	91	1186	88	1951	146	325
Fortune	4640	348	68	5	392	29	382
Burgeo							
LaPoile							

APPENDIX G

Abstract of Census and Returns of Electoral Districts of Newfoundland -
1836 Census. 7

Districts	Episcopalians	Dissenters	Roman Catholic	Total	No. of Churches or Chapels			No. of Ministers		
					Episcopalians	Roman Catholic	Wesleyan	Episcopalians	Roman Catholic	Wesleyan
St. John's	3813	1057	14,056	18,926	7	5	3	3	5	2
Conception Bay	6819	6333	10,063	23,215	9	7	9	2	5	2
Bonavista Bay	3473	461	1,249	5,183	7	2	1	2	1	1
Trinity Bay	4098	1639	1,066	6,803	13	1	6	2	-	4
Fogo	4022	45	819	4,886	4	1	-	1	1	-
Ferryland	313	-	4,798	5,111	1	6	-	-	3	-
Placentia- St. Mary's	710	6	3,985	4,701	1	4	-	-	3	-
Burin	671	1085	1,374	3,140	-	1	3	-	1	2
Fortune Bay	2821	-	308	3,129	-	-	-	1	-	-

APPENDIX H

8

Abstract of the State of Education in Newfoundland - 1849

Number of Schoolhouses	Schools	Denominations	Total Children in Attendance	Amount of Grant from Legislative (Currency)	Average cost per Child (Currency)			Average Salary for Teacher			Amount Paid in Teachers Salary			Balance for Contingences		
					£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
42	84	Catholics	4269	2956-3-11	0	13	10	35	3	10	2332	7	7	623	16	4
27	64	Protestant Episcopalians	1932	2091-18-5	1	1	7	32	13	5½	1739	7	2	352	11	3
-	36	Newfoundland School Society	2421	576-18-7	0	4	9	16	0	6	576	18	7	-		
7	8	Wesleyans	486	288-9-0	0	11	0	36	1	0	288	9	0	-		
-	1	Presbyterians	28	46-3-0	1	12	10	46	3	0	46	3	0	-		
-	1	St. John's, Academy	19	634-12-3	33	8	0	317	6	3½	634	12	3	-		
-	1	Grammar School Harbour Grace	50	175-1-6	3	9	2	173	1	6	173	1	6	-		
1	"	Carbonear	30	173-1-6	5	15	4	173	1	6	173	1	6	-		

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(Extracts) July 1814 - July 1851, vols. 1 to 6.
September 1851 - May 1865, vol. 7.
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(c) Outgoing Letters (Extracts)

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