

BINARIES, BOUNDARIES, AND HIERARCHIES:
THE SPATIAL RELATIONS OF CITY SCHOOLING IN NANAIMO, BRITISH COLUMBIA,
1891-1901

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ABSTRACT

Urban School Boards and City Councils in British Columbia worked in tandem with provincial officials in Victoria to expand the state school system in the 1890s. In discharging their responsibilities, the Boards functioned with considerable independence. They built and maintained schools, appointed and ranked teachers, and organized students. During the course of the decade, City Councils acquired the responsibility for school finance. Nineteenth-century British Columbia education history, written from a centralist perspective, has articulated the idea of a dominant centre and subordinate localities, but this interpretation is not sufficient to explain the development of public schooling in Nanaimo in the 1890s. The centralist interpretation does not allow for the real historical complexity of the school system. Neither does it accommodate the possibility of successful local resistance to central initiatives, nor the extent to which public schooling was produced locally.

It is important, then, to examine what kind of context Nanaimo constituted for state schooling in the last years of the century. This study concludes that civic leaders and significant interest groups in the community believed schooling played an important boundary making role in forging civic, racial, gender, and occupational identities. In carrying out their interlocking responsibilities for providing physical space and organizing teachers and students, the Nanaimo School Trustees created opportunities for local girls and, within limits, for women. The Trustees limited opportunities for local men, and went outside the community for men who had the professional credentials which were increasingly desirable in the late-nineteenth century. Both the traditions of self-help and the imperatives

of corporate capitalism intersected in school production in late-nineteenth century Nanaimo. The focus on securing identities through the differentiating processes of boundaries and hierarchies which was evident in Nanaimo was typical of a wider colonial discourse at the end of the nineteenth century.

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Introduction

Donald Smith, the secretary of the Nanaimo Board of Public School Trustees, made his initial entry in a substantial volume which was to serve as the Board's minute book when he recorded the 'first meeting of the New Board of Trustees' held July 6th 1891.¹ Smith listed those present, noted his appointment as secretary, and summarized the arrangements for future meetings. The only matter discussed by the Trustees at this first meeting resulted in a motion 'that a recommendation be sent to the City Council to provide ways and means to build two School Houses, one in the North Ward & one in the South Ward.'² Smith's account of the Board meeting, brief as it is, reflects important changes which took place in the public school system in the summer of 1891. This Board was holding its initial meeting in July although School Boards normally commenced their duties in January. Also, the Trustees were asking City Council to finance school construction when, up to that time, costs of school construction in British Columbia had been borne by the provincial government. These two changes were part of a complex transformation of the provincial school system.

The 1890s were transitional years in British Columbia's education history. The province was in the process of establishing a city school system financed through property taxes in Nanaimo, New Westminister, Vancouver, and Victoria. Simultaneously, as the need for the Nanaimo Trustees to build two new schools

¹ School District 68 [SD68], Nanaimo Board of School Trustees [NBST], Board minutes [BM], 6 July 1891.

² SD68, NBST, BM, 6 July 1891.

implies, student numbers grew significantly during the decade.³ The provincial government in British Columbia legislated the public school system, but in the cities local authorities had crucial roles to play. Nanaimo's status as a city and its social and economic complexity constituted the context for public schooling in the community. City Council wrestled with problems of school finance. The School Board built and operated the schools and organized teachers and students. The teachers documented the location of students in the school system and their movement from class to class. The efforts of civic authorities sometimes complemented, but not infrequently opposed, central initiatives. Critical as the events of the 1890s were to the history of education in British Columbia, they are not well known. The experience of Nanaimo suggests that, contrary to what many historians have argued, in the cities at the end of the nineteenth century important components of the production of public schooling were decentralized.

I.1 The British Columbia School System in the 1890s

The final decade of the nineteenth century was a time of change in British Columbia's public school system as the provincial government implemented an urban school system in Nanaimo, New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria. For the first time, the province substantially differentiated the administration and financing of schools in these cities from those in the the rest of British Columbia.⁴

³ I have used the term 'students' throughout this study to refer to those who attended Nanaimo's public schools, however, the School Board records use the contemporary term 'scholars'.

⁴ British Columbia developed a city school system in tandem with its development of a municipal system. Archivist Walter J. Meyer Zu Erpen notes that R. Edward Gosnell, the former Legislative Librarian, 'considered the "Municipal Act, 1892," as the first operative municipal legislation.' Walter J. Meyer Zu Erpen, 'Towards

Provincial initiatives for change came in a rapid-fire sequence of legislation. There were harbingers of the new direction in 1888, but it was the Public School Acts of 1891, 1892, and 1893 which fundamentally altered the school system in the province's leading cities. The legislation of 1891 met tremendous opposition from the cities and was in some respects difficult to implement. The subsequent legislation in 1892 and 1893 attempted to sort out the resulting chaos.

Provincial authorities had created the four city school districts in the middle 1880s, but they did not differ from other school districts until the end of the decade and, more significantly, the 1890s.⁵ From 1872 until 1888 all public school costs in British Columbia had been borne by the provincial government. Beginning in 1888, however, the four cities were required to remit one-third of the cost of teachers' salaries to the Provincial Auditor.⁶ In 1891 the School Act went much further, obligating the four City Councils to pay half the cost of teachers' salaries and all operating and capital costs of public schooling in their jurisdictions. At the same time, appointed Trustees in the city districts replaced elected Trustees.⁷ This was a departure from a well-established norm. School

an Understanding of the Municipal Archives of Nineteenth-Century British Columbia: A Case Study of the Archives of the Corporation of the City of Nanaimo, 1875-1904' (MAS thesis, University of British Columbia, 1985), 17.

⁵ In 1884, the Province designated Nanaimo, New Westminster and Victoria as British Columbia's first city school districts. British Columbia, Legislative Assembly [BC, LA], An Act to amend the 'Public School Act, 1879', SBC 1884, chap. 27, sec. 2. Vancouver became the fourth city school district in 1888, BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1888, chap. 32, sec. 2. The Province did not create any more city school districts until 1901. I would like to thank Chris Hanna for getting me copies of the school legislation and other government documents.

⁶ BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1888, chap. 32, sec. 10.

⁷ BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1891, chap. 40, sec. 30 and sec. 22.

Trustees had been elected in British Columbia since 1872, and even after 1891 continued to be elected in all but the four city districts. The final step in devolving the full financial responsibility for schooling to the city school districts came in 1893 when they acquired the responsibility for funding the entire cost of teachers' salaries.⁸

This first city school system lasted only the decade. In 1901, the province introduced a revised and expanded system. Vancouver and Victoria became first-class city school districts while Nanaimo, New Westminster, Nelson, and Rossland were designated second-class city school districts. Eleven other cities were third-class city school districts.⁹ In the 1890s, then, British Columbia's four coastal cities were caught up in the first phase of the province's new urban school system with appointed trustees and onerous new financial obligations. These proved to be radical and controversial changes.

Charles E. Phillips, in The Development of Education in Canada, suggests that the city school system British Columbia inaugurated in the 1890s had enormous long-term significance. He notes that by 1949 British Columbia spent more on education than any other province in terms of average daily attendance per pupil. He links this to the province's decision in the 1890s to restructure school financing in the cities unlike other provinces where 'the tendency ... was to adjust the pace of educational advance to rural areas.'¹⁰ What Phillips argues is

⁸ BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1893, chap. 41, sec. 3.

⁹ BC, LA, Public Schools Act Amendment Act, SBC 1901, chap. 48, sec. 4.

¹⁰ Charles E. Phillips, The Development of Education in Canada (Toronto: W. J. Gage and Company, 1957), 232-3.

that from the late-nineteenth century, British Columbia used city school districts as the engines of change and that this was a causative factor in the province's high rate of expenditure per pupil by the mid-twentieth century. Further, he emphasizes that using cities as the vanguard for the school system was unique to British Columbia. Phillips's conclusions focus attention on the seminal importance of the creation of the province's city school system in the 1890s.

The changes in the public school system intersected with an expansion in the size of the school population. As Table I.1 indicates, the last decade of the nineteenth century saw significant growth in British Columbia's population and an equally rapid rate of population growth in the province's four cities. The school system was a sensitive reflector of the general population expansion and a 1971 study of pupil-teacher ratios over a 100 year period showed just how exceptional the 1890s were.

The elementary school pupil/teacher ratio climbed steadily from 33 students per teacher in 1872 to a peak of over 50 in 1890 and 1891 and was just below 48 students per teacher in 1892. These ratios, which are almost unbelievable considering present standards, decreased to 30 in the 25 years from 1892 to 1917 and hovered around that point for the next 40 years.¹¹

Table I.2 shows the overall increase in enrollment in the four city school districts over the decade. It indicates that the effect of population growth on schools was significantly compounded by increased daily attendance. In Nanaimo's case the

¹¹ British Columbia, Department of Education, Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia: Special Historical Supplement to the One Hundredth Annual Report, 1970-71 (Victoria: Queen's Printer, 1972), 72.

Table I.1

Population growth in British Columbia and its coastal cities 1891-1901

	Population		% change
	1891	1901	
British Columbia	98,173	178,657	+ 82.0
Nanaimo	4,595	6,130	+ 33.4
New Westminster	6,678	6,499	- 2.7
Vancouver	13,709	27,010	+ 97.0
Victoria	16,841	20,919	+ 24.2

Source: Robert A. J. McDonald, Making Vancouver: Class, Status, and Social Boundaries, 1863-1913, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), 93; and Sixth Census of Canada, 1921, vol. 1, tables 1 and 12, pp. 3 and 234-5

Table I.2

School attendance in British Columbia's city school districts for 1890 and 1900: total numbers of pupils of all ages who attended during the year and average daily attendance (ADA)

	Total number		ADA		ADA as % of total	
	1890	1900	1890	1900	1890	1900
Nanaimo	576	1,265	301.38	885.70	52 %	70 %
New Westminster	673	1,221	361.65	833.29	54 %	68 %
Vancouver	1,465	3,907	845.88	2,711.07	58 %	69 %
Victoria	1,896	2,898	1,117.45	2,096.39	59 %	72 %

Sources: British Columbia, Superintendent of Education, Twentieth Annual Report of Public Schools, 1890-91, ix-x; and Thirtieth Annual Report of Public Schools, 1900-01, xv-xvi

total number of students more than doubled (+120 %), but the average daily attendance nearly tripled (+194 %). The rapid growth of the public school system as well as major changes in financing suggest the importance of the 1890s to an understanding of the development of education in British Columbia.¹²

I.2 Late Nineteenth-Century British Columbia Education History

Although the 1890s saw major changes in British Columbia's education system, the decade has not yet drawn the attention of historians. The main surveys are organized topically which obscures any sense of the decade as a significant moment. Donald MacLaurin's unpublished 1936 history of education in British Columbia has a third and final section comprising two thirds of his study which examines a series of topics in the period from 1871 to 1935.¹³ Charles E. Phillips's 1957 history of Canadian education devotes less than twenty of its 600 pages to British Columbia, conveying no sense of the special character of 1890s.¹⁴ F. Henry Johnson's 1964 history of education in British Columbia, in its second section, examines the period from 1871 to 1924 using topic headings similar to MacLaurin's and with the same result -- there is no sense of any particular decade, including the 1890s.¹⁵ Wilson, Stamp and Audet in their

¹² Predictably, schooling costs grew significantly through the decade. In 1890, the provincial government allocated approximately 14 percent of its revenues to education. By 1901 that figure had risen to almost 20 percent. British Columbia, Superintendent of Education [BC, SE], Thirtieth Annual Report of Public Schools, 1900-01 [ARPS], 233a.

¹³ Donald L. MacLaurin, 'The History of Education in the Crown Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia and in the Province of British Columbia' (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 1936).

¹⁴ Phillips, Development of Education.

1970 history of Canadian education touch on many topics in British Columbia school history, but the scope of their book and its organization by broad time periods preclude an understanding of British Columbia schooling in the last decade of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ It is, in fact, something of a lost decade.

Studies of nineteenth-century schooling tail off in the late 1880s while studies of twentieth-century schooling begin after 1900. Yet, Jean Barman's examination of the development of educational structures in nineteenth-century British Columbia can be read as a call to look very carefully at the 1890s. She argues that by the mid-1880s the provincial government had implemented a free non-denominational school system.¹⁷ Earlier, the government had legislated compulsory school attendance. Beginning in 1876, children in British Columbia aged seven to twelve were legally required to attend school six months a year.¹⁸ Once free, compulsory, and non-denominational public schooling was in place, the government had to decide how to administer and fund such a system. The immediacy of their problem was greatly exacerbated by sustained population

¹⁵ F. Henry Johnson, A History of Public Education in British Columbia (Vancouver: Publications Centre, University of British Columbia, 1964).

¹⁶ J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet, eds., Canadian Education: A History (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

¹⁷ Jean Barman, 'The Emergence of Educational Structures in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia,' in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson, eds., Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 16 and 31.

¹⁸ BC, LA, Consolidated Public School Act, SBC 1876, chap. 2, sec. 38. This provision remained unchanged until 1901 when it was amended to require students in the city school districts to attend school every day. BC, LA, An Act to amend the 'Public Schools Act' SBC 1901, chap. 48, sec. 19. In 1921, full-year schooling become compulsory for rural children in British Columbia. Johnson, A History of Public Education, 56.

growth. The 1890s are critical to an understanding of the development of state schooling in British Columbia because in that decade educational authorities faced the challenge of constructing the beginnings of a modern public education system.

The very complication of developments in the 1890s has hindered serious consideration by historians. It has sometimes been tempting to avoid the complexity of these years by situating the transition to civic funding and the introduction of a student-per-capita grant system in the early twentieth century.¹⁹ These changes were, however, very much contested developments of the 1890s. Similarly, the issue of appointed trustees has caused confusion. Ronald Manzer claims that city School Trustees in British Columbia were appointed rather than elected from 1888 to 1901.²⁰ In fact, not until 1891 did the Public School Act institute the appointment of city Trustees and the School Act of 1892 immediately reinstated the election process.²¹ The intricate twists and turns of the School Acts in the final decade of the nineteenth century were labyrinthine in nature precisely because the intensity of debate, fueled by early municipal ambitions and concerns, forced rapid sequential legislative change. In sum, the 1890s were a transitional decade so complicated that it has been tempting to consider it the beginning of the next century or the end of an earlier

¹⁹ See for example, Phillips, Development of Education, 232. The student per-capita grant system introduced in 1893 was replaced by a teacher per-capita grant system in 1905. Donald MacLaurin argues the latter proved to be more conducive to reasonable class sizes. MacLaurin, 'History of Education,' 236.

²⁰ Ronald Manzer, Public Schools & Political Ideas: Canadian Educational Policy in Historical Perspective (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 91.

²¹ BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1891, chap. 40, sec. 22; and BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1892, chap. 40, sec. 5.

initiative and therefore not appreciate its uniqueness. Soaring student numbers coupled with radical and far-reaching provincial legislative initiatives provoked a complex reaction of outrage and enthusiasm in the four city school districts.

I.3 Chapter Outline

This dissertation is written from a civic perspective, not from the perspective of the lived experience of the students and teachers who spent their days in the Nanaimo schools. Neither does it look at schooling in Nanaimo from the perspective of the provincial education authorities or the provincial government. Perhaps, though, this study will facilitate exploration of these subjects by others in the future.

It is useful to review some of the educational responsibilities of those in Victoria and the civic officials and teachers in Nanaimo. The provincial government legislated the school system. The Education Office certified teachers, prescribed textbooks, inspected schools, provided Trustees and teachers with report forms and school registers, and collected information on the schools and published it in Annual Reports. Various other government departments also dealt with the school system as part of their general responsibilities. In Nanaimo, City Council became responsible for school finance in the 1890s. At the same time, the School Trustees were or became responsible for meeting monthly, keeping a copy of the minutes of their meetings, building, insuring, maintaining, repairing, and furnishing the schools, deciding on the number of teachers, setting teacher salaries, appointing teachers, ranking teachers, deciding on the number of classes and the number of grades in a class, and deciding whether classes would be co-

educational and age-graded. Teachers were responsible for maintaining school registers. This division of authority makes clear that the provision of state schooling in Nanaimo was a complicated undertaking requiring the participation of Council, Board and teachers before any instruction even occurred.

Chapter One considers the new ideas about space which emerged in the late-nineteenth century as artists, designers, writers, scientists, and others rethought the hegemony of centralism and the marginalism of the periphery. The writing of history in North America, however, continued to promote a master narrative for much of the twentieth century. British Columbia education historians have consistently argued that central education authorities constructed and controlled the public school system in the nineteenth century. This chapter makes the case that the centralist interpretation does not adequately explain the development of the education system in Nanaimo in the 1890s. Recent cultural theory explores spatial constructions such as the central-local binary, boundaries, and hierarchies. These three provide a framework for reading the extant Nanaimo school records. The chapter concludes that the central-local dualism, which underlies centralist interpretations, is too limited to accommodate the complexity of the production of public schooling in Nanaimo in the late-nineteenth century. Furthermore, public schooling played an important role in Nanaimo in regard to civic, racial, and occupational boundaries and as a venue for the formation of hierarchies of gender and age.

Chapter Two argues that the last years of the nineteenth century were a historically specific moment in Nanaimo's history. At that time, Nanaimo was one of four leading cities in British Columbia with an economy based on coal mining,

small businesses, and government office holding. Its legal, economic, and social diversity was reflected in the lives of the School Trustees. From the perspective of civic leaders the school system was an important signifier of Nanaimo as a modern urban community. Public schooling also had other critical roles to play both as a marker for the population of European descent and as a source of increasingly desirable academic credentials. Schooling, then, was a factor in making and unmaking social boundaries in Nanaimo.

Chapter Three examines the relative ability of provincial and civic authorities to determine school financing. The chapter traces the complicated changes in financing city schools in the 1890s. Over the course of the decade, the provincial government was unsuccessful in its effort to shift the full responsibility for school funding to Nanaimo. Civic authorities, in contrast, ably defended their own interests although in the process relations between City Council and the School Board broke down temporarily. The conflict over school finance can be interpreted in the context of the historiographical debate among historians of education in Ontario about the degree to which central and local education authorities controlled the school system. Developments in school financing show clearly, however, that the centralist interpretation of British Columbia history and the central-local dualism on which it rests are unable to accommodate the complexity of school finance in Nanaimo in the 1890s.

Chapter Four focuses on the work of the Nanaimo School Trustees in building and operating the necessary physical space of a growing school system. The chapter argues that the production of the infrastructure of public schooling was decentralized. The business activities of the School Board involved elements

of both early and corporate capitalism. From the perspective of the Nanaimo School Board making physical space involved dealing with not one 'centre' but many. This chapter looks at a different aspect of the school system than the previous one, but reaches the same conclusions. The centralist interpretation of nineteenth-century schooling fails to integrate the process of school building in Nanaimo and the central-local dualism comes undone under scrutiny.

Chapter Five examines the ways in which the Nanaimo School Trustees constructed a hierarchy of teachers in Nanaimo in the 1890s. In their appointments, the Trustees balanced creating work for women who had graduated from Nanaimo schools with the appointment of men with university degrees who came from outside the community. The Trustees consistently chose not to hire males for entry-and middle-level teaching positions in the 1890s, but having hired women, the Trustees attempted to place them under male supervision by concentrating the physical space of schooling. The Trustees not only ranked male teachers over female teachers, they also placed older teachers above younger ones, in effect replicating the model of the ideal family. The Trustees' actions suggest a concern that what they viewed as appropriate gender and age identities be secured through the formation of a teaching hierarchy which reflected dominant social norms.

Chapter Six begins by contrasting the different representations of Nanaimo's classrooms in the 1890s found in the Superintendent of Education's Annual Reports and Nanaimo school registers. The chapter then analyses the student hierarchies of age and gender encoded in the registers and finds evidence that some girls moved more quickly through the school system than boys

and that some younger students won promotion before older students. The possibility of girls ahead of boys and younger students ahead of older ones resulted from decisions the Trustees made about the number of grades in a class, co-education, and age-grading. In some instances, the hierarchical ordering of gender and age among students differed from that which the Trustees constructed for teachers. By the turn of the century, however, changes in examinations and student reports made the hierarchies of the classroom much less publicly visible.

This dissertation, then, argues that the centralist interpretation of late-nineteenth-century British Columbia education history does not adequately integrate the role of the Nanaimo School Board which was responsible for providing physical space and organizing teachers and students. Neither does it account for the ability of City Council and other interested parties to fight provincial initiatives in regard to school finance. Nor does it account for the role teachers played in the construction of school registers. Further, this study argues that the central-local dualism on which the centralist interpretation rests is fundamentally flawed.

Local officials and individuals in Nanaimo were important to the development of schooling, and therefore it is important to examine the nature of the community. The evidence indicates that in the 1890s civic leaders, like those in many colonial communities at the time, were concerned with defining and securing multiple interlocking identities. In addition to the civic identity itself, those which are considered here include race, gender, age, and occupation. In part, these identities were forged through the differentiating process of constructing boundaries and hierarchies. Public schooling played an integral role

making and unmaking civic, occupational, and racial boundaries and as a forum for the working out of hierarchies of gender and age.

Chapter One: Spatial Relations

At the end of the nineteenth-century new ideas about space swept through the intellectual world. Collectively, these ideas challenged the hegemony of the centralist ideology which underlay imperialism. However, a centralist perspective remained important in the writing of history in Canada and the United States for much of the twentieth century. In British Columbia, education historians have continued to argue that the province's nineteenth-century school system was the product of central school authorities in Victoria. This interpretation does not account for the complexity of the development of public schooling in Nanaimo. Three spatial constructions which were important at the end of the nineteenth-century -- the central-local dualism, boundaries, and hierarchies -- provide a framework for analysing the city's extant school records and recovering the civic role in the production of public schooling in the 1890s

1.1 Centres and Peripheries: Concepts of Space in the 1890s

'From around 1880 to the outbreak of World War I a series of sweeping changes in technology and culture created distinctive new modes of thinking about and experiencing time and space.'¹ This statement, with which cultural theorist Stephen Kern introduces his study of the three decades before the First World War, indicates that in those years the nature of space was the subject of

¹ Stephen Kern, The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 1.

considerable thought. To examine the 1890s from a spatial perspective, then, accords with one of the great intellectual and cultural preoccupations of the age.

Kern argues that conventional or Newtonian space had been understood as something homogenous, inert, and at rest. Throughout the nineteenth century new geometries began to challenge these notions. It was not mathematicians, however, but artists whose work publicized changing conceptions of space. In Still Life, painted in the mid-1880s, 'Cezanne was the first to introduce a truly heterogeneous space in a single canvas with multiple perspectives of the same subject.'² At the same time, in philosophy, Nietzsche developed the theory of perspectivism where 'spaces proliferate with points of view.'³ These new ideas about the nature of space partnered a changing appreciation of the constituent function of space.

Artists began to conceptualize background as 'a positive element, of equal importance with all others.'⁴ Kern stresses the importance of Alexander Archipenko's 1915 ground-breaking sculpture Woman Combing Her Hair. 'Never before in sculpture were essential elements such as a figure's face represented by completely empty space. In this work the traditional division of positive and negative space is dissolved as material and spatial forms flow together and constitute the woman with equal force.'⁵ Here 'empty' space had paradoxically

² Kern, The Culture of Time and Space, 141.

³ Kern, The Culture of Time and Space, 132 and 150.

⁴ Kern, The Culture of Time and Space, 153.

⁵ Kern, The Culture of Time and Space, 159-60.

become central. By the turn of the century traditional ideas about the static nature of space were collapsing in the face of exciting theoretical initiatives.

The 1890s were particularly rich in new approaches to conceptualizing space. Modern cartography dates from a formal proposal in 1891 for an international world map on a uniform scale.⁶ The map would effectively represent Europe and its colonies in the same dimensions. Historian Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier theory of 1893 credited America's development to the 'empty' space of the frontier. In 1894, the Glasgow School of Art mounted an Art Nouveau exhibit. One participant wrote, 'I specially aim at beautifully shaped spaces and try to make them as important as the patterns.'⁷ At the same time, textile designers like C. F. A. Voysey made background space integral to their designs.⁸ In physics, J. J. Thompson discovered electrons in 1897. Kern claims that 'the Thompson atom was thus largely empty space, and it wiped out the classical distinction between the plenum of matter and the void of space.'⁹ Joseph Conrad's 1899 novel of empire, Heart of Darkness, made the 'empty' space of Africa central to his story.¹⁰ In the cultural and intellectual world of the 1890s, space became a subject of debate and enquiry. In particular, the representation

⁶ J. W. Norman Thrower, 'Modern Cartography: Official and Quasi-Official Maps,' in his Maps & Civilization: Cartography in Culture and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 163. The scale proposed was 1:1,000,000, one millimeter on the map equal to one kilometer on the ground.

⁷ Stephen Astley, 'Furniture,' in Stephen Calloway, ed., Liberty of London, Masters of Style & Decoration (Toronto: Little, Brown & Company, 1992), 72.

⁸ Jennifer Harris, 'Textiles,' in Calloway, Liberty of London, 57.

⁹ Kern, The Culture of Time and Space, 153.

¹⁰ Kern, The Culture of Time and Space, 167.

of the relationship of the centre to the periphery and the nature of the periphery were being rethought.

The turn-of-the-century preoccupation with what had been perceived as marginal or empty space that was evident in mathematics, physics, art, philosophy, history, design, and literature was related to an imperialist ideology which was based on a metropole-colony dualism. In his important study of Europe's appropriation of Australia, geographer Paul Carter has argued that ideas of colonial space as empty and passive were integral to the imperial project.¹¹ As the literary theorist Jane Marcus suggests, the acceleration of imperial initiatives in the 1890s contributed to the end-of-the-century reconceptualization of space. She links imperial expansion into the space of Africa to the development of spatial modernism.¹² At the high water mark of imperialism, a spatial discourse emerged which challenged its fundamental assumptions.

In England, William S. Gilbert and Arthur S. Sullivan's 1893 opera, Utopia Limited, popularized a profound questioning of the natural relationships of mother country and colony. In the opera, Princess Zara returns to Utopia, her island home in the South Seas, after having taken her degree at Girton College. She brings with her six 'flowers of progress' who represent the cultural institutions which made England great: a captain in the Royal Navy, a captain from

¹¹ Paul Carter, The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration in Landscape and History, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 303.

¹² Jane Marcus, 'Registering Objections: Grounding Feminist Alibis,' in Margaret R. Higonnet and Joan Templeton, eds., Reconfigured Spheres: Feminist Explorations of Literary Space (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 180.

the First Life Guards representing the army, a lawyer, a Lord High Chamberlain, a county councillor, and a company promoter. Together, they recommend that the island incorporate as a limited liability company, 'Utopia Limited.'

Cultural theorist Carolyn Williams describes the result. 'As the one tiny island adopts the cultural peculiarities of the other, the opera experiments with a piquant version of Gilbertian topsy-turveydom: an allegory of empire and colonialism in which the imperial, ethnographic gaze is returned, reversed, and reflected by the subject people.'¹³ Gilbert and Sullivan offered a cheerful perspective on a serious matter. Joseph Conrad, their contemporary, wrote more darkly on the same subject. According to Mary Louise Pratt, a specialist in comparative literature, Conrad transformed 'Africa from a sun-drenched promontory into the guilt-ridden heart of darkness where European lust for dominance met up with the impossibility of total control.'¹⁴ The work of Gilbert and Sullivan and Joseph Conrad, like that of a host of their contemporaries, reflected and fed deeply felt anxieties about metropolitan-periphery relations in the Empire in the golden years of imperialism.

The political and cultural implications of the new ideas about space were enormous. The old dualisms of centre-periphery / central-local suddenly became complicated. In the 1890s, at the moment when the imperial centre seemed to be

¹³ Carolyn Williams, 'Utopia, Limited: nationalism, empire and parody in the comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan,' in Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken, eds., *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 222-3.

¹⁴ Mary Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 215.

at its most powerful, its natural preeminence and absolute agency came under question. Assumptions about the hierarchical relationship of centre over periphery, the one way flow of authority from the former to the latter, and the homogenous and timeless nature of the periphery were increasingly uncertain.

1.2 North, South, Central, Middle: British Columbia School Names in the 1890s

Half a world away from the centre of the Empire, a concern with centres and peripheries manifested itself in British Columbia in the 1890s through the naming of schools. In 1888-89, Vancouver opened East School and West School.¹⁵ In 1889-90, New Westminster established Westside School and Vancouver built the province's first Central School.¹⁶ In Nanaimo, North and South Ward Schools started in 1891.¹⁷ Five years later, Central School replaced the Nanaimo's Boys' and Girls' Schools.¹⁸ Vancouver added East Branch School and Victoria opened North Ward School, South Park School, and West School.¹⁹ In Nanaimo, the Trustees established Middle Ward School in January 1900.²⁰ Throughout the 1890s, School Trustees in British Columbia's coastal cities participated in a decade-defining spatial discourse in naming their schools.

¹⁵ British Columbia, Superintendent of Education [BC, SE], Eighteenth Annual Report of Public Schools, 1888-89 [ARPS], xi.

¹⁶ BC, SE, Nineteenth ARPS, 1889-90, viii.

¹⁷ BC, SE, Twentieth ARPS, 1890-91, xxv.

¹⁸ BC, SE, Twenty-Fifth ARPS, 1895-96, xv.

¹⁹ BC, SE, Twenty-Fifth ARPS, 1895-96, xv-xvi.

²⁰ BC, SE, Twenty-Ninth ARPS, 1899-1900, v.

Names have significance and implications. In the 1890s, British Columbia's graded schools became, to use Paul Carter's phrase, a spatial text.²¹ What then was the message of that text? In their study of school architecture in British Columbia, Douglas Franklin and John Fleming explain that the new Vancouver school built in 1890 was 'named Central School as it was located midway between the East and West schools.'²² The meaning of the new name, however, may have been less transparent than Franklin and Fleming suggest. School names were affixed by agents of the state to highly visible institutions of state power. The names codified and naturalized the centre as dominant and the peripheries as subordinate or secondary. At the same time, though, what had been obvious was made explicit. In the 1890s, School Trustees in British Columbia cities were not immune from the threat that new intellectual and cultural configurations of space potentially posed to stability. By naming their schools as they did, the Trustees sought to maintain the orderliness of their world as they knew it. A concern with centres and peripheries developed in the naming of British Columbia Schools just as it did more generally in the 1890s. In the scholarly world, historians developed a concern about centres and peripheries which has continued into the twentieth century.

²¹ Carter, The Road to Botany Bay, 50.

²² Douglas Franklin and John Fleming, Early School Architecture in British Columbia: An Architectural History and Inventory of Buildings to 1930 (Victoria: Heritage Conservation Branch, 1980), 113.

1.3 Spatial Paradigms in American and Canadian History

American and Canadian historians have written extensively about centre-periphery relations in their national histories. British Columbia historian Robin Fisher has pointed out that while American historians have used the term frontier to refer to the periphery, Canadian historians have preferred the term hinterland.²³ Prior to the 1970s, Canadian and American historians built analytical paradigms around the nature and relationship of centres and peripheries. Both the American frontier and the Canadian metropolitan schools of history were structured within the same discursive framework.

Frederick Jackson Turner wrote about the American frontier in 1893. He claimed that 'the existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development.'²⁴ In other words, the spatial configuration of the United States determined its development. According to Turner, the frontier affected not just the political, economic, and social systems in America, but the American mind.

The result is that to the frontier the American intellect owes its striking characteristics. That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism working for good and evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which

²³ Robin Fisher, 'Duff and George Go West: A Tale of Two Frontiers,' Canadian Historical Review 68, 4 (December 1987): 504.

²⁴ Frederick Jackson Turner, 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History,' originally published 1893, in John Mack Faragher, ed., Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994), 31.

comes with freedom - these are traits of the frontier, or traits called out elsewhere because of the frontier.²⁵

One of the distinguishing features of the frontier school is its emphasis on the dynamism of the frontier and the influence it had on the metropolitan areas behind it. For Turner, the colonized periphery dominated the metropolis. Although his work was typical of intellectual thought in the 1890s in its focus on the importance of 'empty' space, Turner did not reject centralism. In effect, he simply made the frontier the centre and the metropolis its subordinate periphery.

In Canada, the metropolitan school also concerned itself with the relationship of centre and periphery. In the 1930s, Harold Innis emphasized the critical role the metropolis had played in Canadian history.²⁶ Historian Carl Berger, in The Writing of Canadian History, suggests that 'perhaps the main idea that historians took over from Innis was the belief that Canada developed not in spite of geography but because of it, and that there was a naturalness and solidity to the very structure of the country that lay far deeper than political arrangements.'²⁷ For Innis as for Turner spatial relations were critical, but for Innis the engine of development was located in the metropolis.

²⁵ Turner, 'Significance,' 59.

²⁶ Innis's seminal work, The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History was first published in 1930 by Yale University Press.

²⁷ Carl Berger, 'Harold Innis: The Search for Limits,' in his The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing: 1900-1970 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), 97.

Canadian historians who followed Innis added to his ideas, but the basic issue continued to be the relationship of the metropolis and hinterland. Like Innis, Donald Creighton and the Laurentian school made the metropolis the locus of initiative, far-sightedness, and action. Other historians, such as William Morton, protested the Laurentian school's lack of concern for the regions and provinces of Canada and its overemphasis on the centre. As Carl Berger notes, 'from the middle-forties onwards Morton was thus attempting to define and refine a general concept of the metropolitan-hinterland relationship.'²⁸

In spite of Morton's concerns, Innis's theory continued dominant. In 1954, another leading Canadian historian, J. M. S. Careless, claimed that 'the metropolitan approach largely recognizes what is already going on in Canadian historiography and provides a new framework - one which pays heed both to the distinctive features of the history of this country and to a notable modern phenomenon, the rise of metropolitanism all around the world.'²⁹ His sentiments proved, though, to be something of a last gasp for the centralist interpretation of Canadian history.

By the late 1960s, the hegemony of centralist historiography in Canada was collapsing. Many Canadian historians became caught up in a surge of new and

²⁸ Carl Berger, 'William Morton: The Delicate Balance of Region and Nation,' in his The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing: 1900-1970 (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), 243.

²⁹ J. M. S. Careless, 'Frontierism and Metropolitanism in Canadian History,' Canadian Historical Review 35, 1 (March 1954), reprinted in J. M. S. Careless, Careless at Work: Selected Canadian Historical Studies (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1990), 122.

exciting ideas not unlike those which had been prevalent in other intellectual fields in the 1890s. What had previously been constructed as marginal was recognized as having a history and being significant in its own right. Important articles by S. R. Mealing and Careless himself signalled possible directions.³⁰ Their work in turn was overtaken by a tidal wave of working-class, ethnic, Aboriginal, and women's history which rejected the master narrative.³¹ Peter Novick summed the situation up in his highly regarded monograph on American historians with the phrase, 'The center does not hold.'³² To put it differently, by the 1970s, North American history had moved outside the centralist paradigm.³³

³⁰ S. R. Mealing, 'The Concept of Social Class and the Interpretation of Canadian History,' Canadian Historical Review 46, 3 (September 1965): 201-18; and J. M. S. Careless, "'Limited Identities" in Canada,' Canadian Historical Review 50, 1 (March 1969): 1-10, reprinted in Careless, Careless at Work, 281-91.

³¹ The 'new' histories were interconnected. See, for example, the introductory essays and articles in Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, eds., Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History, Third Edition, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997). Earlier editions of Rethinking Canada were published by Copp Clark Pitman Ltd. in 1986 and 1991.

³² The phrase is used as a chapter title in the book. Peter Novick, 'The center does not hold,' in his That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Novick's chapter title is most likely taken from William Butler Yeats's 'The Second Coming,' 1921. Yeats wrote 'Things fall apart: the center cannot hold.' I am indebted to Neil Sutherland for making this point.

³³ Robin Fisher suggests that American historians moved away from the frontier theory in the mid-1950s when a seminal article by Earl Pomeroy characterized the frontier as conservative, imitative, and dependent. Fisher, 'Duff and George,' 512-3. Nevertheless, the idea of the frontier remained powerful in American popular culture. The sociologist Michael Kimmel notes that 'the recreation of the frontier loomed large in JFK's [John Fitzgerald Kennedy] imagery.... Kennedy evoked the search for the frontier as the source of renewal and hope.' Michael Kimmel, 'The Masculine Mystique,' in his Manhood in America: A Cultural History (New York: Free Press, 1996), 268.

1.4 Spatial Paradigms in Education History

Much of nineteenth-century Canadian education history has been written within a discursive framework which, like the work of Turner and Innis, concerns itself with the relations of centre and periphery. Studies within this framework conceptualize and analyse state school systems in terms of the relative power of central and local school authorities. The central-local relationship is foregrounded in the tables of contents in Canadian texts as traditional as Charles E. Phillips' 1957 Development of Education in Canada and as recent as the political scientist Ronald Manzer's 1994 Public Schools and Political Ideas.³⁴ American historians have also emphasized the criticality of central-local relations in the construction of nineteenth-century state education systems. In his 1983 Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860, the historian Carl F. Kaestle concluded 'the tension between localist tradition and centralizing innovation was the main dynamic in the drama of school reform after 1830.'³⁵ Historians David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot reiterated Kaestle's argument in their 1990 study of co-education in United States.³⁶ Education historians not only traditionally privileged the central-local relationship as an organizing paradigm, but many of

³⁴ Charles E. Phillips, The Development of Education in Canada (Toronto: W. J. Gage, 1957); Ronald Manzer, Public Schools & Political Ideas: Canadian Educational Policy in Historical Perspective (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

³⁵ Cited in David Tyack, 'The Common School and American Society: A Reappraisal,' a review of Carl F. Castle, Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), History of Education Quarterly 26, 2 (Summer, 1986): 304.

³⁶ David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot, Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Schools (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 119.

them continued to do so after the 1970s when it had been abandoned by other historians.

Historians of Ontario's education system have vigorously debated the relationship and relative power of the central and local educational authorities in the nineteenth century.³⁷ As J. Donald Wilson has argued, Michael Katz and his students, writing in the 1970s, placed great emphasis on the role played by central authorities in the development of the school system.³⁸ Their conclusions were first challenged by D. A. Lawr and R. D. Gidney and more recently by R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, and by Chad Gaffield.³⁹ Lawr, Gidney, Millar, and

³⁷ I am indebted to J. Donald Wilson for providing me with a road map of Canadian education history.

³⁸ In a series of articles J. Donald Wilson provides an interpretive overview of the work of Michael Katz and his students and of the other historians discussed here. J. Donald Wilson and David Charles Jones, Review Essay, 'The "New" History of Canadian Education,' History of Education Quarterly 16, 3 (Fall 1976): 367-76; J. Donald Wilson, 'Historiographical Perspectives on Canadian Educational History: A Review Essay,' Journal of Educational Thought 11, 1 (April 1977): 49-63; J. Donald Wilson, 'Introduction: The Historiography of British Columbia Educational History' in J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones, eds., Schooling and Society in 20th Century British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1980), 7-21; J. Donald Wilson, 'Some Observations on Recent Trends in Canadian Educational History,' originally published 1984, in Carl Berger, ed., Contemporary Approaches to Canadian History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 222-36; J. Donald Wilson, 'The New Diversity in Canadian Educational History,' Acadiensis 19, 2 (Spring, 1990): 148-69. For an interpretation by one of J. Donald Wilson's students of the work of several of the historians discussed here see Donald Soucy 'Interpreting Schooling in Nineteenth-Century Ontario,' Historical Studies in Education 3, 2 (Fall 1991): 275-84. Paul Axelrod has also written about the debates among the historians discussed here. See Paul Axelrod, 'Historical Writing and Canadian Education from the 1970s to the 1990s,' History of Education Quarterly 36, 1 (Spring, 1996): especially 31-3.

³⁹ R. D. Gidney and D. A. Lawr, 'Bureaucracy vs. Community? The Origins of Bureaucratic Procedure in the Upper Canadian School System,' Journal of Social History 13, 3 (1981): 438-57; D. A. Lawr and R. D. Gidney, 'Who Ran the Schools? Local Influence on Education Policy in Nineteenth-Century Ontario,' Ontario History 72, 3 (1980): 131-43; R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, Inventing

Gaffield have argued that local communities and families were very effective in getting the public schooling they wanted. Bruce Curtis has also challenged the work of Michael Katz, particularly his social control theory. While Curtis also saw the centre as the locus of power, he developed a sophisticated argument that the central education authorities engaged in a process of state formation by educating students in self governance.⁴⁰ In a major study of nineteenth-century Ontario school history published in the late 1980s, Alison Prentice and Susan Houston continued to focus on the importance of the central education authorities.⁴¹ Working within the central-local paradigm, historians of the nineteenth-century public system in Ontario have reached different conclusions. This study speaks to these debates by offering relevant evidence from the context of British Columbia.

Scholarly histories of the British Columbia school system dealing with the period prior to World War I have also been constructed within the central-local paradigm, but unlike Ontario, there has been little debate. Nineteenth-century British Columbia education history has overwhelmingly been written from the perspective of the centre as the titles in Valerie Giles's annotated bibliography of the province's education history make abundantly clear.⁴² In light of the

Secondary Education: The Rise of the High School in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990); and Chad Gaffield, 'Children, Schooling and Family Reproduction in 19th Century Ontario,' Canadian Historical Review 72, 2 (June 1991): 157-91.

⁴⁰ Bruce Curtis, Building the Educational State: 1863-1871 (London: Althouse Press, 1988); and Bruce Curtis, True Government by Choice Men? Inspection, Education and State Formation in Canada West (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

⁴¹ Susan E. Houston and Alison Prentice, Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988)

⁴² Valerie M. E. Giles, Annotated Bibliography of Education History in British

disagreement in Ontario, the universality of the centralist consensus in regard to nineteenth-century British Columbia is notable.⁴³

The explanation for the dominance of centralism in British Columbia

Columbia (Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 1992). Education historians are not alone in writing nineteenth-century British Columbia history from a centralist perspective. Historian Tina Loo argues that the legal system in British Columbia was developed to overcome localism and to 'break down local practices.' In her view, local communities in British Columbia were recipients of centralist initiatives in regard to the law. Tina Loo, 'Property, Geography, and the Courts,' in her Making Law, Order, and Authority in British Columbia, 1821-1871 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 65.

⁴³ Unlike historians who have studied nineteenth-century British Columbia education history, those who have written about public schooling in the province in the twentieth century have examined rural school concerns. See for example, Thomas Fleming and Carolyn Smyly, 'The Diary of Mary Williams: A Cameo of Rural Schooling in British Columbia, 1922-1924,' in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson, eds., Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 259-84; Penelope Stephenson, "'Mrs. Gibson looked as if she was ready for the end of term": The Professional Trials and Tribulations of Rural Teachers in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley in the 1920s,' in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson, eds., Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 235-57; J. Donald Wilson, 'The Visions of Ordinary Participants: Teachers' Views of Rural Schooling in British Columbia in the 1920s,' in Patricia E. Roy, ed., A History of British Columbia (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1989), 239-55; J. Donald Wilson, 'I Am Here to Help if You Need Me: British Columbia Rural Teachers' Welfare Officer, 1928-1934,' Journal of Canadian Studies 25, 2 (Summer 1990): 94-118; J. Donald Wilson "'I am ready to be of assistance when I can": Lottie Bowron and Rural Women Teachers in British Columbia,' in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson, eds., Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 285-306; J. Donald Wilson and Paul J. Stortz, "'May the Lord have Mercy on You": The Rural School Problem in British Columbia in the 1920s,' first published in 1989, in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson, eds., Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 209-33. Jean Barman has written about public schooling in three British Columbia resource towns (late-nineteenth-century Nanaimo and Wellington and Powell River in the 1920s) in Jean Barman, 'Reflections on the Role of the School in the Transition to Work in British Columbia Resource Towns,' in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson, eds., Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 323-35.

education history derives from an amalgam of factors, one of the most important of which is agreement among historians that the province's education system actually was centralized to an unusually high degree. Manoly Lupul notes that the first Vancouver Island Common School Act in 1865 'established a highly centralized school system, perhaps unrivalled in the power it gave the Governor and the nine-man General Board.'⁴⁴ F. Henry Johnson argues that 'British Columbia had entered Confederation [in 1871] with the most centralized school system on record.'⁴⁵ Donald McLaurin states that the Public School Act of 1872 created 'a highly centralized system for the establishment, maintenance and management of Public Schools throughout the Province of British Columbia.'⁴⁶ Patricia E. Roy claims that John Robson, the provincial minister responsible for education from 1883 to 1892, 'was able to centralize the school system to such an extent that critics accused him of running a political machine.'⁴⁷ Thomas Fleming concludes that 'for much of the first century of public schooling in this province, this pattern of central decision-making was evident.'⁴⁸ Historians would be

⁴⁴ Manoly R. Lupul, 'Education in Western Canada Before 1873,' in J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet, eds., Canadian Education: A History (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 252.

⁴⁵ F. Henry Johnson, A History of Public Education in British Columbia (Vancouver: Publications Centre, University of British Columbia, 1964), 88.

⁴⁶ Donald L. McLaurin, 'The History of Education in the Crown Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia and in the Province of British Columbia' (PhD dissertation, University of Washington 1936), 128.

⁴⁷ Patricia E. Roy, 'John Robson,' Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. 12, 1891-1900 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 918. John Robson held several cabinet portfolios in the years 1883 to 1892 in addition to being responsible for education. He was Premier of British Columbia from 1889 to his death in 1892.

⁴⁸ Thomas Fleming, "'Our Boys in the Field": School Inspectors, Superintendents, and the Changing Character of School Leadership in British Columbia,' in Nancy

drawn to study the centre of what they viewed as a highly centralized system.

Thomas Fleming offers the most specific and articulate statement of the basic discursive framework of the province's nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century school history.

Provincial authorities determined the extent to which schools would be financed, the number of school boards that would exist, the organizational and administrative structures for the delivery of services, the character of the school curriculum, the nature of testing and standards, and criteria for teacher certification.⁴⁹

Fleming delineates the way in which provincial inspectors generated the knowledge, and therefore the power, which allowed the central authorities complete control of the system.

Apart from reporting on teacher performances, inspectors were also responsible for preparing annual reports on their district. These documents formed the basis of the Department of Education's own annual reports on the condition of the provincial schools. In collecting such information, inspectors became the province's leading educational experts, and provided the statistical data necessary for Victoria to maintain its administrative expertise, and, thereby, its hegemony over the development of the school system.⁵⁰

Historians have adopted this centralist paradigm with little debate and it has served British Columbia education history for decades. This study takes a different perspective and reaches different conclusions about the nature of the

M. Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson, and David C. Jones, eds., *Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1986), 286.

⁴⁹ Fleming, 'Our Boys in the Field,' 286.

⁵⁰ Fleming, 'Our Boys in the Field,' 288.

provincial school system in the late-nineteenth-century.⁵¹

While it is true that central education authorities in British Columbia determined many aspects of the school system, it is also true that there were important components of the system which they did not determine. In the 1890s, civic authorities in Nanaimo had a great deal to say about finance, physical space, and organizational structures. The centralist argument that there was a one way flow of authority from Victoria and that agents of the central state working in the field collected all the information on which that authority was based does not accommodate the complexity of the development of public schooling in Nanaimo at the end of the nineteenth century. To begin to reconstruct Nanaimo's experience, this study focuses on three sets of spatial constructions -- the central-local binary, boundaries, and hierarchies.

1.5 Spatial Relations of Public Schooling in Nanaimo in the 1890s

During the last decade, scholars working in different fields have generated an impressive literature of cultural studies which pays particular attention to space. Gillian Rose, a geographer, offers a useful introduction.⁵² She notes that contemporary cultural theory is saturated with spatial metaphors and draws constantly on spatial concepts such as centre, margin, and borderland. Examples

⁵¹ I am indebted to Thomas Fleming for several interesting conversations during which I learned a lot about British Columbia education history and clarified my own perspective on it.

⁵² Gillian Rose, 'As If the Mirrors Had Bled: Masculine dwelling, masculinist theory and feminist masquerade,' in Nancy Duncan, ed., BodySpace: destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality (London: Routledge, 1996), 56-74.

of this literature, several of which are cited below, have provided a framework for reading the extant documentary evidence on Nanaimo schools in the 1890s.

The archetype for the central-local binary which underlies the centralist interpretation of nineteenth-century British Columbia history is the metropole-colony construction of European imperialism which increasingly ordered the world from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, peaking in importance at the end of the nineteenth century. Implicit in the central-local / metropole-colony paradigm are ideas about the nature of the centre and the periphery and the relationship between them which do not fit with the production of public schooling in Nanaimo in the 1890s. There are four parts to this argument.

To begin with, the categories 'central' and 'local' do not stand up to scrutiny. Neither were actually singular entities. In Nanaimo, the City Council, the School Board, the teachers, the students, and local interest groups all played a role in the production of schooling. Also, from the perspective of Nanaimo, there was more than one 'centre.' Nanaimo authorities dealt separately with the provincial legislature, individual provincial politicians, the Education Office, the Provincial Secretary's Office, the Attorney-General's Office, the Department of Land and Works, as well as with national and international suppliers of industrial products and services. The British cultural theorist Stuart Hall reminds us that we need to 're-read the very binary form in which the colonial encounter has for so long itself been represented.'⁵³ Hall's insight that the central-local dualism

⁵³ Stuart Hall, 'When Was "The Post-Colonial"? Thinking At The Limit,' in Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti, eds., The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 246-7.

requires examination is useful in rethinking Nanaimo's experience of public schooling in the 1890s.

The second part of the argument is that the relationships of state schooling in the 1890s did not occur on a single central-local axis. In Nanaimo, the School Board, City Council, teachers, students, and local interest groups interacted with each other as well as with education authorities in other British Columbia cities and a variety of industrial suppliers. Actions and decisions taken anywhere in this constellation could generate reaction and further action. In their richly textured survey of colonial studies, 'Between Metropole and Colony,' Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper emphasize the extent to which colonial historiography 'has blinded us to those circuits of knowledge and communication that took other routes than those shaped by the metropole-colony axis alone.'⁵⁴ The same can be said of education histories which conceptualize school systems in terms of a singular central-local relationship.

The third point in the argument is that, contrary to what is implicit in the traditional binary opposition of central-local, and so clearly articulated in the centralist interpretation of British Columbia schooling, the spatial relations of state schooling did not operate in one direction, or even primarily in one direction. Central initiatives in regard to finance, for example, provoked a strong civic response and were subsequently amended. Historian Catherine Hall captures the importance of thinking about the complexity of the direction of

⁵⁴ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony,' in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 28.

spatial relationships and grasping their significance. She argues that 'the political and institutional histories of 'the centre' and its outer circles may be more mutually constituted than we used to think.'⁵⁵ Her insight that centres and peripheries construct each other is useful for understanding the dynamics of public schooling in Nanaimo.

The final point in regard to the central-local binary is that while much of the public school system was a product of central initiatives, important parts of the 'provincial' education system were 'made-in-Nanaimo.' The local community played a complementary role, not a subordinate one, in the development of the school system. As a result, the conception of the centre as dominant and the local as subordinate which is implicit in the dualism does not appropriately reflect the realities of schooling in Nanaimo in the 1890s.

The other two spatial constructions which are important in this study are boundaries and hierarchies both of which generated concern and attention in late-nineteenth-century Nanaimo. The cultural theorists Helen Liggett and David C. Perry while acknowledging that 'the terminology of spatial theory is somewhat unstable,' argue that one of its main concerns is with 'spatial production as differentiation' through the construction of boundaries and hierarchies.⁵⁶ Issues of boundaries and hierarchies intersected in a number of ways with public

⁵⁵ Catherine Hall, 'Histories, empires and the post-colonial moment,' in Chambers and Curti, eds., The Post-Colonial Question, 70.

⁵⁶ Liggett, Helen and David C. Perry, 'Spatial Practices: An Introduction,' in Helen Liggett and David C. Perry, eds., Spatial Practices: Critical Explorations in Social/Spatial Theory (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1995), 6 and 4.

schooling in Nanaimo in the 1890s.

Cultural studies of the late-nineteenth century reflect the considerable energy which that age devoted to the construction of racial boundaries. The American historian Elaine Showalter links this effort to the cultural insecurities of high imperialism.⁵⁷ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper suggest that an 'embourgeoisement' of imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century enhanced 'racial distancing.'⁵⁸ Colonial historian Alan Lester argues that the impetus for intensified racism in British colonies came from the colonies themselves. He claims that 'a late nineteenth-century empire based on free trade with settler-dominated societies which had been "given their head" in the advance of peripheral capitalist frontiers, was also based on scientific constructions of racial inferiority which found their deepest reservoirs of support and their anatomical raw material in the margins of empire.'⁵⁹ Literary theorist Patrick Williams, writing about India, also observes the increased intensity with which British officials at the turn of the century attempted to enforce racial boundaries and racial purity.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Elaine Showalter, 'Borderlines,' in her Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle (New York: Viking, 1990), 4.

⁵⁸ Stoler and Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony,' 31.

⁵⁹ Alan Lester, "'Otherness" and the frontiers of empire: the Eastern Cape Colony, 1806-c.1850,' Journal of Historical Geography 24, 1 (1998): 14.

⁶⁰ Patrick Williams, 'Kim and Orientalism,' originally published 1989, in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds., Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 492.

Canadian scholars have been well aware of the late-nineteenth century obsession with racial boundaries. In her study of the prairies west of Manitoba, Sarah Carter notes a distinct hardening of racial boundaries in the late-nineteenth century.⁶¹ Cole Harris, in his study of the colonial resettlement of British Columbia, argues that 'boundaries became exceedingly important' in the province in the late-nineteenth century.⁶² Jean Barman similarly claims that colonial elites in British Columbia 'were intent to mark the boundaries of a colonizing population.'⁶³ Nanaimo, as a community, was deeply involved in the definition and maintenance of racial boundaries and public schooling played an important role as a boundary marker in that endeavour. Other boundary concerns also occupied the attention of community leaders in Nanaimo at the end of the nineteenth-century. Two of the most important were civic boundaries and occupational boundaries: the school system was integral to the making and unmaking of those boundaries as well.

Hierarchies of gender and age were important in the late-nineteenth century. The ideal of the patriarchal nuclear family with its hierarchies of gender and age served as a model for organizing private individuals and public institutions.⁶⁴ Hierarchies, however, did not just happen. They had to be made.

⁶¹ Sarah Carter, Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery In Canada's Prairie West (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 21, 159, 161.

⁶² Cole Harris, The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 268.

⁶³ Jean Barman, 'Taming Aboriginal Sexuality: Gender, Power, and Race in British Columbia, 1850-1900,' BC Studies 115/116 (Autumn/Winter 1997/98): 237-66

⁶⁴ Sylvia Schafer discusses the legal and religious history of the hierarchical

Jean Barman argues, for example, that an attempt to subordinate Aboriginal women within the family brought together an unlikely alliance of colonial government officials, colonial missionaries, and Aboriginal men in nineteenth-century British Columbia.⁶⁵ In the province's public school system, the construction of appropriate hierarchies was in part the product of central education authorities through, for example, such instruments as textbooks.⁶⁶ At the same time though, hierarchies were produced by local education authorities responsible for organizing teachers and students. With the expansion of public schooling in Nanaimo in the 1890s, School Trustees made decisions which resulted in highly visible hierarchies of gender and age. These new school hierarchies in some ways supported and in some ways challenged the dominant social norm. Boundaries and hierarchies were intersecting social constructions. Together they forged the relations of difference with which civic leaders attempted to order their world.

Nineteenth-century school systems were spatial constructions. Geographer Doreen Massey argues that 'in human geography, the recognition that the spatial

family in France. Her ideas are generally applicable to imperialist Europe and its colonies. Sylvia Schafer, 'The Long History of Paternal Power,' in her Children in Moral Danger and the Problem of Government in Third Republic France (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 25-43.

⁶⁵ Barman, 'Taming Aboriginal Sexuality,' 249.

⁶⁶ Timothy J. Stanley makes this argument in regard to racial hierarchies. He stresses that the construction of White supremacist ideology in British Columbia was not an aberration, but a product of textbooks which normalized an invented hierarchy of racial superiority and inferiority. Timothy J. Stanley, 'White Supremacy and the Rhetoric of Educational Indoctrination: A Canadian Case Study,' in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson, eds., Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 39 and 50-1.

is socially constituted was followed by the perhaps even more powerful ... recognition that the social is necessarily spatially constituted too.⁶⁷ Attention to the arrangement of social space, then, provides a useful approach to the analysis of social systems, not least education systems. The central-local relations, boundaries, and hierarchies constituted within/by public education in Nanaimo in the 1890s played out in both the physical and textual spaces of schooling. Extant school records constitute the empirical evidence on which this study is based and the final section of this chapter provides a brief introduction to these records.

1.6 Late Nineteenth-Century School Records

The Nanaimo Board of School Trustees generated two important sets of records. The Board minutes are available from July 1891 and the Board letterbooks from 1893 to 1904. The survival of these records, particularly the correspondence, is probably fortuitous. In 1893, the city clerk, Samuel Gough, became the secretary of the School Board. He was responsible for the Board records and the city records until his death in office in 1925. Copies of outgoing letters for both City Council and the School Board were only kept in letterbooks until 1904. Correspondence for the years after 1904 has not remained intact and much of it is lost.

⁶⁷ Doreen Massey, 'Politics and Space/Time,' in her Space, Place, and Gender (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 264.

Several sources provide a context for the Board records. Twenty-five percent of the school registers compiled by Nanaimo teachers during the decade have survived. The City Council minutes and letterbooks for the 1890s are available. The Nanaimo Free Press which reported on all Council and many School Board meetings includes a wealth of information on Nanaimo. George Norris, the owner and editor throughout the 1890s, was well versed in the finer points of Nanaimo politics and history. In addition, the Superintendent of Education's Correspondence Inwards includes a number of letters from individuals in Nanaimo. Many records generated outside Nanaimo also illuminate developments in the city's school system in the 1890s. Information on individuals is available from a wide variety of sources including provincial vital statistics, the Canadian censuses and city directories. The Superintendent of Education's Annual Reports of Public Schools are the most important of the record groups produced by the central education authorities to represent the school system in each locality in the province.

Nineteenth-century school records were cultural constructions. They not only represent the production of education, they are themselves an intrinsic part of that production. They are not, however, homogenous. In regard to public schooling in Nanaimo in the 1890s, there is a disjuncture between the Board minutes, letterbooks, and school registers which were generated locally and the Annual Reports of the Public Schools which emanated from the office of the provincial Superintendent of Education. In part this is because Nanaimo records and provincial Annual Reports served different functions. One distinction is the systematic normalization of order and progress in the Annual Reports and the uncalculated representation of disorder in the Board minutes, letterbooks, and

registers. The Annual Reports were designed to document the progress of the school system from year to year. As a result, they erased the constant change which occurred during the year as the Nanaimo City Council, the School Board, the teachers and the students scrambled to cope, usually in a somewhat improvised fashion, with sequential legislative initiatives, changing standards, a doubling of the number of teachers and classes, and a tripling of students. The School Board records tell a different and more complicated story than the Annual Reports. The reality 'on the ground' in Nanaimo was not easily compatible with the form of the Annual Reports.

One of the most important characteristics of the School Board minutes is that many of the entries are statements of intent. Naturally, however, in the working out of plans agreed upon, changes occurred. Sometimes the changes were alluded to in future minutes, but often they were not. The challenge for historians, then, is to trace the transition from intention to action. This requires not only reading the minutes backwards as much as forward, but linking the minutes to other record groups.

The cultural theorist Ann Laura Stoler notes that in the ongoing contest over which forms of knowledge count, the state establishes a hierarchy of knowledge 'in which the material and particular are subordinate knowledges, encased by the more general and abstract knowledges at the top, and finally by a centralization of knowledge that makes state control possible.'⁶⁸ In the context of

⁶⁸ Ann Laura Stoler, Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 77.

the late-nineteenth-century British Columbia school system, the central authorities used their power to represent city schools to establish their claim to be the centre. Their proclivity for quantifying every aspect of the provincial school system in the Annual Reports facilitated and justified centralized planning.⁶⁹ The 'infinite reproducibility' of the Annual Reports through printing, which was in stark contrast to the single manuscript copies of the Board records, also normalized the authority of the central authorities.⁷⁰ To paraphrase Mary Louise Pratt, in her study of travel literature, in its Annual Reports the Education Office in Victoria converted local knowledge into central knowledge associated with central forms and relations of power.⁷¹

While historians of education in British Columbia have been responsive to the Education Office's construction of the school system as highly centralized, Nanaimo school records provide the basis for revisiting late-nineteenth-century public education from the perspective of one of the province's four city school districts. Nanaimo City Council, the School Board, and Nanaimo teachers played roles in the production of public schooling which have been largely erased in the centralist interpretation. That interpretation has also effectively rendered

⁶⁹ For a similar argument in another context see Miles Ogborn, 'The Universal Register Office' in his Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies, 1680-1760 (New York: The Guilford Press, 1998), 204. For a discussion of the nineteenth-century statistical movement see George Emery, Facts of Life: The Social Construction of Vital Statistics, Ontario 1869-1952 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), especially Chapter 1.

⁷⁰ For a similar argument in another context see Benedict Anderson, 'Census, Map, Museum' in his Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Revised Edition (London: Verso, 1991), 182.

⁷¹ Pratt, Imperial Eyes, 202.

irrelevant the nature of local communities. To begin to redress the balance, the following chapter examines Nanaimo in the 1890s. It argues that those of European descent in the community shared a widespread colonial concern with securing their own hegemony in relationship to people of different cultural heritages. Nanaimo's community leaders took every opportunity to further Nanaimo's status as a city and its participation in both a coal-mining and mixed urban economy. Public schooling was seen by community leaders as an important instrument for making and unmaking the boundaries of identity which were critical to these projects.

Chapter Two: Making and Unmaking Boundaries of Identity in Nanaimo

If the centre of British Columbia's provincial school system was Victoria, one of its pre-eminent localities was the city of Nanaimo. The city was built around coal, but it was not a stereotypical coal-mining community, nor was it one and the same with nearby coal-mining towns. Historically, politically, economically, socially, and discursively, Nanaimo was a distinct entity within the central Vancouver Island coal-mining region. As the province's second fastest growing city, it was an important urban community in British Columbia.¹ A mixed urban economy and government office holding supplemented coal mining. The occupational experiences of Nanaimo's School Trustees convey something of the complexity and uniqueness of the city. Long in the forefront of schooling in British Columbia, Nanaimo was sufficiently developed to warrant its position as one of four city school districts. The colony's second elementary school and the province's third high school opened there in 1853 and 1886 respectively. From a civic perspective, public schooling was important in the 1890s as it helped to define and secure civic and racial boundaries while at the same time it facilitated crossing occupational and gender boundaries.

¹ The historian John Douglas Belshaw describes late-nineteenth century Nanaimo as a 'middling' or 'larger secondary' British Columbia centre. He claims that Nanaimo, more than the capital Victoria or the metropolis Vancouver, was 'typical of the rest of the province.' John Douglas Belshaw, 'Cradle to Grave: An Examination of Demographic Behavior on Two British Columbian Frontiers,' Journal of the Canadian Historical Association 5 (1994): 46, 41, 43.

2.1 Mapping 'Local'

What the word 'Nanaimo' represents historically is far from obvious. Those who have written about Nanaimo often express confusion about its basic character. Brian Ray Douglas Smith, in an early scholarly study of the city, argues that the stereotypical image of a coal-mining community as articulated by Dickens, Disraeli, and D. H. Lawrence, not to mention Zola, simply did not apply to Nanaimo.² Nevertheless, Smith draws on that stereotype, depicting Nanaimo's miners as living from day-to-day and relying on the obliterating effect of the tavern to see them through. For the miners, he wrote, 'the morrow was often unpleasant and always uncertain.'³ Smith, himself, remarks on a similar tension in accounts of Nanaimo written by commentators in the 1880s and 1890s. 'Either they saw Nanaimo as a sooty colliery town transported from the "Black Country" or they visualized the clean progressive industrial "city of tomorrow", the "Newcastle of the Pacific."⁴ In a more recent historical analysis, the historian John Douglas Belshaw argues that 'contemporary accounts of [late-nineteenth century] Nanaimo set it apart from the general run of mining towns in North America and the British Isles.'⁵

² Brian Ray Douglas Smith, 'Some Aspects of the Social Development of Early Nanaimo' (BA Essay, University of British Columbia, 1956), 27.

³ Smith, 'Some Aspects of the Social Development,' 124.

⁴ Smith, 'Some Aspects of the Social Development,' 128. In 1873, George M. Grant reported that 'Nanaimo does not look like a coal mining place.' George M. Grant, 'The Coast and Vancouver's Island,' in his Ocean to Ocean: Sandford Fleming's Expedition Through Canada in 1872, originally published 1873 (Toronto: Coles Publishing Company, 1970), 335.

⁵ Belshaw, 'Cradle to Grave,' 44. For the same point see Ben Lawrence Moffat, 'A Community of Working Men: The Residential Environment of Early Nanaimo, British Columbia, 1875-1891' (BA (Hons.) thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1982),

A recent evaluation of late-nineteenth-century Nanaimo by a leading legal historian, Constance Backhouse, indicates that confusion about the historical nature of the community endures. Backhouse succinctly depicts Nanaimo as follows.

Late-nineteenth-century Nanaimo was a city of stark contrasts. Perched on a narrow plain on the east coast of Vancouver Island, it was a thriving, bustling resource town. Coal had been discovered in the 1850s, and the completion of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway in 1886 had spurred its development as an important regional centre. Powerful and confident coal-mining magnates and business entrepreneurs had built grand, stylish residences displaying their wealth. Impoverished working-class employees lived nearby, often in neighbourhoods separated along ethnic or racial lines, in bleak clapboard row houses.⁶

Backhouse's comments draw on an implicit stereotypical construction of the immediately knowable 'mining town.' Women had no presence. The population was essentialized by class. Those who lived there were forever locked in dualistic opposition to each other. 'Grand residences' and 'bleak row houses' materially articulated the stark dichotomization of social relations.

Yet, Backhouse cannot entirely avoid recognizing that the community was more complex than either she or the stereotype would allow. On the one hand she portrays Nanaimo as static, yet at the same time, she uses 'thriving' and 'bustling,' terms which imply energy and change. She also acknowledges the impact of coal

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⁶ Constance Backhouse, 'Infanticide,' in her Petticoats and Prejudice: Women and Law in Nineteenth-Century Canada (Toronto: Women's Press for The Osgoode Society, 1991), 125.

and the arrival of the railroad in 1886 on the development of the community. The inherent tension between her two images, the one so transparent and timeless and the other so vibrant, begs the question of the real nature of Nanaimo in the 1890s. The answer lies in both a longer perspective on the town's development and the particular experience of the decade.

In 1852, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) established a coal-mining community near the winter home of the Snuneymuxw people on the central-east coast of Vancouver Island.⁷ An earlier attempt by the Company in 1849 at coal mining at Fort Rupert, further north on Vancouver Island, had failed. Somewhat less than twenty Ayshire miners had come to work at Fort Rupert. A few, including Robert Dunsmuir, were joined by their wives while others married Aboriginal women. The Company moved the miners south to the new community of Colviletown or Nanaimo. Their numbers were augmented in 1854 by the arrival of twenty-six English families, seventy-five people in total, many from Staffordshire, whose emigration to Nanaimo on the ship the Princess Royal had been organized for the HBC by George Robinson.⁸ A few years later, in 1862, the HBC sold its coal-mining interests to the British based Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company. Most of the Fort Rupert and Princess Royal miners stayed in Nanaimo to work for the new mine owners.⁹

⁷ Bill Merilees, Newcastle Island: A Place of Discovery (Surrey: Heritage House, 1998), 31-2.

⁸ The Nanaimo Historical Society and Peggy Nicholls, From the Black Country to Nanaimo 1854 Vol. 1 (Nanaimo: Nanaimo Historical Society, 1991).

⁹ For background information on Ayrshire and Staffordshire miners, see H. Keith Ralston, 'Miners and Managers: The Organization of Coal Production on Vancouver Island by the Hudson's Bay Company, 1848-1862,' in E. Blanche Norcross, ed., The Company on the Coast (Nanaimo: Nanaimo Historical Society, 1983), 42-55; and

The city of Nanaimo incorporated in 1874.¹⁰ Over time, other companies and individuals like Robert Dunsmuir began to mine coal outside the city. They established numerous mines along the central-east coast of Vancouver Island and more and more miners from Britain, northern Europe, and China came to work in the constantly evolving mining landscape. By 1890, an extensive Nanaimo coal-mining region had developed around the city. However, there were differences between the region and the city.

Much of what has been written about Nanaimo has been concerned with the region as a whole, but for the purposes of this study the term 'Nanaimo' refers specifically to the city.¹¹ Because of its incorporated status, the city in the 1890s

Nanaimo Historical Society and Peggy Nicholls, From the Black Country to Nanaimo 1854, Vol. 1-5 (Nanaimo: Nanaimo Historical Society, 1991).

¹⁰ Engin Isin suggests that incorporation of cities is a significant event. He traces civic incorporation from 12th century Europe to modern Canada. He argues that in Britain, British North America, and the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec, between 1830 and 1880, the incorporation of cities emerged as 'one of the most important apparatuses of governance' of the modern state. The creation of city governments meant that the authority of the state could reach more deeply into society. Cities, he concludes, were territorial institutions of the state. Engin F. Isin, Cities Without Citizens: Modernity of the City as a Corporation (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1992), 54-5, 132-3, 174-5.

¹¹ John Douglas Belshaw incorporates the whole region in his important demographic analyses of Nanaimo. Beshaw, 'Cradle to Grave,' 45, note 16; and John Douglas Belshaw, 'Death Takes a Holiday: An Examination of Mortality on Two British Columbia Frontiers,' a paper presented to the BC Studies Conference, Kelowna, October 1994, Table 2. Allan Seager and Adele Perry recognize the distinction between the city of Nanaimo and 'the outlying villages of Northfield and Wellington' but include the whole colliery region in their study of Nanaimo in 1891. Allen Seager and Adele Perry, 'Mining the Connections: Class, Ethnicity, and Gender in Nanaimo, B.C., 1891,' Histoire sociale/Social History 30, 59 (May 1997): 58. Lynne Bowen, in her study of the self-help movement in Nanaimo, states that 'for the purposes of this study "Nanaimo" includes all the coal-mining communities of central Vancouver Island.' Lynne Bowen, 'Friendly Societies in Nanaimo: The British Tradition of Self-Help in a Canadian Coal-Mining

was legally distinct from the ring of surrounding unincorporated mining communities of Wellington, Departure Bay, Brechin, Northfield, Harewood, Extension, and Cedar. Historians Allen Seager and Adele Perry point out that Wellington, the best known of the Dunsmuir mining communities, 'had no cartography to speak of, only a geology, being not one place but many located along the so-called Wellington coal seam.'¹² The city of Nanaimo's boundaries, by contrast, remained virtually unchanged from incorporation in 1874 until the 1940s.¹³ As a civic entity, Nanaimo was unusually stable which both created and demanded the development of a civic identity.

The provincial government initially established the Nanaimo school district in July 1870 as the area within a three-mile radius of the Court House.¹⁴ In 1884, the province designated Nanaimo as a city school district and, in 1891, adjusted the boundary of the school district to coincide with the corporate limits of the city.¹⁵ By the 1890s, both the city of Nanaimo and the city school district were legally separate entities within the larger coal-mining region. Historian

Community,' BC Studies 118 (Summer 1998): 67.

¹² Seager and Perry, 'Mining the Connections, 66.

¹³ E. Blanche Norcross, 'How Nanaimo Grew,' in E. Blanche Norcross ed., Nanaimo Retrospective: The First Century (Nanaimo: Nanaimo Historical Society, 1979), xix.

¹⁴ Walter J. Meyer zu Erpen, 'Towards an Understanding of the Municipal Archives of Nineteenth-Century British Columbia: A Case Study of the Archives of the Corporation of the City of Nanaimo, 1875-1904' (MAS thesis, University of British Columbia, 1985), 183, note 622.

¹⁵ British Columbia, Legislative Assembly [BC, LA], An Act to amend the 'Public School Act, 1879', SBC 1884, chap. 27, sec. 2. British Columbia, Superintendent of Education, [BC, SE] Twentieth Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1890-91, [ARPS] lii.

Robert G. McIntosh notes that very few mining communities were incorporated until well into the twentieth century.¹⁶ Nanaimo, one of the first cities in British Columbia and one of the first city school districts in the province, was an atypical nineteenth-century coal-mining community.

These legal distinctions were matched in the minds of civic leaders by a widely perceived difference in status between the city and its neighbours. Both City Council and the Board of School Trustees regularly communicated with counterparts in Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster.¹⁷ In contrast, Nanaimo's civic administrators had little official business with nearby communities. Confident of their primacy in the region, they wrestled with issues such as private versus public ownership of public utilities, which troubled other metropolitan centres, and worked endlessly to make Nanaimo one of the province's leading modern urban communities. In this endeavour they experienced a measure of success. The city was the freight and distribution centre for central Vancouver Island.¹⁸ As early as 1881 Nanaimo was part of a triangular 'urban system' which included Victoria and New Westminster and which expanded by 1891 to include Vancouver.¹⁹

¹⁶ Robert G. McIntosh, "'Grotesque Faces and Figures": Boy Labour in Canadian Coalfields, 1820-1930' (PhD dissertation, Carleton University, 1990), 135.

¹⁷ Archivist Walter J. Meyer Zu Erpen notes that, 'due to the lack of provincial supervision of municipal affairs, city clerks frequently corresponded with one another regarding the interpretation of statutory law. They also sought advice concerning procedural matters, forms, registers, and equipment.' Meyer zu Erpen, 'Towards an Understanding,' 24. A similar correspondence occurred between School Board secretaries. In the case of Nanaimo, the same individual, Samuel Gough, was city clerk and secretary of the School Board.

¹⁸ Smith, 'Some Aspects of the Social Development,' 71.

¹⁹ Robert Galois and Cole Harris, 'Recalibrating Society: The Population

While it shared a coal-mining economy and experience with local communities, Nanaimo's particular experience of that economy in the 1890s was distinct. In large part, the reason lies in the character of the coal companies which operated in the Nanaimo area.²⁰ The Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company, which bought out the HBC operations in 1862, was centred in the city. The Company reorganized as the New Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company (NVCMLC) in 1889. In 1884, five years before the reorganization, the Directors had sent out a new Superintendent, Samuel M. Robins. Robins remained as the Company's Superintendent in Nanaimo until 1903.²¹ By the turn of the century, under Robins's management operations had expanded to the point that the Company, with approximately 1,200 employees, had the largest payroll on the Pacific Coast.²² The NVCMLC operated on a large scale. By the early 1890s it was producing 500,000 tons of coal annually, most of which it exported to California. The Company's four operating mines put out 2,000 tons of coal a day. The Board of Directors of the NVCMLC was dominated by John Galsworthy who assumed the

Geography of British Columbia in 1881,' The Canadian Geographer 1 (1994): 48. Galois and Harris note that in 1881 the three cities contained 18 percent of the province's total population and 40 percent of its non-native population.

²⁰ For information on Nanaimo region mines and the different coal seams they tapped see, Arthur Leynard, 'The Coal Mines of Nanaimo,' a paper presented to the Nanaimo Historical Society, 20 April 1982. For a columnar section of the Nanaimo coal field see Merilees, Newcastle Island, 24.

²¹ Lynne Bowen, Boss Whistle: The Coal Miners of Vancouver Island Remember (Lantzville, British Columbia: Oolichan Books, 1982), 96. Samuel Robins's last few months in Nanaimo were spent wrapping up the Company's business as the NVCMLC had sold its holdings on Vancouver Island.

²² Henderson's British Columbia Gazetteer and Directory (Vancouver: Henderson Publishing Company, 1900), 309.

position of Chairman in 1888. He sought to ensure long-term stability by reinvesting profits into the Company. On average, in the 1890s, the Company paid only modest yearly dividends of just under 3 percent. In the early-twentieth century the NVCMLC succumbed to competition from American fuel oil and sold out to the American owned Western Fuel Company.²³

Allan Seager and Adele Perry explicate the distinction between the NVCMLC and the Dunsmuir operations. The former was, they write, 'neither totally impecunious nor particularly lucrative' bearing 'little resemblance to the vast majority of speculative mining issues in the North American West.'²⁴ Their explanation for the divergent character of the two coal companies is worth quoting at length.

Managerial strategies at the Vancouver Coal Company revolved around relatively intensive development of spatially limited resources, requiring a more settled work force and, in general, a degree of 'cooperation' with labour and community.... The rival Dunsmuir never established a well-developed 'company town' in the 1870s, 1880s, or 1890s. Pursuing an equally rational strategy of relatively less intensive development of spatially dispersed resources in the Nanaimo district, their own settlement became a peculiarly perambulating coal camp.²⁵

This is an important scholarly effort to probe the oppositional policies of the companies. Often historians blur the experience of the two Companies. For example, Mark Leier writes:

²³ A. W. Currie, 'The Vancouver Coal Mining Company: A Source for Galsworthy's Strife,' Queen's Quarterly 70 (1963-64): 60-1.

²⁴ Seager and Perry, 'Mining the Connections, 65.

²⁵ Seager and Perry, 'Mining the Connections, 65-6.

... the Miners' and Laborers' Protective Association [was] a local union representing miners who worked for the New Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company Limited and for the infamous mines of Robert Dunsmuir at nearby Wellington. Attempts to unionize had met with blacklisting and firings; strikes with lockouts, evictions from company housing, arrests, and confrontations with the militia.... In 1890-91 [the miners] struck for an eight-hour workday and recognition of their union. With the failure of this strike, miners in Nanaimo turned to political action.²⁶

Leier's comments might be taken to mean that the events following the formation of the union occurred at both the Dunsmuir and the NVCMLC operations. In fact, Leier is describing events that took place at Wellington. In Nanaimo, the NVCMLC was receptive to the union.

Confrontation has been the leitmotif of coal-mining history in British Columbia. Labour historian Allen Seager states that 'industrial conflict was endemic in the mining community.'²⁷ Vancouver historian Robert A. J. McDonald describes the mining communities of Vancouver Island as 'highly polarized.'²⁸ However, in the 1890s, the city of Nanaimo experienced peaceful labour-management relations in its primary industry. Much of the stereotype of

²⁶ Mark Leier, 'Ralph Smith,' Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. 14, 1911-1920 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 947-8.

²⁷ Allen Seager, 'Miners' Struggles in Western Canada: Class, Community, and the Labour Movement, 1890-1930,' in Deain Hopkin and Gregory S. Kealey, eds., Class, Community and Labour Movements in Wales and Western Canada (St. John's: The Society for Welsh Labour History and Canadian Committee for Labour History, 1989), 175.

²⁸ Robert A. J. McDonald, 'Working Class Vancouver, 1886-1914: Urbanism and Class in British Columbia,' in Robert A. J. McDonald and Jean Barman, eds. Vancouver Past: Essays in Social History (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 34.

Nanaimo derives from violent confrontations which occurred in the Dunsmuir mines outside the city's boundaries.²⁹ Alternatively, the image of violent labour-management confrontation and the use of the militia in Nanaimo derives from events that did occur in the city, but well after the 1890s.³⁰ For the city itself, unlike the surrounding communities, the end of the nineteenth century was a time of labour-management accord.

White Nanaimo miners formed a union, the Miners' and Mine Labourers' Protective Association [MMLPA], in 1890 which 'quickly became the vanguard of labour in the province.'³¹ The union was composed of four lodges, one in the city and three in the district, but only the one in the city remained intact throughout the decade.³² The MMLPA signed an agreement with the NVCMLC in July 1891 which according to Allen Seager and Adele Perry represented 'a practical accommodation' between the miners and the Company.³³ By 1900, all White

²⁹ Jeremy Mouat, 'The Politics of Coal: A Study of the Wellington Miners' Strike of 1890-91,' BC Studies 77 (Spring 1988): 3-29, provides an account of one of the most famous strikes at the Dunsmuir mines.

³⁰ For an account of the use of the militia during a 1913-14 coal mine strike in Nanaimo see Desmond Morton, 'Aid to the Civil Power: The Canadian Militia in Support of Social Order, 1867-1914,' Canadian Historical Review 51, 4 (December 1970): 407-25.

³¹ Paul A. Phillips, No Power Greater: A Century of Labour in British Columbia (Vancouver: B.C. Federation of Labour, Boag Foundation, 1967), 19. Nanaimo miners had first formed a union, the Miners' Mutual Protective Society, in 1877. In the 1880s, the Knights of Labour unionized miners in Nanaimo and Wellington. John Douglas Belshaw, 'The British Collier in British Columbia: Another Archetype Reconsidered,' Labour/Le Travail 34 (Fall 1994): 18; and Lynne Bowen, Three Dollar Dreams (Lantzville, British Columbia: Oolichan Books, 1987), 158 and 233-5 .

³² Thomas Robert Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labor Movement and Political Action, 1879-1906' (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1954), 66 and 76.

³³ Seager and Perry, 'Mining the Connections, 63.

underground miners in Nanaimo belonged to the union.³⁴ James Dunsmuir's refusal to accept the MMLPA provoked the unsuccessful 1891 strike at Wellington to which Mark Leier referred.³⁵ In Nanaimo during the 1890s, the MMLPA and the NVCMLC fashioned a working economic environment.

Samuel Robins, as Superintendent of the NVCMLC, played an important role in the decade's labour relations in Nanaimo. Mining historian Lynne Bowen argues that under Robins's leadership the Company 'co-operated with fledgling unions and ... revealed itself many times as an enlightened employer.'³⁶ Alan Seager suggests Robins's policies were farsighted.³⁷ Labour historian Paul A. Phillips claims that Robins 'maintained industrial peace for twenty years. He was willing to co-operate with the men and negotiate with ... [a union], a willingness that did not endear him to Dunsmuir.'³⁸ During the 1891 Wellington strike at the Dunsmuir mines outside Nanaimo, Robins wrote to the editor of Nanaimo Free Press.

³⁴ Belshaw, 'The British Collier,' 19. In November 1902, MMLPA members voted to become a local of the Western Federation of Miners. Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' 177-8.

³⁵ Thomas Robert Loosmore claims that by 1898 the MMLPA had reached agreement with both the NVCMLC and Dunsmuir for a check-off of union dues from all underground workers. Loosmore notes some credited the negotiation of the agreement to Ralph Smith while others credited it to Arthur Wilson. Both Smith and Wilson were School Trustees in the 1890s. Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' 89.

³⁶ Bowen, Boss Whistle, 131.

³⁷ Seager, 'Miners' Struggles in Western Canada,' 165.

³⁸ Phillips, No Power Greater, 8

I have no desire, nor am I entitled, to interfere in any way with the administration of the affairs of the Miners' Union. A few months ago, I considered the time had arrived when it would be advantageous, both to our employes [sic] and my company to recognize a well-organized and soberly conducted Union. I believed such a Union had been formed, and I entered into agreement with it. The agreement I shall carry out, as I am pledged to do.³⁹

In his testimony to the federal government's Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration in 1902, Robins reiterated his desire to deal with organized labour.⁴⁰ He argued that a man should be paid wages 'upon which he can live respectably and support a family respectably. The wages should be governed on what a family can be brought up on respectably.'⁴¹ As these comments suggest, Robins favoured non-confrontational labour-management relations.

When Robins retired in 1903 he was sufficiently popular that the city celebrated Sam Robins Day.⁴² Brian Ray Douglas Smith claims that Nanaimo remembered the provisions Robins made for the women widowed in the devastating 1887 explosion in Number One mine.⁴³ Lynne Bowen suggests his popularity was

³⁹ Samuel M. Robins, letter to the editor, Nanaimo Free Press, 17 September 1891, 1.

⁴⁰ Canada, Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, Report, 1902, 76. I am indebted to Eva St Jean for drawing my attention to Robins's testimony.

⁴¹ Canada, Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, Report, 1902, 73 and 75.

⁴² Samuel Robins was also highly regarded by the Company's Board of Directors. Currie, 'The Vancouver Coal Mining Company,' 59 and 61.

⁴³ Smith, 'Some Aspects of the Social Development,' 125.

based on his fair dealings with the miners, his development of the five-acre lots which the miners could buy at minimal cost, the Company's gift of public park land, and Robins's running feud with Robert and James Dunsmuir.⁴⁴ It is difficult to fully account for Samuel Robins's labour policies. However, he was deeply involved in the day-to-day life of the community for two decades and, contrary to the common image of Nanaimo as the site of bitter coal-mining strikes, there were no strikes at the NVCMLC during those twenty years.

The flagship mine of the NVCMLC, Number One, was located within the city of Nanaimo. This was the most productive coal face in the history of British Columbia. Coming into operation 15 November 1883, it was worked until 5 October 1938 producing eighteen million tons of coal.⁴⁵ The three other NVCMLC mines lay outside city limits, but most of the miners working in those mines lived in Nanaimo and commuted to work on Company run standard gauge railways.⁴⁶

The infrastructure required for the NVCMLC mining operations was substantial. The Company operated wharves and railway, telephone, and telegraph systems. Robins's office was connected by Company phone to 'every pit-head, loading wharf and workshop, and engine house, from Northfield to

⁴⁴ Bowen, Boss Whistle, 96.

⁴⁵ Bowen, Boss Whistle, 95 and 130. The most important of the NVCMLC mines outside the city limits was the Southfield mine at Wellington which came into operation in the late 1880s. Only the NVCMLC mined coal within Nanaimo's city limits.

⁴⁶ Williams Illustrated Official British Columbia Directory (Victoria: R.T. Williams, 1892), 318.

Southfield'⁴⁷ About 150,000 tons of shipping were under charter to the Company. It also had machine, carpentry, and blacksmith shops to service the locomotive engines and rolling stock for its railway. The shops also maintained the furnaces, boilers, stationary engines, and miles of steel cable which were part of the mining operations. The British-made engines in Number One mine could raise 1,000 tons of coal every eight hours and brought the coal cars up at the rate of half-a-mile a minute. Number One Mine introduced electricity in 1892 and was the first mine in the province to do so. Lynne Bowen argues that the NVCMLC was in the forefront of innovation in coal mining.⁴⁸

The NVCMLC owned about 30,000 acres and pursued an active land development policy. Within the city, it sold town lots to private individuals while west of the city Samuel Robins arranged to have 700 acres cleared for a Company farm.⁴⁹ Adjacent to the farm, the Company offered another 700 acres for sale in five-acre lots.⁵⁰ The Company also donated land to the city for schools, a hospital, parks, and a large cemetery. George Norris, the editor of the Nanaimo Free Press, linked the NVCMLC's land policies to home ownership in Nanaimo. In 1891, Norris wrote:

⁴⁷ Williams (1892), 320.

⁴⁸ Bowen, Three Dollar Dreams, 364-5.

⁴⁹ The VCMLC prepared a town plan in England and held an auction of town lots in 1864. Meyer Zu Erpen, 'Towards an Understanding,' 31.

⁵⁰ Individuals could take a long term lease on the lots at a very low rate with an option to buy. If a family had to surrender a lease for some reason, the Company paid compensation for any improvements which had been made. A. F. Buckham, 'A Man With Vision, Far Before His Time, Samuel Matthew Robins Was Certainly God-Father to Nanaimo,' Colonist, 27 January 1957, Magazine section, 13.

Nanaimo is essentially a city of homes, nearly every miner and laboring man having a comfortable house of his own, or else purchased from the New V. C. Company on a long term of payment. For this happy state of affairs the New Vancouver Coal Company is mainly responsible, as, owing to the efforts of the Superintendent, Mr. Samuel M. Robins it is within the reach of every steady employe [sic] of the Company to become a house holder.⁵¹

According to John Douglas Belshaw, the NVCMLC 'was almost as disinterested in profiting from the sale or rental of homes (or using accommodation as a strike tool) as it had been in continuing the HBC's truck system. The contrast between Nanaimo and the Dunsmuir towns was marked.'⁵² The diversification of NVCMLC operations was unique in the Nanaimo region. While coal mining was the basis of its operations, the Company was a complex economic organization particularly identified with the city. The American historian Katherine G. Morrissey, in another context, argues that the land policies such as those pursued by the NVCMLC can be understood as 'outward signs of internal mental maps.'⁵³ The Company and its manager Samuel Robins appear to have been engaged in colonial settlement as well as mining a frontier.

In addition to the NVCMLC operations, the city of Nanaimo had a complex and diversified economy.⁵⁴ Its port operated year round with both shipping and

⁵¹ Nanaimo Free Press, 7 May 1891, 1.

⁵² John Douglas Belshaw, 'The Standard of Living of British Miners on Vancouver Island, 1848-1900,' BC Studies 84 (Winter 1989/90): 53.

⁵³ Katherine G. Morrissey, Mental Territories: Mapping the Inland Empire (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 16. The Inland Empire encompassed a large part of Washington and Idaho and small sections of British Columbia, Montana and Oregon.

⁵⁴ I have drawn information on economic activities in Nanaimo from the following

passenger vessels. Haslam's sawmill produced 70,000 board feet a day and a sash and door factory appeared in 1890, joined by a second saw mill in 1895. The British Columbia Tanning Company ran a shoe and leather factory. Other productive enterprises included several boatbuilding establishments, T. & N. W. Dobeson's large foundry, and Robert Wenborn's machine works. Several breweries, the two largest, the Union Brewery and the Nanaimo Brewery, also contributed to civic pride. Both Ralph Craig and McDonald and Andrews operated carriage works. John Hilbert manufactured furniture, A. Henderson established a marble works, and Phil Gable a cigar works. Candy and soda water were produced and local factories, some owned by individuals and others by joint stock companies, used steam power. Much of this productive capacity developed in the mid-to-late 1880s and 1890s.

As in many North American urban communities, private companies operated civic utilities. The electric light company formed in 1890 provided arc and incandescent lighting. A gas company dating from 1887 also offered lighting. The water works company established in 1888 piped water to households, and a telephone company provided local communication. The city was serviced by a volunteer fire department, the Black Diamond Engine Company which dated from 1878.

The growing population and a diversifying economy generated a surge of construction in the 1880s and 1890s. New buildings included a three-story stone

sources: Bowen, Boss Whistle; Bowen, Three Dollar Dreams; Johnson, et al, Nanaimo; Smith, 'Some Aspects of the Social Development;' Nanaimo Free Press, Golden Jubilee Edition, 16 April 1924; and Williams (1892 and 1893).

Post Office and Custom's House, a Francis Rattenbury designed stone Court House, the railway station, a brick fire hall, three public schools, several churches, a hospital, banks, and a three-story brick Opera House. Numerous hotels sprang up -- the Occidental in 1886, the Globe in 1887, the Palace in 1888, the Wilson in 1889, and the Crescent in 1890.⁵⁵ City Council was consumed with providing the necessary urban infrastructure, building sidewalks and clearing, grading, and maintaining streets. In May 1890, ratepayers approved a \$50,000 loan by law for street improvements. Borrowing money was a departure from precedent for the city, which until then had refused to do so.⁵⁶ Paved streets and deficit financing became common as the city entered the modern age.

Many residents were self employed including lawyers, architects, realtors, insurance agents, doctors, teamsters, building contractors, dress makers, grocers, shopkeepers, and boarding-house owners. An increasing number were employed by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments. An extensive service industry included banks, hotels, and bars, as well as general and specialty stores. Established in 1874, the Nanaimo Free Press, was the longest running of several newspapers.

⁵⁵ John Cocking, who sat on City Council and the School Board in the 1890s, later recalled that Nanaimo had twenty-two hotels at that time, each of which paid a three hundred dollar a year business license fee. NCA, Scrapbook AR7/66, 'Messrs. Hickman and Cocking, Pioneers, Recount Experiences During Earlier Day of Nanaimo,' Nanaimo Free Press, 27 Aug 1947. My thanks to Daphne Paterson for drawing this article to my attention.

⁵⁶ Smith, 'Some Aspects of the Social Development,' 106.

By the 1890s, Nanaimo's economic capacity extended well beyond coal mining. A significant small- and medium-sized business community involved itself in a wide variety of entrepreneurial activities. At a time when the Canadian economy was on the cusp of the transition to corporate capitalism, Nanaimo's business community was representative of the high water mark of local small-scale industrial production.⁵⁷ Allen Seager and Adele Perry argue that 'local industrialization, in any real sense, however, still remained a mainly hypothetical scenario.'⁵⁸ The business historian Philip Scranton suggests, though, that small industrial enterprises like those in Nanaimo deserve attention 'not as a base-point for growing big, but as a persistent element in the structure of economic activity.'⁵⁹ He points out that locally owned and operated businesses provided the opportunity of entrepreneurship and for both owners and employees offered an important 'pathway' out of, in Nanaimo's case, the mines. Scranton concludes that attention to small business 'allows a closer look at the "periphery" in core-periphery relations.'⁶⁰ Both Nanaimo's coal-mining economy and its mixed urban economy created the context for public schooling in the community.

⁵⁷ For a useful summary of the characteristics of these economic periods see the introductions to Michael S. Cross and Gregory S. Kealey, Canada's Age of Industry, 1849-1896 and The Consolidation of Capitalism, 1896-1929, Readings in Canadian Social History, Vols. 3 and 4 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982 and 1983).

⁵⁸ Seager and Perry, 'Mining the Connections,' 65.

⁵⁹ Philip Scranton, 'Small Business, Family Firms, and Batch Production: Three Axes for Development in American Business History,' Business and Economic History, Second Series, 20 (1991): 99. I am indebted to Peter Baskerville for drawing my attention to this article.

⁶⁰ Scranton, 'Small Business,' 101.

Civic boundaries played an important role in the politics of identity in Nanaimo at the end of the nineteenth century. The public school system was an important ingredient in the process of community formation. Status as a city school district reflected the stability of the community and connected it to the other cities in the province. At the same time, being a city school district distinguished Nanaimo from the nearby 'Put-Up and Pull-Down-Again' mining towns like Wellington.⁶¹ Nanaimo's economy experienced a growth spurt in the late 1880s and early 1890s and again at the end of the decade. The NVCMLC engaged in coal mining and land development and built a complex infrastructure to support their operations. Cooperation between the MMLPA and the NVCMLC kept the mines running throughout the decade. At the same time, a diversification of economic activity occurred with the growth of small businesses, the advent of civic utilities, and the increase in government offices. Nanaimo's school system supported the city's developing urban economy at the end of the nineteenth century.

Nanaimo existed within an imperial framework. Its major employer was precisely the kind of company that Gilbert and Sullivan parodied in Utopia Limited and its major product was coal. The NVCMLC office in Nanaimo was in close touch with London by telegraph.⁶² Progress and coal were inextricable in the late-nineteenth century.⁶³ British Columbia mining historian Jeremy Mouat

⁶¹ Bowen, Boss Whistle, title of Chapter 2, 24.

⁶² Bowen, Three Dollar Dreams, 183.

⁶³ Stephen Kern, The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1918 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983) 93.

argues that 'mining's significance to the industrial world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries cannot be overemphasized. Coal was the primary energy source.'⁶⁴ It powered the steamships which were integral to the imperial connections of the 1890s.⁶⁵ However, coal was more than a primary material product of Empire. According to cultural theorist Ann McClintock, coal 'became the metaphor for [Europe's] scientific and philosophic mastery of the world'⁶⁶ In this sense, Nanaimo was part of the imperial system. Yet, as Ann Laura Stoler argues, 'colonialism was not a secure bourgeois project. It was not only about the importation of middle-class sensibilities to the colonies, but about the making of them.'⁶⁷ In the making of metropolitan sensibilities, whether middle class or working class, public schooling had an important role to play.

2.2 Social Boundaries

'Miner' is the primary social category invoked by historians in their analysis of Nanaimo society. In late-nineteenth-century Nanaimo, however, the identities of miners were not fixed. Geographer Cole Harris suggests that in British Columbia's cities, where there was a varied occupational structure, 'class

⁶⁴ Jeremy Mouat, Roaring Days: Rossland's Mines and the History of British Columbia (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995), xii.

⁶⁵ Smith, 'Some Aspects of the Social Development,' 2. Over a period of a hundred years the Nanaimo area produced fifty million long tons of coal. Smith, 'Some Aspects of the Social Development,' 37.

⁶⁶ Ann McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context (London: Routledge, 1995), 115.

⁶⁷ Ann Laura Stoler, Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 99.

alignments were less sharp.⁶⁸ Social relations within Nanaimo's British-American community were complex and there were many forces which acted to produce what historian Robert A. J. McDonald describes in regard to Vancouver as 'a broad "middling" group that thought of itself as respectable.'⁶⁹ Some labour historians see the desire for respectability as a force weakening 'working-class unity and resolve in the class struggle,' although in the case of Nanaimo, John Douglas Belshaw suggests that the restrictions on boy labour were an important mitigating factor which led Vancouver Island miners to unions and political action.⁷⁰ However, Belshaw also concludes that in the 1890s 'the tendency on Vancouver Island was primarily away from class confrontation.'⁷¹ He explains this as a function of the occupational mobility and social participation of Vancouver Island miners.

Any commitment the immigrant British miners might evince for radical strategies was frequently compromised by the manifold extracurricular responsibilities and affiliations taken on by the pitworkers. It has been proposed in studies of British colliery towns that the experience of running a small business would dull a miner's revolutionary fervour. What, then, is one to make of the many British miners around Nanaimo who moved out of mining and into

⁶⁸ Cole Harris, The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 258.

⁶⁹ Robert A. J. McDonald, Making Vancouver: Class, Status, and Social Boundaries, 1863-1913 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), xix.

⁷⁰ For references to works which make this argument see Belshaw, 'The British Collier,' 33. For a discussion of the limitations on boy labour in British Columbia coal mines see Belshaw, 'The British Collier,' 34. It is difficult to get a clear sense of boy labour in the VCMLC mines. Some boys worked as pushers or hauliers and some worked with their fathers at the coalface. James Dunsmuir's use of Chinese underground mine workers limited the opportunities for boys, but in the NVCMC mines in the 1890s there were no Chinese workers underground. Belshaw, 'The Standard of Living of British Miners,' 45 and 64.

⁷¹ Belshaw, 'The British Collier,' 20.

some kind of self-employment through the nineteenth century.⁷²

Belshaw calculates that 60 percent of the 1880 cohort of miners left mining to open various kinds of businesses during the 1880s and 1890s. He concludes that 'these immigrant miners certainly had expectations of self-improvement and even their unions defended this kind of occupational mobility.'⁷³ Many experienced occupational mobility and diversity. Miners could move up through the mine hierarchy, find additional sources of income, or change their occupation. These possibilities intensified with the economic growth the city experienced toward the end of the century.

Gender was an important boundary marker in Nanaimo in the 1890s. It defined the life experiences of men and women. Although coal mining was a masculine enterprise, British and American women were certainly present and important in Nanaimo in the 1890s.⁷⁴ They played a critical part in creating the family networks which were so much a key to Nanaimo's civic life. Women aged twenty-five to thirty-five experienced nuptiality levels of 93 percent in 1891 with correspondingly high fertility rates.⁷⁵ Women also provided much of the

⁷² Belshaw, 'The British Collier,' 21. Ben Lawrence Moffat makes a similar argument. His study of Nanaimo ends in 1891, but in the previous ten years he found 'a general movement among Nanaimo's working men toward higher ranking occupations.' Moffat, 'A Community of Working Men,' 115.

⁷³ Belshaw, 'The British Collier,' 22.

⁷⁴ In their analysis of the 1881 census Robert Galois and Cole Harris state that in British Columbia while the ratio of males to females was 3:2 'White Nanaimo was not far from being gender balanced (1.29:1).' Galois and Harris, 'Recalibrating Society,' 40.

⁷⁵ Belshaw, 'Death Takes a Holiday,' 32; and Belshaw, 'Cradle to Grave,' 51 and 58.

intensive domestic labour necessary to reproduce coal mining. They had a public presence as wives and mothers, as members of women's groups, as participants in community events, and as teachers. Although the public sphere was predominantly masculine, women had access to civic status to the extent that they were part of what was perceived of as respectable society. Status mitigated in some ways the limitations gender placed on British and American women's occupational and political opportunities.

Race and racial boundaries are complex subjects. Neither racial categories nor racial boundaries stand up to scrutiny. It is, in part, the impossibility of maintaining boundaries that destabilizes race as category. The African-American philosopher Adrian Piper has examined the unrecognized extent of African ancestry of 'White' Americans. She concludes that even such a theoretically well-policed racial boundary as that defining 'White' America has been historically permeable.⁷⁶ The historian Sarah Carter makes the same point in regard to the Canadian prairies, noting the legal difficulty of defining 'who or what constituted a "white woman."' ⁷⁷ Carter argues that, 'today there is fairly widespread consensus in the sciences of biology and anthropology that the word "race" refers to nothing that science should recognize as real.'⁷⁸ Piper and Carter are typical of today's scholars who write about race and racial boundaries as 'fictions of

⁷⁶ Adrian Piper, 'Passing for White, Passing for Black,' in Elaine K. Ginsberg, ed., Passing and the Fictions of Identity (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 250.

⁷⁷ Sarah Carter, Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery In Canada's Prairie West (Montreal : McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 199.

⁷⁸ Carter, Capturing Women, 11.

identity,' as the collection in which Piper's article appears is titled.⁷⁹

That said, the late-nineteenth century was an era consumed with the idea of distinct racial groups and the need to maintain strict racial boundaries. As Robert Galois and Cole Harris put it, 'simple categories labelled the "otherness" that permeated British Columbia in 1881.'⁸⁰ Such was the case in Nanaimo in the 1890s. Harris has described racism in late-nineteenth-century British Columbia as 'particularly virulent.' He argues that 'Whiteness became the first and most essential marker of social respectability. From the idea of race followed a number of boundary operations intent on affixing space for insiders and outsiders, and ensuring that the former had most of it.'⁸¹ In Nanaimo, racial lines hardened at the end of the nineteenth-century. After a major explosion in Number One mine in 1887, White miners demanded, and Samuel Robins agreed to, the exclusion of Chinese miners from work below ground.⁸²

The term 'white,' was used by Robins and others to refer to those miners who were perceived to be of European descent.⁸³ In the following, 'White' will be

⁷⁹ For a discussion of the constructedness of racial categories in the context of British Columbia see Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag, 'Introduction: Taking Gender into Account in British Columbia,' in Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag, eds., British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1992), note 1, 14.

⁸⁰ Galois and Harris, 'Recalibrating Society,' 50.

⁸¹ Harris, Resttlement of British Columbia, 268 and 273.

⁸² Bowen, Boss Whistle, 96.

⁸³ Canada, Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, Report, 1902, 73.

used, but the capital indicates that scholars no longer understand the category to be essentialized or stable. As Ann Laura Stoler, who has studied the Dutch colonial experience, reminds us, 'questions of what constituted European identities in the colonies and the problematic political semantics of "whiteness" have only recently come squarely within the scope of our analysis.'⁸⁴ This point is applicable to Nanaimo given that, for example, some of the Fort Rupert miners were married to Aboriginal women.

Racial boundaries were as well established above, as below, ground in Nanaimo. Those of perceived Aboriginal and East Asian heritage were excluded from Nanaimo's formal civic life. Symbolically and practically they were 'outside' the city. The Nanaimo Indian Reserve established by the Canadian government bordered the city to the south while Nanaimo's 'Chinatown' was located first to the north of the city and then outside the city's western boundary.⁸⁵ In his testimony to the 1902 Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, NVCMLC Superintendent Samuel Robins stated:

We own the land on which 'Chinatown' is built: the Chinese erected the buildings, such as they are, themselves. It was considered temporary. I wanted to get them outside of the town. I removed them. We get \$50 or \$60 a month for the whole of 'Chinatown.' It is unsatisfactory to me. They have been there sixteen or seventeen years. They tried to buy lots in the city. They offered very good prices on it. I refused. I refused to sell to them anywhere.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Stoler, Race and the Education of Desire, 99.

⁸⁵ See Map 4:1.

⁸⁶ Canada, Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, Report, 1902, 75.

Keeping members of the Chinese community 'outside' was integrally linked to labour-management relations 'inside.' From the NVCMLC's perspective, Robins explicitly articulated the relationship. 'If today you removed all our Chinese we would either have to reduce our wages or shut down.... I set my face against bringing the scale of wages down. We don't want to take every cent there is in the business. I have no doubt the miners' unions would do all they could to prevent wages coming down.'⁸⁷

Nanaimo miners saw Chinese workers as dangerous rivals. The 1890 Workingmen's Platform called for a prohibition on the employment of Chinese in all Charters issued by the provincial government.⁸⁸ The Nanaimo Workingman's Platform of 1894 expanded that demand to include the prohibition of both Chinese and Japanese workers from municipal and provincial employment.⁸⁹ The 1900 Nanaimo Labour Party Platform began with a call for the 'exclusion from British Columbia of all Mongolian coolie labourers.'⁹⁰ These sequential documents indicate an increasing hostility to the employment of East Asian workers who were conceptualized by the miners as undercutting their own economic position. Paul A. Phillips sums up labour's view of Chinese and Japanese workers 'as low wage competitors in the labour market [who] represented a real threat to the security and standards of the white workers.'⁹¹

⁸⁷ Canada, Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, Report, 1902, 75.

⁸⁸ Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' Appendices, vi.

⁸⁹ Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' Appendices, xi

⁹⁰ Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' Appendices, xviii

⁹¹ Phillips, No Power Greater, 162.

Nanaimo miners were united in their profound hostility to Chinese and Japanese mine workers and John Douglas Belshaw argues that the resulting 'gaping chasm between occidental and oriental mine employees' undermined class solidarity.⁹²

While respecting the hard, difficult, and often dangerous work done by White settlers in Nanaimo, it is important to recognize the extent to which their construction of racial boundaries was integral to their efforts. A separate and lower wage scale for Chinese workers was one part of the equation. The other part of the equation was Britain's ability to take control of the land and introduce the western European landholding system of private ownership. The Canadian government completed the process, introducing legal impediments and limiting First Nations people to reserves. The sustained effort of governments to secure racial identities was a fundamentally violent process. Racial boundaries and the determined subordination of those perceived as East Asian or Aboriginal effectively underwrote the respectability so valued by Nanaimo's White community.⁹³

⁹² Belshaw, 'The British Collier,' 23.

⁹³ Nanaimo's Chinese community has not been widely studied, however, an article by Kay Anderson and a review by R. F. Zeidel dealing with Chinese communities elsewhere suggest it would be inappropriate to conceptualize Nanaimo's Chinese society from the perspective of an oppressed 'other.' Anderson draws on personal accounts of life in Vancouver's Chinatown to 'unsettle the notions of a stably positioned, internally unified and uniformly oppressed victim.' Kay Anderson, 'Engendering Race Research: Unsettling the Self-Other Dichotomy,' in Nancy Duncan, ed., BodySpace: destabilizing geographies of gender and sexuality (London: Routledge, 1996), 198-9. This article rethinks Anderson's earlier work, Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991). In reviewing a monograph on the Chinese experience in Idaho, R. F. Zeidel writes, 'rather than suffering as victims of oppression and racism, the Boise Basin Chinese made the most of their "chance" and struggled to overcome discrimination and exploitation. As a result, they experienced considerable economic success, cultural toleration, and even legal

Evidence abounds of the unease that existed in colonial settings around the world at the turn of the century regarding the maintenance of racial boundaries. Ann Laura Stoler describes the tension in the Dutch colonies 'between a belief in the immutability and fixity of racial essence and a discomfoting awareness that these racial categories were porous and protean at the same time.'⁹⁴ Those same tensions may have been felt in Nanaimo. Certainly there was what cultural theorists would identify as a discursive density around the subject of racial differentiation. Making racial boundaries incurred costs even for the dominant group, not the least of which was a pervasive anxiety.

Members of Nanaimo's perceived White community could aspire to public respect and civic status. Those of perceived East Asian or Aboriginal heritage did not have access to either. In fact, the shared hostility of Nanaimo's White community to the First Nations and East Asian communities outside the city was a primary factor mitigating class and gender boundaries within the city. The

justice.' R. F. Zeidel, review of Liping Zhu, *A Chinaman's Chance: The Chinese on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier* (Denver: University Press of Colorado, 1997) in *Choice*, 35, 8 (April 1998): 1007. An account of Nanaimo's 'Chinatown' which accords with Zhu's argument can be found in Denise Chong, *The Concubine's Children: Portrait of a Family Divided* (Toronto: Penguin, 1995). For a bibliography of sources which give voice to the East Asian experience in British Columbia see Patricia E. Roy, "'Active Voices': A Third Generation of Studies of the Chinese and Japanese in British Columbia," *BC Studies* 117 (Spring 1998): 51-61. For an analysis of the complexity of the agency of Chinese merchants in British Columbia see Timothy J. Stanley, "'Chinamen, Wherever We Go": Chinese Nationalism and Guangdong Merchants in British Columbia, 1891-1911,' *Canadian Historical Review* 77, 4 (December 1996): 475-503.

⁹⁴ Ann Laura Stoler, 'Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia,' in Cooper and Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire*, 215.

cultural critic Stuart Hall has examined issues of identity and diaspora. He suggests that, 'instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact ... we should think, instead, of identity as a "production" which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation.' He goes on to argue that, 'without relations of difference, no representation [can] occur.'⁹⁵ It seems that in Nanaimo, in the 1890s, racial constructions provided the relations of difference which, in part, constructed a civic identity.

State schooling facilitated the making and unmaking of social boundaries in late-nineteenth century Nanaimo in several ways. Formal education provided the knowledge and credentials increasingly necessary for occupational mobility. Schooling allowed girls and women access to expanded roles in the public sphere. For young boys in their mid-teens who could not find work in the mines or elsewhere, schools could be seen as constituting an alternative to street corners. In regard to racial boundaries, the public school system was integral to 'the process of exclusion, by which cultures designate and isolate their opposites, and its obverse, the process by which cultures designate and valorize their own incorporative authority.'⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora,' in Williams and Chrisman, eds., Colonial Discourse, 392 and 397. The article was originally published in 1990.

⁹⁶ Edward Said, 'Criticism Between Culture and System,' in his The World, the Text, and the Critic (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 216.

2.3 Occupational Boundaries

Twenty-nine men served on Nanaimo's Board of Public School Trustees between July 1891 and June 1901. A thirtieth served as the Board's appointed secretary for nine of those years. Both individually and collectively they were men of achievement. From their own experiences, the Trustees had important reasons to value education. Their lives also reveal much about Nanaimo's civic identity and further demonstrate the importance of education in making and unmaking social boundaries.

The seven Trustees who served on the School Board from July 1891 to January of 1893, unlike those who followed them, were appointees. In 1891, the British Columbia government ended the long-standing practice of the election of School Trustees in the city school districts.⁹⁷ The School Act of that year required the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to appoint three city School Trustees and the municipal councils to appoint another four. The practice of appointing Trustees was shortlived. In 1892 the Province restored the election of city School Trustees.⁹⁸ However, the practice in place from 1884 to 1891 of electing two School Trustees in each city ward was not revived. Instead, from 1893 city School Trustees were elected at large.

It is difficult to draw any general distinctions between the appointed and elected Trustees. Both groups included men from long-time Nanaimo families and

⁹⁷ BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1891, chap. 40, sec. 22.

⁹⁸ BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1892, chap. 40, sec. 5.

relative newcomers. Former coal miners, businessmen, and government officials were part of both groups. One difference between the two groups was that all the Trustees who were doctors or working coal miners were elected. The tone of the School Board minutes and the way the Board conducted its business did not change when elected Trustees replaced those who had been appointed. The main difference between the appointed and elected Boards was that the latter got on more easily with the City Council than did the Board appointed by Council and the provincial government. The reasons for that seeming oddity are discussed in the following chapter. Overall, there was a consistency and continuity to the Nanaimo School Boards of the 1890s.

Table 2.1 lists the Trustees's names, birth and death dates, and years of service on the School Board in the 1890s.⁹⁹ The Table serves as a reference guide

⁹⁹ I have compiled biographical information on the Nanaimo School Trustees of the 1890s from a variety of sources. The Nanaimo Historical Society and Peggy Nicholls, From the Black Country, Vols. 1-5 and information from Peggy Nicholls provided invaluable insight into the Princess Royal families and their descendents. Peggy Nicholls has generously shared her rich knowledge of Nanaimo history with me on many occasions both in conversations and in writing. I am deeply indebted to her particularly for the sense she has given me of the intermarriages of long-time Nanaimo families.

Information on several of the Trustees can be found in the nominal censuses of 1881, 1891, and 1901. I accessed the 1881 census by means of a data base prepared by historians Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager and the Public History Group at the University of Victoria. I accessed the 1891 census through a data base prepared by Patrick A. Dunae with Christine Meutzner at Malaspina University-College in Nanaimo. Christine Meutzner willingly showed me how to use Paradox just as Malaspina surrendered its site license. Ron Apland, a member of the Psychology Department at Malaspina, introduced me to Access. He was very generous with his expertise and designed a report form for individual households. The 1901 census I accessed manually.

The Nanaimo Free Press makes references to all the Trustees. I read originals of the paper for 1891 and 1892. For other years in the 1890s I used dates from School Board and City Council minutes and from particular events. I found death dates for most of the Trustees by searching British Columbia vital statistics on-line and located obituaries in the Nanaimo Free Press for twenty-one of the thirty Trustees. Victoria Ridley, Nancy Blundell, Eva St Jean, and Lyndy

for the four-part discussion which follows. The first section identifies those Trustees who were part of an open-ended civic family compact. Membership crossed occupational boundaries and formed a core group which had respectability, status, and authority in the community. The second section

Parisien made copies of some of these articles for me.

Biographical dictionaries provided information on some Trustees. I consulted J. B. Kerr, Biographical Dictionary of Well-Known British Columbians (Vancouver: Kerr & Begg, 1890); R. E. Gosnell, A History of British Columbia ([Chicago?]: Lewis Publishing Company, 1906); and F. W. Howay and E. O. S. Scholefield, British Columbia: From the Earliest Times to the Present Vol. 4 (Vancouver: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1914). A helpful guide to the biographical dictionaries is R. Dale McIntosh, Compiler, Who's Who in Who's Whos: An Index to Biographical Dictionaries of British Columbians (Victoria: Public History Group, University of Victoria, 1991).

City Directories were a good source of information about the Trustees. A useful guide to the Directories is John S. Lutz, editor and George Young, compiler, The Researcher's Guide to British Columbia: Nineteenth Century Directories, A Bibliography and Index (Victoria: Public History Group, University of Victoria). Jean Barman kindly loaned me copies of this work and the one above. I consulted Williams' British Columbia Directory (Victoria: R. T. Williams) for the years 1891, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895, 1897-98, 1899, and Henderson's British Columbia Gazetteer and Directory, 1899-1900 (Vancouver: Henderson Publishing Co., 1900). My thanks to Pamela Mar for providing me with information about the Directories.

Information on one or more of the Trustees can be found in John Douglas Belshaw, 'Death Takes a Holiday: An Examination of Mortality on Two British Columbia Frontiers,' a paper presented to the BC Studies Conference, Kelowna, October 1994; Bowen, Boss Whistle; Bowen, Three Dollar Dreams; Johnson, et al, Nanaimo; Smith, 'Some Aspects of the Social Development;' Meyer zu Erpen, 'Towards an Understanding;' Leier, 'Ralph Smith,' 947-51; and Allen Seager, 'Socialists and Workers: The Western Canadian Coal Miners, 1900-1921,' Labour/Le Travail 16 (Fall 1985): 36-7.

Information on Samuel Gough was available in NCA, Families, Box 9, Samuel Gough. Information on Edward Quennell is available from Nanaimo Retired Teacher's Association, School District 68 History Project, Tape 989.14.1/T17, Jeffrey Waatinen interview with Mildred Couture, 5 July 1989. (Mildred Couture was Edward Quennell's granddaughter by his first wife Julia Sophia Wilcox.) Information on John Dick can be found in David Forbes, 'Nanaimo Childhood Recalled at 90,' Nanaimo Free Press, 9 January 1982. My thanks to Peggy Nicholls for giving me a copy of this article. Information on Mark Bate can be found in a taped address by D. Bate to the Nanaimo Historical Society, 8 November 1966.

Table 2.1

Nanaimo School Trustees 1891-1901: names, birth and death dates, and years of service on the School Board

Name	Birth - death dates	Years of service, 1891-1901*
Mark Bate	1837 - 1927	91-92
John Dick	1837 - 1902	91-92
Alexander Shaw	1835 - 1916	91-92
Donald Smith**	1844 - 1895	91-92
Josiah W. Stirtan	1848 -	91-92
Marcus Wolfe	1850 - 1896	91-92
John Hilbert	1846 - 1926	91-92-93-94
John H. Cocking	1863 - 1954	93
John Frame	1847 - 1936	93
Joseph Ganner	1844 - 1903	93
A.E. Praeger	1855 - 1898	93-94
Samuel Gough**	1850 - 1924	93-94-95-96-97-98-99-00-01
Edward Quennell	1844 - 1912	93-94-95-96-97-98-99-00-01
Ralph Craig	1847 - 1894	94
Thomas Bryant***	1851 - 1933	94-95
Thomas Dobeson	1844 - 1914	94-95
Arthur Wilson	1854 -	94-95
William McGregor***	1855 - 1898	94-95-96-97-98
W.K. Leighton***	1854 - 1906	95
R.E. McKechnie	1861 - 1944	95-96
Joseph H. Davison		96-97
Francis B. LeFeuvre	1856 - 1945	96-97-98-99
Joshua Martell	1843 - 1909	96-97-98-99
William Manson, Jr.	1867 -	96-97-98-99-00-01
Ralph Smith	1858 - 1917	97-98
John Newton	1861 - 1919	98-99-00-01
Edward C. Barnes	1857 - 1937	99-00-01
William H. Wall	1848 - 1932	99-00-01
N. McCuish	1856 - 1928	00-01
John Morrison	1863 -	00-01

* The date 1901 is the terminal date for this study, but not necessarily the terminal date of Board membership for a Trustee.

** Donald Smith was a Trustee who acted as Board secretary in 1891-92. Samuel Gough was the ongoing appointed Board secretary from 1893.

*** Thomas Bryant was elected 28 May 1894 following the death of Ralph Craig. William McGregor was elected 19 June 1894 following the resignation of A. E. Praeger. W. K. Leighton was elected 14 March 1895 to meet the requirement of the Public School Act of 1895 for seven Trustees.

examines the Trustees's occupational identities which disrupt the fixed oppositional identities of 'miners' and 'middle class.' The third section argues that, in addition to family relationships, Nanaimo School Trustees of the 1890s were connected by civic and fraternal participation. The fourth and final section places Nanaimo in an imperial context and suggests additional reasons for civic support for the school system.

A number of the Nanaimo School Trustees of the 1890s were part of an extended network of families who were prominent in civic life for decades. The first mining families arrived in Nanaimo between 1852 and 1854. Some came from Fort Rupert where an earlier Hudson's Bay Company mining effort had failed. The majority, seventy-five people in all, arrived on the Princess Royal having been specifically recruited in England by the Hudson's Bay Company to work at Nanaimo. Many of the Fort Rupert and Princess Royal families supplied community leaders in the following decades. Over time, members of these families intermarried with each other and with other civic leaders. Many of their descendents live in Nanaimo and some participate in an annual celebration of the arrival of the Princess Royal on November 27. Community leadership in Nanaimo was marked by longevity. In this regard, the city of Nanaimo does not fit the stereotype of a transient mining town.

The Goughs were one of Nanaimo's Princess Royal families. In 1854, as a five-year old, Samuel Gough travelled on the Princess Royal on the six month voyage around Cape Horn. Gough was Nanaimo's city clerk for almost half a century from 1880 to his death in 1925. He was secretary of the School Board from 1893 to 1925 and also, for many years, secretary of the Nanaimo Hospital

Board. His sister Amanda Gough married George Norris, the owner and editor of the Nanaimo Free Press.¹⁰⁰ Another sister, Sabra Gough, married George Thomson, who was elected in 1887 to the provincial legislature. A third Gough sister, Harriet, married William K. Leighton, an entrepreneur and office holder who served as a School Trustee in the 1890s.

Women were critical to the construction of the Princess Royal family networks which connected many of the Trustees of the 1890s. For example, John and Mary Meakin came to Nanaimo on the Princess Royal in 1854 as a young married couple. Their daughter Amanda married William McGregor in 1876. McGregor was the son of one of the original Fort Rupert miners, and a man of importance in his own right as manager of the NVCMLC's Number One mine.¹⁰¹ He served as Chairman of the School Board from 1895 until his death in 1898. Another Princess Royal couple, John and Jane Biggs, saw their daughter Maria marry Edward Quennell, a city businessman, in 1876. Quennell served on the School Board from 1893 until his death in 1912 and succeeded McGregor as Chairman of the Board. Quennell School, which opened in 1913, was named after him. Quennell also served two terms as Mayor and eighteen terms as an Alderman. When Maria Quennell's sister, Louisa Biggs, married Amanda

¹⁰⁰ George Norris routinely attended and reported City Council and School Board meetings in the 1890s. According to Thomas Robert Loosmore, the Free Press also 'devoted considerable space to labor news' and 'its reporting was eminently fair and honest.' Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labor Movement,' 213. Robert Dunsmuir sued Norris for libel for reporting that Dunsmuir was short-weighting his miners. Dunsmuir later withdrew his suit. Phillips, No Power Greater, 7.

¹⁰¹ For details on William McGregor's father, John McGregor, one of the Fort Rupert miners who came to Nanaimo, see Smith, 'Some Aspects of the Social Development,' 7.

McGregor's brother, Albert Meakin, Edward Quennell and William McGregor became brothers-in-law.¹⁰²

Two other School Trustees of the 1890s married into Princess Royal families. John Dick married Esther Ann Richardson, who, like Samuel Gough, was a child passenger on the Princess Royal. Dick, from a Scottish mining family, was an extraordinarily successful prospector. He was elected to City Council in 1875 and 1884.¹⁰³ Council's appointment of Dick as a School Trustee in 1891-92 is indicative of his high status in the community.¹⁰⁴ William H. Wall came to Nanaimo in 1880. The following year he married Naomi Malpass, the Nanaimo born daughter of Princess Royal passengers John and Lavinia Malpass. Wall served as a School Trustee in the late 1890s at which time he was chief engineer and surface manager for the NVCMLC's Number One mine. At least five of the School Trustees of the 1890s were connected to and by the Princess Royal and Fort Rupert families.

Many of the Trustees of the 1890s had fathers and/or fathers-in-law who were coal miners. This was the case for John Dick, Samuel Gough, William McGregor, Edward Quennell, and William Wall. Some fathers/fathers-in-law experienced occupational mobility, although not always upward. School Board secretary Samuel Gough's father, Edwin, was not unusual in his successive

¹⁰² Nanaimo Historical Society and Peggy Nicholls, From the Black Country, Vol. 2.

¹⁰³ John Dick resigned his seat shortly after the election of 1884. Meyer Zu Erpen, 'Towards an Understanding,' 304.

¹⁰⁴ John Dick's brother, Alexander Dick, was the provincial mines's inspector from 1880 until 1898.

occupations. Nine years after he arrived in Nanaimo in 1854, he left the mines to become the local constable, a position he resigned a few years later. He then worked as a housebuilder. In 1870, he went to the state of Washington and returned to mining. An accident there resulted in the loss of one of his legs below the knee. He came back to Nanaimo and in 1874 opened a hotel. He died the following year and his wife, Elizabeth Gough, continued as a hotel keeper until she died in 1899.¹⁰⁵ Edwin Gough's occupations serially connected coal mining, public service, and entrepreneurial activity. Many of the Trustees or members of their families worked at either two or three corners of that triangle.

In a study of Ladysmith during a strike in 1912-14, the historian John R. Hinde argues that miners could not afford to participate in municipal politics.¹⁰⁶ However, 'miners' did not constitute a homogenous social category and blanket generalizations about them are difficult to sustain. In Nanaimo, miners and former miners could and did participate in municipal, provincial, and federal politics.¹⁰⁷ In the 1890s, both coal miners and former coal miners were members of the Nanaimo School Board.

¹⁰⁵ Nanaimo Historical Society and Peggy Nicholls, From the Black Country, Vol. 2.

¹⁰⁶ John R. Hinde, "'Stout Ladies and Amazons': Women in the British Columbia Coal-Mining Community of Ladysmith, 1912-14,' BC Studies 114 (Summer 1997): 38. Hinde's argument is not entirely consistent even for Ladysmith. He describes Frederick Greaves as 'a miner active on the school board and in civic affairs.' Hinde, "'Stout Ladies and Amazons,'" 43.

¹⁰⁷ For example, Nanaimo's Mayor, Richard Gibson, was one of only seven on-shift miners to survive the devastating explosion of 3 May 1887 at Number One mine in Nanaimo. Bowen, Three Dollar Dreams, 264.

Some of the Trustees of the 1890s spent their working life associated with the coal mines. This was the case for William McGregor. Following the death of his father, he started work in the mines in 1866 as a trapper or door boy at the age of eleven. McGregor worked his way up through every position in the mine, taking the requisite examinations to become certified as a mechanical engineer and mine manager. In 1884, the newly arrived NVCMLC's Superintendent, Samuel Robins, appointed McGregor manager of the Company's flagship Number One mine.

Trustees John Frame, Neil McCuish, Joshua Martell, and John Newton also remained associated with the mines during their working lives.¹⁰⁸ John Frame was born in Scotland and immigrated to Nanaimo in 1876 to work as a miner. Frame was both an Alderman and School Trustee in 1894. Neil McCuish came to Nanaimo from Nova Scotia. He was secretary of the miners' union, the MMLPA, in the late 1890s and a member of the School Board in 1900-01. Joshua Martell was born in Nova Scotia and began work in the Cape Breton coal mines. He moved to Nanaimo in 1879. Like McGregor, Martell successfully passed the examinations to become certified as a mine manager. He was an Alderman in 1896 and a School Trustee from 1896 to 1899. John Newton came to Nanaimo to work for the NVCMLC as a oversman in 1888. In 1909 he was appointed inspector of mines by the provincial government. Newton served as a School Trustee in the late 1890s. The hierarchy of jobs in mining evident in the experience of some of the Trustees

¹⁰⁸ This may also have been the case for John Morrison who was a School Trustee in 1900-01. He was born in Scotland and came to Canada in 1873. Morrison worked as a stationary engine operator in the mine.

is one of the factors that complicates the category 'miner.'¹⁰⁹

Trustees McGregor, Frame, McCuish, Martell, and Newton would have understood the necessity of a basic education and technical knowledge for advancement in the coal mines. As they knew, and as Jeremy Mouat points out, 'mining was in fact at the leading edge of applied science and technology, and by the turn of the century the underground working place was among the most sophisticated working environments in the world.'¹¹⁰ That these men gave their time to act as School Trustees indicates they themselves respected and valued education. The Nanaimo historian Peggy Nicholls comments that William and Amanda McGregor had 'six children for whom they both had great plans. They were determined that they would be educated. To this end William served as chairman of the Nanaimo School Board for several years.'¹¹¹

Two of the Trustees of the 1890s, Thomas Bryant and Francis B. LeFeuvre, worked in the NVCMLC infrastructure. Bryant had been a school teacher in England before emigrating to Canada in 1888. He became the storekeeper for the NVCMLC, a position he held through the 1890s. Prior to the First World War, he returned to teaching. Bryant was a School Trustee in 1894-95. Francis LeFeuvre came to Canada from England in 1873. He managed the 700 acre NVCMLC farm in

¹⁰⁹ Another Trustee, Joseph H. Davison, also stands as an example of the diversity of occupations in the mines. He worked as a weighmaster for the NVCMLC. He was a School Trustee in 1896-97, an Alderman in 1895, and Mayor in 1896-97. He left Nanaimo late in 1897 and went to the Klondyke.

¹¹⁰ Mouat, Roaring Days, xiv.

¹¹¹ Nanaimo Historical Society and Peggy Nicholls, 'Amanda Theresa McGregor' From the Black Country, Vol. 5.

the 1890s. By 1901 he had opened his own grocery store. LeFeuvre served as a Trustee from 1896 to 1899. He was also an Alderman in 1898-99. Bryant and LeFeuvre serve as reminders that the NVCMLC operations generated diversified employment.

Some of the Trustees associated with the mines had additional sources of income or produced some of their own food. John Dick and his wife kept large gardens and domestic animals including pigs. Dick's daughter, Isabel Sayers, recalled that, in addition to the family home, her father owned two houses in Nanaimo, the timber rights to Gabriola Island, 360 acres of waterfront property at White Rock, and the Newcastle Hotel in Nanaimo. He died a rich man. Peggy Nicholls notes that, 'John Dick and the Richardsons [his wife's family] left wills that tied up millions of dollars worth of stock and property.'¹¹² While the scale of Dick's estate may have been unusual, many of the Trustees had gardens and real estate investments.

Ralph Smith, a Trustee who was a coal miner, built on his union affiliation to establish a career in provincial and federal politics. He began work at eleven in the coal mines of Newcastle. With his wife, Mary Ellen Smith, he emigrated to Vancouver Island in 1891 at age thirty-four where he found employment in the Nanaimo mines. From 1895 to 1902, he was the elected paid secretary/business agent for the Miners' and Mine Labourers' Protective Association. Ralph Smith

¹¹² Nanaimo Historical Society and Peggy Nicholls, From the Black Country, Vol. 5. In a study of ten probate records for White miners killed in the 1887 explosion in the NVCMLC's Number One mine, John Douglas Belshaw found 'the sums handed on to their relations were sometimes quite impressive.' Most estates has a value of \$1000. Belshaw, 'Death Takes a Holiday,' 31.

was a Nanaimo School Trustee in 1897-98. He became vice-president of the Canadian Trades and Labour Council in 1896 and president in 1898. From 1898 to 1900 he represented the Nanaimo district in the British Columbia legislature. He was elected as Vancouver's Member of Parliament in 1900 and served until 1911 as a Liberal.¹¹³ Following his defeat, he returned to Vancouver to work as an insurance and real estate agent. In 1916 he won election from Vancouver City to the provincial legislature and at the time of his death in 1917 he was British Columbia's Minister of Finance.¹¹⁴ Other Trustees were active in miners' union politics, but Smith's fifteen-year career as both a provincial and federal politician was unique. However, Ralph Smith was not the only Trustee who left coal mining.

Several of the 1890s Trustees began their working lives in the mines and then turned to other employment.¹¹⁵ William H. Wall and Samuel Gough both fit this pattern. Wall, like William McGregor, started as a trapper boy and later moved up through the mine hierarchy. By the late 1890s, he was chief engineer and surface manager for the NVCMLC's Number One mine and a certified master mechanic. Wall became a mine manager in Cumberland and, in 1907, a diamond driller for the Greater Vancouver Water Board a position he held for twenty-five years. While still working in Vancouver, he built a shingle mill and charcoal

¹¹³ In 1900 the federal Vancouver riding included Nanaimo. By 1904, Nanaimo was a separate riding. Ralph Smith was elected twice from this riding, in 1904 and 1908. Leier, 'Ralph Smith,' 949-50.

¹¹⁴ Ralph Smith's widow, Mary Ellen Smith, won the by-election which followed. She later became the first female cabinet member in the British Empire.

¹¹⁵ Robert Dunsmuir is the best known Nanaimo miner who experienced occupational mobility. He became the richest man in British Columbia and was twice elected to the provincial legislature.

burner at Craig Bay near Nanoose. Samuel Gough attended school in Nanaimo until the age of thirteen when he went into the mines. He worked there for seventeen years until he became city clerk in 1880.¹¹⁶ The experiences of Smith, Gough and Wall indicate that the occupational identity of coal miners was not fixed.

Mark Bate was another Trustee who left work in the mine and the mine infrastructure. Bate was the nephew of the Hudson's Bay Company mine manager, George Robinson, and a cousin of Thomas Bryant who also served on the School Board in the 1890s. Bate arrived in Nanaimo from England in 1857 and started in the mine as an engine driver and weigher. He became the cashier and accountant for the mine. In 1866, he was part owner and editor of a local newspaper, the Nanaimo Gazette. In 1869, he was appointed Superintendent of the VCMLC, a position he held until 1884. Bate became the Provincial Assessor and Tax Collector for the Nanaimo area, a position he held until 1913. He was appointed the first Justice of the Peace for the Nanaimo district in 1893. The provincial government also appointed him to the Hospital Board. He became Nanaimo's first Mayor in 1875 and served a subsequent fifteen terms. Bate was a provincial government appointee to the School Board in 1891-92. His grandson remembered him as a man interested in books and poetry on the one hand, and the possibilities of large-scale iron and steel production in British Columbia on the other. Mark Bate's experience, as well as that of Samuel Gough, indicates the possibilities for employment outside the mines created by the expanding state.

¹¹⁶ For a list of Gough's civic offices in the years up to 1904 see Meyer Zu Erpen, 'Towards an Understanding,' 314-8. The city offered only annual appointments until 1899 after which Gough's position as city clerk became permanent.

Two Trustees who had worked in the mines became businessmen.¹¹⁷ Joseph Ganner, who sailed on the Princess Royal with his family when he was twelve years old, worked in the mines for sixteen years after his arrival in Nanaimo. He then started a teamster business which prospered over time, in part because of a government mail contract. Ganner and his sons owned a sixteen passenger stage coach and the first covered moving van on the Island. Ganner also raised and sold horses and rented out houses and rooms. He served as an Alderman from 1891 to 1893, and a School Trustee in 1893. Trustee Edward C. Barnes moved from working as a mine carpenter for the NVCMLC to being co-owner of the contracting firm Barnes and Wilson. Barnes served twelve years on City Council and six years on the School Board beginning in 1899.

Another Trustee, Edward Quennell, spent only a brief period as a miner before pursuing other work. Quennell served for four years in the British Navy, then came to Nanaimo from Sussex in 1864 and worked as a miner for two years. For the next seven years he was the purser on the steamer James Douglas. In 1873, he opened the Cosmopolitan Butcher Shop. He expanded this to three butcher shops where he sold meat raised on a large farm he owned south of the city. Quennell was president of the Union Brewery in Nanaimo and the long-time pilot commissioner and harbour master at Nanaimo. In 1989, Quennell's granddaughter, Mildred Couture, remembered her grandfather being keen on his

¹¹⁷ This is likely also true for a third Trustee, Arthur Wilson. He appears to have left mining and opened the Comox Road Nursery in 1899. However, this conclusion remains tentative. Arthur Wilson was president of the MMLPA in the mid-1890s. He was an Alderman in 1894 and 1896 and a School Trustee in 1894-95.

daughters receiving a good education. He had, she reported, great respect and admiration for E. B. Paul, Nanaimo's first high school teacher in 1886.¹¹⁸ The experiences of Ganner, Barnes, and Quennell indicate that some miners became employers. The Nanaimo School Trustees in the 1890s included in their number men working in the mines or as part of the mine infrastructure and those who had done so, but had moved to other occupations. Other Trustees were never directly involved in mine work.

Several 1890s Trustees were businessmen. John Cocking, long remembered in Nanaimo for his active role as Chairman of City Council's Street Works Committee, operated a livery and haulage business. In 1947, he reminisced about Nanaimo in the late 1880s when there were 'three road men, one horse and a dump cart.... it really was at that time a "one-horse town."¹¹⁹ He was a critical player in the transformation of the 1890s which saw the city acquire both the rock crusher and steam roller which were necessary for paved streets. Cocking served on the School Board in 1893 and City Council in 1893-95 and 1898-1901.

John Hilbert, too, was a businessman. He came to Nanaimo in 1874 and initially worked as a building contractor. He soon established a furniture

¹¹⁸ According to his granddaughter, Edward Quennell was always interested in schools and teachers. NCA, Nanaimo Retired Teacher's Association, School District 68 History Project, Tape 989.14.1/T17, Jeffrey Waatinen interview with Mildred Couture, 5 July 1989.

¹¹⁹ NCA, Scrapbook AR7/66, 'Messrs. Hickman and Cocking' John Cocking also played an important role in Nanaimo's purchase of the Waterworks Company in the early twentieth century.

business to which he added undertaking. In the early 1890s, he became a full-time undertaker. He was a stockholder in the Gas and Waterworks companies and the Tannery. Hilbert was a member of City Council from 1882 to 1888 and Mayor in 1890-91. He acted as a magistrate for many years, was a municipally appointed School Trustee in 1891-92, and an elected Trustee in 1893-94.

Ralph Craig and Thomas Dobeson, also Trustees in the 1890s, owned larger businesses. Craig's carriage factory also did wheelwrighting, general smithing, and farriery work. Williams Directory for 1892 described the enterprise as a 'steam-powered extensive manufactory' employing many workmen.¹²⁰ Craig was an Alderman in 1887, 1890, and 1893-94. He was elected to the School Board in January 1894, but his death a few months later ended his civic involvement. Thomas Dobeson established the Nanaimo foundry and engineering works in 1889 which specialized in stationary and marine engines and heavy casting of iron and brass.¹²¹ His father owned an engineering works on the Tyne and Dobeson himself was well educated and had served a lengthy apprenticeship in marine and locomotive engineering. He described himself as an 'ardent, well informed reader.'¹²² He was also Chairman of the Nanaimo Pilotage Authority. Dobeson was an Alderman from 1891 to 1895 and a School Trustee in 1894-95.

¹²⁰ Williams, (1892), 323.

¹²¹ According to the Nanaimo historian Peggy Nicholls, Dobeson's Nanaimo Foundry was bought out by Madills and by the 1990s was one of the oldest foundries in British Columbia.

¹²² Howay and Scholefield, British Columbia, 702.

Two of the Trustees in the 1890s managed private utility companies. Alexander Shaw had come to Nanaimo in the late 1870s from Scotland. He built a boat which he rowed to Victoria to take his teacher certification examination and then taught for many years. Shaw became Nanaimo's stationmaster in 1886. By the early 1890s he had established the Nanaimo Electric Light Company. The provincial government appointed Shaw to the School Board in 1891-92 which indicates his high profile in the community. Joseph Stirtan came from Ontario in the early 1870s and on arrival in Nanaimo in 1875 built a number of important buildings including St Ann's Convent and the Opera House. He obtained the right to lay waterworks and designed his own bore for making the wooden pipes. Stirtan was initially the president, then the manager, of the Nanaimo Water Works. He was also director of the British Columbia Tanning Company and owned land in Vancouver and New Westminster. Stirtan was a Justice of the Peace and was appointed to the School Board by City Council in 1891-92.

Nanaimo's businessmen could be optimistic in the growth economy of the 1890s, but they always faced an underlying insecurity. Successful as they were, small businesses like those of Quennell, Cocking, and Hilbert were vulnerable in the shifting economy of the 1890s. Even larger businesses like Craig's and Dobeson's were not secure in 1890s when, increasingly, industrial production was being centralized. The private utilities managed by Shaw and Stirtan faced restructuring as they would soon become public. Also, with the growing population, real estate values rose sharply in Nanaimo and housing availability declined.¹²³ The participation of businessmen on the School Board may indicate

¹²³ Moffat, 'A Community of Working Men,' 121.

that they perceived education as a form of personal insurance in changing times. George Norris, the owner and editor of the Free Press, articulated that belief as early as 1874 when he called for the establishment of a high school in Nanaimo. In an editorial on the subject he argued, 'our youths beginning the battle of life, if well educated, will be prepared for contingencies.'¹²⁴

In the 1890s two Trustees, William Leighton and Marcus Wolfe, were insurance and real estate agents. Leighton, whose marriage was discussed above, was involved in numerous enterprises. After working as telegrapher and bookkeeper and for a brief period as co-owner of the Parlour Shavery Saloon, Leighton opened a real estate business in 1888. In the 1890s he was also secretary of the Nanaimo Gas Works and the local agent for many life and fire insurance companies. At the time of his death in 1906, he owned the Nanaimo Opera House and Hotel. In addition to his business activities, Leighton acted as city assessor for three years and as city returning officer for eleven years, mainly during the 1890s. Leighton was a School Trustee in 1895.

Marcus Wolfe came to Nanaimo in 1860. For a number of years, he was a partner in the prominent 'Red House' general store of his father-in-law Alexander Mayer. Wolfe was the treasurer of the Nanaimo Water Works and secretary of the Nanaimo Board of Trade. In 1893, he became a real estate agent and insurance broker. Marcus Wolfe's status in the community was indicated by City Council's appointment of him to the School Board in 1891-92. The expansion of insurance

¹²⁴ Cited in E. Blanche Norcross, 'A Pioneer Newspaperman and his Newspaper,' in E. B. Norcross and D. F. Tonkin eds., Frontier Days of Vancouver Island (Courtenay, B. C.: Island Books, 1969), 36.

industries was one of the defining characteristics of the corporate economy at the turn of the century. The experience of Leighton and Wolfe indicates that this new economy had reached Nanaimo by the 1890s.¹²⁵

Two of the Trustees provided the administrative services which were hallmarks of the developing economy of the 1890s. William Manson was the accountant for the Haslam sawmill and sash and door factory. Manson was born in the Shetland Islands and came to Nanaimo in 1889. He was a School Trustee from 1896 to 1901, an Alderman from 1898-1900, and Mayor from 1901 to 1904. In 1904, he moved to Alberni which he represented in the provincial legislature. He was Provincial Secretary in Premier McBride's administration. In 1908, Manson moved to Prince Rupert which he also represented in the legislature. His fellow Trustee, Donald Smith, was a notary public and conveyancer.¹²⁶ Like William Leighton and Marcus Wolfe, he also worked as an insurance and real estate agent. In addition, Smith was a Justice of the Peace. He was a member of City Council in 1884-85 and was appointed to the School Board by the provincial government in 1891-92. Smith preceded Samuel Gough as secretary for both the Hospital Board and the School Board.

¹²⁵ For an excellent description of the rapid expansion of these industries at the turn of the century see Angel Kwolek-Folland, 'From Six to Forty Thousand: The Growth of Financial Industries, 1840-1930,' in her Engendering Business: Men and Women in the Corporate Office, 1870-1930 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 15-40.

¹²⁶ The 1891 nominal census indicates that Donald Smith was a lawyer, but I have followed the city directories which consistently identify him as a notary public and conveyancer as well as an insurance and real estate agent.

Trustees Emil Praeger and R. E. McKechnie were doctors. Praeger was trained in Glasgow and London and acted as medical officer for the NVCMLC from 1887-94. He was a member of the School Board in 1893-94 until he resigned to move to Los Angeles where he died in 1898. Dr. McKechnie graduated from McGill in 1890 having won the Holmes Gold Medal. He practiced in Nanaimo in the 1890s. For eight years he was the NVCMLC doctor and city health officer. He served as a School Trustee in 1895-96 and was elected from Nanaimo City to the provincial legislature in 1898 where he became a cabinet minister. McKechnie left politics in 1900 and, after a period of post-graduate study in Vienna, moved to Vancouver in 1903. He was the first President of the British Columbia Medical Association and later became president of the Canadian Medical Association. McKechnie was Chancellor of the University of British Columbia for twenty-six years and the recipient of many awards including Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

Economic participation as an accountant, notary public, insurance agent, or as an office clerk required at least a basic education. Law and medicine required formal certification. Leighton, Wolfe, Manson, Smith, Praeger and McKechnie would have understood the benefits of public schooling for diverse employment opportunities. The individual and complex reasons why each of these men served on the School Board cannot be known. Yet, their employment histories suggest that a recognition of the economic value of an education may have been part of their motivation.

Most of the Trustees in the 1890s were touched by deaths resulting from mine explosions. In 1879, Samuel Gough's teenage brother, Reuben, died in a

mine explosion. In 1887, William McGregor led the rescue party after a horrific explosion in Number One mine which killed his father-in-law, John Meakin, two brothers-in-law -- nineteen-year old Arthur Meakin and twenty-year old William Hoy -- and a cousin. Edward Quennell's brother-in-law, George Biggs died in the same explosion. Eleven years later William McGregor died a terrible death from burns he received trying to stop a fire in Number One mine. At the time, McGregor was Chairman of the School Board and the minutes of the meeting following his death convey a sense of devastation. An estimated three thousand people attended McGregor's funeral including City Council and the School Board as groups. The Trustees were only too aware of the dangers of working in the mines.

Five of the Trustees did not survive the 1890s. Emil Praeger died in the United States after an operation at forty-three. William McGregor died when he was forty-four. Marcus Wolfe committed suicide at forty-six apparently because of financial problems. Just weeks after his factory burned to the ground, Ralph Craig died following an operation when he was forty-seven. Donald Smith died of an illness at fifty-one. The Trustees knew that their world was not stable or secure partly because of the nature of work in the mines, partly because of the limitations of medical science, and sometimes because of sheer bad luck.

Nanaimo School Trustees of the 1890s were deeply involved in fraternal organizations which often functioned as self-help societies.¹²⁷ These included

¹²⁷ Belshaw, 'Death Takes a Holiday,' 31; and Bowen, Three Dollar Dreams, 199-200.

the Ancient Order of United Workmen, the American Legion of Honor, the Ancient Order of Druids, the Knights of Pythias, Sons of St. George, the Caledonian Society, Good Templars, Royal Templars of Temperance, the Ancient Arabic Order of the Mystic Shrine, Woodmen of the World, Fraternal Order of Eagles, and Knights Templar. Most of the Trustees who belonged to fraternal organizations were Masons in addition to whatever other groups with which they were affiliated. In 1891-92, Marcus Wolfe became the thirteenth Grand Master of the British Columbia Grand Masonic Lodge.¹²⁸ When the ninety-year old former coal miner John Frame died in 1936 he had been a Mason for seventy years and was the oldest Mason in British Columbia. Next to the Masons, the most common affiliations were with the Independent Order of Foresters and the Oddfellows. The historian Mark C. Carnes argues that 'fraternal ritual, though remarkably widespread, was chiefly a phenomenon of the middle classes.'¹²⁹ In Nanaimo, membership was not the prerogative of any single class. Lynne Bowen argues that community leaders and ordinary workingmen joined the city's fraternal societies whose lodges reached their peak of popularity in the 1890s.¹³⁰ Participation in fraternal organizations was an important form of insurance, a centre for social activities, and a signifier of respectability. Nanaimo's fraternal lodges had close

¹²⁸ Cyril Edel Leonoff, 'Marcus Wolfe, Grand Master of the B. C. Grand Lodge of the Masons, 1891-92,' in his Pioneers, Pedlars, and Prayer Shawls: The Jewish Communities in British Columbia and the Yukon (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1978), 34-5.

¹²⁹ Mark C. Carnes, 'Middle-Class Men and the Solace of Fraternal Ritual,' in Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffin, eds., Meanings for Manhood: Constructions of Masculinity in Victorian America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 39.

¹³⁰ Bowen, 'Friendly Societies,' 74-5. Robert A. J. McDonald similarly argues that Vancouver's fraternal societies included men from the middle and upper working classes. McDonald, Making Vancouver, 194.

links with lodges in Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster. They served, then, to connect Nanaimo to the province's leading cities.

The Nanaimo School Trustees in the 1890s were part of a stable group of civic leaders. They were intricately connected to each other and their city through family relations, work, business, fraternal organizations, and civic participation. When Samuel Gough died in 1925, a quarter century after the 1890s, the degree of Nanaimo's civic stability was evident. The police and fire departments in full uniform followed the Silver Cornet Band in his funeral procession. Six Nanaimo Mayors acted as his honorary pallbearers. Three of them, Mark Bate, Thomas Hodgson, and William Manson, were School Trustees in the 1890s. A fourth, John Shaw, was Principal of the Public Schools during that decade. The Free Press epithet for Samuel Gough, 'honored in life and respected in death,' would have been appreciated by the Trustees collectively.¹³¹

The Trustees of the 1890s put a wealth of experience, knowledge, imagination, ambition, and energy at the disposal of public schooling in Nanaimo. From their own experiences, they had important reasons to value education. Their commitment to education, which was evident in their participation as School Trustees, went beyond an appreciation of the opportunities it might offer to young people in Nanaimo. The Trustees derived considerable prestige and status from their leadership roles. This was enhanced if the city established itself as a leading urban centre. While part of the profile of a modern city was paved streets, sidewalks, and electric street lights, an excellent school system was equally

¹³¹ Nanaimo Free Press, 29 December 1925, 1.

necessary. Good schools served the educational needs of children, signified Nanaimo's right to be considered one of the province's important cities, and further enhanced the Trustees's personal status and respectability within the community. Public schooling was an essential ingredient in the development of personal and civic identity.

Coal miners not only supported public education individually, as in the case of those who served as Trustees, they also did so collectively. In his study of boy labour in Canadian coal mines, Robert G. McIntosh reports with reference to Nanaimo in the 1870s, that 'miners, like other organized workers, were convinced of the benefits of a common school education.'¹³² The Workingman's Platform of 1890 and the subsequent Nanaimo Workingman's Platform of 1894 both specifically supported public schooling.¹³³ The president of the MMLPA stated before the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese immigration in 1900 that 'he regarded his ability to "give my little girl education" as one of the preeminent tests of his standard of living.'¹³⁴ Interest and support for public schooling was broadly based in Nanaimo.

Schooling in Nanaimo in the 1890s occurred in an imperial as well as a civic context: indeed the two were integrally connected. Pride in the imperial

¹³² McIntosh, "Grotesque Faces and Figures," 133, 141, and 145.

¹³³ As cited in Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' Appendices, vii and xii.

¹³⁴ John Belshaw, 'Pitlads and Inkwells: Miners' Children and Education on Nineteenth Century Vancouver Island,' a paper presented to the Kingston Conference, October 1993, 17.

relationships peaked in the mid-to-late 1890s.¹³⁵ Vron Ware, who has written about 'Whiteness' in the imperial age, suggests that 'unless one is essentialist about whiteness, it follows that whiteness is ultimately about learned behavior.'¹³⁶ Formal schooling would inculcate the young in the knowledge systems which had been the basis of Europe's imperial claims since the Enlightenment. Timothy J. Stanley argues further that 'by helping to "organize" British Columbia society on the basis of "race," and by indoctrinating students in supremacist ideology, schooling played an important role in promoting White domination in B. C.'¹³⁷ Ann Laura Stoler discusses a widespread concern at the turn-of-the-century in the Dutch colonies that it was not possible for European children 'raised and educated in the Indies to be bearers of Western culture and civilization.'¹³⁸ Many proposals were considered for sending all Dutch children to Holland for their education. For those of European descent in Nanaimo, who had no choice but to educate their children there, a modern public school system was an important component in the transmission of a metropolitan identity.

The Nanaimo School Trustees of the 1890s exercised their responsibilities in a decade which was at once optimistic and expansionary and at the same time

¹³⁵ Mouat, Roaring Days, 38.

¹³⁶ Vron Ware, 'Defining Forces: "Race", Gender and Memories of Empire,' in Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti, eds., The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons (London: Routledge, 1996), 144.

¹³⁷ Timothy J. Stanley, 'White Supremacy and the Rhetoric of Educational Indoctrination: A Canadian Case Study,' in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson, eds., Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 40.

¹³⁸ Stoler, 'Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers,' in Cooper and Stoler, eds., Tensions of Empire, 216, see also 214.

subject to rapid change and considerable uncertainty. A school system could help to maximize the opportunities, mitigate the contingencies, and secure vulnerable identities. Public schooling could reinforce civic and racial boundaries while breaching occupational and gender boundaries. Nanaimo was not simply a passive recipient of a centralized state education system: instead, civic leaders had important reasons for participating in the production of public schooling. Such participation in the late-nineteenth century, however, was complicated and demanding as City Council and the School Board discovered when the provincial government unleashed a major legislative initiative designed to transfer the full cost of schooling to the Nanaimo and the other three city school districts.

Chapter Three: Financing Nanaimo Schools

In British Columbia in the 1890s, one of the most important developments in public schooling occurred when the provincial government attempted to shift the financial responsibility for city schools to the Nanaimo, New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria City Councils. The chaotic and volatile events which followed speak to a debate among historians of education in Ontario about the relative power of central and local authorities and also illuminate the problematic nature of a centralist interpretation of nineteenth-century British Columbia education history. Ironically, when the provincial government attempted to decentralize the financing of city schools the limits of central power became starkly evident.

3.1 The 'Central-Local' Debate

F. Henry Johnson's history of public schooling in British Columbia rests on the assumption that the provincial government arranged school affairs to its own satisfaction.¹ Johnson also assumes that City Councils and School Boards formed a single local education authority. He argues that by the late 1880s the British Columbia government:

was ready to relinquish cautiously and to a very limited degree, some of its strong control.... The cost of education was becoming such a heavy drain on the provincial treasury that it was considered time to share the expense with local authorities, particularly the cities. This could hardly be done without also making some

¹ I would like to thank J. Donald Wilson, Clarence Karr, and Thomas Fleming for their comments on an early version of this chapter.

concessions to local control.²

As this chapter will demonstrate, Nanaimo City Council contested and renegotiated the province's attempts to restructure school finance in the 1890s. The provincial concessions to local autonomy which Johnson described were actually concessions to the School Boards, while the expenses that the province shared were shared with the City Councils.

While historians have long recognized the establishment of a free, compulsory, and non-sectarian public school system as the seminal achievement in nineteenth-century education, Charles E. Phillips has suggested that an equally significant development was the transition to financing education by means of local taxation on real estate.³ In British Columbia, this practice began in the late-nineteenth century in Nanaimo, New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria. The

² F. Henry Johnson, A History of Public Education in British Columbia (Vancouver: Publications Centre, University of British Columbia, 1964), 90-1. Charles E. Phillips also asserted that the British Columbia government successfully shifted the costs of education to local communities beginning in the 1890s. Charles E. Phillips, The Development of Education in Canada (Toronto: W.J. Gage and Company Limited, 1957), 233.

³ Phillips, The Development of Education, 299-300. At the end of the twentieth century, the government of Ontario moved to reverse the initiatives of the late-nineteenth century. Beginning in 1997, the province's education system would be funded from general revenue instead of municipal property taxes which by that time had to generate \$5.4 billion to meet school costs. Commentators agreed that this was the cornerstone of a wide-ranging restructuring of the province's taxation system. Martin Mittlestaedt and James Rusk, 'Ontario shakeup a real rattler,' The Globe and Mail, 18 January 1997, 1 and 8. Local resistance to the new funding system took many forms and the issue had not been resolved by October 1998. At that time, a Southam Newspapers report noted that 'in a dramatic move Thursday, the Toronto district school board virtually declared war on the provincial government by releasing a list of 138 schools it said could close over the next four years if the Tories don't amend their new education funding formula.' The Vancouver Sun, 30 October 1998, A12.

provincial government unilaterally imposed a new financing process, but the resulting chaos and its eventual resolution revealed the degree to which civic authorities in late-nineteenth-century British Columbia could impose their own interests on the central authorities.

British Columbia school legislation in the late 1880s and early 1890s simultaneously divided and multiplied local school authorities in the cities. To this time, local school authority had been vested entirely in School Boards. The School Acts of 1888, 1891, 1892, and 1893 changed that. These Acts made City Councils responsible for school finance. As a result, in each of the four city school districts legal responsibilities for the production of public schooling were divided between two different bodies. In Nanaimo, close links existed between the two. City Council actually appointed four of the seven members to the 1891-92 School Board. Nevertheless, the Council and the Board responded differently to the legislation. The Trustees tried to get on with the job of building schools and expected the Aldermen to find the necessary money. The Aldermen protested vigorously against having to provide the money and considered the Trustees to be rushing ahead without really considering the fiscal consequences. That conflict developed between the two groups is not surprising. The magnitude of the legislation was enormous. In addition, each of the School Acts in the early 1890s changed the rules established in the previous Act. The fast-moving sequence of legislation caused confusion and conflict between Nanaimo's School Board and City Council.

It was not the cost of education, or Nanaimo's citizens contributing to the cost of education, to which the Aldermen objected. What they deplored was the

use of property taxes to finance public schooling. Just at the moment when Nanaimo City Council faced unprecedented demands for civic development, for which its main source of revenue was property tax, the provincial government required Council to pay part, and then the whole, of the cost of public schooling. In a letter to the Provincial Auditor, Nanaimo's city clerk argued it was 'beyond the power of the Council to share so large an amount from the revenue of this City and [still] meet the requirements of the town for roads and bridges.'⁴ Paved streets, sidewalks, and bridges were important in themselves, but in addition they symbolized a modern urban community. There was no thought that the province would pay for municipal development, but the province had traditionally paid for schools. City Council tenaciously resisted the province's attempt to shift the costs of education to the cities.

Dramatic increases in Nanaimo property assessments in the 1880s undoubtedly compounded the frustration felt in Nanaimo over the province's efforts to tie school finance to property taxes. In a geographical study of residential patterns in Nanaimo, Ben Lawrence Moffat examined the appraised values of thirty selected lots in 1881 and 1891. Those assessed at \$150 in 1881 were assessed at between \$500 and \$1000 ten years later.⁵ On top of property

⁴ Nanaimo Community Archives [NCA], Corporation of the City of Nanaimo [CCN], Council letterbook [CL], 20 July 1889, S. Gough to J. Mc. B. Smith, Auditor. In another letter the city clerk reported that City Council also objected to the fact that many of those who benefitted from the city schools did not own property and therefore those who did own property would have to bear an unfair burden with schools being supported through a property tax. NCA, CCN, CL, 8 March 1889, S. Gough to Geo. Thomson, M. P. P.

⁵ Ben Lawrence Moffat, 'A Community of Working Men: The Residential Environment of Early Nanaimo, British Columbia, 1875-1891' (BA (Hons.) thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1982), 138.

tax increases resultant from rising assessments, the provincial government was now endeavouring to add the costs of public schooling. City Council was not alone in voicing its objections. The miners' union in its Workingman's Platform of 1894 demanded that the provincial government 'do erect and maintain school houses and do pay the salaries of teachers and other officials connected therewith.'⁶ Miners, many of whom were home owners, opposed financing education by means of civic property taxes.⁷ In late-nineteenth-century Nanaimo, the problem of financing public schooling generated sustained local resistance to provincial initiatives.

⁶ Thomas Robert Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labor Movement and Political Action, 1879-1906' (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1954), Appendices, xii. The Workingman's Platform of 1894 was produced by the Nanaimo Reform Club which was dominated by the Miners' and Mine Labourers' Protective Association. The 1894 Platform also called upon the provincial government to take 'full control of educational matters.' While it is not possible to interpret the thinking behind the demand for a centralization of education, Thomas Robert Loosmore suggests it may have been linked to the question of how schools were to be financed. Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labor Movement,' 70. Neither he nor I have found any evidence to suggest that the miners' union was unhappy with the local administration of the public schools. Given the importance of home ownership to Nanaimo miners and the increase in city assessments, it is understandable that miners would strenuously oppose the province's efforts to devolve the cost of schooling onto property owners.

⁷ The use of property taxes for education continued to be a subject of debate for decades. In his 1945 commission report on school financing, Maxwell A. Cameron called the practice 'highly contentious and perplexing.' He recommended that the use of property taxes for education purposes be reduced, in part because by the mid-twentieth century each municipality in British Columbia continued to set its own assessment rules. He recommended the establishment of a provincial assessment authority. British Columbia, Commission of Inquiry into Educational Finance, Report, Maxwell A. Cameron (Victoria: King's Printer, 1945), 40-7. In the 1990s, public schooling in British Columbia is still partly funded by property taxation. The leader of the Liberal party, Gordon Campbell, has said that if his party forms the government, it will phase out the school tax on property. Vaughn Palmer, 'Campbell outlines how he'd handle reins of power,' Vancouver Sun, 28 April 1995.

Historians of education in Ontario have long argued about the relationship between central and local authorities in providing public schooling. In particular, they have debated whether public schooling was constructed from the centre or the periphery and what kind of power was located where in the system. Bruce Curtis argues that the Ontario government effected a centralization of educational power in the 1840s and 1850s.⁸ He claims that provincial school legislation in those decades 'aimed precisely to redistribute powers of educational management away from the locality.'⁹ Community resistance to the legislation, he argued, actually fed the growing power of the central state. 'On the whole ... local opposition to central policy initiatives tended to extend and solidify administrative structures.'¹⁰ Curtis also suggests that confusion and grey areas in provincial law facilitated the accumulation of power by the central authorities. 'The vagueness of educational power created an important tactical space, room to manoeuvre, for [the central] educational authority.'¹¹ According to Curtis, the state in Ontario constructed itself and accumulated power through education legislation. Centralization of educational power, he concluded, was the critical component in state formation in mid-nineteenth-century Ontario.

⁸ Bruce Curtis, True Government by Choice Men? Inspection, Education and State Formation in Canada West (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990); and Bruce Curtis, Building the Educational State: 1863-1871 (London: The Falmer Press and the Althouse Press, 1988).

⁹ Curtis, Building, 75.

¹⁰ Curtis, Building, 373.

¹¹ Curtis, Building, 376.

R. D. Gidney and D. A. Lawr and, later, Gidney and W. P. J. Millar have assessed the relations of educational power in Ontario differently than Bruce Curtis.¹² Gidney and Lawr argue that local communities effectively resisted central initiatives with which they did not agree. Local interests, they write, could 'challenge central policy in significant ways, shape it to their own ends, and play an active role in making the kind of system that had emerged by the late-nineteenth-century.'¹³ In their work on the development of Ontario secondary schools, Gidney and Millar have demonstrated that local educational interests were generally successful in their efforts to get what they wanted. The critical factor in the tug-of-war was the ability of local groups to have provincial politicians intervene with central authorities in support of local agendas. In other words, Gidney and Millar indicate the importance of individual provincial politicians as agents of local interests.¹⁴ According to Gidney and Millar, the state could not sustain initiatives against the wishes of the local community. Educational power, they conclude, was not centralized.

The historiographical debate which Curtis, Gidney, Lawr, and Millar have framed provides a useful context in which to consider the transition in financing education that took place in British Columbia in the 1890s. The following sections

¹² R. D. Gidney and D. A. Lawr, 'Bureaucracy vs. Community? The Origins of Bureaucratic Procedure in the Upper Canadian School System,' Journal of Social History 13, 3 (1981): 438-57; D. A. Lawr and R. D. Gidney, 'Who Ran the Schools? Local Influence on Education Policy in Nineteenth-Century Ontario,' Ontario History 72, 3 (1980): 131-43; and R. D. Gidney and W. P. J. Millar, Inventing Secondary Education: The Rise of the High School in Nineteenth-Century Ontario (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

¹³ Lawr and Gidney, 'Who Ran the Schools?,' 132.

¹⁴ See for example, Gidney and Millar, Inventing Secondary Education, 251.

of the chapter reconstruct, from Nanaimo's perspective, the sequence of events that occurred when the provincial government undertook the devolution of the operating and capital costs of schooling to the cities.

3.2 Provincial Political Representation

Some background on the results of the 1890, 1894, 1898, and 1900 provincial elections in Nanaimo is helpful in understanding the city's ability to respond to provincial educational initiatives. The Nanaimo miners' union, the Miners' and Mine Labourers' Protective Association [MMLPA], enthusiastically embraced direct political action from the time of its formation. Labour historian Allen Seager emphasizes the precocious nature of the Nanaimo miners' political initiatives in the 1890s.¹⁵ Seager argues that 'electoral success is the distinguishing characteristic of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century mining community, occurring almost in a vacuum of successful parliamentary labour politics in the Dominion.'¹⁶ It is not surprising then that the MMLPA candidate, Thomas Keith, a miner, won the provincial seat for Nanaimo City in 1890.¹⁷ Although formal political parties did not exist in British Columbia at

¹⁵ Allen Seager, 'Socialists and Workers: The Western Canadian Coal Miners, 1900-1921' Labour/Le Travail 16 (Fall 1985): 36.

¹⁶ Allen Seager, 'Miners' Struggles in Western Canada: Class, Community, and the Labour Movement, 1890-1930,' in Deain Hopkin and Gregory S. Kealey, eds., Class, Community and Labour Movements in Wales and Western Canada (St. John's: The Society for Welsh Labour History and Canadian Committee for Labour History, 1989), 177.

¹⁷ Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labor Movement,' 53. Thomas Forster, the Miners' and Mine Labourers' Protective Association [MMLPA] candidate for Nanaimo District, the area outside the city, was also successful. He was a miner turned farmer representing a predominantly rural constituency. Forster was an ally rather than a representative of labour. Loosmore, 'The British Columbia

that time, the legislature Keith joined was dominated by the essentially conservative government of John Robson. The two premiers who followed Robson, Theodore Davie and John Turner, were also conservatives.¹⁸ Historian Margaret A. Ormsby describes Robson, Davie, and Turner, as leaders who 'clung tenaciously to the system of personal alignments which formed the basis of the province's non-party tradition.'¹⁹ Thomas Keith was inevitably frustrated by his inability to influence legislation since the government had a working majority and only Nanaimo had returned a labour member.²⁰

By the next provincial election in 1894 the MMLPA had merged with other groups opposed to the sitting government and formed the Nanaimo Reform Club whose candidates were miners and prominent union members.²¹ In this election

Labour Movement,' 50-1.

¹⁸ John Robson was Premier from 2 August 1889 to 29 June 1892. Theodore Davie held office from 2 July 1892 to 2 March 1895. He was succeeded by John Turner who was Premier from 4 March 1895 to 8 August 1898. S. W. Jackman, Portraits of the Premiers: An Informal History of British Columbia (Sidney, B.C.: Gray's Publishing Ltd., 1969), viii. Davie lived in Nanaimo for a year in 1887. Jackman, Portraits of the Premiers, 92; David Ricardo Williams, 'Theodore Davie,' Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. 12, 1891-1900 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 227.

¹⁹ Margaret A. Ormsby, 'The Great Potlatch,' in her British Columbia: A History (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1958), 304. Ormsby calls John Robson 'the single reformer in a dreary fifteen-year period of provincial politics' on the basis that he put some checks on the expropriation of natural resources. Ormsby, 'The Great Potlatch,' 311. Patricia E. Roy says that Robson 'never ceased to advocate political reform.' Patricia E. Roy, 'John Robson,' Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. 12, 1891-1900 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 917.

²⁰ Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' 58 and 60.

²¹ Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' 67. By 1894 there were three provincial seats for the Nanaimo District -- one for the city, one for the area to the north, and another for the area to the south.

the Labour-Opposition ticket was defeated in the Nanaimo seats. Thomas Keith in Nanaimo City lost to James McGregor, a former miner now a businessman, and brother of School Trustee William McGregor. In Nanaimo North, John Bryden, Robert Dunsmuir's son-in-law, won over Ralph Smith, then a newcomer to Nanaimo. In Nanaimo South, Tully Boyce, the head of the MMLPA, lost to Dr. W. W. Walkem.²² In this situation, Nanaimo City had a sitting member who supported the administration. This enhanced James McGregor's efforts to act in the interests of Nanaimo.

In the 1898 provincial election, Ralph Smith, the only Labour candidate in the province, won Nanaimo South. In the few years since the previous election Smith had become well-known as the paid secretary/business agent for the MMLPA and vice-president of the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress.²³ The Nanaimo City seat in 1898 went to Dr. R. E. McKechnie described by labour historian Paul A. Phillips as a pro-labour independent.²⁴ Smith was, and McKechnie recently had been, on the Nanaimo School Board. Both supported the barely viable new government of C. A. Semlin, the former leader of the Oppositionists.²⁵ This administration, always tenuous, survived for only two years.²⁶ Semlin's government was dependent on labour support and much more

²² Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' 76.

²³ Mark Leier, 'Ralph Smith,' Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. 14, 1911-1920 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 948. The 1898 election was the first provincial election in British Columbia with a truly secret ballot. Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' 89.

²⁴ Phillips, No Power Greater, 30.

²⁵ Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' 93.

²⁶ The transfer of the Premiership from John Turner to Charles Semlin occurred

predisposed to reformist measures than the administrations which preceded it. In 1899 several bills of interest to labour passed the legislature.²⁷ Labour had established itself as an important factor in British Columbia politics. Ralph Smith and R. E. McKechnie could be expected to represent Nanaimo's interests in regard to education from their vantage point as supporters of the government. However, Semlin's administration was so insecure that there were no important educational initiatives in the final years of the century.

In 1900 another provincial election took place. Ralph Smith, by then president of the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress, did not again contest Nanaimo South where James Dunsmuir had declared himself. Instead, with the support of R. E. McKechnie, president of both the Nanaimo Labour Party and the local Liberal Association, Smith ran for and won McKechnie's Nanaimo City seat.²⁸ Following the election, Joseph Martin, a one-time Semlin Cabinet minister who had replaced Semlin as Premier in February 1900, resigned because he could not command a majority in the legislature.²⁹ James Dunsmuir became the

when the Lieutenant-Governor, Thomas R. McInnes, rejected Turner's right to meet the legislature, dismissed him, and called on the leader of the Opposition, Charles Semlin, to form a government. Semlin was Premier of British Columbia from 15 August 1898 to 27 February 1900. Jackman, Portraits of the Premiers, viii and 105.

²⁷ Ormsby, 'The Great Potlatch,' 320; and Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' 93.

²⁸ Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' 100. Loosmore describes Ralph Smith and Dr. McKechnie as allies. Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' 131, 173, 175. Paul A. Phillips claims that the Nanaimo Labour Party, dating from 1899, was built around Ralph Smith. Phillips, No Power Greater, 31. Thomas Robert Loosmore argues the Nanaimo Labour Party was not a real labour party, but a group of reformers and unionists who coalesced around Ralph Smith. Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' 104.

²⁹ Charles Semlin, like John Turner before him, was dismissed by Lieutenant-

Premier.³⁰ Dunsmuir's government was predictably conservative in nature.³¹ However, because the administration of government had received no attention for almost a year, twenty-five members of the legislature, including Ralph Smith, agreed to support Dunsmuir for one year.³² Before this could happen, Smith resigned his Nanaimo City seat to successfully contest the Vancouver Island seat in the federal election of 1900.

Ralph Smith had hoped to run as a Liberal in the 1900 federal election, but he could not secure the nomination and so appeared as an Independent. During the campaign, Tully Boyce and Thomas Keith opposed Smith's politics of conciliation. The MMLPA, however, endorsed him. R. E. McKechnie secured Nanaimo's Liberal vote for Smith. James Hawthornthwaite, son-in-law of School Trustee and oftentimes Mayor of Nanaimo, Mark Bate, delivered the radical labour vote to Smith. Two years later Hawthornthwaite joined the Revolutionary Socialist Party and split with Smith³³ Paul A. Phillips suggests that by the time Smith won

Governor Thomas R. McInnes who then called on Joseph Martin to be Premier. Martin was Premier from 28 February to 14 June 1900. His inability to govern resulted in the dissolution of the legislature. Jackman, Portraits of the Premiers, viii, 106, 115.

³⁰ Five days after inviting James Dunsmuir to form the government of British Columbia, Lieutenant-Governor Thomas R. McInnes was dismissed from office by the Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier. James Dunsmuir was Premier from 15 June 1900 to 21 November 1902. Jackman, Portraits of the Premiers, viii and 139; and Ormsby, 'The Great Potlatch,' 324.

³¹ Margaret A. Ormsby suggests that Labour candidates split the left-centre vote in the 1900 provincial election strengthening the Conservatives. Ormsby, 'The Great Potlatch,' 323.

³² Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' 122.

³³ Loosmore, 'The British Columbia Labour Movement,' 130, 140, 142, 149, 172, 176, and 179. James Hawthornthwaite ran unsuccessfully against Ralph Smith in the federal election of 1908. Leier, 'Ralph Smith,' 950. Labour historian Allen

a federal seat in 1900, 'his main electoral support came from non-labour sources and like many before him, once elected he was absorbed into the Liberal Party.'³⁴ However, given the MMLPA endorsement and Hawthornthwaite's support, it is likely that Ralph Smith did command some labour support in his first federal election.

In the provincial by-election for the Nanaimo City seat Ralph Smith had vacated, James Hawthornthwaite won by acclamation. He had little in common with the Premier, James Dunsmuir. When the 1901 School Act relegated Nanaimo to a city school district of the second class, demographics were no doubt the main factor. Nevertheless, the Act was the product of a political moment when Nanaimo's sitting member was not part of the government of the day.

3.3 Operating Revenues

The initial harbinger of change in the system of school finance came in the Public School Amendment Act of 1888. Since Confederation in 1871, the provincial government had financed the entire cost of education from general revenues supported in part by a capitation tax. The 1888 School Amendment Act, however, required the four city school districts of Nanaimo, New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria to remit one-third of the cost of teachers' salaries to the

Seager describes Hawthornthwaite, who spent fifteen years in the provincial legislature, as the most distinguished of British Columbia's mining politicians in the 1890-1930 era. Allen Seager, 'Miners' Struggles in Western Canada,' 177.

³⁴ Phillips, No Power Greater, 32.

province.³⁵ In March 1889, Nanaimo City Council received its first notice from the Provincial Auditor for \$960 for teachers' salaries. The Aldermen responded 'that the Council strongly protests against paying the charge made by the Government for the support of the public schools, as it is impossible to spare so large a sum from the revenue of this City.'³⁶ As well as refusing to pay, Council also attempted to have the charge remitted and the legislation repealed.

The second notice from the Provincial Auditor brought forth another refusal to pay from Nanaimo.³⁷ In a letter to his counterpart in New Westminster, Nanaimo's city clerk, Samuel Gough, stated 'our Council will allow the matter to go to the Courts before paying.' He added, 'we have been informed that your City paid the impost for the last half of 1888.'³⁸ Like Nanaimo, the city of Victoria continued to object to its new financial responsibilities. Victoria actually went to

³⁵ British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, [BC, LA] Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1888, chap. 32, sec. 10. In 1884, the Province designated Nanaimo, New Westminster and Victoria as British Columbia's first city school districts. BC, LA, An Act to Amend the 'Public School Act, 1879', SBC 1884, chap. 27, sec. 2. Vancouver became the fourth city school district in 1888. BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1888, chap. 32, sec. 2. The Province did not create any more city school districts until 1901.

³⁶ NCA, CCN, Council minutes, [CM] 4 March 1889. Nanaimo City Council had objected to the new financing system before the 1888 School Act had even passed the legislature. NCA, CCN, CM, 26 March 1888. See also NCA, CCN, CL, 26 March 1888, S. Gough to Geo. Thomson, M. P. P. George Thomson, a member of the government party, won the provincial by-election in Nanaimo in January 1887 following the death of the sitting member William Raybould. As noted in Chapter Two, Gough and Thomson were brothers-in-law. I would like to thank Shirley Bateman from the Nanaimo Community Archives for spending many hours in the vault at City Hall with me so I could read the Council minutes.

³⁷ NCA, CCN, CL, 20 July 1889, S. Gough to J. Mc. B. Smith, Auditor.

³⁸ NCA, CCN, CL, 1 August 1889, S. Gough to D. Robson, City Clerk, New Westminster. An impost is a tax.

the length of going to court to test the legality of the 1888 legislation. In January 1890, Chief Justice Begbie upheld the constitutionality of the Act.³⁹

In Nanaimo, the tug of war continued. In response to yet another notice, Nanaimo City Council implored the city's representatives in the provincial legislature to use their 'utmost influence to secure the repeal of the obnoxious "amendment" ... making this city liable for the large sum of \$1,920.00 annually for School purposes also the setting aside of the sum now claimed under the above "amendment."⁴⁰ Nanaimo's continued refusal to reimburse the province for one-third of teachers' salaries reached a climax in November 1890. At that time, P. Irving, the Deputy Attorney General, informed the Aldermen that the matter had been transferred to his department 'to enforce the collection of the demand by legal process; Nanaimo being the only city which has not paid.'⁴¹ Nanaimo held out longer than the other cities, but in the face of the threat of court action, Council capitulated and paid.

Nanaimo City Council had vigorously resisted the province's decision to shift part of the burden of financing education to the city and to property owners. George Thomson, Nanaimo's representative in the provincial legislature, had

³⁹ Victoria Daily Times, 18 January 1890, 1.

⁴⁰ NCA, CCN, CL, 22 January 1890, S. Gough to Geo. Thomson, M. P. P. and 27 January 1890, S. Gough to A. Haslam, M. P. P. Andrew Haslam, an Independent, won the provincial by-election in Nanaimo in June 1889 following the death of the sitting member Robert Dunsmuir. Haslam did not run in the subsequent provincial election in 1890, turning instead to municipal politics and serving as Nanaimo's Mayor in 1891-92.

⁴¹ Nanaimo Free Press, 25 November 1890, 1. See also NCA, CCN, CM, 24 November 1890.

stated during debate on the bill in the legislature that he felt that 'the city of Nanaimo would surrender its municipal charter rather than pay the tax.'⁴² In the end, however, Nanaimo's Aldermen complied with the law by raising the required sum through a street improvement loan by-law.⁴³

In the city school districts in 1891, the British Columbia government ended the long-standing practice of electing School Trustees.⁴⁴ The School Act of that year required that in Nanaimo, New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria the Lieutenant-Governor in Council appoint three School Trustees and the municipal Councils appoint another four. The Act also required the Councils to designate one of their own appointees as Chairman.⁴⁵ In response to opposition from the cities, the government had changed the 1891 School Act on its passage through the legislature. It added a clause stating that if a municipal Council did not appoint Trustees the province would do so.⁴⁶ With no discussion, perhaps because they had little choice, Nanaimo Aldermen complied with the Act and named four School Trustees in June 1891.⁴⁷ These four joined the three

⁴² Victoria Daily Colonist, 17 April 1888.

⁴³ NCA, CCN, CM, 25 February 1895.

⁴⁴ BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1891, chap. 40, sec. 22.

⁴⁵ BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1891, chap. 40, sec. 22. The practice of appointing Trustees was shortlived. In 1892 the province restored the election of city School Trustees. BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1892, chap. 40, sec. 5. However, the practice in place from 1884 to 1891 of electing two School Trustees in each city ward was not revived. Instead, from 1893 city School Trustees were elected at large.

⁴⁶ BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1891, chap. 40, sec. 28.

⁴⁷ NCA, CCN, CM, 29 January [sic] 1891. The date should be 29 June 1891. Council reported the appointments to the Provincial Secretary a month later. NCA, CCN, CM, 20 July 1891. The Trustees named by Council were Marcus Wolfe,

provincial appointees and the new Nanaimo School Board met for the first time in July 1891.

Charles E. Phillips suggests there was a direct connection between the practice of appointing Trustees and the transition to financing education by means of property taxation. Phillips claims 'a probable reason for not permitting the direct election of any or all members of city boards was that the many who paid little or no direct taxation on urban real estate might elect those who promised generous spending on schools.'⁴⁸ Nanaimo's Free Press certainly linked the two provisions of the Act, noting that 'while the voting Power is thus taken away from the citizens, the bill gives them greater paying powers.'⁴⁹ The Free Press, though, read more into the new practice of appointing Trustees than just the prevention of overly generous school spending.

George Norris, the editor of the Free Press, saw the 1891 School Act as an attempt by the province to legislate power away from the local community.

What with the Council of Public Instruction, the Superintendent of Education, the Inspectors, the Land and Works Department, [and] the three Government appointies [sic] on the Trustee Board, the Chairman and the Three Trustees appointed by the Municipal Council, will cut but a small insignificant figure in the educational procession. The Municipal appointees would require greater bravery than the 'Noble Light Brigade' to make a stand against such

Josiah W. Stirtan, John Dick, and John Hilbert as Chairman. The Trustees named by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council were Mark Bate, Donald Smith, and Alexander Shaw. British Columbia, Superintendent of Education [BC, SE], Twentieth Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1890-91 [ARPS], xxv.

⁴⁸ Phillips, Development of Education, 268.

⁴⁹ Nanaimo Free Press, 12 February 1891, 4.

an array of Government [guns, in] regard to the financial burden imposed on the City of Nanaimo.⁵⁰

Robert Beaven, the leader of the opposition in the provincial legislature, and the member for the city of Victoria, also argued that the 1891 School Act centred power in the provincial government.⁵¹ Beaven tried to amend the Act so that city School Trustees would continue to be locally elected, however his attempt was unsuccessful.⁵² The provincial government appeared to be abrogating local political power to its own advantage by replacing elected Trustees with appointed ones.

The 1891 Public School Act radically changed the process of financing public schooling in British Columbia's four coastal cities. It significantly increased Nanaimo City Council's financial obligations. Instead of being responsible for one-third of the teachers' salaries, City Council was now responsible for half the cost of salaries.⁵³ In addition, for the first time Council had to assume responsibility for 'the whole of all other expenses for the purchase or lease of school sites, erection, enlargement or rent of school buildings, for

⁵⁰ Nanaimo Free Press, 12 February 1891, 4.

⁵¹ Nanaimo Free Press, 19 February 1891, 1. Robert Beaven was the member of the provincial legislature for Victoria City for twenty-three years, the Premier of British Columbia in 1882-83, and the recognized leader of the opposition from 1883 to 1894. According to H. Keith Ralston and Hamar Foster, Beaven 'had increasingly become a spokesman for what might be called working-class views.' Beaven was Mayor of Victoria in 1892-93 and 1896. H. Keith Ralston and Hamar Foster, 'Robert Beaven,' Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. 14, 1911-1920 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 48-9.

⁵² Nanaimo Free Press, 11 March 1891, 1; and 20 March 1891, 4.

⁵³ BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1891, chap. 40, sec. 30.

furniture and repairs, and all other incidental expenses whatsoever incurred by the Board of Trustees.⁵⁴ With the exception of half the cost of teachers' salaries, Nanaimo's City Council now had to fund all operating and capital costs of the city schools. The Free Press estimate that school costs would double the current real estate tax anticipated the impact on Nanaimo's budget.⁵⁵

In shifting almost the full cost of schooling to the cities in 1891, the province created parallel civic school authorities -- School Boards and City Councils. The legislation created such a complicated relationship between the two that the result was chaotic. By the terms of the 1891 School Act, Trustees determined the amount to be expended on the schools.⁵⁶ Nanaimo's unelected and unaccountable School Board could spend as it wished and Council had no recourse but to pay. In his 1935 examination of the history of school finance, then Chief Inspector of Schools H. B. King noted that under the 1891 Act, 'City Council was required to raise and levy upon the rateable property of the city the sums required by the trustees. There was no limitation to what the Board might demand. For a brief time the four city School Boards had fiscal independence.'⁵⁷ This situation was untenable and the following year the School Amendment Act of 1892 drastically altered the relationship between City Councils and School Boards.

⁵⁴ BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1891, chap. 40, sec. 30.

⁵⁵ Nanaimo Free Press, 12 February 1891, 4.

⁵⁶ BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1891, chap. 40, sec. 34.

⁵⁷ British Columbia, Commission on School Finance in British Columbia, School Finance in British Columbia, H. B. King (Victoria: King's Printer, 1935), 9.

The 1892 Public School Amendment Act added new fuel to the fires of confusion in the fiscal relationship between City Councils and School Boards by restructuring their relative powers. The Act stated that:

the Board of Trustees shall, on or before the first day of March in each year, cause to be prepared and laid before the City Council a detailed estimate of the sums required by the Board for ... any ... lawful purpose within their jurisdiction. Such estimate shall be subject to the consideration, alteration and final approval of the Council.⁵⁸

The shoe, it appeared, was now on the other foot. Public School Trustees were dependent for every nickel on the good will of their City Councils. In his 1935 study, H. B. King concluded that the 1892 Act 'gave the City Councils full control over the School Boards.'⁵⁹ The reality, however, was not quite as King suggested.

The Act, which was proclaimed on 23 April 1892, contained a curious provision. Section 3 stated that, until new School Boards were elected, which would not be until the next municipal election in January 1893, 'the present Boards shall continue to exist and perform their functions as heretofore.'⁶⁰ Therefore, the critical changes in the 1892 legislation were not to come into effect until almost a year later. But a year later those changes would be overtaken by the new and significantly altered Public School Amendment Act of 1893. The Nanaimo School Trustees wasted no time at all drawing Section 3 to the attention of their frustrated City Council.⁶¹ The effect of Section 3 was that the Public

⁵⁸ BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1892, chap. 40, sec. 17.

⁵⁹ British Columbia, Commission on School Finance, 9.

⁶⁰ BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1892, chap. 40, sec. 3.

⁶¹ School District 68, [SD68] Nanaimo Board of School Trustees, [NBST] Board

School Amendment Act of 1892, which gave complete financial control to City Council, was only in force for about three months in 1893. In those months, discussion of the 1893 Public School Amendment Act was already underway. The 1892 legislation, which on the surface gave so much fiscal authority to the City Councils, in reality gave them no authority whatsoever. Like its predecessor, the 1892 school legislation lasted only a year.

In the third Act in as many years, the province aimed to create a balance between the responsibilities and authority of City Councils and School Boards. The Public School Amendment Act of 1893 returned to the Boards the control over all ordinary expenses. Councils, however, retained the right to control all special expenses. If a City Council rejected a request for special expenditure from the Board, then the Board could request that the matter be submitted to the ratepayers in the form of a money by-law.⁶² In a letter to Thomas Keith, Nanaimo's representative in the provincial legislature, the city clerk, Samuel Gough, explained Council's opposition to this arrangement. 'The Council of this City consider that as long as it is their duty to levy and collect the funds for school purposes, they should hold a veto power over the actions of the Trustees in matter of expenditures.'⁶³ In trying to shift most of the cost of schooling to the city, the

minutes, [BM] 13 May 1892. None of the histories of education I consulted remarked on Section 3. My attention was drawn to it by this reference in the Nanaimo School Board minutes.

⁶² BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1893, chap. 41, sec. 8. The 1879 Ontario School Act gave City Councils the power to refuse to raise money requested by the School Trustees. If they did the Trustees had the right to require that the question be submitted to the voters. Phillips, Development of Education, 290.

⁶³ NCA, CCN, CL, 21 February 1893, S. Gough to Thomas Keith, M. P. P.

School Act of 1891 had created conflicting civic authorities, the City Council and the School Board. The result was a period of utter confusion in city schooling which required two further legislative attempts by the province in 1892 and 1893 to restore order.

In spite of the differences between Nanaimo City Council and the Nanaimo School Board, Council took over the responsibility for school operating costs without undue difficulty. The 1891 School Act had increased the municipality's share of teachers' salaries to one-half, but the province continued to set and pay the salaries. The 1893 legislation made City Councils responsible for the full cost of teachers' salaries and gave Trustees the right to set and pay salaries.⁶⁴ There is no record of any clash between Nanaimo's Trustees and Aldermen over teachers' salaries. Nor did they clash over the payment of incidentals which City Council funded from 1891.⁶⁵ The School Board and Council did have differences over the preparation of the 1892 school budget, but they reached a working resolution with no blood spilt.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1893, chap. 41, sec. 3. This legislation also mandated that the city treasurer rather than the secretary of the School Board pay the School Board accounts. In Nanaimo this did not happen until 1897. NCA, CCN, CM, 8 and 15 February 1897.

⁶⁵ Nanaimo did not have a sewer system in the 1890s and scavenging, the collection of waste, was the one issue on which the Trustees and Aldermen did argue about payment of incidental school costs. Also, in August 1892, alarmed at the rate at which the Trustees were spending their annual appropriation, City Council asked that 'the Secretary of the School Trustee Board be requested to furnish a statement of the amounts for incidentals, and that the attention of the Trustees be drawn to the amount asked for at the beginning of the year and the amount already drawn.' NCA, CCN, CM, 15 August 1892.

⁶⁶ NCA, CCN, CM, 1, 15, 22 and 29 February 1892. See also NCA, CCN, CL, 2 February 1892, S. Gough to Donald Smith, secretary of the Board of School Trustees, requesting an itemized statement; 10 February 1892, S. Gough to Donald Smith, secretary of the Board of School Trustees, requesting an answer to

The relative amicability between the Council and the Board in regard to operating costs resulted from the province's action in combining the transfer of school expenditures with a transfer of new sources of revenue to City Councils.⁶⁷ Nanaimo City Council did have to tax real estate and put loan by-laws before the ratepayers to generate money to pay the costs of public schooling in the community. However, the province greatly reduced the financial impact on the cities by giving them two important sources of income in the 1891 Revenue Tax Act and the 1893 Public School Amendment Act. The Tax Act allowed municipal collectors in the four city school districts to collect the annual three dollar provincial revenue tax payable by all adult males in the province.⁶⁸ In a study of

his previous letter; and 23 February 1892, S. Gough to John Hilbert, Chairman of the Public School Trustee Board, requesting a meeting between the Board and the finance committee of City Council.

⁶⁷ There was a precedent for the simultaneous transfer of revenue and expenditure. The 1888 Public School Amendment Act which required the four City Councils to remit one-third of teachers' salaries to the province also empowered the School Trustees to collect high school fees. The 1891 School Act gave the power to implement high school fees to the City Councils. The 1893 School Amendment Act returned that power to the School Trustees. Donald Leslie MacLaurin, 'The History of Education in the Crown Colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia and in the Province of British Columbia' (PhD dissertation, University of Washington, 1936), 161-2. It is not clear whether the Nanaimo Trustees or Aldermen ever charged fees for students to attend the High School.

⁶⁸ Prior to British Columbia's entry to Confederation local communities had levied taxes to support education. These usually took the form of a capitation tax. British Columbia, Commission on School Finance, 4-5; Jean Barman, 'Transfer, Imposition or Consensus? The Emergence of Educational Structures in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia,' in Nancy M. Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson, and David C. Jones, eds., Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1986), 252; and Dan Hawthorne, 'Structures and Aspirations: Towards an Interpretation of Public Education in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia' (unpublished paper, York University, 1987), 21-3. I am indebted to Dan Hawthorne for giving me a copy of his paper. After Confederation, the School Tax Act of 1876 required that every male over eighteen pay an annual tax of three dollars towards the maintenance of public schools. BC, LA, School Tax Act, SBC 1876, chap. 27, sec. 2. Barman argues that this tax was

Nanaimo's municipal records, Walter Meyer zu Erpen claims the province made this change 'as a concession to help offset the increased amounts those municipalities were required to pay for public schools.'⁶⁹ City Councils quickly gained a second important source of revenue to offset school costs. The 1893 School Amendment Act established a grant system according to which the province would pay the four City Councils a student per-capita grant of \$10 based on average daily attendance.⁷⁰ The cities continued to collect the revenue tax in addition to the new per-capita grants.⁷¹ These revenues substantially reduced the amount of money Nanaimo City Council had to generate from property tax to meet its fiscal responsibilities for school finance.

The extent of the reduction can be seen in Nanaimo's annual budgets. In 1896, for example, the city of Nanaimo received \$10,170.04 from the revenue tax and per-capita grant combined. In the same year, the city spent \$11,449.53 on

directed against the province's Chinese population. 'Transfer, Imposition,' 256. In 1881 this tax was renamed the Provincial Revenue Tax. British Columbia, Commission on School Finance, 25.

⁶⁹ Walter J. Meyer zu Erpen, 'Towards an Understanding of the Municipal Archives of Nineteenth-Century British Columbia: A Case Study of the Archives of the Corporation of the City of Nanaimo, 1875-1904' (MAS thesis, University of British Columbia, 1985), 189. From 1892, the municipal collectors in the four city school districts had the same right to collect the provincial revenue tax as the provincial collector had in the rest of the province. British Columbia, Commission on School Finance, 24.

⁷⁰ The province paid all education costs outside the four city districts until 1901 when all incorporated municipalities were given the same responsibilities as the four city districts had been given by 1893. British Columbia, Commission on School Finance, 10. The student per-capita grant system was replaced in 1905 by a teacher per-capita grant system which was more conducive to reasonable class sizes. MacLaurin, 'History of Education,' 236.

⁷¹ The province ended the practice of the cities collecting the revenue tax in 1913. British Columbia, Commission on School Finance, 24.

school salaries and incidentals.⁷² The city, therefore, paid 11 percent of the total costs of schooling. That percentage increased toward the end of the decade. In 1899, the city received \$12,462.44 from the tax and grant combined and spent \$14,670.12 on school operating costs.⁷³ In 1900, the revenue tax and the per-capita grant generated \$12,923.14 for the city. In that year, the city spent \$15,554.49 on school salaries and incidentals.⁷⁴ In 1901, the city garnered \$13,458.70 from the tax and grant and expended \$16,642.18 on school operating costs.⁷⁵ From 1899 to 1901, then, the city paid sequentially 15, 17, and 19 percent of the total school operating costs. While the percentage was increasing, the city's share by 1901 amounted to only one fifth of the total. Revenue transfers greatly limited the extent to which City Council had to use property taxation to support schooling. Opposition from Nanaimo and elsewhere resulted in the provincial government substantially offsetting the costs of schooling for the municipal Councils in the city school districts.

⁷² Nanaimo Free Press, Statement of Accounts for the Corporation of the City of Nanaimo for the Year 1896, 8 January 1897.

⁷³ Nanaimo Free Press, Corporation of the City of Nanaimo, Statement of Receipts and Expenditures for the Year 1899, 15 January 1900.

⁷⁴ Nanaimo Free Press, Corporation of the City of Nanaimo, Statement of Receipts and Expenditures for year ending Dec. 31 1900, 19 January 1901.

⁷⁵ NCA, CCN, Finance Department, F.8 Finance Statements, 1901, A-04-01/Box 5.

3.4 Capital Revenues

While the province's transfer of school operating costs to the cities initially caused confusion in urban school governance, the simultaneous transfer of the capital costs of school construction created a crisis.⁷⁶ When the appointed Trustee Board first took office in July 1891, it immediately notified City Council that two new schools had to be built.⁷⁷ Since the 1891 School Act required Council to bear the full costs of school construction, Council's only recourse was deficit financing.

When its finance committee recommended the submission of a loan by-law to ratepayers, Council reluctantly agreed.⁷⁸ At the end of April 1892, a \$10,000 by-law proposal for the purchase of property and school construction passed the necessary three readings in Council.⁷⁹ At the same time, the finance committee reached agreement with the Trustees to postpone any action on the new school buildings until the by-law received ratepayer approval.⁸⁰ At a joint meeting in early May, the Aldermen explained to the Trustees that the by-law would go before the voters by the middle of the month. The Aldermen also expressed their concerns about how they would get the money if the by-law failed since Council

⁷⁶ BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1891, chap. 40, sec. 30.

⁷⁷ NCA, CCN, CM, 6 July 1891.

⁷⁸ NCA, CCN, CM, 29 February 1892.

⁷⁹ NCA, CCN, CM, 28 March and 25 April 1892.

⁸⁰ NCA, CCN, CM, 2 May 1892.

was in a 'bad hole' financially.⁸¹

To its astonishment, only a week later, Council received a letter from the School Trustees stating that in ten days 'they intended awarding the contract for building a two roomed school-house in the South Ward, at a cost of \$2,183.00.'⁸² The Aldermen reacted as if they had been stung. They immediately carried a motion directing that 'the Clerk notify the School Trustees ... that they must defer awarding any contract for the erection of school building, and that the Council will not hold themselves responsible for any obligation incurred by them for the erection or alteration of buildings.'⁸³ The Aldermen followed that motion with a second one directing 'that a notice be inserted in the Free Press stating that the Municipal Council will not hold themselves responsible for any debts contracted by the School Trustees for any other purpose than current incidental expenses.'⁸⁴ A week later, Mayor Haslam defended this notice saying, 'all the Aldermen were anxious to see the school built, but not out of their own pockets. The notice was a necessary precaution.'⁸⁵

The School Trustees were much provoked by Council's motions. In response, they too passed a motion.

⁸¹ SD68, NBST, BM, 2 May 1892.

⁸² NCA, CCN, CM, 9 May 1892.

⁸³ NCA, CCN, CM, 9 May 1892.

⁸⁴ NCA, CCN, CM, 9 May 1892.

⁸⁵ Nanaimo Free Press, 17 May 1892, 1.

Resolved that inasmuch as the Board of School Trustees have carried out [their duties], and all their proceedings have been in accordance with the Public School Act 1891. Said Trustees deem the action taken at the last meeting of Council (May 9th) very ill advised and irregular and to say the least disrespectful to them.⁸⁶

Obviously, Nanaimo's City Council and the School Board experienced serious difficulties in working together to build new schools as required by the 1891 School Act.

By mid-May 1892, City Council was confused. In the middle of their acrimonious debate with the Trustees about finding the money for school construction as required by the 1891 School Act, Council was taken aback by the proclamation of the School Amendment Act on 23 April 1892. This Act seemed to shift fiscal authority to the Council, but the School Trustees pointed out the clause in the 1892 Act which effectively kept the earlier 1891 Act in force until January 1893. With the implications of the 1892 Act still unclear, Council withdrew its by-law and sought legal advice.⁸⁷ When it received legal instruction as to its power to raise money through a loan by-law, Council proceeded to do so.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ SD68, NBST, BM, 13 May 1892.

⁸⁷ NCA, CCN, CL, 10 May 1892, S. Gough to Donald Smith, secretary of the Public School Trustee Board, stating that Council was seeking legal advice and asking that the Trustees defer awarding any building contracts. Also, NCA, CCN, CL, 10 May 1892, S. Gough to Drake, Jackson and Helmcken, Barristers, Victoria, asking whether City Council had the right to 'raise money by way of loan for School purposes.'

⁸⁸ Nanaimo Free Press, 31 May 1892, 4.

The 1892 impasse between City Council and the School Board over school construction was resolved when Council proceeded with the by-law to borrow \$10,000 to raise the necessary money.⁸⁹ The ratepayers approved the by-law by a majority of ninety-five to forty-eight.⁹⁰ The city clerk informed the Trustees that the money would soon be available and requested them to submit plans for the new schools to Council within the week. The Trustees willingly forwarded the building plans, but rejected an effort by Council to alter the site which the Trustees had chosen for one of the schools.⁹¹ Construction went ahead and both North and South Ward school buildings opened in January 1893. Despite their different perspectives and a financing process fraught with difficulty, Nanaimo City Council and the School Trustees did build two schools with the \$10,000 the city borrowed for that purpose.⁹²

In creating parallel education authorities in the cities, the 1891 school legislation forced City Councils and School Boards into an adversarial relationship.

⁸⁹ NCA, CCN, CM, 30 May 1892.

⁹⁰ There were six spoiled ballots. NCA, CCN, CM, 13 June 1892. Voting on the Fire Hall and Hydrant By-Law which took place the same day was slightly more positive: 108 to thirty-six, with five spoiled ballots. The city raised the money by selling debentures. NCA, CCN, CM, 1 August and 5 September 1892.

⁹¹ NCA, CCN, CM, 1, 7, and 15 August 1892. NCA, CCN, CL, 3 and 11 August 1892, S. Gough to Donald Smith, secretary of the School Trustee Board. Council approved the site for North Ward School but recommended a different site be chosen for South Ward School. This reversed the position taken by Council a year earlier when it had requested that the site for North Ward School be moved, but made no objection to the site for South Ward School. NCA, CCN, CM, 14 July 1891.

⁹² Construction costs for North Ward School were \$3,600 and for South Ward \$2,500. NCA, NBST, Board letterbook, [BL] page 250 following 4 February 1898. The land purchased for the two school sites cost \$2,200. SD68, NBST, BM, 14 July 1891.

In Nanaimo, the School Board bent its full efforts toward getting new schools built, furnished, and staffed.⁹³ The Trustees showed no interest in the problems City Council had in funding the Board's endeavours. As far as the School Trustees were concerned it was Council's job to pay and pay it should. When the Aldermen appeared to balk, the Trustees cited the provincial legislation to them or appealed to the Superintendent of Education for support. Unlike City Council, the School Board did not contest or resist the legislative efforts of the central authorities. Instead, the Board contested City Council's reluctance to pay. The only exception to this pattern occurred when the Trustees supported Council's resolution to the government protesting that Nanaimo had not been on the same footing as the other cities in regard to the provision of schools at the time of the 1891 School Act.⁹⁴

The Nanaimo School Trustees twice sought the support of the Education Office in their conflict with City Council. In July 1891, they complained to the Superintendent of Education, S. D. Pope, that City Council believed it did not have to pay for school incidentals, land costs, or construction of school buildings until February 1892.⁹⁵ In this instance, Pope supported the Trustees and replied that under section 30 of the 1891 School Act, City Council did have financial

⁹³ When the appointed Trustee Board took office in July 1891, the Trustees had to rent two churches to house the school children who could not be fitted into the existing classrooms. BC, SE, Twenty-First ARPS, 177. See also, SD68, NBST, BM, 24 July 1891.

⁹⁴ SD68, NBST, BM, 12 March 1892.

⁹⁵ British Columbia Archives and Records Service [BCARS], British Columbia [BC], Superintendent of Education [SE], GR 1445, Correspondence Inwards, [CI] Donald Smith, 17 July 1891, secretary of the Nanaimo Board of School Trustees to S. D. Pope.

responsibilities for these matters.⁹⁶ The Trustees also turned to Pope for suggestions and advice when Council advertised it would not be responsible for debts contracted by the School Board other than incidentals.⁹⁷ Pope's reply is somewhat surprising. While he regretted Council's action, he stated his Department had no control over the matter.⁹⁸

The conflict between City Council and the School Board occurred despite the fact that over time many of the same men were interested in both areas of governance and served as Aldermen and Trustees. For example, of the seven School Trustees in 1892, four served on City Council at one time or another.⁹⁹ Three were Aldermen including John Dick (1875 and 1884), John Hilbert (1882-88), and Donald Smith (1884-85). Both Mark Bate and John Hilbert served as Mayor, Bate for sixteen terms (1875-89 and 1898-1900) and Hilbert for two (1890-91). Conversely, of the ten members of City Council in 1892, three served on the School Board in the 1890s. These included Thomas Dobeson (1894-95), Joseph Ganner (1893), and Edward Quennell (1893-1912). Some of these civic leaders served on both the Council and the Board at the same time in the 1890s. Quennell was an Alderman and a Trustee in 1893 and 1898. He was Mayor and

⁹⁶ SD68, NBST, BM, 24 July 1891.

⁹⁷ BCARS, BC, SE, GR 1445, CI, 11 May 1892, Donald Smith, Secretary of the Nanaimo Board of School Trustees to S. D. Pope. Smith included a copy of the newspaper advertisement. Pope had earlier urged the Trustees to construct more school accomodation. NBST, BM, 8 April 1892.

⁹⁸ SD68, NBST, BM, 8 July 1892.

⁹⁹ For the names of Nanaimo School Trustees see SD68, NBST, BM, from 6 July 1891. For the names of Nanaimo Mayors and Aldermen see Meyer zu Erpen, 'Towards an Understanding,' 301-10.

Chairman of the School Board in 1894 and Mayor and a Trustee in 1895. Hilbert was Mayor and Chairman of the Trustee Board in 1891. The general pattern was an overlapping membership on Council and Board; however in 1892, the year when tensions between the two groups ran the highest, no one was a member of both City Council and School Board.

The men who served as Aldermen and School Trustees played an important role in Nanaimo's history and, whatever their positions on a given issue, they were used to working together as community builders in various political and social institutions in the city. In spite of their strong commitment to Nanaimo, the 1891 School Act which transferred the capital costs of schooling to the city brought them to loggerheads in their respective roles as Aldermen and Trustees. At the height of discord in the spring of 1892, Mayor Haslam suggested that Council could 'oust' the four Trustees it had appointed and appoint new ones.¹⁰⁰ At the subsequent meeting of Council, Alderman Baker commented that Council had erred in appointing four Trustees who did not sit on Council as well. He noted 'the Trustees do not study the finances, but leave that for the Aldermen to ponder their brains over.'¹⁰¹

The disagreement about financing North and South Ward Schools in 1892 occurred between City Council and the School Board. Yet, there is no evidence of conflict within the School Board itself between the municipally appointed Trustees and those who had been provincially appointed. The Board's May 13 motion,

¹⁰⁰ Nanaimo Free Press, 10 February 1892, 2.

¹⁰¹ Nanaimo Free Press, 16 February 1892, 4.

which stated that City Council's actions were ill advised, irregular and disrespectful, carried unanimously. The conflict over school capital costs was not part of a long-standing or on-going civic political sectionalism. Rather, it was an immediate and temporary response to a major legislative initiative by the provincial government.

Although the provisions of the 1891 School Act required City Council to fund school construction, it was the provincial government that financed Nanaimo's third school of the decade in 1895-96. City Council began to apply pressure on the provincial government to that end early in 1892. In one of the lengthiest motions of the decade, Council moved that:

Whereas by an Act of the Legislature passed at the Session of 1891, the Cities of this Province were called upon to erect and maintain their own school buildings and provide liberally towards the expense of the education of the children, and

Whereas, during the past four years dating from 1888 to 1891 large sums were expended by the Provincial Government in the other cities of the province for the purpose of erecting school buildings, etc: during that period the City of Victoria received \$14,460.00, Vancouver \$52,705.00, New Westminster \$26,755.00, Nanaimo \$66.00 and

Whereas, at the time of the said Act coming into force this City was insufficiently provided with School accommodation, and to place it in proper condition for present needs, it will be necessary to impose an additional special rate of nearly one per cent on all the Real Estate of this city, the payment of which will bear very heavily upon our citizens,

Be it Therefore Resolved that this Council respectfully request the Provincial Government to place a sum in the Estimates to aid this City in the erection of such buildings as are required to meet the needs of our city, and that will place it more on an equality with the other Cities of this Province in the way of expenditure for School purposes.

Be it also Resolved that a copy of the foregoing be forwarded to Thomas Keith Esq. M. P. P. by the City Clerk with a request that he bring the matter before the Government at as early a date as possible.¹⁰²

¹⁰² NCA, CCN, CM, 9 February 1892.

Thomas Keith, Nanaimo's representative in the provincial legislature, did endeavour to support Council's initiative, but he failed to receive any promise of assistance.¹⁰³ The provincial government took the position that it was too late make any special provision for Nanaimo.¹⁰⁴

City Council did not give up its efforts to correct what it considered to have been unfair treatment of Nanaimo at the time of the 1891 School Act. In February 1894, Council minutes reported that:

His Worship the Mayor [Edward Quennell] stated that Alderman Dobeson and himself had, during the past week visited Victoria, and had been privileged with an interview with Hon. J. H. Turner Provincial Minister of Finance, regarding the limited amount of school accommodation provided by the Government in this city previous to the year 1891, as compared with the other cities of the Province; Mr. Turner had promised that the Government would do the very best they could in the matter.¹⁰⁵

With Turner's assistance, City Council succeeded in getting the Province to make an appropriation of \$15,000 in 1895 for the construction of Central School in Nanaimo.¹⁰⁶ Within the year, Nanaimo City Council sought further assistance

¹⁰³ NCA, CCN, CM, 22 February 1892.

¹⁰⁴ NCA, CCN, CM, 14 February 1892.

¹⁰⁵ NCA, CCN, CM, 26 February 1894; see also a further reference to this visit, 15 January 1895.

¹⁰⁶ Council minutes show that the provincial government paid the appropriation in two installments. NCA, CCN, CM, 3 and 8 July 1895. Ratepayers rejected a \$10,000 loan by-law for the construction of Central School. NCA, CCN, CM, 22 April 1895.

from the Province to complete the school.¹⁰⁷ Council obtained an additional appropriation chiefly because James McGregor, the sitting member, lobbied effectively for the extra funds to finish the building.¹⁰⁸

Nanaimo City Council raised the money to build three schools in five years. Costs for the two Ward Schools were met by a municipal school erection loan by-law. Costs for Central School were financed by special appropriations from the provincial legislature for school construction. These appropriations were secured through intense, persistent, and effective municipal lobbying.¹⁰⁹

3.5 Mapping 'Central-Local' Relations

The response in Nanaimo to the provincial government's attempts in the early 1890s to transfer the costs of schooling to City Councils provides a rich ground for historical interpretation. Viewed in the context of the debate about central-local school relations outlined at the beginning of the chapter, events in Nanaimo support elements of the arguments of R. D. Gidney, D. A. Lawr, and W. P. J. Millar, as well as those of Bruce Curtis.

¹⁰⁷ NCA, CCN, CL, 27 February 1896, S. Gough to Edward Quennell. NCA, CCN, CL, 27 February 1896, S. Gough to William McGregor, Chairman of the Public School Trustee Board.

¹⁰⁸ SD68, NBST, BM, 9 May 1896.

¹⁰⁹ Central School cost \$18,539. NCA, NBST, BL page 250 following 4 February 1898.

Developments in the financing of schooling in Nanaimo in the final decade of the nineteenth century were consistent with the argument developed by R. D. Gidney, D. A. Lawr, and W. P. J. Millar that local communities had the power to protect themselves. The British Columbia government exercised its constitutional right to legislate on educational and municipal affairs when it transferred the responsibility for funding school operating costs to the cities. Nanaimo City Council, the MMLPA, and the Free Press resisted that initiative. In 1901, Alexander Robinson, the Provincial Superintendent of Education, publicly acknowledged the effectiveness of the opposition. In the Annual Report of Public Schools for that year, he wrote:

When the yearly amount of the per capita grant received for any division in our city schools exceeds the yearly salary of the teacher employed - when, in other words, certain school-rooms become a source of revenue to the City Council - the subject calls for prompt action on the part of the Government of the Province. Take, for example, the case of the public schools of Nanaimo ... after paying the salaries of all the teachers employed, the City Council of Nanaimo will have on hand a surplus of \$1,410.45 from the per capita grant alone.¹¹⁰

According to the Superintendent of Education, Nanaimo City Council was actually making money from the per-capita grant! Resistance from Nanaimo and the other cities had forced the province to transfer very significant revenues to the cities to defray their school spending.

Gidney, Lawr, and Millar rightly emphasize the power of local educational interests. Their argument that provincial politicians were critically important in

¹¹⁰ BC, SE, Thirtieth ARPS, 1900-01, 280.

securing local interests is sustained by the experience of Nanaimo. City Council lobbied five provincial politicians in its pursuit of civic self-interest. The appeal to George Thomson and Andrew Haslam in January 1890 regarding the repeal of the charge for teachers' salaries resulting from the 1888 School Act was not successful. Haslam, recently elected in a by-election, was an Independent. Thomson was a supporter of the Robson administration. Neither was able to obtain concessions for the city in spite of Thomson's support of the government or the fact that a provincial election was imminent. In the 1890 election, the two Nanaimo district seats and the Nanaimo City seat returned members who opposed the government. It is not surprising that when the Aldermen appealed to Thomas Keith in February 1892 for assistance in obtaining a special appropriation for school construction in Nanaimo, Keith as a member of the opposition was unable to help. In February 1894, Council tried again. Mayor and School Trustee Edward Quennell, accompanied by Alderman and School Trustee Thomas Dobeson, travelled to Victoria to meet with the provincial Finance Minister, John Turner. He promised to help the city secure a special appropriation. The meeting of Quennell and Dobeson with Turner occurred at a time when the three sitting members from Nanaimo were all in opposition to the government and just prior to the provincial election of 1894. Turner and the city supported each other.¹¹¹ In the 1894 election, the Nanaimo City seat went to James McGregor, a government supporter, and Nanaimo duly received \$15,000 for school construction. In 1896, the City once again sought a special appropriation for the completion of Central School. According to the School Board minutes, James McGregor was successful in

¹¹¹ John Turner was not reluctant to spend money. During the years he was Minister of Finance (1877-95) the provincial deficit grew from \$172,753 to \$1,010,899. Jackman, Portraits of the Premiers, 103.

his efforts to secure the needed funds. Members of the provincial legislature John Turner and James MacGregor made significant contributions to the achievement of City Council's objective of special appropriations for school construction. City Council used provincial politicians as its first line of attack, and if that failed, it used the same approach again.

Bruce Curtis has recognized an important reality when he argues that uncertainty and grey areas created tactical space and room for manoeuvre. However, he has not considered the extent to which the local authorities could use such spaces to achieve their own ends. Cultural theorists devote considerable attention to such spaces which they denote as 'the interstices of power structures.'¹¹² Nanaimo Aldermen lived with three sequential legislative initiatives in as many years while at the same time managing an experimental and rapidly changing system of financing school operating and construction costs. In the confusion, they had grey areas to explore.

City Council creatively manipulated the possibilities inherent in the 'tactical space' of special appropriations. Others obviously followed suit. A quarter century later in 1925, in a major review of the school system, J. H. Putman and G. M. Weir cast a critical eye on the practice of using provincial general revenue for school construction grants. They recommended that municipalities be forced to issue debentures for capital expenditures on

¹¹² See for example Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, 'Between Metropole and Colony,' in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 18.

schools.¹¹³ That was precisely what Nanaimo City Council avoided doing when it built Central School with special grants. Special appropriations presented important possibilities for City Council to minimize what it perceived as the negative impact of provincial educational initiatives.

Historians Allan Greer and Ian Radforth define state formation as 'a cultural phenomenon ... by which authority became progressively pervasive and efficacious in society.'¹¹⁴ Bruce Curtis ties state formation to the construction of educational systems. Curtis conceives of the state as the central educational authority, but Greer and Radforth consider municipal institutions as part of the state.¹¹⁵ Their broader conceptualization facilitates an interpretation of the restructuring of school financing in British Columbia in the 1890s as an important step in state formation.

The school legislation of the early 1890s increased the functions of both local and central authorities. The multiplication of increasingly complicated relationships expanded the role and authority of both municipal and provincial governments. Nanaimo's City Council found itself involved in a whole range of new relationships as a result of suddenly becoming part of the educational system. Council interacted with the Education Office, the Auditor General, the Attorney

¹¹³ British Columbia, Education Survey Committee, Survey of the School System, J. H. Putman and G. M. Weir (Victoria: King's Printer, 1925), 298

¹¹⁴ Allan Greer and Ian Radforth, 'Introduction,' in Allan Greer and Ian Radforth, eds., Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 10.

¹¹⁵ Greer and Radforth, 'Introduction,' 4.

General, the Department of Land and Works, the local School Trustees, and municipal ratepayers. These relationships were characterized by increased bureaucratic complexity. Transfer of the per-capita grant required a quarterly exchange of letters between the Superintendent of Education and the city clerk.¹¹⁶ Each change in the system had ramifications. For example, because of the per-capita grant, City Council suddenly found it had a vested interest in children actually attending school. In British Columbia in the 1890s, the province restructured school finance. Nanaimo City Council contested and renegotiated the provincial initiatives in order to protect the municipal property taxes which were the basis of the city's development plans. The interaction of the province and the city over educational finance resulted in an expanded and more complex state. Both the city and the province gained new functions and powers as a result. Developments in urban school finance enhanced emerging municipal powers at the end of the century. Changes in school finance contributed to the process of state formation in late-nineteenth-century British Columbia.

In the debate over school finance which engulfed Nanaimo civic leaders in the 1890s, the position of the School Board was significant. The Board did not challenge, but rather worked to implement, central initiatives. Normally School Boards are conceptualized as 'local' but the position of the Nanaimo Board in 1891-92 was clearly mutable. Equally mutable was the position of members of the provincial legislature such as Robert Beaven, leader of the opposition and Mayor of Victoria who opposed the government's efforts to shift the cost of school finance

¹¹⁶ NCA, CCN, CL, 29 September and 3 October 1893, S. Gough to S. D. Pope, Superintendent of Education.

to City Councils; John Turner, the cabinet minister who acted in the interests of Nanaimo City Council and civic property owners by obtaining a special appropriation for the construction of Central School; and James McGregor, the member for Nanaimo City who secured a second appropriation to complete Central School. The longstanding centralist interpretation of nineteenth-century British Columbia education history underestimates the complexity of financing public schooling in Nanaimo.

The idea of a central authority imposing its will on a local community along a single axis of communication is not adequate to represent the restructuring of city school finance in British Columbia in the 1890s. First, neither 'Victoria' nor 'Nanaimo' functioned as homogenous entities. Second, there were multiple routes of communication between Nanaimo City Council and individual provincial politicians and a number of government departments. In addition, the Nanaimo School Board had its own communication link with the Education Office. Third, the back flow of resistance from City Council, the MMLPA, and the Free Press to the province's financial initiatives resulted in substantial modifications to centrally constructed school and tax legislation. The problem with the centralist version of British Columbia's education history is that it is premised on a binary opposition which cannot stand up to scrutiny. 'Central' and 'local' were never stable categories, multiple axes of communications existed, and 'local' resistance was as important as 'central' initiatives in determining the system of school finance. Production of the physical space of public schooling, the subject of the next chapter, poses further challenges to the centralist interpretation of nineteenth-century British Columbia's school history and to the applicability of the binary model on which that interpretation rests.

Chapter Four: Making School Space

During the 1890s, in the face of student population growth intensified by increased attendance, providing the physical space of schooling in British Columbia's cities was an important and demanding undertaking shouldered entirely by the School Boards. The Education Office in Victoria did not direct or regulate the building, insuring, maintaining, repairing, or furnishing of city schools. These critical functions in the production of public schooling were decentralized and, therefore, cannot be accommodated in the centralist interpretation of British Columbia education history.

Nanaimo School Trustees developed the expertise they needed to make school space through trial and error. They accomplished much, but their efforts were often fractured, fragmented, and circular. Little sense of what was involved in creating physical space can be obtained from the theoretically comprehensive Superintendent of Education's Annual Reports of Public Schools. Rather, the minutes and letterbooks generated by the Board itself are essential to reconstructing this essential work. The Trustees functioned as hands-on managers with only a secretary to provide bureaucratic support. They turned for advice, not to the central Education Office, but laterally to their colleagues in other cities. The School Board consciously supported the local economy in awarding contracts. At the same time, the Trustees used their purchasing power to situate Nanaimo in the nexus of the national and continental corporate economy. Both strategies contributed to the construction of the community's civic identity. In the schools they built, the Trustees attempted to create material manifestations of Nanaimo as a modern city.

4.1 'Divisions' and 'Schools'

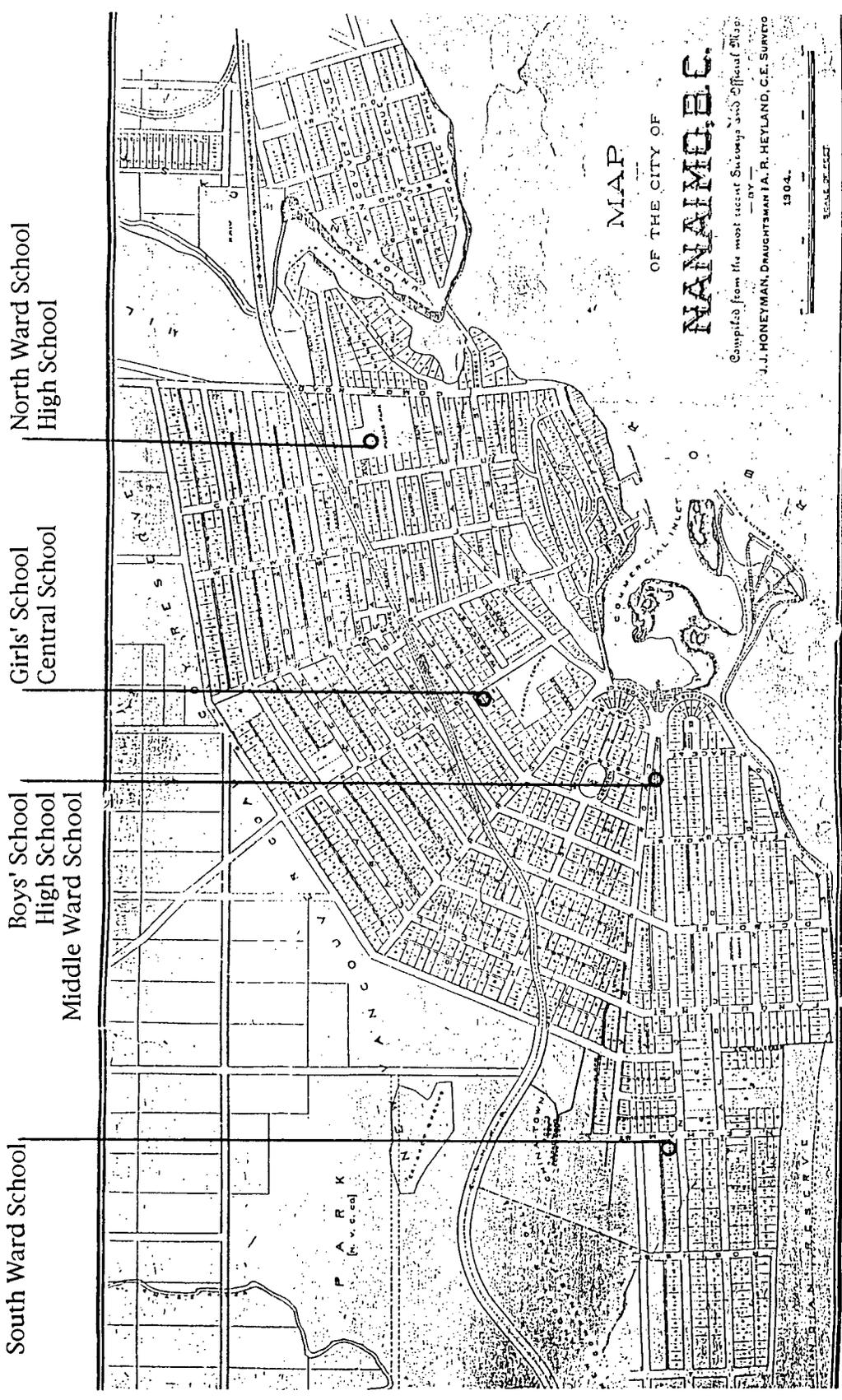
Divisions were a fundamental part of the educational discourse of late-nineteenth-century British Columbia. When the Annual Report of Public Schools stated that there were ten divisions at Central School in Nanaimo in 1897, it meant there were ten classes in the school. What is confusing is that the relationship between divisions and grades, which is examined in Chapter Six, changed over the course of the decade. For the purposes of the discussion here it is sufficient to note that at Central School the most junior students were in the tenth division and the most senior in the first division. This was the reverse of the practise today when students move through schools from the first to the twelfth grades. Nanaimo's Ward Schools housed junior students who, in time, would move on to Central School.

The word 'school' is also problematic, but for rather different reasons. While it appears to be the sort of term which is immediately knowable, in Nanaimo in the 1890s, the meaning of the word 'school' depended on its context. Sometimes a school was a group of students and teachers. Sometimes it was a building. Reconstructing the chronology of events in the development of Nanaimo schools in the 1890s is difficult, in large part because of the unstable meaning of 'school.' Several times in the 1890s, Nanaimo schools occupied buildings which did not carry the school name. From July 1891 to January 1893, North and South Ward Schools existed and did not exist. That is to say, there were students and teachers who were considered to constitute those schools, but they did not occupy buildings with those names. Similarly, from January to April 1896 Central School

teachers and students were located in several different places during the construction of the Central School building. Nanaimo's High School was housed sequentially in the Boys' School, the Presbyterian Church, City Council chambers, the High School, Middle Ward School, and North Ward School.

There is a second dimension to the difficulty of the term 'school.' Over the decade of the 1890s, some of the school buildings in Nanaimo had multiple names as indicated on Map 4.1. Take, for example, the Boys' School. The school building which was built in 1885-86 was known as the Boys' School, although from 1886 until July 1891 the High School was located there as well. From July 1891 to January 1893, the building housed South Ward School in addition to three-quarters of the Boys' School students. The building was vacated in April 1896 when the students moved to the new Central School. In September 1896, the High School moved into the building which was then briefly known as the High School. In January 1900, the building was renamed again when the Trustees opened the new Middle Ward School for junior students there. Over the course of a decade, one Nanaimo school building had three different names and housed the whole or part of five different schools. Schools without buildings, school buildings with one name housing schools with a different name, and school buildings changing names, combined to create a certain linguistic confusion. Figure 4.1 shows chronologically the various locations of Nanaimo schools in the 1890s.

The 1890s saw a significant increase in the number of students in the Nanaimo public school system as shown in Table 4.1. The enrolled student population more than doubled as did the number of teachers. Equally



Map 4.1 Nanaimo, B.C., 1904

Source: Nanaimo Community Archives

Figure 4.1

Nanaimo schools chronology: divisions and locations, 1887-1901

Aug. 1887	Aug. 1890	Aug. 1891	Oct. 1892	Jan. 1893	Jul. 1893	Aug. 1895	Apr. 1896	Apr. 1897	Oct. 1898	Jan. 1899	Jan. 1900	Mar. 1900	Feb. 1901
SOUTH WARD SCHOOL													
1		1-2		1-2		1-2		1		1-2		1-2	
at Boys' School													
NORTH WARD SCHOOL													
1		1-2		1-2		1-2		1		1-2		1-2	
at Methodist Church													
4		4		4		4		4		4		4	
BOYS' SCHOOL													
1-3		1-3		1-3		1-3		1-4		1-4		1-4	
GIRLS' SCHOOL													
1-3		1-4		1-4		1-4		1-4		1-4		1-4	
at Coop. Building, City Hall, Fire Hall													
1-8		1-10		1-10		1-10		1-10		1-10		1-10	
CENTRAL SCHOOL (built on site of Girls' School)													
MIDDLE WARD SCHOOL													
1		1		1-3		1-3		1-3		1-3		1-3	
(at former Boys' School)													
HIGH SCHOOL at													
Boys' School		Presbyterian Church		City Hall		North Ward School		former Boys' School		North Ward		North Ward	
1		1		1		1		1		1		1	
1-2		1-2		1-2		1-2		1-2		1-2		1-2	

Sources: School District 68, Nanaimo Board of School Trustees [NBST], Minutes, July 1891 - June 1901; Nanaimo Community Archives [NCA], NBST Letterbook, 4 March 1893 - 25 October 1901; NCA, extant Nanaimo school registers, 1891-1901; NCA, Corporation of the City of Nanaimo, Council Minutes, July 1891 - June 1901; British Columbia, Superintendent of Education, Annual Reports of the Public Schools, Seventeenth Annual Report 1887-1888/1888-1889 to Thirty-First Report 1901-1902

Table 4.1

Growth of the Nanaimo public school system 1890-1900: numbers of teachers, numbers of enrolled students, average daily attendance (ADA), and average daily attendance as a percent of enrolled students

<u>Year</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>ADA</u>	<u>ADA as % of Enrollment</u>
1890	7	576	301.38	52 %
1891	8	682	382.52	56 %
1892	11	779	494.52	63 %
1893	13	793	491.73	62 %
1894	13	895	592.45	66 %
1895	13	948	641.10	68 %
1896	13	960	680.63	71 %
1897	13	939	683.72	73 %
1898	15	1,036	721.06	70 %
1899	15	1,148	814.03	71 %
1900	17	1,265	885.70	71 %

Sources: British Columbia, Superintendent of Education, Annual Reports of the Public Schools, Nineteenth Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1889-1890 to the Thirtieth Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1900-1901

importantly, the average daily attendance increased from just over 50 to approximately 70 percent of the enrolled students. This meant that the number of students in Nanaimo classrooms on a daily basis almost tripled during the decade. Although the absolute numbers are small by today's standards, the relative increase in the number of students kept the Trustees scrambling throughout the 1890s to provide school space.

4.2 Development of Nanaimo Schools in the 1890s

In the early 1890s, there were two elementary schools in Nanaimo, the Boys' School, originally built in 1873 then rebuilt at a new location in 1885-86, and the Girls' School which dated from 1878-79.¹ The High School, which had opened in 1886, occupied a room in the Boys' School. The Trustees appointed in 1891 found the school buildings in serious disrepair and incapable of accommodating the number of children in the community. Although school attendance for six months of the year had been compulsory for children age seven to twelve since 1876, only in 1891 did the government legally require Trustees to provide school accommodation for all school-age children within their jurisdiction.² Meeting for the first time on July 6, 1891, Nanaimo's new School Board found itself facing substantial problems revolving around the need to expand the space of the public schools. Map 4.1, Figure 4.1, and Table 6.1 (in chapter 6) are all helpful in understanding the number and location of divisions

¹ Patricia M. Johnson, John G. Parker, and Gino A. Sedola, Nanaimo: Scenes from the Past (Nanaimo: Nanaimo & District Museum Society, 1966), 49.

² British Columbia, Legislative Assembly [BC, LA], Consolidated Public School Act, SBC 1876, chap. 2, sec. 38; BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1891, chap. 40, sec. 33.

and schools which the following paragraphs outline.

The Trustees of 1891-92 built two elementary schools, North Ward and South Ward, to act as feeders for the Boys' and Girls' Schools. The Ward Schools began to function in September 1891, but because the new school buildings were not ready, the Trustees housed the classes in temporary premises for the intervening eighteen months. Population growth had exceeded the rate of construction and Nanaimo experienced a building shortage throughout the 1890s. With empty space at a premium the Trustees were fortunate to find two vacant buildings to rent -- the old Presbyterian Church and the old Methodist Church.³

The High School class went to the Presbyterian Church. The Boys' School housed its own first, second and third divisions, as well as South Ward School. At the old Methodist Church, the Trustees located the fourth division of the Boys' School and North Ward School. At the Girls' School the four divisions remained in their usual place. Thus for eighteen months, Trustees, teachers, and students coped with makeshift arrangements.⁴ During that time, the principals complained that overcrowding had reached the point where all the seats were taken and there was no more standing room.⁵ In fact, students were actually refused admission to the schools because there was literally no room for them.⁶

³ Both the Methodists and the Presbyterians had recently built new churches to accommodate their growing congregations.

⁴ British Columbia, Superintendent of Education [BC, SE], Twenty-First Annual Report of Public Schools, 1891-92 [ARPS], 177; and School District 68 [SD68], Nanaimo Board of School Trustees [NBST], Board minutes [BM], 24 July 1891.

⁵ SD68, NBST, BM, 8 April 1892.

⁶ SD68, NBST, BM, 13 May 1892.

Since turning students away was illegal, this was a serious situation. The Trustees responded by opening two additional divisions, one at each of the Ward Schools, in October of 1892.

In 1893, a further rearrangement took place. North and South Ward Schools moved into their own buildings in January. At the same time, the High School relocated to the City Council Chambers for several months while the Trustees built an addition for it at the newly completed North Ward School. That done, they reported to the Superintendent of Education that the children of Nanaimo enjoyed 'ample accommodation' in their schools.⁷ The following year, 1894, the secretary of the School Board, Samuel Gough, informed the Education Office that the Boys' School had been 'completely renovated, inside and out and now is in as good condition as at any time since it was built.' However, at the same time, Gough indicated that further space would soon be necessary. 'The number of children attending our schools is increasing, and the Trustees contemplate the erection of a large Central School on the site of the Girls' School. The old building has served its day and cannot be made to do service much longer.'⁸

In August 1895, the Trustees tore down the Girls' School and in its place began to build a new co-educational Central School which would amalgamate the former Girls' and Boys' Schools.⁹ While construction was underway in the fall of

⁷ BC, SE, Twenty-Second ARPS, 1892-93, 525.

⁸ BC, SE, Twenty-Third ARPS, 1893-94, 190.

⁹ The Trustees' decision to adopt co-education was an important one and is

1895, two divisions from the Girls' School went to a building owned by a local cooperative society, a third went to the Fire Hall, and a fourth to City Council chambers.¹⁰ The Trustees were concerned that the surroundings of the Fire Hall was 'hardly suitable' as a school, but they could find no other accommodation.¹¹ The situation became more complicated in January of 1896. At that time, the classes from the Boys' and Girls' Schools were integrated, although Central School was not ready until April 1896 when it opened with eight divisions. A year later, in April 1897, the Trustees moved the senior divisions from North and South Ward Schools to Central School, increasing the total there to ten divisions.

Overcrowding persisted in the later years of the decade. In October 1898, the Trustees added two more divisions -- an eleventh division at Central School and a second division at South Ward School. Three months later, in January 1899, the Trustees moved the eleventh division from Central School to become the second division at North Ward School. The next year, in January 1900, again as a result of student population pressure, the Trustees established Middle Ward School with one division. Middle Ward was housed in the old Boys' School building which was then serving as the High School. In March 1900, the Trustee Board expanded the High School by adding a second division. In spite of the Trustees' efforts to meet the demands for more accommodation, Nanaimo classrooms remained overcrowded. As a result, the Trustees created second and

discussed in Chapter Six.

¹⁰ SD68, NBST, BM, 3 August 1895.

¹¹ Nanaimo Free Press, 5 August 1895, 3. The Trustees might have been even more concerned about the Fire Hall if they had known the new school building would not be ready for occupancy until April 1896.

third divisions at Middle Ward in February 1901. To make room for the new classes the High School classes moved to the North Ward School in March 1901 at which time North Ward School was reduced from two divisions to one.

Through the 1890s the Nanaimo Trustees played catch up in their efforts to house an increasing number of students. They built three new schools, but by the end of the decade the schools were as crowded as they had been ten years earlier. Legislation and practice vested the work and responsibility for the important task of producing the physical space of education with the School Board. In this respect, the provincial education system was decentralized.

4.3 Fragmenting the 'Centre'

To the extent that provision of school space was the business of the School Board, it was a business whose form straddled the boundary between early and corporate capitalism. In the tradition of early industrial capitalists, the School Trustees managed the 'business' directly. The Board secretary constituted the entire bureaucracy and there was no middle management. The spatial relationships in which the Trustees engaged, however, were typical of those of the corporate capitalist era. They were not simply local or regional in nature, but reached across North America. From the perspective of Nanaimo there were multiple 'centres.'

In accordance with the 1891 School Act, Nanaimo's School Board and City Council became the owners of school property. In November 1892, the Board purchased from the New Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company [NVCMLC] the

four lots on which North and South Ward Schools stood.¹² In June 1893, City Council requested the Provincial Secretary to transfer title of the Boys' and Girls' Schools' properties to the City.¹³ The Provincial Secretary's office referred the matter to the Executive Council.¹⁴ It in turn took the question of ownership of school properties in the four city school districts to the Legislative Assembly.¹⁵ As a result, the 1894 Public School Amendment Act conveyed title to school property in the four cities to the City Councils.¹⁶ In 1895, when the Trustees embarked on the construction of Central School, they wanted to buy additional property to enlarge the school grounds. Lacking sufficient funds, they devised the innovative scheme of leasing the adjacent lots with an option to purchase in two years.¹⁷ In June 1898, the provincial government approved a special appropriation of \$2,500 which allowed the Board to purchase the lots.¹⁸

¹² SD68, NBST, BM, 11 November 1892

¹³ NCA, Corporation of the City of Nanaimo [CCN], Council minutes [CM], 12 June 1893.

¹⁴ NCA, CCN, CM, 26 June 1893.

¹⁵ NCA, CCN, CM, 31 July 1893.

¹⁶ BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1894, chap. 46, secs. 8-10.

¹⁷ SD68, NBST, BM, 16 November and 4 December 1895; NCA, NBST, Board letterbook [BL], 26 November 1895, S. Gough to Mr. Bullock, Union B. C.; and NCA, NBST, Board BL, 29 January 1896, S. Gough to Mr Bullock, Cumberland, agreeing to a two year lease with option to purchase lots 19 to 22 adjacent to Central School. The Free Press reported that the same arrangements were made with Thomas O'Connell for additional adjacent lots. Nanaimo Free Press, 5 December 1895, 2. The leases were signed in February 1896. Nanaimo Free Press, 24 February 1896, 1.

¹⁸ SD68, NBST, BM, 4 June 1898. The conveyancing documents were ready for signatures by July. SD68, NBST, BM, 2 July 1898.

As a result of the 1891 School Act, the Trustees acquired the responsibility for insuring the schools they built. They were also required to insure the schools whose ownership the 1894 School Amendment Act had transferred to the City.¹⁹ While they were building Central School in 1895-96, several insurance agents approached the Board offering to provide insurance.²⁰ The Trustees decided to insure the new school for \$10,000, 'the insurance to be fairly divided among the local agents.'²¹ In January 1899, Samuel Gough, the Board secretary, reported that Central School was insured for \$15,000, and the High School and both Ward Schools for \$2,000 each. Trustee William Manson added that 'the Board had divided the insurance of the school property as near as practicable among the different insurance companies doing business in this city.'²² According to the Board Chairman, Edward Quennell, this meant that the fifteen companies licensed in Nanaimo carried about \$1,300 insurance each.²³ For the Trustees, public schooling, in addition to its educative functions, supported the development of the civic economy.

¹⁹ NCA, CCN, CM, 2 April 1894.

²⁰ For example, W. H. Perkins offered a policy through Commercial Union Assurance of London. SD68, NBST, BM, 4 December 1895. W. K. Leighton and G. L. Schedky also offered to provide insurance on the new school. Nanaimo Free Press, 27 January 1896, 2. After the school opened insurance agents continued to solicit the Board. These included Miss Spencer, Nanaimo Free Press, 11 May 1896, 1; E. E. Potts, agent of the British American Insurance Company, Nanaimo Free Press, 15 February 1897, 2; and C. C. McKenzie agent for the Manchester Fire Insurance Company, Nanaimo Free Press, 6 February 1899.

²¹ Nanaimo Free Press, 27 January 1896, 2. See also SD68, NBST, BM, 5 November 1898 and 7 January 1899.

²² Nanaimo Free Press, 16 January 1899, 4.

²³ Nanaimo Free Press, 6 February 1899, 3.

The Trustees, as is evident from the previous chapter and the first section of this chapter, built North and South Ward Schools in 1891-92. Their minutes for 12 March 1892 indicate that they instructed Donald Smith, the Board secretary, to write the Education Office for Ward School plans.²⁴ If that letter was ever sent, it does not survive in the Superintendent's correspondence inwards. In April, the Trustees directed local architect, James Kelly, to 'prepare specifications according to the plan now on the table for a two roomed school house [in the South Ward].'²⁵ In August, The Board turned again to Kelly, asking him to provide them with a sketch of the proposed North Ward School. Two days later, at a special meeting, the Trustees told Kelly to draw up plans according to his sketch and to include a fence and outhouses in the specifications.²⁶ Once completed, the Free Press described the Ward Schools as 'spacious commodious structures, well ventilated and well lighted' with two large classrooms in each school.²⁷ Only four months later, though, construction started again at North Ward to build an additional classroom to house the High School.²⁸ School buildings, it seemed, were never actually finished.

²⁴ SD68, NBST, BM, 12 March 1892.

²⁵ SD68, NBST, BM, 13 April 1892.

²⁶ SD68, NBST, BM, 13 and 15 August 1892.

²⁷ Nanaimo Free Press, 10 January 1893, 4.

²⁸ SD68, NBST, BM, 11 May 1893. The addition cost over \$1,000. BC, SE, Twenty-Second ARPS, 1892-93, 525.

It is not clear whether Kelly designed the Ward schools or worked from plans provided by either the Education Office or the Department of Land and Works. Douglas Franklin and John Fleming, in their study of school architecture in British Columbia, suggest that small schools in Victoria in the 1880s were 'probably contractor-built from standard plans by the Department of Public Works.'²⁹ The Department had prepared its first standard school plan in 1881 and, according to Ivan Saunders in his study of British Columbia school architecture, 'by 1885 this first plan had evolved into a standard printed plan and specification' which was used for rural and some urban schools through the 1890s.³⁰ It is possible that the Nanaimo Trustees obtained Ward School plans from this source, but the external appearances of North and South Ward Schools do not resemble the drawing prepared by the Department of Land and Works.

Whatever the source of the plans, the Trustees did employ a local architect and must have entered into discussions with him about the design and stylistic aspects of the buildings. The Trustees, for example, decided to have towers with bells built on both buildings even though that added \$600 to the overall cost.³¹ Possibly in their entirety, and certainly to a considerable degree, North and South Ward schools were made in Nanaimo without direction from the central Education Office.

²⁹ Douglas Franklin and John Fleming, Early School Architecture in British Columbia: An Architectural History and Inventory of Buildings to 1930 (Victoria: Heritage Conservation Branch, 1980), 83.

³⁰ Ivan J. Saunders, 'A Survey of British Columbia School Architecture to 1930,' Parks Canada, Research Bulletin 225 (November 1984): 4.

³¹ SD68, NBST, BM, 1 September 1892.

In the summer of 1894, when the Board first began to consider building a large two-story school, they sought information on design and architects from the Vancouver and Victoria School Boards.³² These enquires led to solicitations from two Victoria architects.³³ By the following spring, the Trustees had decided to build a brick school which would hold eight divisions. They projected the daunting cost of \$20,000 for the building and \$5,000 for additional land.³⁴ Although \$15,000 of this would be provided as a special appropriation from the provincial government, the remainder would have to come from Nanaimo. When the Trustees and City Council tried to raise the money through a loan by-law, they failed. That the by-law did not succeed was probably a result of the poor coal markets of the the mid-1890s which led the NVCMLC to seek and the Miners' and Mine Labourers' Protective Association to agree to a wage reduction which was not reversed until 1898.³⁵ The failure of the by-law meant that the new school had to be built with the appropriation alone.

³² NCA, NBST, BL, 13 July 1894, S. Gough to A. Williams, Secretary, Public School Trustee Board, Victoria; and 20 July 1894, S. Gough to A. H. B. MacGowan, Hon. Secretary, Vancouver Public Schools, Vancouver.

³³ Samuel Gough acknowledged these letters. NCA, NBST, BL, 30 July 1894, S. Gough to W. Ridgway Wilson, Victoria; and 30 July 1894, S. Gough to A. E. Ewart, Victoria. In May 1895 Gough again wrote Ewart returning his plans and telling him that the Board had chosen a Nanaimo architect for the project. NCA, NBST, BL, 17 May 1895, S. Gough to A. E. Ewart, Victoria.

³⁴ SD68, NBST, BM, 18 March 1895.

³⁵ Lynne Bowen, Three Dollar Dreams (Lantzville, British Columbia: Oolichan Books, 1987), 366-9.

The Trustees drafted specifications for Central School and invited local architects to submit plans in April 1895.³⁶ James Kelly and John J. Honeyman responded. The Board chose Honeyman and asked him to 'prepare the specifications and detailed plans as speedily as possible.'³⁷ The final plans called for a two-story frame building on a basement of stone and brick. There were to be eight large classrooms each with seating for sixty students allowing eighteen square feet for every pupil. In addition, the large attic contained two further rooms which could be developed as classrooms in the future.³⁸ At the last minute, the Trustees decided an electric call bell system should be included in the specifications.³⁹ The architectural plans for Central School, and the criteria on which they were based, were made in Nanaimo.

Once the plans for Central School were completed the Trustees called for tenders. A Vancouver firm, Carter Brothers, wrote to ask if non-local firms could submit tenders.⁴⁰ Samuel Gough, in reply, assured Carter Brothers that outside tenders would be accepted, but he also indicated that when tenders were similar those from local firms would be chosen. Gough stated firmly that 'the competition

³⁶ SD68, NBST, BM, 30 April 1895.

³⁷ SD68, NBST, BM, 11 May 1895. The evidence does not indicate why the Trustees chose John J. Honeyman over James Kelly. One possibility is that the Trustees tended to share contracts among local businessmen as much as possible and Kelly had drawn the plans for North and South Ward Schools. Honeyman was a Glasgow trained architect who had emigrated to Vancouver Island in 1889 to take up sheep farming. NCA, Nanaimo Retired Teachers' Association, Box 1, George Duffell, 'The History of Pauline Haarer Elementary School,' mimeograph, nd.

³⁸ Nanaimo Free Press, 17 May 1895, 1.

³⁹ SD68, NBST, BM, 8 June 1895.

⁴⁰ SD68, NBST, BM, 4 July 1895.

is square and above board, and the Trustees will do the right thing in the matter.⁴¹ The Board initially received forty-seven tenders, five for the entire building and the rest for specific components such as carpentry, plastering, and painting. Because the tenders exceeded the funds available the specifications were revised and new tenders called for.

The Trustees awarded contracts for Central School in July 1895. They also appointed a clerk of the works to oversee the project under the direction of the architect, John J. Honeyman.⁴² The Board then devised a certificate system for paying the contractors. Three Trustees, William McGregor, Thomas Bryant, and R. E. McKechnie, agreed to act as a building committee and the Board arranged to meet fortnightly instead of monthly while construction was underway.⁴³ By September, the foundations were laid and the framework nearly completed.⁴⁴ Presumably, most of the interior work was completed by the end of November when the clerk of the works' appointment ended.⁴⁵ The production of physical space required new and more complex management systems. There were no guidelines for the Trustees in these matters and as they moved through the 1890s they developed their own not inconsequential expertise.

⁴¹ NCA, NBST, BL, 24 June 1895, S. Gough to Messrs Carter Bros., Builders and Contractors, Vancouver.

⁴² SD68, NBST, BM, 13 July 1895.

⁴³ SD68, NBST, BM, 8 June and 3 August 1895. The building committee replaced the Board's usual property committee. Nanaimo Free Press, 27 January 1896, 2.

⁴⁴ Nanaimo Free Press, 9 September 1895, 4.

⁴⁵ SD68, NBST, BM, 4 December 1895.

The Trustees appear to have operated independently in the design and building of the Ward Schools and they certainly did so for Central School. Other than possibly the standard plans for one-room schools discussed above, there is no indication in the records used in this study that the Board had access to any literature on school design and construction as did Boards in provinces such as Nova Scotia.⁴⁶ The Trustees did file notice of their plans, specifications, and contracts with the Department of Land and Works. Approval of these by the Department was necessary for the release of special appropriation monies, but this seems to have been simply pro forma.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the Trustees' discursive focus on ventilation, light, electric bells, desks, maps, outhouses, and fences was very much part of a widespread late-nineteenth discourse on school design.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Trustees in Nova Scotia had available to them a pamphlet written in 1850 by the Superintendent of Education, John William Dawson. It was based on a widely known American treatise on school architecture by Henry Barnard. In 1864, the Nova Scotia Superintendent of Education commissioned W. R. Mulholland to prepare standard plans for distribution. In 1901, the Council of Public Instruction in Nova Scotia issued a new set of plans for rural schools drawn up by the Halifax architect Herbert E. Gates. Robin H. Wyllie, 'The Schoolhouse in Nova Scotia: A Study of Influences on the Evolution of Schoolhouse Design in Nova Scotia, 1850-1930,' Nova Scotia Historical Review 14, 2 (1994): 45, 50, and 55.

⁴⁷ NCA, CCN, CM, 3 June and 8 July 1895. Nanaimo Free Press, 9 March 1896, 2. NCA, NBST, BL, 24 February 1896, S. Gough to W. S. Gore, Deputy Commissioner Land and Works, Victoria.

⁴⁸ On the recurring discussion of these aspects of school design see, Wyllie, 'The Schoolhouse in Nova Scotia,' 41-60; William W. Cutler, III, 'Cathedral of Culture: The Schoolhouse in American Educational Thought and Practice since 1820,' History of Education Quarterly 29, 1 (Spring 1989): 1-40; and Jean and Robert McClintock, 'Architecture and Pedagogy,' in Jean and Robert McClintock, eds., Henry Barnard's School Architecture (New York: T. C. Press, 1848, 1970), 1-28.

The nineteenth-century school playground, Bruce Curtis has argued, 'like interrogation in the gallery, like written answers to test questions, was an examination device.'⁴⁹ Curtis delineates the ways in which the playground was integral to the inculcation of self-governance in students which he considers was the purpose of schooling.

In addition to its functions of balancing physical and moral development, of strengthening the body, of making obedience visible and pleasant to students, or protecting students from their families and friends, and providing for defecation and urination, the playground was also extremely important in nineteenth-century educational theory as a terrain of scrutiny and examination.⁵⁰

Curtis devotes considerable attention to the importance of the circular or rotary swing which served the several purposes of providing a safety valve for excess energy, strengthening boys' arms as they hung from it, and giving students the opportunity to learn the virtue of taking turns. Central School in Nanaimo had such a swing called a giant stride. It was presented to the school by Samuel Robins on behalf of the New Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company. In making this gift, Robins may have been reflecting, consciously or unconsciously, nineteenth-century educational theory. Perhaps, given the colonial context of Nanaimo, he was using the giant stride as a cultural marker. The historical geographer, Cole Harris, suggests that this was an important part of the resettlement of British Columbia. Harris observes that,

⁴⁹ Bruce Curtis, 'The Playground in Nineteenth-Century Ontario: Theory and Practice,' Material History Bulletin 22 (Fall 1985): 27.

⁵⁰ Curtis, 'The Playground,' 26.

to settle down in another place, among different people and different ways, was constantly to be reminded of one's own difference. What was implicit had been made explicit. People discovered their own ethnicity. When, at the same time, there was a great deal of cultural loss, as invariably there was, this explicit identification focused on a declining number of markers. Increasingly, for those inside an expatriate culture, these markers became symbols of where one had come from and who one was.⁵¹

Rotary swings formed part of the nineteenth-century British school landscape. In Nanaimo, for those who could read it, Central School's giant stride encoded a metropolitan identity.

Ventilation was a subject of particular concern to the Trustees. The Free Press approvingly described the plans for Central School as follows.

The heating and ventilation of the building are features that have been given closest attention. By a simple, yet thorough system, fresh cold air, introduced at the basement, will supply the radiators and thence ascend by means of tin-piping to the various rooms. Vitiated air will escape at the floor levels in each room, and be conveyed by means of brick aspirating shafts through the roof of the building ... by which means the whole atmosphere in every room is changed at least four times per hour.⁵²

The Board's enquiries to its counterparts in Vancouver and Victoria, prior to constructing Central School, had elicited the information that the 'Smead-Dowd system of ventilation and warming had proved most satisfactory.'⁵³ This system,

⁵¹ Cole Harris, The Resettlement of British Columbia: Essays on Colonialism and Geographical Change (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997), 265-6.

⁵² Nanaimo Free Press, 17 May 1895, 1.

⁵³ SD68, NBST, BM, 6 August 1894.

manufactured in Toronto, was used in schools across Canada.⁵⁴

With very limited funds at their disposal, the Trustees decided they could not afford to include a heating system when the contracts for Central School were awarded in July 1895. By November, though, they directed the building committee to further investigate heating systems.⁵⁵ Information provided by Leek & Co of Vancouver led the Trustees to seek further specifics on the difference between pin and coil radiators. To this end they invited J. W. Leek to attend their next Board meeting.⁵⁶ As a result, in December 1895, the Trustees awarded Leek & Co a \$2,000 contract to heat the first floor and corridors of the new building.⁵⁷ The acquisition of a modern central-heating system secured Nanaimo's new Central School a place among the province's foremost urban schools, compensating to some degree for the fact that the Trustees could not afford the brick exterior they desired.

The construction of Central School remained a work-in-progress. There were ongoing decisions and changes, some caused by the shortage of money, some by unforeseen problems, and some by changing plans for the number of classes to

⁵⁴ Wyllie, 'The Schoolhouse in Nova Scotia,' 55.

⁵⁵ SD68, NBST, BM, 16 November 1895. NCA, NBST, BL, 16 November 1895, S. Gough to Messrs Leek & Co, Vancouver asking how much of a steam heating system the Board could purchase for \$2,000.

⁵⁶ SD68, NBST, BM, 26 November 1895 and NCA, NBST, BL, 26 November 1895, S. Gough to Messrs Leek & Co.

⁵⁷ SD68, NBST, BM, 4 December 1895. Since the heating system the Trustees purchased was not manufactured in Vancouver but was shipped to Leek & Co by rail, it is possible that it was the Smead-Dowd system from Toronto. Nanaimo Free Press, 27 January 1896, 2.

be housed at Central School. Lack of money meant that the Trustees had to postpone a fence around the grounds, building only that portion between the girls' and boys' playgrounds.⁵⁸ A \$3,000 appropriation by the government to complete the building resulted in the installation of the remainder of the heating system months after the original installation had been finished.⁵⁹ Typical examples of unanticipated problems were the need to seal the bricks in the air shafts to prevent them from scaling and the necessity of installing an exterior fire escape.⁶⁰ In May 1886, a month after the students had moved into Central School the Board decided to finish the attic, a project which took until October.⁶¹ No sooner did architect John J. Honeyman declare the building completed than it became apparent that doors had to be installed on the stairs to the basement.⁶² And so it went on. By the new century, Central School began to require major repairs such as a new roof and modifications to the cement work which sealed the bricks in the air ducts.⁶³ As was the case at the Ward Schools, construction, renovation, and maintenance at Central School intersected in an on-going process.

⁵⁸ Nanaimo Free Press, 9 March 1896, 2.

⁵⁹ SD68, NBST, BM, 18 April 1896.

⁶⁰ Nanaimo Free Press, 23 March 1896, 1; 9 June 1896, 4; and 13 July 1896, 3. SD68, NBST, BM, 23 May and 12 September 1896 and 23 January 1897. The fire escape was in place in early March 1897. Nanaimo Free Press, 8 March 1897, 1.

⁶¹ SD68, NBST, BM, 9 May and 10 October 1896.

⁶² SD68, NBST, BM, 12 December and 26 December 1896. John J. Honeyman reported the completion of the basement doors in March 1897. SD68, NBST, BM, 6 March 1896.

⁶³ SD68, NBST, BM, 2 June and 1 September 1900.

As student numbers continued to grow in the late 1890s, the Trustees were forced to reopen classrooms at the Boys' School and the Ward Schools. All but one room in each of these schools had been closed in 1897 when most of the classes moved to Central School. As early as 1898, William McGregor, the Board Chairman, reported to the Trustees that 'attendance had so materially increased that immediate action was an imperative necessity.'⁶⁴ To refurbish classrooms at the Ward Schools, the Trustees purchased furniture and desks, repaired blackboards, and fixed the outhouse.⁶⁵ Several rooms came back into service over the next few years, and it was always the responsibility of the Board's building committee to prepare the space.⁶⁶ Every decision about the number of classes had physical ramifications.

The Trustees were constantly engaged in repairing and improving the schools. Executing repairs was the particular responsibility of the property or building committee, but the Board as a whole decided what would be done.⁶⁷ It arranged to have water connected to North Ward School in April 1893.⁶⁸ The following month, the fence at the Girls' School required rebuilding.⁶⁹ Two months later, the Trustees contracted for new steps for the Girls' School.⁷⁰ Early in 1894,

⁶⁴ Nanaimo Free Press, 3 October 1898, 3.

⁶⁵ SD68, NBST, BM, 1, 6, 8, 22 October, 5 November and 28 December 1898. Nanaimo Free Press, 7 November 1898, 4.

⁶⁶ SD68, NBST, BM, 10 February 1900, and 2 February and 2 March 1901.

⁶⁷ See for example, SD68, NBST, BM, 8 July 1894.

⁶⁸ SD68, NBST, BM, 6 April 1893.

⁶⁹ SD68, NBST, BM, 1 May 1893.

⁷⁰ SD68, NBST, BM, 31 July 1893.

they built an additional water closet at North Ward School for the girls attending the High School.⁷¹ That summer the Board renovated the Boys School and repainted it.⁷² A letter to the editor of the Free Press complaining that windows at the Girls' School had been broken for some weeks suggests, however, that at times the Trustees were not as diligent about repairs as they needed to be.⁷³ In 1895, the Board discussed a new fence for the Boys' School. Foundry owner Thomas Dobeson advised his fellow Trustees that cast-iron would not be strong enough to withstand the assaults of the boys, for that heavy wrought-iron would be needed.⁷⁴ The Board repaired the roof and gutters at the High School and fixed the blackboards at the Ward Schools in the summer of 1897.⁷⁵ In 1899, the Trustees arranged the clearing of the additional lots purchased for playgrounds at Central School.⁷⁶ At the turn of the century the Trustees reported to the

⁷¹ SD68, NBST, BM, 5 February 1894.

⁷² BC, SE, Twenty-Third ARPS, 1893-94, 190; and SD68, NBST, BM, 6 August 1894.

⁷³ Nanaimo Free Press, 19 November 1894, 2. The Trustees did repair the window as evidenced by the invoice they paid for window glass. SD68, NBST, BM, 12 January 1895. Broken windows continued to be a problem and in May 1896 the Trustees turned to prevention, posting reward notices for information leading to conviction of anyone found guilty of damaging school property. Nanaimo Free Press, 11 May 1896, 1. The Board also decided to cover the basement windows at Central School with wire netting. NCA, NBST, BL, 22 December 1896, S. Gough to Prior & Co, Victoria, asking prices for wire netting; and NCA, NBST, BL, 12 February 1897, S. Gough to Prior & Co, Victoria ordering wire netting. In spite of these precautions, windows continued to be broken. Nanaimo Free Press, 8 March 1897, 2.

⁷⁴ Nanaimo Free Press, 5 August 1895, 3.

⁷⁵ Nanaimo Free Press, 5 July 1897, 3; and 7 September 1897, 1.

⁷⁶ SD68, NBST, BM, 5 August 1899.

Superintendent of Education their intention to 'make quite extensive repairs to the various schools, the expense of which is found from year to year to be a growing burden.'⁷⁷ Not only were monetary costs increasingly a problem, but so were the demands on the Trustees' time.

Appointing, paying, and supervising school caretakers regularly occupied the Board's attention. When a janitor did not do an adequate job, the school principal referred the matter to the Board.⁷⁸ The Board, in turn, asked its secretary to deal with the problem.⁷⁹ In 1894, The Trustees directed Samuel Gough, their secretary, to make up rules for the guidance of the various caretakers so that they might better perform their duties.⁸⁰ A year later a committee of Trustees prepared new guidelines which were discussed and accepted by the Board.⁸¹ Throughout the 1890s, the Board always employed four caretakers at a time as well as a scavenger to remove waste. Until the advent of Central School the caretakers were women the Trustees felt needed the income.⁸² When the Fire Department asked the Board to consider employing a woman in need of assistance, it delegated one of the Trustees to speak to the caretaker at North Ward. She reportedly said that since her husband was now working 'she was quite willing to give up the position to any other person who may be in more

⁷⁷ BC, SE, Thirtieth ARPS, 1900-01, 270.

⁷⁸ See for example, SD68, NBST, BM, 12 September 1892.

⁷⁹ SD68, NBST, BM, 14 October 1892.

⁸⁰ SD68, NBST, BM, 10 August 1894.

⁸¹ Nanaimo Free Press, 5 August 1895, 3.

⁸² Nanaimo Free Press, 27 January 1896, 2.

need.⁸³ A change in caretakers duly occurred.⁸⁴ The caretaker for Central School was responsible for the boiler which served the new heating system and was also supposed to act as attendance officer for the city schools. The advertised salary for the position was \$50 a month, a sum higher than some of the teachers' salaries.⁸⁵ Needless to say the position was hotly contested and the Board received thirty-three applications, all from men.⁸⁶ Technology, in the form of the boiler, restricted employment opportunities for women at the same time it created an opportunity for a man. The self-help tradition which was so much a part of the Trustees' experience, and clearly evident in their caretaker hiring practices in the early part of the decade, gave way to the perceived need to turn to male expertise in the face of new corporate products such as central heating boilers.

The School Board secretary was the purchasing agent responsible for acquiring the many supplies and services necessary to the functioning of the schools. Money was always a major consideration and the Board authorized

⁸³ SD68, NBST, BM, 7 August 1897.

⁸⁴ NCA, NBST, BL, 9 September 1897, S. Gough to Mrs, J. Pearce, and S. Gough to Mrs. Mary Peacock. From November 1897 to December 1900 caretakers had to supply their own equipment. Before and after that period the Trustees supplied the necessary brushes, etc. Nanaimo Free Press 11 December 1900, 4.

⁸⁵ Nanaimo Free Press, 24 February 1896, 1. When the senior divisions at the Ward School moved to Central School, the Trustees increased J. B. Mercer's salary to \$60 a month. At the same time, the Trustees reduced the salaries of the women caretakers at the Ward Schools from \$10 to \$8.50 a month. Nanaimo Free Press, 15 February 1897, 2; NCA, NBST, BL, 22 February 1897, S. Gough to Mrs. J. Pearce, caretaker, North Ward School and S. Gough to Mrs M. E. Irving, caretaker, South Ward School.

⁸⁶ Nanaimo Free Press, 9 March 1896, 2. Once appointed, the Central School caretaker, J. B. Mercer, did not routinely act as an attendance officer. Nanaimo Free Press, 7 March 1898, 3.

Samuel Gough 'to procure necessary supplies for the Schools at the best possible advantage as regards price.'⁸⁷ Stoves had to be bought, cleaned, and repaired, and chimneys fixed. Coal had to be purchased and hauled, and wood kindling made available. Water had to be paid for and scavenging arranged. Windows had to be cleaned and glazed. Furniture had to be acquired and repaired. Chalk, brushes, brooms, inkwells, thermometers, clocks, and even a drum had to be obtained.⁸⁸ Walls needed replastering, kalsomining, and painting.⁸⁹ While Samuel Gough did as much of the Board's business locally as he could, he also bought from suppliers in the province's other cities and beyond.

The School Board obtained a variety of its supplies locally. For example, John Hilbert, who manufactured furniture, provided some necessary tables and chairs as did Andrew Haslam.⁹⁰ Although the Trustees did not often purchase maps locally, they obtained several from a Nanaimo stationer in 1900.⁹¹ Even when orders were placed locally by the Trustees, however, the actual product might come from Toronto. That was the case with blackboard cloth ordered from

⁸⁷ SD68, NBST, BM, 6 March 1893.

⁸⁸ SD68, NBST, BM, 6 April, 1 May, 12 June, and 4 and 26 December 1893; 4 April, 10 May, and 3 August 1895; and 12 December 1896. NCA, NBST, BL, 7 March 1895, S. Gough to Henry Dawson, Nanaimo. SD68, NBST, BM, 1 May and 5 June 1897. Nanaimo Free Press, 8 November 1897, 2. NCA, NBST, BL, 7 and 21 June 1897, S. Gough to Thompson Stationary, Vancouver. SD68, NBST, BM, 4 March, 6 May, and 2 September 1899; Nanaimo Free Press, 7 August 1889, 2.

⁸⁹ SD68, NBST, BM, 3 June 1899; and Nanaimo Free Press, 11 December 1900. Kalsomining was a method of fumigating. Nanaimo Free Press, 7 January 1901, 2.

⁹⁰ SD68, NBST, BM, 6 April 1893 and 17 November 1894.

⁹¹ SD68, NBST, BM, 3 November 1900

Pimbury & Co, a Nanaimo pharmacy and stationers.⁹² Issues of price and availability were important in the placement of orders. In one instance, Gough described to the Board how he had purchased goods from New York only to discover he could have obtained them in Nanaimo for the same price.⁹³

The Trustees dealt with many firms outside Nanaimo to provide desks for the city schools. School desks were an innovation in Nanaimo in the 1890s replacing benches. When the Ward Schools were built the desks were ordered from a company that specialized in producing them. Because they were shipped to Nanaimo a month late the opening of the schools was delayed until January 1893.⁹⁴ To furnish Central School the Trustees sought information from the School Boards in New Westminster and Victoria about their suppliers for seats and desks.⁹⁵ Samuel Gough also wrote to companies in Vancouver and Spokane for price lists.⁹⁶ The Board eventually settled on Robertson & Co in Vancouver as their supplier.⁹⁷ Two years later, the Board purchased school desks from the Northwest School Furniture Co of Portland, Oregon.⁹⁸ Throughout the decade the

⁹² Nanaimo Free Press, 4 October 1897, 4.

⁹³ Nanaimo Free Press, 4 March 1901, 2.

⁹⁴ SD68, NBST, BM, 15 August and 11 November 1892. The minutes do not make clear where the Board ordered the desks.

⁹⁵ NCA, NBST, BL, 3 July 1895, S. Gough to Victoria School Trustees and S. Gough to New Westminster School Trustees.

⁹⁶ NCA, NBST, BL, 25 March 1896, S. Gough to St George & Co, Vancouver; S. Gough to W. E. McCormick, Spokane; and S. Gough to Messrs Robertson & Co, Vancouver.

⁹⁷ Nanaimo Free Press, 30 March 1896, 3.

⁹⁸ NCA, NBST, BL, 10 May 1898, S. Gough to Manager, Northwest School Furniture Co, Portland, Oregon.

Trustees continued to purchase desks from companies outside Nanaimo. However, in 1898 they ordered a set from the Nanaimo Saw Mill Factory.⁹⁹ By 1901, they had again turned to companies outside Nanaimo. Desks from the B. C. Import and Trading Company in New Westminster proved to be defective and resulted in considerable correspondence. Eventually Gough wrote, 'it is too bad that there has been so much trouble over these desks as our Board wishes to deal with business concerns in this province, but it is almost certain that after this experience they will order somewhere else when desks are again wanted.'¹⁰⁰ It is unclear why it was so difficult to obtain school desks in British Columbia. With the growing school population in the province and the change away from benches in the city schools desks were in high demand.

The Trustees routinely authorized the purchase of maps and charts for the schools. From time to time, travelling salesmen appeared before the Board to demonstrate their products. In July 1895, for example, a book agent exhibited his firm's English History chart and the Trustees purchased five of them.¹⁰¹ Samuel Gough obtained Scarfes Synoptical Charts from Swinerton & Oddly and a mounted Chambers' Primer Chart and Numerical Frame from T. E. Hibben & Co.¹⁰² Both these firms were located in Victoria. Gough ordered maps of Europe

⁹⁹ SD68, NBST, BM, 6 October 1898; and Nanaimo Free Press, 29 December 1898, 3.

¹⁰⁰ NCA, NBST, BL, 12 March 1901, S. Gough to Manager B. C. Import and Trading Co, New Westminster. NCA, NBST, BL, 23 March, 28 March, 6 April, and 24 April 1901, S. Gough to B. C. Import and Trading Co, New Westminster.

¹⁰¹ SD68, NBST, BM, 24 July 1895.

¹⁰² NCA, NBST, BL, 4 January 1895, S. Gough to Messrs T. E. Hibben & Co, Victoria; and NCA, NBST, BL, 24 April 1896, S. Gough to Swinerton & Oddly,

and the Dominion from Gage Publishing and an 'excelsior series' map of the hemispheres from the Home Knowledge and Supply Association.¹⁰³ He also inquired about maps of the United States, North America, Africa, and Canada from E. N. Moyer & Co. In his correspondence, Gough stipulated that the maps had to be 'of recent date.'¹⁰⁴ All these firms were in Toronto.¹⁰⁵ He also ordered a map catalogue and a school supplies catalogue from Rand McNally in Chicago.¹⁰⁶ School maps were part of the North American corporate economy and one of the most important instruments of European and North American imperialism. The Trustees clearly saw them as important additions to Nanaimo classrooms.

In 1901 one of the Trustees, John Newton, proposed that the Board buy school texts and sell them to the students at cost. He further suggested that at the end of term the school principals could buy back books in good condition and resell them at cost.¹⁰⁷ Newton argued that 'the book question was quite an item

Victoria.

¹⁰³ NCA, NBST, BL, 17 April 1893, S. Gough to Gage, Toronto; and NCA, NBST, BL, 6 November 1893, S. Gough to The Home Knowledge & Supply Association, Toronto.

¹⁰⁴ NCA, NBST, BL, 23 March 1899, S. Gough to E. N. Moyer & Co, 41 & 43 Richmond St West, Toronto, Ontario. Maps of British Columbia were provided by the Department of Land and Works to the schools at no cost. NCA, NBST, BL, 23 March 1899, S. Gough to Deputy Commissioner Land and Works Department, Victoria; SD68, NBST, BM, 1 April 1899.

¹⁰⁵ Gough also obtained liquid slating for the blackboards from the Methodist Book Room in Toronto. NCA, NBST, BL, 2 November 1893.

¹⁰⁶ NCA, NBST, BL, 2 October 1894, S. Gough to Messrs Rand McNally & Co, Map Publishers & Engravers, Chicago, Illinois. Samuel Gough also wrote to the American Crayon Co in Waltham, Massachusetts for information on the cost of school crayons. Within a month he had placed an order. NCA, NBST, BL, 23 February and 29 March 1894.

¹⁰⁷ SD68, NBST, BM, 2 March 1901.

in many homes where there are three or four children going to school.¹⁰⁸ In the ensuing discussion among the Trustees, William Wall expressed the opinion that the publishers might not be willing to offer the Board the wholesale price they extended to booksellers. John Morrison reported that he had discussed the matter with the booksellers in Nanaimo who told him 'it did not pay to handle school books, they were so keenly cut; they kept them merely to help sell other goods.'¹⁰⁹ John Shaw, the Principal of Central School, who was present at the Board meeting, contributed his own experience to the discussion. He explained that 'after hearing many complaints about the high prices of books he had gone to Pimbury & Co's to make enquiries. They simply threw the invoices on the counter and asked him to examine them to see how very little the dealer made. Some of the books cost the dealers 4.5 cents and they sold them for 5 cents.'¹¹⁰

Secretary Samuel Gough duly obtained price lists from Gage and Copp Clark Publishers, both of Toronto, and ascertained that, indeed, wholesale prices were not available to the Board.¹¹¹ Trustee John Newton conjectured that if the Board bought and sold used texts 'in time the retailers could not handle school books, and on their dropping them the Board could probably get wholesale rates.'¹¹² Many of the Trustees, however, expressed the view that parents

¹⁰⁸ Nanaimo Free Press, 4 March 1901, 2.

¹⁰⁹ Nanaimo Free Press, 4 March 1901, 2.

¹¹⁰ Nanaimo Free Press, 4 March 1901, 2.

¹¹¹ NCA, NBST, BL, 19 March 1901, S. Gough to Gage & Co, Toronto and Copp, Clark & Co, Toronto.

¹¹² Nanaimo Free Press, 6 May 1901, 3.

believed used texts carried 'germs of disease and vermin.'¹¹³ In the end, the Trustees contented themselves with recommending that teachers 'be requested to interest themselves in the transfer of second-hand books between the scholars.'¹¹⁴

The decade 1891 to 1901 was a time of pressured growth and expansion for public schooling in Nanaimo. The Board's expenditures reflect the development it coped with. In 1892, the Trustees estimated \$3,750 for operating expenses and \$4,500 for land and building construction. In 1895, the Board estimated expenditures of \$12,575 for operating costs and \$25,000 for a new school building and land. In 1901, they predicted operating expenditures at \$16,912.¹¹⁵ In a period of less than ten years, the Board's estimates for operating expenditures alone grew by 350 percent.

The Board minutes and the newspaper reports of its meetings indicate that the Board worked hard, discussed matters carefully, and reached conclusions with a high degree of unanimity. The Trustees perceived themselves as acting in a non-partisan manner.¹¹⁶ There are some indications that they brought a certain humour to their deliberations. For example, during a discussion on tendering, the Chairman of the building committee, Edward Barnes, argued that very small

¹¹³ Nanaimo Free Press, 6 May 1901, 3.

¹¹⁴ SD68, NBST, BM, 4 May 1901.

¹¹⁵ SD68, NBST, BM, 1 February 1902, 22 February 1895, and 2 February 1901. I have added the cost of teachers' salaries to the 1892 estimates since they are part of the estimates for other years.

¹¹⁶ Nanaimo Free Press, 6 February 1899, 3.

jobs which had to be done quickly did not need to be tendered. In an intense discussion, the other Trustees took the position that all work should be tendered since it was paid for by the public. The next item of business was a request from Principal John Shaw to have a few desks fixed to the floor where a partition had been altered. Edward Barnes immediately moved that tenders be called for, provoking an outburst of laughter from the Trustees.¹¹⁷ As it commonly did, the Board fashioned a working compromise between the need to disperse public money appropriately and the problem of putting very small jobs to tender. In those cases where work was difficult to tender, the Trustees agreed it should be awarded on a day-work basis.¹¹⁸

The Nanaimo School Trustees built, insured, maintained, repaired, and furnished their schools. In the fashion of the small-scale businesses typical of early capitalism, they managed their affairs directly. They did so without direction or supervision from the Education Office. In terms of the very important work of the production of the physical space of city schools, the late-nineteenth century British Columbia education system was highly decentralized. In carrying out their business the Trustees were involved in multiple axes of communication that included several government departments and suppliers located locally, in cities in British Columbia, the American Northwest, central Canada, and the eastern and central United States. From the perspective of Nanaimo, there were multiple centres in the production of the physical space of schooling.

¹¹⁷ Nanaimo Free Press, 27 February 1901, 2.

¹¹⁸ Nanaimo Free Press, 8 July 1901, 3.

In the 1890s, the experience of Nanaimo in regard to the restructuring of school finance and the provision of school space illuminates the limitations of a centralist interpretation of the production of public schooling. The next two chapters which deal with the construction of teacher and student hierarchies add further weight to the argument that local authorities played a role in the development of the education system which should be integrated into the overall conceptualization of the project of public schooling. The work the Trustees did in providing physical space intersected with their decisions about organizing teachers and students. A three-fold increase in student numbers drove the Board throughout the decade to provide more and more space. In January 1890, Nanaimo had two elementary schools both of which had three classes. By January 1901, there were four elementary schools with ten, three, two, and two classes. In the same period the High School grew from one class to two. The change in scale as well as the change in size required decisions about the appointment of teachers and the organization of teachers and students. These decisions were the responsibility of the Nanaimo School Trustees.

Chapter Five: Gendering Instruction

The authority to create teaching positions, set teachers' salaries, and appoint teachers for city schools was vested entirely in local School Boards. While the right to hire was long-standing, the wider powers to decide on the number of teachers and their salaries resulted from provisions in the 1893 School Act. Constructing the teaching staff was an essential component in the production of public schooling. In British Columbia's city school districts in the 1890s the process was decentralized.

The Nanaimo Trustees fashioned a gendered teacher hierarchy through their hiring practices. Between 1891 and 1901 Nanaimo's School Trustees chose not to appoint men who applied for entry- and middle-level teaching positions. As a result, the Trustees created professional employment opportunities for women while at the same time denying those opportunities to men. Once hired, however, women teachers found themselves barred from senior positions and the highest salaries, in part because of the spatial organization of the schools. Gender had a Janus face: where there were possibilities for women, men were constrained; where there were possibilities for men, women were constrained. Gender played a powerful role in the hiring process and the hierarchical configuration of teachers in Nanaimo.¹

¹ Jane Rendall and Phyllis Stock-Morton suggest that gender history grew out of work by Joan Kelly and Natalie Zemon Davis in the mid-1970s on the social relationship of the sexes. Jane Rendall, "'Uneven Developments': Women's History, Feminist History and Gender History in Great Britain," and Phyllis Stock-Morton, 'Finding Our Own Ways: Different Paths to Women's History in the United States,' in Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson, and Jane Rendall, eds., Writing Women's History: International Perspectives (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 48 and 64-5. Joan Wallach Scott argues that identities are forged in

In the 1890s, civic identity was an important consideration for the Trustees when they hired teachers. They used their power of appointment to provide work for local female high school graduates many of whom had achieved provincial recognition as award winners. At the same time, to staff the High School, the Board hired men who were not from the community, but who held university degrees. The Trustees balanced providing an employment venue for local women and reinforcing Nanaimo's status as a city school district by integrating teachers with university accreditation.

5.1 Feminizing the Teaching Staff

The procedures for appointing teachers and establishing their salaries

relationships and 'the relations between the sexes are a primary aspect of social organization.' Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 25. Other gender historians, as well, have focused on the relations of difference between the sexes. See, for example, Margaret R. Higgonnet and Patrice L.-R. Higgonnet, 'The Double Helix,' in Margaret R. Higgonnet and Patrice L.-R. Higgonnet, eds., Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 34. In the 1990s, gender historians have become increasingly concerned with the intersection of gender, race, and class. For a useful statement of this perspective see Lykke de la Cour, Cecilia Morgan, and Mariana Valverde, 'Gender Regulation and State Formation in Nineteenth-Century Canada,' in Allan Greer and Ian Radforth, eds., Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 165. Further perspectives are articulated in Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag, 'Introduction: Taking Gender into Account in British Columbia,' in Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag, eds., British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1992), 5; and Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, 'Introduction,' in Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, eds., Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), xii. Joy Parr examined the parameters of gender history in Canada by the mid-1990s. Joy Parr, 'Gender History and Historical Practice,' The Canadian Historical Review 76, 3 (September 1995): especially 358, 362, and 368.

derived from both law and practice. Trustees in all British Columbia school districts acquired the power to hire teachers in 1873, but the provincial authorities continued to set the number of teaching positions for each district, and the salaries for those positions.² The 1893 amendment to the Public School Act transferred the authority to establish and pay teachers' salaries in the city school districts to the local Trustees.³ Prior to 1893, the Nanaimo Trustees applied to the Superintendent of Education when they wanted to hire additional teachers. If their application was successful, the government would include a salary for the position in the provincial estimates. The Trustees could then include a notice of salary when they advertised the job.⁴ After 1893, it was up to the Nanaimo Trustees to decide how many teachers would be hired and what their salaries would be. The Nanaimo Board normally continued the practice of setting the salary prior to advertising.⁵ Applicants for teaching positions, then, often knew from the advertisement what the salary would be.

² British Columbia, Legislative Assembly [BC, LA], Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1873, chap. 8, sec. 7; and BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1872, chap. 16, sec. 7. Only persons who held a teaching certificate were eligible for appointment. BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1872, chap. 16, sec. 33.

³ BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1893, chap. 41, sec. 3. City School Boards gained the right to set salaries because the province, between 1888 and 1893, had transferred the full responsibility for funding teachers' salaries to the four city districts. BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1888, chap. 32, sec. 10; BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1891, chap. 40, sec. 30; BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1893, chap. 41, sec. 3.

⁴ See for example, Nanaimo Free Press, 15 July 1891, 1.

⁵ Salaries were tied to a position not to the incumbent. It was not unusual for a teacher with, for example, a Second Class B certificate teaching the 5th division at Central school to make \$60 a month, while another teacher with a higher Second Class A certificate teaching the more junior 9th division at Central School, made \$50. See salaries for Miss M. P. Haarer and Miss M. Woodman, British Columbia, Superintendent of Education [BC, SE], Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1898-99 [ARPS], xlvi.

The literature on feminization of teaching argues that men were not interested in entry- and middle-level teaching positions because the salaries were so inadequate that only women would, or could, accept such remuneration. In 1975, Alison Prentice wrote, 'by the end of the century the question of whether to employ a male or female teacher had become academic, for in most places in Canada, almost the only elementary-school teachers available for hire were women.'⁶ She added, 'for many ... school authorities, the main reason for engaging female teachers was less their real or imagined qualifications, than the fact that they could be obtained relatively cheaply.'⁷ Marta Danylewycz and Prentice made the same argument in 1984, claiming that 'women teachers, it was well known, could be engaged for half the salaries required by men.'⁸ Writing in 1991, Prentice and Marjorie Theobald continued to accept these earlier arguments.⁹ In a 1992 computer-based quantitative analysis of the gendered construction of Canada's public school teaching corps, historian Patrick Harrigan

⁶ Alison Prentice, 'The Feminization of Teaching in British North America and Canada 1845-1875,' originally published 1975, in J. M. Bumstead, ed., Interpreting Canada's Past, Vol. 1, Before Confederation (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1986), 375.

⁷ Prentice, 'Feminization,' 377.

⁸ Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, 'Teachers, Gender, and Bureaucratizing School Systems in Nineteenth Century Montreal and Toronto,' History of Education Quarterly 24 (Spring 1984): 87.

⁹ At the same time, Prentice and Theobald were critical of the argument that feminization of teaching was primarily the result of a gender ideology which emphasized women's natural role as nurturers of the young. Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald, 'The Historiography of Women Teachers: A Retrospect,' in Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald, eds., Women Who Taught: Perspectives on the History of Women and Teaching (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 6.

argued that 'school boards did not necessarily turn to women because they could be paid less, for the evidence suggests that many boards hired them reluctantly. It was because there were not enough men available at a price that school boards were willing to pay.'¹⁰

Over a considerable period of time and in a variety of national settings, historians have concluded that the majority of teacher salaries were so low that only women would accept them. With some exceptions, a general perception exists that the feminization of teaching staffs across Canada was at bottom an economic issue: women would work for wages that men would not accept. Two questions arise from the economic explanation for the feminization of teaching. How did entry- and middle-level teaching salaries compare to salaries in other occupations open to young women and men? Is there any evidence that men sought entry- and middle-level teaching work at the salaries women received? Both of these questions can be addressed in regard to Nanaimo.

The 1901 nominal census provides a context for Nanaimo teacher salaries. The median salaries reported for nineteen- to twenty-seven-year-old males and females, shown in Table 5.1, give some indication of the relative position of entry- and middle-level teachers' salaries.¹¹ The figures suggest that the median

¹⁰ Patrick Harrigan, 'The Development of a Corps of Public School Teachers in Canada, 1870-1980,' History of Education Quarterly 32, 4 (Winter 1992): 511.

¹¹ The 50 percent sample is taken from the 1901 nominal census for the three Nanaimo city wards, North Ward, Middle Ward, and South Ward. The age group nineteen to twenty-seven was chosen for comparison because census data indicates that thirteen of the fourteen entry- and middle-level teachers in the Nanaimo public schools were within this age range. If five or more individuals reported an occupation, it has been included separately in Table 5.1. For eighteen males and ten females in the sample the record was either incomplete or

reported teacher salary compared favourably with the median salaries or wages reported for clerks, tailors, coal miners, teamsters, carpenters, and barkeepers.¹² It seems unlikely, therefore, that young men would have universally eschewed entry- and middle-level teaching positions on the grounds of inadequate salary. In addition, men could aspire to promotion to senior positions and higher salaries. In that respect, men might have had an even greater incentive than women to attempt a career in teaching.

While the evidence suggests that entry- and middle-level teacher salaries could have been acceptable to men, the question remains as to whether there is any evidence that they were attracted to teaching at the salaries offered. In fact, there is. The Nanaimo School Board minutes provide the names of applicants in eleven competitions between July 1891 and June 1901.¹³ The names indicate

unreadable. Entry- and middle-level teaching positions include the 3rd to the 10th divisions at Central school, and all divisions at North, Middle, and South Ward schools. Senior positions include the principals of the High School and Central School and the first assistant teachers at each of those schools. In June 1901, the fourteen entry- and middle-level positions were held by women and the four senior positions were held by men. The median annual salary for all women teachers in the Nanaimo public schools in June 1901 was \$660, and for all men teachers, \$1200.

¹² Other historians have noted that teachers' salaries compared well with those in industrial occupations. Terry Wotherspoon argues that in British Columbia in 1890 'teachers' salaries in the province, on average, remained higher than industrial wages.' Terry Wotherspoon, 'From Subordinate Partners to Dependent Employees: State Regulation of Public School Teachers in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia,' *Labour/Le Travail* 31 (Spring 1993): 99. In his short survey of the history of Canadian education, Paul Axelrod reports that salaries of women teachers in Ontario in 1871 compared favourably with those of industrial workers. Paul Axelrod, *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 49.

¹³ Not all appointments resulted from competitions. Also, a competition might result in appointments for several positions. One competition for a senior position, principal of the Girls' school, is not included. A competition for a position at the High School is also not included.

Table 5.1

Number employed and median annual salaries, ages 19-27, Nanaimo 1901, by occupation

Occupation	Men		Women	
	Number	Salary	Number	Salary
No occupation	6	---	158	---
Printer	5	\$ 900		
Barber	5	\$ 900		
Blacksmith	7	\$ 750		
Barkeeper	6	\$ 710		
Coal miner	88	\$ 700		
Teacher			5	\$ 660
Carpenter	7	\$ 660		
Teamster	9	\$ 650		
Tailor	5	\$ 600	1	\$ 600
Clerk	15	\$ 600	11	\$ 400
Labourer	6	\$ 400		
Laundryman	11	\$ 180		
Domestic			9	\$ 160
Other: upper 1/3	10	\$1000	1	\$ 600
middle 1/3	10	\$ 830	2	\$ 420
lower 1/3	10	\$ 600	1	\$ 180
Total	200		188	

Source: Canada, Nominal Census, 1901. The calculations are based on a sample of census data which includes 50 percent of the residents of the City of Nanaimo.

that men as well as women applied for entry-and middle-level teaching positions in Nanaimo schools.

The eleven competitions between 1891 and 1901 can be divided in two groups. In the first group of four competitions, twenty-four females and two individuals whose sex is unknown applied.¹⁴ As a result of these competitions, six females were hired. In a second group of seven competitions, fifty-three females, thirteen males, and two individuals whose sex is unknown applied. The Trustees hired thirteen females and no males in these competitions. Of those whose sex can be determined in this second group, 80 percent of the applicants were female, 20 percent were male, and 100 percent of those the Trustees hired were female. While women always outnumbered men as applicants, the virtual monopoly women had on the entry-and middle-level teaching positions resulted from Nanaimo Trustees choosing to appoint females even when they could have appointed males.¹⁵ A close look at one of the competitions illuminates the Trustees' hiring practices.

¹⁴ In the School Board minutes, some applicants were referred to only by their last name and one or more first initials. The sex of these applicants is unclear. However, applicants known to be male were often referred to in this way in the minutes and the provincial Annual Reports, while applicants known to be female were rarely referred to in this way. Therefore, those applicants whose sex is unknown were likely to be men.

¹⁵ Up to 1914, the Nanaimo Trustees continued to hire women over men for entry-and middle-level positions. 'Even though it was clear by the twentieth century that "no men need apply" for lower- and middle-level teaching positions in Nanaimo, it appears that they continued to do so in about half the competitions, and the trustees continued not to hire them.' Helen Brown, 'Gender and Space: Constructing the Public School Teaching Staff in Nanaimo, 1891-1914,' BC Studies 105/106 (Spring/Summer 1995): 65.

In April 1897, the Nanaimo Trustees had fourteen applications for the vacant sixth division class at Central School: some came from women teachers of more junior classes and others came from men and women who were not at that time teachers in Nanaimo.¹⁶ Five of the fourteen applicants were males. The sixth division at Central School was awarded to Sarah Muir whose own class, the more junior ninth division, then required a teacher. The ninth division appointment went to May Woodman and her position as teacher of the tenth division class, the most junior in the school, then had to be filled. That job went to a newcomer, Nellie Donaldson. She did not have important family connections and she held a Third Class B teaching certificate, the lowest level certificate issued.

Of the males the Trustees did not hire, one had important family connections and two were award-winning Nanaimo students. The male applicants included John McGregor whose father, William McGregor, was the Chairman of the School Board and whose uncle, James McGregor, was the sitting member in the provincial legislature for Nanaimo City. Two other applicants, Arthur Morgan and John Lukey, had won awards in the Nanaimo schools. Arthur Morgan had an outstanding academic career. In 1894, he won the Proficiency Award at the High School and the Governor General's Bronze medal. He received the High School Proficiency Award again in 1895 and 1896. In January 1897, the Free Press reported that Arthur Morgan had been the top student at the High School for three years running and had actually won the Governor General's new Silver Medal in 1895 and 1896. However, since a student could only win one medal, and

¹⁶ Nanaimo Free Press, 12 April 1897, 3.

Morgan had won the Bronze medal in 1894, his silver medals had been awarded to the second-ranking students, John Lukey in 1895 and Isabel Bennie in 1896.¹⁷

Arthur Morgan wrote his teacher certification examinations for the first time in 1895 and obtained a Third Class B certificate. The following year he wrote again, this time obtaining a First Class B certificate. This was a real accomplishment for a nineteen-year-old as it was the same level certificate held by John Shaw, the Principal of Central School. In a letter to S. D. Pope, the Superintendent of Education, Morgan indicated his hopes of going to McGill University.¹⁸ Employment as a teacher would have helped him finance that ambition. Alternatively, he could have continued teaching in Nanaimo and moved up through the system. However, the Nanaimo Trustees did not hire him, and according to the Annual Reports of Public Schools he had still not found work as a teacher by 1900.

Perhaps the Trustees did not choose Arthur Morgan because he had been ineffective six months earlier as a substitute for James Galloway who was away ill.¹⁹ Morgan may simply have been unsuited to teaching in spite of his ability to

¹⁷ Nanaimo Free Press, 25 January 1897, 4. Isabel Bennie was not an applicant in the April 1897 competition. However, she was appointed without a competition to teach at North Ward School in September 1898 when another teacher resigned after the term had started. Bennie held a First Class B certificate.

¹⁸ British Columbia Archives and Record Service [BCARS], GR 1445, British Columbia, Superintendent of Education, Correspondence Inward [BC, SE, CI], 15 August 1895, Arthur D. Morgan to S. D. Pope.

¹⁹ BCARS, GR 1445, BC, SE, CI, School Inspector William Burns to S. D. Pope, 5 October 1896. Burns reported 'Mr Galloway's illness has materially affected his room; the substitute, (A. D. Morgan) is not at all up to the work.'

write examinations. However, had the Trustees wished to hire a male, they could have chosen John McGregor, with his prominent family connections, or John Lukey, with his high academic achievement. The former was a teacher in a school district near Nanaimo. The latter, like Morgan, had not been able to find a teaching job by 1900.

There is no specific evidence to indicate why the Board chose Nellie Donaldson over Morgan, McGregor, and Lukey. It may have been that the Trustees considered it inappropriate for a man to teach the seven and eight year-old children in the tenth division class. Such a possibility accords with historian Janet Guildford's argument that school authorities hired women because their 'special abilities' made them 'inherently suited to the care and teaching of young children.'²⁰ The Board might have been particularly concerned about a man teaching the young girls in the class. If that was the case, it indicates an important ramification of the Trustees' decision to make the Ward Schools and Central School co-educational.²¹ The American education historians David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot have noted, 'coeducation and the transformation of teaching into a woman's job went hand in hand.'²² In Nanaimo, co-education may have been a factor in the feminization of entry- and middle-level teaching positions.

²⁰ Janet Guildford, "'Separate Spheres': The Feminization of Public School Teaching in Nova Scotia, 1838-1880," *Acadiensis* 22, 1 (Autumn, 1992): 53 and 44. Patrick Harrigan makes the same argument. Harrigan, 'The Development of a Corps of Public School Teachers,' 511.

²¹ The Trustees' decision to adopt co-education is discussed in Chapter Six.

²² David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot, Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Schools (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 84.

The Nanaimo Trustees closed the door to men far more tightly than did Trustees in the other three city school districts in British Columbia. In 1901, in New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria, approximately 20 percent of all entry- and middle-level teachers were men. The difference between Nanaimo and the other cities is exemplified by the 1901 median male monthly salary. In Nanaimo, where men held only senior positions, this was \$92. In New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria, where men held the senior positions and also entry- and middle-level positions, the median male monthly salaries were \$70, \$72, and \$65 respectively.²³

Only once during the 1890s do the records indicate that the Trustees discussed their hiring policies. At the Board meeting 13 July 1895, Trustee Thomas Bryant gave notice that he would be introducing a motion regarding the future appointment of teachers.²⁴ Bryant sent a copy of his resolution to the Superintendent of Education asking whether any part of it was contrary to Department policy.²⁵ Both these actions were unusual. Trustees did not give advance notice of motion nor did they communicate personally with the Superintendent.²⁶

²³ BC, SE, Thirtieth ARPS, 1900-01.

²⁴ School District 68 [SD68], Nanaimo Board of School Trustees [NBST], Board minutes [BM], 13 July 1895.

²⁵ BCARS, GR 1445, BC, SE, CI, T. Bryant to S. D. Pope, 19 July 1895.

²⁶ The School Board communicated with the Superintendent of Education through the Board secretary. With the exception of Bryant's letter, Nanaimo Trustees did not correspond individually with the Superintendent. This was not the case for the teachers. The Superintendent's correspondence inwards contains numerous letters from individual teachers asking for blank forms, submitting their monthly reports, and correcting errors in monthly reports recently submitted. There were very close and regular lines of communication between the teachers and the

Bryant's resolution was debated at the Board meeting 24 July 1895. The minutes make no mention of the discussion, possibly because Bryant withdrew the motion in the end. The Free Press, however, reported the 'lengthy debate'. One part of Bryant's motion dealt with gender. He called for appointments to the senior classes at North Ward and South Ward Schools to be restricted only to men. No other Trustees were willing to accept such a policy. Edward Quennell said 'he had always understood that the female teachers had given every satisfaction, and he saw no reason to exclude them from the principalship of the Ward schools.' R. E. McKechnie expressed the opinion that 'the proposed exclusion of female teachers was a retrograde step. He then instanced how women were taking front rank with the men in all branches of science and art, citing a few of the women who had graduated with high honors at the different universities.' Thomas Dobeson added that 'one of the problems of the day was finding profitable employment for women, and we should not try to contract the field of labor but rather to broaden it.' He favored 'leaving the matter open so that men and women could equally apply.' Arthur Wilson 'thought women should have the same opportunity as men in applying for positions.' The businessman, the doctor, the foundry owner, and the coal miner-union president, were agreed. Qualified women should have the opportunity to teach.²⁷

Superintendent.

²⁷ Nanaimo Free Press, 29 July 1895, 2. The other two Trustees present, William McGregor, the Board Chairman, and William Leighton are not reported as speaking to the motion.

Thomas Bryant's motion also called for all hirings to be restricted to individuals who held at least a Second Class A certificate. At that time, seven of Nanaimo's thirteen teachers held certificates lower than that. The Trustees were not sympathetic to this part of Bryant's resolution. Arthur Wilson said he 'did not consider the certificate any indication of the teaching ability of the teacher, for it was a well known fact that some of our most successful teachers could only obtain low certificates.' At that point, Bryant withdrew the resolution. Evidently, the Nanaimo Trustees felt the attributes of a successful teacher were not entirely measured by the certification process.

Over the period 1891 to 1901 in Nanaimo, women monopolized the entry- and middle-level teaching positions while men were limited to the senior positions at Central School and the High School. This numerical dominance of women teachers was typical of the pattern throughout urban North America.²⁸ The American historian, David Potter, has suggested that for women individual opportunity began in the city.²⁹ In terms of the opportunity for women to gain professional employment, education historians would concur. Prentice and Theobald have demonstrated that 'wherever ... urban hierarchies came into

²⁸ Most studies on feminization of teaching focus on the second half of the nineteenth century. Chad Gaffield, however, suggests the importance of a longer view. 'The aggregate Canadian data show that by 1875, female teachers outnumbered male teachers by approximately a 2:1 ratio ... this disproportion increased to more than 4:1 in favour of females by 1905 ... by 1970, the ratio of female to male teachers ... dropped to 1.5:1.' Chad Gaffield, 'Back to School: Towards a New Agenda for the History of Education,' *Acadiensis* 15, 2 (1986): 181-2.

²⁹ Cited in Judith Fryer, 'Women and Space: The Flowering of Desire,' in Jack Salzman, ed., *Prospects, The Annual of American Cultural Studies*, Vol. 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984): 199.

existence, the percentage of female teachers tended to be higher than the average for the region or the period in question.³⁰ Jean Barman has established that in British Columbia in 1891, 37.7 percent of teaching positions were in the four city school districts. Of these positions, 62.1 percent were held by women. In 1900, 31.2 percent of positions were in the city districts and 70.5 percent were held by women.³¹

In a comparative analysis of the international literature on the feminization of teaching written in 1993, the education historian James C. Albisetti found a 'truly remarkable consensus.' He notes that historians' analyses of the feminization process in countries as disparate as Germany, the United States, Denmark, Russia, and Italy agree that men were not interested in teaching and women were willing to do so for lower salaries than men would accept.³² Albisetti, however, raises many questions about the validity of this international consensus. He claims 'one could argue that many discussions of the relative unattractiveness of teaching to men contain a dose of circular reasoning: at times, shortages of teachers are used to show the unattractiveness of the field, but at other times the assumed unattractiveness is used to explain the shortages.'³³ Albisetti believes that feminization of teaching was more complex than has been

³⁰ Prentice and Theobald, 'Historiography of Women Teachers,' 5.

³¹ Jean Barman, 'Birds of Passage or Early Professionals? Teachers in Late Nineteenth-Century British Columbia,' Historical Studies in Education 2, 1 (Spring 1990): Table 3.

³² James C. Albisetti, 'The feminization of teaching in the nineteenth century: a comparative perspective,' History of Education 22, 3 (September 1993): 254.

³³ Albisetti, 'The feminization of teaching,' 255.

recognized. He identifies a number of factors that need further consideration and argues what is most critical 'for beginning to understand differing levels of feminization is a nearly universal phenomenon: the higher percentages of women teachers in urban than in rural schools.'³⁴ Since the appointment of women teachers to entry- and middle-level positions in Nanaimo was typical of urban school systems, Nanaimo's status as a city school district may have been a factor in the gender construction of its teaching staff.

Twenty-four women and four men taught in Nanaimo's public schools between September 1891 and June 1901. Household information is available for many of them from the 1891 and/or 1901 nominal censuses.³⁵ Sixteen of the teachers lived with their parent or parents, bringing an additional income into the home. Twelve lived in households headed by their father. Isabel Bennie, Gertrude McKinnon and Emeline Pearce were the daughters of coal miners; Mary Dobeson's father was a businessman; Nellie Donaldson's and Kate Hilbert's fathers were blacksmiths; Rosina Duncan's father was a labourer; Marion Gordon's father was a contractor and politician; Eva LeFeuvre's father managed the NVCMLC farm; Isabella Sinclair's father was a teamster; and May and Annie Woodman's father was a stationary engine operator. Four teachers lived in households headed by their mothers. Isabel Brown's, Paulina Haarer's, and Christina Pool's mothers were homemakers. Ruth George's widowed mother had a small produce store. Sixty-seven percent of Nanaimo's female teachers were from Nanaimo and lived in

³⁴ Albisetti, 'The feminization of teaching,' 259.

³⁵ My access to the 1891 census is described in Chapter Two. I accessed the 1901 census manually, and in addition Jean Barman generously shared with me her data base on teacher households taken from the 1901 census.

parent-headed households.

Some of the teachers lived apart from their nuclear families. Christina Duncan, Abbie Gardiner, Florence Hartt, Maria Lawson, Sarah Marshall, and Lemuel Robertson were boarders. In 1891, Sarah Muir lived with her family: her father was a teamster. By 1901, however, she and a teenage brother boarded with another family. All the female teachers for whom census information is available who did not live with their own families boarded in a family household. Only the male teacher, Lemuel Robertson, chose a boarding house.

Two teachers became heads of households between 1891 and 1901 and another two headed households in both 1891 and 1901. James Galloway lived with his parents and siblings in 1891. He married in 1895 and by 1901 was head of his own household which included his wife and two young children. In 1891 Lucy Mebius boarded in a family household, but by 1901 she headed a household that included her widowed mother and her sister who was also a teacher. Walter Hunter and John Shaw were heads of household in both 1891 and 1901. Not surprisingly, married male teachers were much more likely than unmarried female teachers to be heads of household.

Seven of Nanaimo's twenty-eight teachers in the 1890s were related to men who were Trustees during that decade or who were important in the community in other ways.³⁶ Mary Dobeson was the daughter of Thomas Dobeson, an Alderman,

³⁶ An eighth teacher, Isabel Bennie, may have been related to Trustee John Frame who was married to Agnes Bennie.

Trustee, and owner of the Nanaimo Foundry. James Galloway was the nephew of both John Dick, an Alderman and a Trustee, and Archibald Dick, the provincial inspector of mines. Marion Gordon's father was a Member of Parliament. Kate Hilbert's father, William, was an Alderman and her uncle, John Hilbert, was an Alderman, Mayor, and School Trustee. Eva LeFeuvre's father was an Alderman, Trustee, and manager of the NVCMLC farm. John Shaw's father, Alexander, was the owner of the Nanaimo Electric Light Company and a School Trustee. Maria Lawson's father, the editor of the *Victoria Colonist*, was well known in Nanaimo. One quarter of Nanaimo teachers had close family connections with community leaders.

The historian Jean Barman has developed a data base of the information on teachers in the Annual Reports of Public Schools from 1881 to 1901. From this it is evident that seventeen of the twenty-eight teachers began their teaching careers in the Nanaimo school system. Eleven taught elsewhere before being employed in Nanaimo: five had taught for one year, four for two years, and two for three years. Of the eleven teachers who taught elsewhere before entering the Nanaimo schools, five women came from schools in communities bordering Nanaimo and three women from schools in communities further away on Vancouver Island.³⁷ The three teachers who came to Nanaimo from school systems in other parts of British Columbia were all men. John Shaw, Principal of the Boys' School and Central School, had taught on Salt Spring Island, although he grew up on Gabriola Island near Nanaimo. Walter Hunter, the Principal of the High School, had taught in Lillooet and Lemuel Robertson, the assistant teacher at

³⁷ I am indebted to Jean Barman for this information.

the High School, had taught in Vancouver.

Of the twenty-eight teachers in Nanaimo in the 1890s, nineteen had been students in Nanaimo and ten had won awards. Sarah Muir, Marion Gordon, Maude Edwards and Emeline Pearce were named to the Provincial Honour Roll for deportment; Christina Pool, Pauline Haarer, Rosa Duncan for Punctuality and Regularity; and James Galloway, May Woodman, Christina Duncan, Maude Edwards, and Isabel Bennie for Proficiency. James Galloway, Christina Duncan, and Maude Edwards won the Governor General's Bronze Medal, the most prestigious award open to Nanaimo students between 1888 and 1894. Isabel Bennie won the Governor General's Silver Medal, which replaced the Bronze Medal.

Overall, it appears that Nanaimo's School Trustees appointed beginning teachers or teachers who were in the very early stages of their careers. Having been schooled in Nanaimo and winning an award were important factors in obtaining an appointment in the Nanaimo School system in the 1890s. The relationship between gender, academic achievement, and appointment to a teaching position in Nanaimo is interesting. In the 1890s even winning a prestigious award was not enough to make the Trustees hire a Nanaimo man to teach a junior class. The Board had no hesitation, however, in hiring Lemuel Robertson who was not from Nanaimo, but who did have a university degree, to teach at the High School. In this regard, the Trustees struck a balance between providing employment for young women in the community and appointing senior teachers with the academic qualifications necessary to maintain Nanaimo's identity as one of the province's leading city school districts.

Certification standards were determined by the provincial government. While the details changed during the 1890s, the general nature of the process remained the same. Teachers wrote Education Office examinations for a particular level of certificate in 'an intricately stratified system' and their marks determined their success.³⁸ Third Class B certificates were valid for one year, Third Class A for two years, Second Class B for three years, Second Class A for five years, and First Class B and A certificates for life.³⁹ All teachers who held Second and Third Class certificates had to renew their certification within specified periods.

Although they were not required to attempt a higher level of certification, many teachers did so. Historian Mary Kinnear, in a study of Manitoba teachers, suggests men had more incentives than women to upgrade their certificates.⁴⁰ In Nanaimo, Walter Hunter and Lemuel Robertson, who had degrees from McGill, held First Class A certificates. John Shaw held a First Class B and James Galloway improved his Second Class B certificate to a First Class B in 1893. All Nanaimo's male teachers in the 1890s had or acquired life certificates. Of the female teachers, Abbie Gardiner held a First Class B certificate and Isabel Bennie, Flora Hartt, and Eva LeFeuvre wrote for First Class B certificates in 1898 when they were

³⁸ Mary Kinnear's reference to 'an intricately stratified system' of certification was made in regard to Manitoba, but well describes late-nineteenth-century British Columbia. Mary Kinnear, 'Teachers: A Majority in the Margins,' in her In Subordination: Professional Women, 1870-1970 (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995) 127.

³⁹ BC, SE, Twentieth ARPS, 1890-91, lxxv.

⁴⁰ Kinnear, 'Teachers: A Majority in the Margins,' 130.

aged nineteen, twenty-six, and twenty-one respectively.⁴¹ As many female as male Nanaimo teachers held life certificates over the course of the decade. While that included 100 percent of the men and only 17 percent of the women, the absolute numbers are important. For the five years before Bennie, Hartt, and LeFeuvre secured First Class certification in 1898, all male teachers and no female teachers were certified at that level.⁴² After the women were successful in their examinations three male and three female teachers held First Class certificates. Under the complex certification process in effect in British Columbia young female teachers in Nanaimo, as well as male teachers, demonstrated that they could achieve the same level of certification as Principal John Shaw.⁴³

Four of the twenty-eight teachers made teaching in Nanaimo their life's work.⁴⁴ This was the case for Pauline Haarer, Walter Hunter, Lucy Mebius, and May Woodman. Between 1891 and 1901, Haarer moved from a Third Class B certificate to a Second Class B and Mebius upgraded a Third Class A to a Second Class A certificate. Woodman started in Nanaimo in 1894 with a Second Class B certificate and by 1901 had achieved a Second Class A certificate. After her retirement, Pauline Haarer was honoured by having a school named after her.

⁴¹ Maria Lawson also took a First Class B certificate in 1898 although by that time she had left Nanaimo.

⁴² Abbie Gardiner, who held a First Class B certificate when she taught in Nanaimo (January 1887 to December 1891) had started teaching in 1883 with a Third Class A certificate.

⁴³ Isabel Bennie married in 1902. In the case of the women a high level of certification did not necessarily correlate with a long teaching career.

⁴⁴ I do not have information about the later lives of Nellie Donaldson, Christina Duncan, Rosina Duncan, Flora Hartt, Sarah Marshall, and Annie Woodman.

Given that in 1890 she was a seventeen-year-old beginning teacher at the bottom of the school hierarchy, it is ironic that in Nanaimo today hers is the only well known name of all those who served as Trustees and teachers in the 1890s. Death claimed Walter Hunter and Lucy Mebius while they were still teaching. Hunter was fifty-two and had taught in Nanaimo for seventeen years. Mebius was fifty-eight when she died, at which time she had been teaching in Nanaimo for forty-one years. May Woodman taught for over forty years before retiring. Although Haarer, Mebius, and Woodman were longtime Nanaimo teachers, none held particularly high certificates in the 1890s.

Some of the teachers took up other work. James Galloway left teaching after sixteen years. Maria Lawson was described by the Free Press, when she died in 1945 at age ninety-three, as having been the 'dean of Western Canada's newspaperwomen.'⁴⁵ John Shaw, after teaching for twenty-three years, worked for the next twenty-four years for the inland revenue office. As soon as he left teaching in 1907, he became a Trustee and soon thereafter the Chairman of the School Board, a position he held until 1936. Shaw also served as an Alderman and Mayor of Nanaimo. Central School was renamed the John Shaw High School in his honour, but when it was torn down after World War II the name went with it. At the time of his death in 1937 the Free Press noted that 'his 55 years continuous service to education, first as teacher and later as trustee ... is believed to have been the longest association with British Columbia schools of any resident of this province.'⁴⁶ John Shaw was unique in that after he left teaching he

⁴⁵ 'Was a Teacher Here More Than Sixty Years Ago,' Nanaimo Free Press, 13 August 1945, 3.

⁴⁶ 'A Leader Passes,' Nanaimo Free Press, 2 July 1937, 2.

continued to be directly involved with Nanaimo schools for another three decades.

At least ten of the female teachers married. These include Isabel Bennie, Isabel Brown, Maud Caroline Edwards, Marion Gordon, Kate Hilbert, Eva LeFeuvre, Gertrude McKinnon, Emeline Pearce, Christina Pool, and Isabella Sinclair. Mary Kinnear notes nineteenth-century women teachers were expected to marry.⁴⁷ John Hinde suggests that in Ladysmith women normally sought employment outside the home as a temporary occupation until they married or if their husband died.⁴⁸ It is not surprising, therefore, that many of Nanaimo's female teachers married. However, of the twenty-four women who taught in Nanaimo in the 1890s, at least six, or 25 percent, did not. Given the nuptiality rate of 93 percent which John Belshaw found for Nanaimo, it is possible that some women used their work as teachers to avoid marriage. Adele Perry says of White women in nineteenth-century British Columbia, 'whatever power they reaped from their status as "civilizers" was not without its costs. Constructed as colonial wives and mothers and sometimes faced with a society that offered them little else, theirs could be restricted lives.'⁴⁹ Teaching, with all its limitations, was 'something else.'

⁴⁷ Kinnear, 'Teachers: A Majority in the Margins,' 130.

⁴⁸ John R. Hinde, "'Stout Ladies and Amazons": Women in the British Columbia Coal-Mining Community of Ladysmith, 1912-14,' BC Studies 114 (Summer 1997): 42-3.

⁴⁹ Adele Perry, "'Oh I'm Just Sick of the Faces of Men": Gender Imbalance, Race, Sexuality, and Sociability in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia,' BC Studies 105/106 (Spring/Summer 1995): 42.

In the city of Nanaimo, by systematically hiring women for entry- and middle-level teaching positions, the Trustees provided a singular and important venue of employment for young women. Work as a teacher was more accessible to women than to men. However, it became evident in the Nanaimo schools during this period that, as the number of women increased, their access to leadership positions diminished.⁵⁰ The Trustees attempted to ensure that senior positions were held by men.

5.2 Masculinizing Supervision

The Nanaimo Trustees preferred men rather than women to hold senior positions in the teaching hierarchy. In the summer of 1891 Donald Smith, the secretary of the School Board, complained to the Superintendent of Education that Abbie Gardiner, principal of the Girls' school, had 'exceeded her authority.'⁵¹ She resigned shortly afterwards.⁵² The Trustees demoted her successor, Maria Lawson, and reduced her salary when they amalgamated the Boys' and Girls' Schools into the co-educational Central School in 1896.⁵³ Miss Lawson resigned a year after the school opened, during term, with no notice, and without observing

⁵⁰ Other historians have noted a diminishment in leadership and salary possibilities for women after 1890. See, for example, Martha Vicinus, Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 40, 102, and 176.

⁵¹ BCARS, GR 1445, BC, SE, CI, 10 August 1891, Donald Smith to S. D. Pope.

⁵² School District 68 [SD68], Nanaimo Board of School Trustees [NBST], Board minutes [BM], 11 December 1891.

⁵³ SD68, NBST, BM, 24 December 1895. The Central School building did not actually open until 1 April 1896.

the custom of doing so in writing.⁵⁴ These were the two most senior women in the Nanaimo public schools between 1891 and 1897, and both experienced the Trustees' lack of support for their leadership.⁵⁵ Since the Trustees wanted males to hold senior positions they were fortunate to find in Walter Hunter, John Shaw, and James Galloway men who made long-term commitments to Nanaimo. All three were teaching in Nanaimo at the beginning of the expansionary period in 1891. Hunter had started there in 1887 and continued until his early death in 1905. John Shaw headed the Boys' School, then Central School, from 1884 until he left teaching in 1907. James Galloway was the first assistant to Shaw from 1889 until he stopped teaching in 1905.

The intricacies of the social relationship of space and gender have attracted attention from historians and other scholars.⁵⁶ Linda Kerber argues that 'the philosophy and ideology of ... institutions are increasingly understood to be embedded in their arrangement of physical space.'⁵⁷ Judith Fryer suggests

⁵⁴ SD68, NBST, BM, 3 April 1897.

⁵⁵ Lucy Mebius succeeded Maria Lawson as the most senior woman teacher. The pattern repeated itself again in 1914 when the Trustees demoted Lucy Mebius as part of the process of merging Central school with Quennell school. BC, SE, Forty-Third ARPS, 1913-14, A cxxvii. For biographical information on Lucy Mebius see Jean Barman, 'Pioneer Teachers of British Columbia,' British Columbia Historical News 25, 1 (1991-92): 15.

⁵⁶ See, for example, Veronica Strong-Boag's analysis of gender and the textual space of the Canadian Historical Review. Veronica Strong-Boag, Canadian Historical Association, Presidential Address, 'Contested Space: The Politics of Canadian Memory,' Journal of the Canadian Historical Association 5 (1994): 10.

⁵⁷ Linda K. Kerber, 'Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History,' Journal of American History 75, 1 (June 1988): 31 and 33. For an innovative study of the way in which social class was reflected and constructed by the spatial organization of schools see Ulla Johansson and Christina Florin, 'Order in the (Middle) Class! Culture, Class and Gender in the Swedish State

that as women began to work outside the home it became increasingly necessary to control them through rigid spatial order.⁵⁸ Gillian Rose and Miles Ogborn argue that 'unequal gender relations are produced and reproduced through spaces, places, and landscapes, for through these processes women have literally been put in their place.'⁵⁹

In Nanaimo, the spatial organization of the schools affected women teachers' opportunities for leadership roles. Spatial configurations changed as the Trustees expanded the school system in response to the growing school population and the need to reduce overcrowding in classrooms. The spatial organization of the schools was most favourable for women to hold senior positions from 1893 to 1896, and to a lesser extent from 1899 to 1901. It was least favourable for women seeking leadership roles in 1897-1898. The Trustees' concern that women work under male supervision was more easily addressed when schooling was concentrated in as few spaces as possible.

Grammar School 1850-1914,' Historical Studies in Education 6, 1 (Spring 1994): 21-44.

⁵⁸ Fryer, 'Women and Space,' 207. Scholars who examine the relationship of space and gender inevitably find themselves confronting the question of the causal relationship between the two constructions. Generally, they argue either that the causal relationship is not discernible or not significant. See for example, Daphne Spain, Gendered Spaces (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 6; Shirley Ardener, 'Ground Rules and Social Maps for Women: An Introduction,' in Shirley Ardener, ed., Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps, revised edition (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 2.

⁵⁹ Gillian Rose and Miles Ogborn, Debate, 'Feminism and historical geography,' Journal of Historical Geography 14, 4 (1988): 408.

In 1891 and 1892 the Board expanded the spatial distribution of the schools when it built North and South Ward Schools at a distance from the Boys' and Girls' Schools. The new schools opened in 1893, and the teaching staff at that time is shown in Table 5.2. This arrangement provided several leadership possibilities for women. Not only was Miss Lawson principal of the Girls' school, but the senior teachers at the spatially separated North and South Ward schools, both of whom were women, were de facto principals. Samuel Gough, the secretary for the Board of School Trustees, referred to them as such when he wrote to them, and they were almost always referred to as principals in the School Board minutes.⁶⁰ Also, the senior teachers at the Ward Schools communicated directly with the Board, a privilege the Trustees accorded only to principals.⁶¹ Thus, in 1893, three women and two men had the title 'principal.' In addition, the highest-paid woman teacher had a higher salary than the lowest-paid male teacher, suggesting a certain mutability to the gendering of the salary hierarchy. Only two of the ten women teachers worked under direct male supervision. In January 1893, the spatial organization of public schools in Nanaimo created leadership opportunities for women teachers that were the best they would be at any time between 1891 and 1901.

A subsequent Trustee Board began the process of bringing the Ward School teachers under centralized supervision. In November 1894, the Trustees

⁶⁰ See for example, SD68, NBST, BM, 6 March, 1893; Nanaimo Community Archives [NCA], NBST, Board letterbook [BL], 17 October 1893, S. Gough to Miss Duncan; 20 November 1894, S. Gough to Miss Duncan; 20 November 1894, S. Gough to Miss Gordon.

⁶¹ SD68, NBST, BM, 4 September and 16 October 1893; NCA, NBST, BL, 11 September 1893, S. Gough to Miss Lawson.

Table 5.2

Nanaimo teachers, January 1893: school/division, certificate, and monthly salary

School/division	Teacher	Certificate	Salary
High School	Mr. Hunter, B. A.	1st A	\$ 115
Boys' School 1	Mr. Shaw	1st B	\$ 100
Boys' School 2	Mr. Galloway	2nd B	\$ 75
Boys' School 3	Miss Hartt	2nd B	\$ 60
Boys' School 4	Miss Pool	3rd B	\$ 50
Girls' School 1	Miss Lawson	2nd A	\$ 80
Girls' School 2	Miss Mebius	3rd A	\$ 65
Girls' School 3	Miss Brown	2nd B	\$ 55
Girls' School 4	Miss Haarer	3rd B	\$ 50
North Ward 1	Miss Gordon	2nd B	\$ 60
North Ward 2	Miss Hilbert	3rd B	\$ 60
South Ward 1	Miss Duncan	2nd A	\$ 60
South Ward 2	Miss Marshall	3rd B	\$ 50

Sources: School District 68, Nanaimo Board of School Trustees, Board minutes, 14 October 1892 and 6 January 1893; British Columbia, Superintendent of Education, Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1892-93, 660

placed North Ward School under the principalship of Miss Lawson at the Girls' School and South Ward School under the principalship of Mr. Shaw at the Boys' School 'for the preparation of examination papers, and general oversight.'⁶² However, with the Ward Schools at a distance from the Boys' and Girls' Schools, and with Shaw and Lawson teaching all day in their own classes, not much supervision could go on. The spatial separation of the Ward Schools from Central school subverted the intended arrangements. That reality was reflected in Board secretary Samuel Gough's continued references to the senior teachers at the Ward

⁶² SD68, NBST, BM, 17 November 1894; NCA, NBST, BL, 20 November 1894, S. Gough to John Shaw.

Schools as principals.⁶³ However, while the Trustees' efforts at that time were frustrated, they were a harbinger of the future.

The Board significantly concentrated the space of schooling in 1896 when Central School replaced the Boys' and Girls' Schools. The Trustees' decision to amalgamate the two schools into one which was co-educational freed them from an obligation to have a woman principal. While the law did not absolutely require that a woman be principal of the Girls' School, it strongly suggested it.⁶⁴ In December, the Board established the ranking of teachers for the new school.⁶⁵ Central School required only one principal, and it is hardly surprising that the Board chose John Shaw over Maria Lawson. What was telling was the Trustees' decision to appoint James Galloway as assistant principal rather than Maria Lawson, the Girls' School principal.⁶⁶ Galloway received an increase of \$5 monthly while Lawson's salary was correspondingly decreased by \$5.⁶⁷ Under the new arrangements, Nanaimo had two male principals, one at the High School and one at Central, and two women teachers at the Ward Schools whose status as

⁶³ SD68, NBST, BM, 10 May and 24 July 1895; see also NCA, NBST, BL, 4 February 1895, S. Gough to Miss Duncan; 10 June 1895, S. Gough to Miss Duncan; 27 January 1897, S. Gough to Mrs Fiddick.

⁶⁴ BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1879, chap. 30, sec. 9. This section continued to appear in subsequent acts.

⁶⁵ SD68, NBST, BM, 24 December 1895.

⁶⁶ The term 'assistant principal' is used in the newspaper report of the Board meeting. Nanaimo Free Press, 16 December 1895.

⁶⁷ Maria Lawson resigned in the middle of the term in March 1897. At the time she did not do so in writing, but simply informed one of the Trustees whom she happened to meet. This was very unusual behaviour for Maria Lawson, who was in the habit of writing to the Trustees almost monthly about various matters she wished to bring to their attention. SD68, NBST, BM, 3 April 1897.

principals was ambivalent. All the men had higher salaries than any of the women and six of ten women teachers worked under male supervision. The opening of the large co-educational Central school in January 1896 diminished the leadership possibilities for women.

Spatial integration clearly had the effect of bringing women under male supervision, but there is no direct evidence as to whether that was a major consideration for the Trustees in making the decisions they did. However, events between May 1896 and January 1897 suggest the Board did consciously link space and gender. During those months the Board received three, or possibly four, complaints about the senior teachers at the Ward Schools, Sarah Marshall and Mary Dobeson, and one complaint about a junior teacher at Central School, Sarah Muir. The complaints expressed parental dissatisfaction with student progress and the teachers' discipline, competence, and failure to assign homework.⁶⁸ In each instance, the Trustees supported the women teachers, but at the same time their recommendations implied a need for more supervision by the male principal. In regard to the complaint about discipline, for example, the Trustees concluded that 'in cases of violent or wilful opposition to the authority of teachers, that the matter be reported to the Principal of the school, who shall take the steps he may deem necessary.'⁶⁹

⁶⁸ SD68, NBST, BM, 12 September 1896. An earlier incident involving the same parent may have been part of the same complaint. SD68, NBST, BM, 23 May and 6 June 1896. SD68, NBST, BM, 26 December 1896; 2 January 1897; and 9 January 1897. SD68, NBST, BM, 9 January 1897; 23 January 1897; 30 January 1897; and 13 February 1897.

⁶⁹ SD68, NBST, BM, 10 October 1896.

For the Ward School teachers, reporting to the principal at Central School would have been complicated by the distance involved. The Trustees recognized this. At a special meeting in January 1897 to deal with the complaint regarding homework, they decided to relocate the two senior Ward School classes to Central School.⁷⁰ Following that move, the teachers were ranked as shown in Table 5.3. Eight of the ten women now came under male supervision and the other two, at least nominally, did so as well. To facilitate this supervision, the Trustees inaugurated a system whereby students from the High School did some teaching at Central School in order to free John Shaw to visit the classrooms of the women teachers.⁷¹ Moving the two senior Ward School classes to Central School resulted in the most spatially concentrated arrangement of the schools between 1891 and 1901, and it corresponded with the fewest leadership possibilities for women. When the Board concentrated the space of public schooling, it brought more women teachers under male supervision.

In the hierarchy of teachers shown in Table 5.3 the two oldest teachers were males and the eight youngest teachers were females.⁷² The three male

⁷⁰ SD68, NBST, BM, 23 January 1897. The move did not actually take place until 1 April 1897, when the Trustees completed construction of a necessary fire escape. BC, SE, Twenty-Sixth ARPS, 1896-97, 231.

⁷¹ SD68, NBST, BM, 1 May 1897; and BC, SE, Twenty-Sixth ARPS, 1896-97, 215. There are no further references to this arrangement in the Board minutes. Thomas Fleming reports that a later attempt by a city superintendent to free Vancouver principals from full-time teaching was opposed by the provincial education authorities. Thomas Fleming, 'In the Imperial 'Age and After: Patterns of British Columbia School Leadership and the Institution of the Superintendency, 1849-1858,' BC Studies 81 (Spring 1989): 59.

⁷² The ages of the teachers listed in Table 5.3 were as follows: Mr. Hunter, forty-four; Mr. Shaw, thirty-four; Mr. Galloway, twenty-six; Miss Mebius, thirty; Miss Hartt, twenty-five; Miss Haarer, twenty-four; Miss Muir, twenty-one; Miss Dobeson, twenty; Miss Marshall, twenty-three; Miss Woodman, nineteen; Miss Donaldson,

teachers were ranked in descending order of age and six of the eight female teachers at Central School were also organized in descending order of age. By the late 1890s, the Trustees had ensured that among teachers age was normally superior to youth. When combined the gender and age hierarchies of Nanaimo teachers, as they were constituted by 1897, resembled the model of the ideal family.

Beginning in 1899, the Trustees reluctantly increased the spatial dispersion of classes. They found themselves responding to increasing student numbers, overcrowded classrooms, and the urgings of the Superintendent of Education that new classes be added.⁷³ The Board expanded the Ward Schools because it had no other alternatives. There was simply no room for more classes at Central School. The Trustees added a second division at South Ward in 1898.⁷⁴ In 1899, they started a new school, Middle Ward, in the former Boys' School which had been doing service as the High School.⁷⁵ In 1900, the Board opened a second division at North Ward School.⁷⁶ The following year, 1901, the Trustees added two more divisions at Middle Ward.⁷⁷

twenty; Miss Lefevre, twenty. Miss Edwards' age is unknown.

⁷³ For example, SD68, NBST, BM, 2 and 6 October 1897; 28 December 1899; and 6 October 1900; BC, SE, Thirtieth ARPS, 1900-01, 280.

⁷⁴ SD68, NBST, BM, 6 November 1898.

⁷⁵ SD68, NBST, BM, 28 December 1899.

⁷⁶ SD68, NBST, BM, 22 August 1900. The Trustees closed this division in 1901.

⁷⁷ SD68, NBST, BM, 2, 19 and 21 February 1901. Growth in student numbers caused the Trustees to add a second High School class starting 1 March 1900. BC, SE, Twenty-Ninth ARPS, 1899-1900, 220.

Table 5.3

Nanaimo teachers, April 1897: school/division, certificate, and monthly salary

School/division	Teacher	Certificate	Salary
High School	Mr. Hunter, B. A.	1st A	\$ 120
Central 1	Mr. Shaw	1st B	\$100
Central 2	Mr. Galloway	1st B	\$80
Central 3	Miss Mebius	3rd A	\$75
Central 4	Miss Hartt	2nd B	\$65
Central 5	Miss Haarer	2nd B	\$60
Central 6	Miss Muir	3rd B	\$60
Central 7	Miss Dobeson	2nd B	\$55
Central 8	Miss Marshall	2nd B	\$55
Central 9	Miss Woodman	2nd B	\$55
Central 10	Miss Donaldson	3rd B	\$50
North Ward	Miss Edwards	2nd A	\$50
South Ward	Miss LeFeuvre	2nd A	\$50

Sources: School District 68, Nanaimo Board of School Trustees, Board minutes, 23 May 1896 to 10 April 1897; British Columbia, Superintendent of Education, Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1896-97, xli

The return of a measure of spatial dispersion again provided some leadership opportunities for women. The salaries of the women who were the senior teachers at South and Middle Ward schools were equivalent to those of the sixth division teacher at Central school. Seven of the fifteen women -- almost half -- taught at a distance from male supervision. Nevertheless, a considerable degree of spatial concentration remained, with the ten divisions at Central weighing heavily against the one, two, and three divisions at North, South and Middle Ward Schools. John Shaw's title was 'Principal of the Public Schools' which included Central School and the three Ward Schools. The Trustees limited the title 'principal' to two men, one at the High School and one at Central School, and

continued the practice in place since 1897 of having all the male salaries higher than any of the female salaries.

In Gendered Spaces, Daphne Spain examines the relationship between gender stratification and spatial organization.⁷⁸ Overall, she concludes, spatial segregation disadvantaged women.⁷⁹ She correlates sexual integration in American schools with women's access to suffrage and property rights, and the right to control their own labour.⁸⁰ In the Nanaimo public schools, though, spatial separation created more leadership roles for women than did spatial concentration. The latter worked against the interests of the women teachers by restricting their access to senior positions, limiting their voice, and bringing them under increased male supervision.⁸¹ While Spain has generally found the way forward for women to be through spatial integration with men, in Nanaimo women teachers lost ground when school space was concentrated at Central School. Gendered Spaces is a thoughtful and innovative work, but the patterns which emerged in the Nanaimo schools do not support its conclusion.

The Nanaimo School Trustees, in building a teaching staff during a formative period, were actively engaged in gender formation. They feminized

⁷⁸ Spain, Gendered Spaces, 11.

⁷⁹ Spain, Gendered Spaces, 6, 16, and 27.

⁸⁰ Spain, Gendered Spaces, 167.

⁸¹ As principals, Maria Lawson and her predecessor, Abbie Gardiner, had submitted reports to the Superintendent of Education which were published in the Annual Reports of Public Schools. In addition, both communicated directly with the Trustees.

some positions and masculinized others. Their appointments coded appropriate gender roles. As Mariana Valverde argues, the concept of gender formation implies a dynamic element -- gender is formed and reformed, negotiated, and contested.⁸² In Nanaimo, the process of gender formation of the teaching staff never really achieved equilibrium in the 1890s. Some men resisted the exclusion of males from entry- and middle-level positions by continuing to apply for them. Some women resisted demotion by resigning. In addition, the continued growth in student numbers late in the decade created pressure on the Board to accept a renewed spatial dispersion of classes which resulted in women working without direct male supervision. Nevertheless, by 1901 the Trustees had established a clearly defined gender hierarchy: all entry- and middle-level teaching assignments went to women, all principalships went to men, and all men had higher salaries than any women.

⁸² Mariana Valverde, Comment: Dialogue, 'Gender History/Women's History: Is Feminist Scholarship Losing its Critical Edge,' Journal of Women's History 5, 1 (Spring 1993): 123.

Chapter Six: Organizing Students

In the 1890s, the Nanaimo School Board was responsible for organizing students into classes. The decisions the Trustees made about the number of grades in a classroom, co-education, and age-grading determined the gender/age/achievement configuration of students. Girls and boys moved through school as individuals and the evidence indicates that some girls won promotion ahead of boys and some younger students passed ahead of older ones. The possibility of a student hierarchy where girls could lead boys and youth could take precedence over age did not accord with the social norms the Trustees had adhered to when appointing and ranking teachers. By the end of the decade, the number of public examinations had been reduced and students were no longer given a class ranking on their report cards. The hierarchical ranking of students became less publicly visible.

Nanaimo teachers documented the location of the students in daily registers provided by the Education Office in Victoria. These late-nineteenth-century British Columbia school registers are important records for education historians. They are the textual evidence most intimately connected with the day-to-day life of students, teachers, and classrooms. Registers indicate the permeability of the classroom to civic and provincial authorities, parents, and the community. They name individual students and reveal their complex movement through the school system. The registers encode the organization of children on the basis of age, gender, and academic achievement. The Education Office in Victoria devised the format of the registers. Individual teachers inscribed the information in them. When that information was aggregated it served as the

basis for provincial funding grants to civic authorities and for the Superintendent of Education's Annual Reports of Public Schools. As the hub in the education wheel, registers played a critical role in the process of schooling. At the same time, registers were cultural constructions and as such were representations of state ideology and teacher and student experience.

6.1 Nanaimo School Registers

Twenty school registers are extant for Nanaimo, British Columbia in the years 1891-1901.¹ This chapter conceptualizes the registers as texts which were both integral to the project of schooling and representative of it. The school year was divided into quarters which began in August, November, January, and April. From August 1891 to June 1901, there were 543 full quarter divisions and 8 partial quarter divisions.² The extant registers contain class records for 139, or 25 percent, of the quarter divisions. Table 6.1 shows the total number of divisions and indicates those for which registers survive.

The information in the registers was entered in a spreadsheet which includes the unique annual identification number the teacher assigned to each student in a division, the student's name, age, sex, division number, school, quarter, year, and any comments which the teacher made about the student.³

¹ The school registers are held by the Nanaimo Community Archives.

² Although each class, or division as they were called, continued for the full school year, teachers started a new page in the register each quarter. I am using the term 'quarter division' to refer to a class during one quarter.

³ There are 9,034 line entries in the spreadsheet.

The registers do not specifically indicate whether a student was male or female, that determination was made on the basis of a student's first name.⁴ The results of three sets of class examinations which had been left in the registers were added to the spreadsheet.⁵

The Education Office in Victoria provided the class registers whose format remained unchanged throughout the decade. Their primary purpose was to produce a set of quantifiable information on each individual student. The Scottish historian, Fiona Paterson, argues that constructed categories of quantified information were internal to state representations of what counted as education. 'Useful knowledge,' she states, 'was based on the order created by classification and counting.'⁶ The construction of the Scottish registers Paterson examined varied in significant ways from the British Columbia registers. Standardized registers were introduced in Scotland as a result of the institution of a capitation grant in 1853.⁷ Capitation funding necessitated the construction of individual pupil identity. In British Columbia, capitation grants were introduced in city school districts in 1893.⁸ The Education Office needed to make no changes in the

⁴ If the student's sex was not reasonably clear it was recorded as unknown. In many cases, it was possible to make a determination when the spreadsheet was sorted. For example, in a different quarter a teacher might have recorded a middle name which indicated whether a student was male or female.

⁵ Each set of examination results was on a single sheet of paper. They were found in the registers for Central School 4, January 1896-June 1897, Central School 6, August 1899-June 1901, and Central School 9, August 1899-June 1901.

⁶ Fiona M. S. Paterson, 'Measures of Schooling: Registers, Standards and the Construction of the Subject,' *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1, 3 (September 1988): 286. Standards were written examinations taken by all students.

⁷ Paterson, 'Measures of Schooling,' 284.

⁸ British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, [BC, LA] Public School Amendment Act,

format of the registers at that time because individualization of students was already in place.

In Scottish registers, the appropriate space was left blank to indicate that a child was present in class. Only when the child was absent was the space filled in: 'A' indicated absent without permission, 'H' indicated absent because of circumstances at home, 'S' indicated the child was away sick, and so on. Paterson considers that this system 'transformed the invisible into the visible and, through categorisation of absences, made it possible to distinguish acceptable from unacceptable.'⁹ In British Columbia, teachers indicated a student's presence in class for half a day by a half cross in the appropriate space. Students present for a full day received a full cross. Provincial authorities required teachers to use the textual space of registers to reveal a student's attendance in the physical classroom space, but the text remained mute as to why students were not in the classroom or where they were.

Compulsory school attendance in British Columbia for children aged seven to twelve dated from 1876. It was, however, a very qualified compulsory attendance since children only had to attend school for six months of the year.¹⁰ This requirement remained unchanged through the 1890s. In 1901 the government mandated that students in city school districts attend school every

SBC 1893, chap. 41, sec. 3.

⁹ Paterson, 'Measures of Schooling,' 292.

¹⁰ BC, LA, Consolidated Public School Act, SBC 1876, chap. 2, sec. 38.

day.¹¹ That the state in British Columbia did not use school registers to map students outside the classroom may have reflected children's legal right to be absent from class for four months of the school year.

It is possible that the 1901 full-time attendance law merely codified a practice already in place in city schools in the 1890s. Christopher Clubine, in his study of nineteenth-century Toronto schools, discusses just such a situation. The Toronto School Board had higher attendance standards than those established by Ontario legislation.¹² While there is no direct evidence that Nanaimo school children were compelled to attend school full-time prior to the 1901 law, local authorities may have expected students to attend regularly throughout the year even though the law did not require them to do so. The Nanaimo Trustees, for example, hired a truant officer in 1896 as had the Toronto Trustees. The per-capita student grant which the provincial government instituted for the four city school districts in 1893 would have been an incentive for civic authorities to encourage school attendance. Australian historians Ian Davey and Kerry Wimhurst argue that compulsory full-time attendance institutionalized the twentieth-century dependent child.¹³ Using Davey and Wimhurst's criteria, it

¹¹ BC, LA, An Act to amend the 'Public Schools Act' SBC 1901, chap. 48, sec. 19. Not until 1921 did full-year schooling become compulsory for rural children in British Columbia. F. Henry Johnson, A History of Public Education in British Columbia (Vancouver: Publications Centre, University of British Columbia, 1964), 56.

¹² Christopher Clubine, 'Motherhood and Public Schooling in Victorian Toronto,' Ontario History 88, 3 (September 1996): 168 and 171.

¹³ Ian Davey and Kerry Wimhurst, 'Understanding irregular school attendance: beyond the rural-urban dichotomy,' in K. Goodenow and William E. Marsden, eds., The City and Education in Four Nations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 168-9. In South Australia a partial compulsory attendance requirement was in force from 1875 to 1915. In 1915, the state legislated full-time compulsory

may be that in Nanaimo this process began in the 1890s.

Presumably class registers were carefully scrutinized by the Inspector on his visits to the schools. This would have been particularly important in British Columbia. Since the province had no Normal School until 1901, teachers in the 1890s did not receive formal instruction on the keeping of a register. There was, however, no dedicated space for the Inspector to sign the register when he had examined it. None of the registers used in this study show any evidence of the Inspector's, or for that matter even the Principal's, presence.¹⁴ A printed note at the bottom of the first page stated that the register was the property of the School Trustees and not the teacher. In reality, though, the registers were shared spaces. Their categories were constructed by the provincial authorities, they were owned by the School Trustees, and teachers maintained them.

6.2 Teachers, Registers, and Classrooms

All the inscriptions in the twenty registers used in this study were made by teachers. While Nanaimo may have been extreme in this regard, it seems likely that in school registers generally the great majority of the inscriptions would have been made by teachers. Yet, historians do not examine registers from the perspective of the teacher's role in their construction. Some historians have examined the ideology of the central authority and consequently have focused on

attendance. Davey and Wimhurst, 'Understanding irregular school attendance,' 160-1.

¹⁴ The only exception was when a teacher kept an informal tally on the number of visitors to the classroom.

the standardized categories of the register which represent that ideology.¹⁵ Other historians have needed to extract one particular kind of information from the registers, usually information about attendance rates.¹⁶ Such approaches have yielded valuable information, but they do not convey the critical role teachers played in the creation of the registers.

Both in what they did record and what they did not record, there was a degree of uniformity in the way Nanaimo teachers kept their registers. Certain inscription practices of Nanaimo teachers were constant in all the registers. Some of the standardized categories were never completed by the teachers. These included 'Weather,' 'Statistics of Children,' 'Statistics of Pupils,' 'Studies Pursued,' and 'Master or Teacher's Remarks.' Not collecting and reporting this information may have been the prerogative of urban school teachers since these categories were not completed for Nanaimo in the Superintendent of Education's Annual Reports. Only very occasionally did teachers complete the category, 'Official Visits During Above Quarter,' or sign their names and the dates in the space provided. Conversely, teachers always assigned a unique number to each student and recorded daily attendance with the appropriate crosses or half crosses. In most registers, teachers filled in the name of the school, the division number, and the beginning and ending date for the quarter in the assigned spaces at the top of the pages.

¹⁵ For example, Paterson, 'Measures of Schooling.'

¹⁶ For example, Davey and Wimhurst, 'Understanding irregular school attendance.'

Beyond these common practices, however, teachers kept their registers in distinctively individualized ways. Some teachers changed the ordering of student names from one quarter to the next. In August, the teacher might list the students in an apparently random order, in November she/he might alphabetize the names, in January girls' and boys' names might be alternated. Some teachers repeated the students' names each quarter, others simply listed the unique number and left the name column blank. Some teachers entered ages every quarter, some only did it for the first quarter, some never did it, and some only entered ages in subsequent quarters if a student's age changed. Some teachers did all or part of their attendance calculations on the register pages while others never did. These variations from the ordained script indicate that teachers exercised a degree of autonomy in the textual spaces of their registers.

In fifteen of the twenty registers, teachers appropriated space to compile numerical data for the reports they submitted to the Education Office. These tables reveal the regularized system of communication between the classroom and the students' homes in the form of monthly reports which teachers sent to parents. For teachers, monthly student reports must have been daunting. Taken in conjunction with the attendance reports teachers compiled, it is evident that record maintenance took a great deal of time and energy. In a recent article on the social relations of school space, Kate Rousmaniere has argued that teachers' work culture was shaped by their physical workspace.¹⁷ It is equally true that teachers' work culture was shaped by the demands, constraints, and possibilities

¹⁷ Kate Rousmaniere, 'Teachers' Work and the Social Relations of School Space in Early-Twentieth-Century North American Urban Schools,' Historical Studies in Education 8, 1 (Spring 1996): 42-64.

of their textual workspaces.

Of the thousands of monthly student reports written by Nanaimo teachers between 1891 and 1901, one is extant. The physical boundaries of the school registers were mutable and several of the twenty used in this study had papers tucked inside. Left by chance in one of the registers, Alice McCullough's report from September 1901 has survived.¹⁸ The textual space of the report had evolved during the 1890s. Gone was the cordial invitation to parents to visit the classroom 'as often as may be consistent with their convenience,' although a parent's signature on the report was still mandatory.¹⁹ Letter grades in each subject had replaced numerical grades and students no longer received a rank in the class. Monthly reports connected classrooms and homes throughout the 1890s. However, the change to letter grades and the elimination of ranking meant that the achievement hierarchy of the classroom became less visible.

The statistical summaries some teachers arbitrarily wrote across their register pages detailed the presence of the local community in each classroom. The senior class at North Ward School opened its doors many times in 1894-95. The teacher's notes indicate thirteen visits by Trustees, four visits by the

¹⁸ 'Nanaimo Central Public School, Term Report of Alice McCullough a pupil of Fifth Grade, Term ending December 1901' The underlined words were entered by the teacher on the standardized form. Only the marks for September had been entered on this report. 'Jas Galloway' signed in the space for the teacher's name. He taught the second division at Central School. McCullough's report was left in the register for Central School 9, August 1899-June 1901.

¹⁹ For an example of a monthly student report from 1888, see Chuck Gosbee and Leslie Dyson, eds., 'Glancing Back' Reflections and Anecdotes on Vancouver Public Schools (Vancouver: Vancouver School Board, 1988), 25.

Inspector, and 129 visits by members of the community.²⁰ The same pattern was evident for the senior class at the Girls' School in 1895-96. The teacher's calculation table shows thirteen visits by Trustees, six visits by the Inspector, and 134 visits by members of the community.²¹ These informal tables in the registers not only indicate the number of visitors, they indicate the month of each visitation. The Superintendent's Annual Reports, on the other hand, give only the aggregate for the school year. From the registers it is clear that the majority of parental and community visitors came in December and June, presumably for the public examinations. However, visitors also came throughout the year. The senior class at North Ward in 1894-95 received community visitors in every month but May. The senior class at the Girls' School in 1895-96 had non-official visitors in all months except September and March. In the 1890s, classroom boundaries in Nanaimo were crossed throughout the year by members of the public.

There was no category in the registers for teachers to report on the origin, destination, promotion, or failure of their pupils and most teachers did not record such information. However, some did so occasionally and some did so regularly. Sarah Marshall literally claimed the margins of her register to keep notes about where her students came from and went to.²² Sarah Muir, the teacher for the

²⁰ Register for North Ward School 1, August 1893-March 1896, 1-2. There are no page numbers printed in the registers. I determined them by counting.

²¹ Register for Girls' School 1, August 1895-November 1895; and Central School 2, January 1896-June 1897, 37-8.

²² Register for Central School 7, August 1899-June 1901, 17-28. Teachers' names were determined from the Nanaimo Board of School Trustees' minutes. Since teachers sometimes changed classes during the school year, the Annual Reports of the Public Schools are not precise enough to identify which teacher taught a given

sixth division at Central School from 1898 to 1900, also kept close track of the comings and goings of her pupils.²³ In the November quarter of 1898, she noted that fifty-three students were promoted, one left for Victoria, one for Ontario, one for England, and one arrived from nearby Union. In the April quarter of 1899, for which not only her margin notations but the class examination results survive, fourteen students were promoted, ten were recommended for promotion, three failed, one went to California, one to nearby Northfield, and one -- a thirteen year old male -- left school to go to work. Two students from Cedar, south of the city, entered the class that quarter.

In the November quarter of 1899 and the January quarter of 1900, the patterns of student movement through Sarah Muir's sixth division class continued. Two students left for Victoria, two for Ontario, and one for Australia. One student went to Harewood, a 'suburb' of Nanaimo, and one arrived from Harewood. One went to Wellington, another nearby community, and one to Union. In these two quarters, six students, all male, left to go to work and one, again a male, left school. Of the six boys who went to work one was eleven, three were twelve, one was thirteen, and one was fourteen. The boy who left school with no reason given was thirteen. In addition, forty students were promoted at the end of the November quarter. The fact that Sarah Muir used register space to record the origins and destinations of her students provides historians with valuable evidence about the mobility of children and their families and about the movement of boys from school to work. For Sarah Muir, the construction of what

division at a particular time.

²³ Register for Central School 6, August 1899-June 1901, 7-14.

was relevant to know differed from that of the provincial authorities.

Some boys left school to work in the NVCMLC or Dunsmuir mines and the numbers increased over the decade. Historian Robert G. McIntosh, in a study of boy labour in Canadian coal fields, suggests there were limited opportunities for boys in the Vancouver Island coalfields because of legislative restrictions dating from 1877 and the ready availability of low-paid Asian mineworkers.²⁴ In the even-numbered years of the 1890s, the number of males under sixteen employed in all Vancouver Island coal mines varied from a low of 58 in 1890 to a high of 143 in 1896. Boys constituted 2.2 and 4.6 percent of the total mine labour force in 1890 and 1896.²⁵ The reasons for the increase are not entirely clear, but may be due in part to the agreement between Nanaimo miners and Samuel Robins following the 1887 explosion that Chinese labour not be used underground.²⁶

An important aspect of the Nanaimo school registers was the unique number teachers assigned to each student in the class. When a student came into a class, whether in August or at any time through the year, the teacher gave the

²⁴ Robert G. McIntosh, "Grotesque Faces and Figures": Boy Labour in Canadian Coalfields, 1820-1930' (PhD dissertation, Carleton University, 1990), 3, 33, and 142. 'The Mines Act of 1877 put very stringent conditions on the employment in mines of boys under sixteen. [In 1883,] Dunsmuir proposed successfully that the age be lowered to fourteen.' McIntosh, "Grotesque Faces and Figures," 33.

²⁵ McIntosh, "Grotesque Faces and Figures," 15. In Nova Scotia, by contrast, boys constituted a high of 17 and a low of just under 13 percent of the colliery labour force in the 1890s. McIntosh, "Grotesque Faces and Figures," 15.

²⁶ British Columbia legislation excluding Chinese miners from underground employment was sustained by the Supreme Court of British Columbia in 1897 but declared unconstitutional by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1899. McIntosh, "Grotesque Faces and Figures," 37.

student a number which remained particular to that student until the close of the school year in June. Unique numbers always appeared sequentially in the August quarter, but not in the three succeeding quarters. Students left during and at the end of quarters so their numbers did not reappear. Also, in a new quarter teachers often changed the order of the students' names in the register, and therefore the order of the unique numbers. The spreadsheet used in this chapter could not have been constructed had students in each class not had unique numbers.

6.3 Local Daily/Central Annual

Table 6.2 summarizes information from the extant registers on the total number of students enrolled in a division or class in a given quarter and the highest unique number recorded for the class in that quarter. The Table reveals the magnitude of student movement through classroom spaces in the course of a year. For example, in 1898-99, the first division at Central School averaged forty-two students while the ninth division averaged eighty-five students. In that school year, sixty-two different students enrolled in the first division compared to 153 students in the ninth division.²⁷ Teachers in the most senior classes not only had a significantly smaller number of students than teachers in the junior classes, they also had a smaller turnover of students in a given year.

²⁷ Table 6.2 indicates that during the school year the largest turnover of students occurred between the second and third quarters. Presumably this was a result of the Christmas examinations. Table 6.2 also reveals an unusual movement of students in four of the five divisions at Central School for which information was available in the fourth quarter, the April to June quarter, of the 1898-99 school year. At the present time, I cannot explain why that was so.

Table 6.2

Nanaimo schools: enrollment from extant registers, 1891-1901

SCHOOL	DIV	YEAR	Quarter 1			Quarter 2			Quarter 3			Quarter 4		
			S	na	N									
Boys	1	1891-92	49		49	50	2	50	52	1	56	43	1	56
Boys	1	1892-93	45		45	46	6	46	48		56	47		56
Boys	1	1893-94	45		45	46	2	46	47		54	46		56
Boys	1	1894-95	45		45	47	2	46	46		57	43		56
N Ward	1	1892-93							38		38	39	1	43
N Ward	1	1893-94	45		45	42		46	42		59	46	4	63
N Ward	1	1894-95	46		46	46		49	44		58	44		59
N Ward	1	1895-96	51		51	56	7	53	54		61			
Girls/Cen	2	1895-96	46		46	43		46	55		71	52	1	71
Central	4	1895-96							95	38	95	96	38	96
Central	2	1896-97	41		41	42	4	42	48	1	68	47	4	67
Central	4	1896-97	49	1	49	49	4	49	81	26	81	81	28	81
Central	5	1896-97	61		61	60		60	63	1	87	65		118
Central	4	1897-98	67		67	59		69	64		88	54		89
Central	5	1897-98	74		74	67		75	74	4	103	74	6	105
Central	6	1897-98	71		71	89	17	89	79		123	82	5	125
Central	7	1897-98							82		134	79		136
Central	9	1897-98	120		120	84	3	121	92		141	88		145
Central	10	1897-98	126		126	89		130	104		160	111		174
Central	1	1898-99	36		36	38	2	38	47		57	47		62
Central	4	1898-99	60		60	60	6	60	68		108	65	2	122
Central	5	1898-99	66	1	66	66	1	67	79	3	125	89	3	144
Central	6	1898-99	83		83	82	4	83	85		135	74	1	153
Central	7	1898-99	89		89	84	7	89	68		144			
Central	9	1898-99	84		84	82		85	83		127	90		153
Central	10	1898-99	118		118	115		123						
Central	1	1899-00	41	1	41	41	4	41	52	4	66	50		67
Central	4	1899-00	67		67	66	2	68	62		112	63	3	113
Central	5	1899-00	68		68	67	4	68	64		110	64		111
Central	6	1899-00	69		69	70	3	71	72		115	71	3	115
Central	7	1899-00	76		76	74		76	74		101	73	2	104
Central	9	1899-00	91		91	91		94	74		120	74		124
Central	1	1900-01	57		57	57	2	57	53	1	76	53		76
Central	2	1900-01	56	1	56	51		55	58	1	83	58		84
Central	4	1900-01	70		70									
Central	5	1900-01	78		78	65		79	80		142	75		144
Central	6	1900-01	82		82	69	1	84	74	1	84	70		91
Central	7	1900-01	83	5	83	73	1	86	100		141	73		141
Central	8	1900-01							96	1	111	67		112
Central	9	1900-01	78		78	74	1	80	84		113	69	1	121
Central	10	1900-01				93		105	99		115	72		122

S = number registered, na = number which never attended, N = highest unique number,
 indicates an increase in N of ten or more from the previous quarter.

The Annual Reports of the Public Schools created a much more static image of classroom space than is indicated by Table 6.2. The order and stability constructed by the single aggregate enrollment number in the Annual Reports were at variance with the reality of Nanaimo classrooms. For example, Table 6.2 shows that in the first division of the Boys' School in 1891-92, fifty-six students, minus four who never attended, were in class for all or part of the school year. This is close to the number fifty-three which was cited in the Annual Report.²⁸ Table 6.2 shows, however, that while the enrollment in the class was relatively stable for the first three quarters of the school year, it dropped in the April to June quarter.

The ninth division at Central School in 1897-98 can also be compared as it appeared in the registers and as it was represented in the Annual Report. Table 6.2 shows that 145 students, minus three who never attended, were in the class for all or part of the school year. Table 6.2 also indicates that the number of students enrolled varied between a disproportionate high of 120 in the first quarter to a more stable range of eighty-four, ninety-two, and eighty-eight students in the succeeding three quarters. The Annual Report cites 104 as the total number of students who attended the class during the year.²⁹ There are several implications stemming from these examples.

²⁸ British Columbia, Superintendent of Education [BC, SE], Twenty-First Annual Report of Public Schools, 1891-92 [ARPS], v.

²⁹ BC, SE, Twenty-Seventh ARPS, 1897 - 98, vii.

In the case of the ninth division at Central School in 1897-98, the relationship of the number in the Annual Report to the register numbers is perplexing. The numbers do not accord and the difference between them is considerable. In fact, the Annual Report number, 104, does not reflect the quarterly enrollments, the variation in enrollment from one quarter to another, or the total number of students who attended the class during the school year. In this instance, the Annual Report appears to be wrong.

The Annual Reports hide, and the registers reveal, quarterly variations in enrollment. For example, the numbers in the Annual Reports erased both the fourth quarter drop in enrollment in the first division at the Boys' School in 1891-92 and the first quarter surge in the ninth division at Central School in 1897-98. Using school admission registers, education historians Ian Davey and Kerry Wimhurst found similar quarterly variations in Hindmarsh, a suburb of the Australian city of Adelaide, in 1884 and 1899.³⁰

The Annual Reports also obscure, and the school registers clarify, the ebb and flow of students within quarters as well as between them. For example, Table 6.3 shows the fluctuating enrollment pattern of students in the ninth division of Central School in the August quarter in 1897. Of the 120 students who were in the class during the quarter, half moved either in or out of the class by the end of the eighth week. The Trustees struggled in October and November 1897 to cope with the extremely high enrollments in the ninth and tenth divisions at Central School. The classrooms, with seating for eighty, could not hold the students who

³⁰ Davey and Wimhurst, 'Understanding irregular school attendance,' 162.

Table 6.3

Enrollment pattern for Central School division 9 in the August 1897 quarter

Weeks attended	Number of students	% of total	Comments
1 - 12	42	35.0 %	Enrolled all 12 weeks.
1 - 8	28	23.3 %	Major changeover after 8 weeks.
9 - 12	31	25.8 %	
1 - 3	2	\	All others who either left early (2.5%), or started late (13.3%).
1 - 5	1		
2 - 12	5		
3 - 12	1		
4 - 12	3	15.8 %	
5 - 12	3		
6 - 12	2		
8 - 12	1		
12	1	/	
Total	120		

Source: Nanaimo Community Archives, Central School register, August 1897

came to class each day.³¹ To relieve the situation the Board moved students into more senior classes during the quarter.³² The high enrollments the teachers dealt with were compounded by administrative decisions to move students during the quarter.

Fiona Paterson claims that class registers extended 'the organization of space and time in the school on to a level of administration which would make its patterns visible beyond the immediate spatial/temporal location of the individual

³¹ School District 68 [SD68], Nanaimo Board of School Trustees [NBST], Board minutes [BM], 2 October 1897.

³² SD68, NBST, BM, 6 November 1897.

school.³³ In British Columbia the Annual Reports of Public Schools constructed a composite which obscured important aspects of classroom space. Numbers derived from the registers may have made the patterns of space and time in Nanaimo schools visible to authorities in Victoria, but when those authorities mirrored them back to a wider public in their published Annual Reports, they did not adequately represent the experience of Nanaimo classrooms.

The Annual Reports, authoritative because they were published and widely distributed, constructed classrooms differently than did the registers. This was neither accidental nor unavoidable. Behind the printed words and numbers of the Annual Reports lay a normalization of the province's classrooms as stable and orderly. Behind the manuscript inscriptions of the teachers lay classroom spaces which were rarely in equilibrium. Late-nineteenth-century Nanaimo school registers were oppositional texts which challenged the state's representation of reality and illuminated the state's ideological imperatives.

6.4 Co-education and Grading

In the mid-1870s, the Superintendent of Education urged the implementation of co-education in both urban and rural schools in British Columbia. F. Henry Johnson observes that 'co-education was adopted in most areas where separate classes would have been impractical but in the larger centres of Victoria, New Westminster and Nanaimo separate boys' and girls' public

³³ Paterson, 'Measures of Schooling,' 284.

schools were retained longer.'³⁴ With the exception of the High School which was co-educational from the time it opened in 1886, the transition to co-education in Nanaimo occurred in the 1890s.

Nanaimo's North and South Ward Schools, which opened in 1891 for junior students, were co-educational from the beginning. Later in the decade, in December 1896, the Trustees merged the Boys' and Girls' Schools into a co-educational Central School. In describing the plans for the school, the Free Press noted that 'each classroom has two doors, one for the boys and the other for the girls - the building is designed throughout with the object of separating, as far as possible, the girls from the boys.'³⁵ Although a degree of separation remained, the Trustees were unanimous in their decision to have boys and girls in the same classes. The principal reason they favoured co-education was because it meant each classroom would have one grade, not two, which as Trustee Arthur Wilson argued, would 'enable the teachers to do better and more effective work.'³⁶ The second reason the Trustees adopted co-education was that they believed it would be socially beneficial for both girls and boys in that, as Trustee Thomas Dobeson said, 'they were made better behaved, as each had a restraining influence on the other.'³⁷

³⁴ Johnson, A History of Public Education, 51. Johnson adds, 'The last stronghold of resistance to co-education was in Victoria where its Boys' Central and Girls' Central Schools continued to operate until 1937.'

³⁵ Nanaimo Free Press, 17 May 1895, 1.

³⁶ Nanaimo Free Press, 16 December 1895, 2. The Trustees made the same argument in their annual report to the Superintendent of Education, BC, SE, Twenty-Fifth ARPS, 1895-96, 211.

³⁷ Nanaimo Free Press, 16 December 1895, 2.

A second important change in the Nanaimo schools in the 1890s occurred when the Trustees reduced the number of different grades in each classroom. At this time in British Columbia, the reader was the curriculum. Readers, then, indicate the grades in a class. In 1891, every class in the Nanaimo schools used two or three different readers which means there were two or three grades in all classrooms.³⁸ By 1893, about half the classes used only one reader. When Central School opened in 1896, all classes, except the most junior, had students working in only one reader. Classrooms, then, became more specialized over the decade. For example, in 1891 there were four classes at the Girls' School. The senior class used the Fourth and Fifth Readers while the junior class used the first and second level Primers and the Second Reader.³⁹ By 1893, the senior class at the Girls' School used only the Fifth Reader while the junior class continued to use the same three readers as it had two years earlier. In 1896, nine of the ten classes at Central School each used only one reader. Only the junior class at Central and the junior classes at the Ward Schools used two or three readers. By 1896 there was a single reader, and therefore a single 'grade', in most Nanaimo classrooms.

Although the Nanaimo Trustees introduced co-education and single grade classrooms in the 1890s, they did not implement age-grading. Table 6.4 shows

³⁸ Data about which readers were used in each division are not available from the class registers even though there was designated reporting space for such information. However, until 1899 the Superintendent of Education's Annual Reports indicated which readers were used in each division.

³⁹ There was no First Reader in British Columbia schools until 1897-98. Even when it was introduced provincially, Nanaimo schools did not adopt it. Students in Nanaimo continued to work through the two parts of the Primer and then move on to the Second Reader.

the age distribution of students by class or division in various years. The most striking feature of the Table is that a four- or five-year age range in each classroom was the norm throughout the entire decade.⁴⁰ There was an upward shift in the age range from the junior to the senior classes which became more accentuated by the end of the decade. This is evident from a comparison of the the first division at the Boys' School in the early 1890s with its equivalent, the first division of Central School, in the late 1890s. In the former, the youngest student was nine and the oldest fifteen, while in the latter the youngest student was eleven and the oldest sixteen. In Nanaimo schools in the 1890s classrooms were not age-graded.

Historians have interpreted age-grading as an educational innovation with complicated repercussions for children. British historian Hugh Cunningham argues it was one of several changes which created a separate world of childhood.⁴¹ Several American historians have also written about age-grading. Daniel T. Rodgers states that age-grading meant 'a much more consistent behavioral scrutiny than ever before and a much tighter, habit-ingraining behavioral regimentation.'⁴² Selma Berrol claims schools in 'urban-immigrant districts showed great variations in the ages of students in any given grade, a

⁴⁰ When years are conflated, for example the first division at the Boys' School from 1891 to 1894, the age range is virtually identical for each year.

⁴¹ Hugh Cunningham, Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500 (London: Longman, 1995), 35-40.

⁴² Daniel T. Rodgers, 'Socializing Middle-Class Children: Institutions, Fables, and Work Values in Nineteenth-Century America,' in Ray Hiner and Joseph M. Hawes, eds., Growing Up in America: Children in Historical Perspective (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 122.

Table 6.4
Nanaimo schools: age distribution by division from extant August registers, 1891-1901

School	Div	Years	Student distribution by age																	Total
			6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	na					
N. Ward	1	1893-95	1	5	19	34	39	20	15	6	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	142	
Central	10	1897-98	55	44	12	1	4	1											124	241
Central	9	1897-00	15	96	125	54	27	11	3	1									41	373
Central	7	1899-00	1	13	38	39	29	18	5										16	159
Central	6	1897-00		13	58	89	68	47	22	4	1								3	305
Central	5	1896-00		6	25	67	75	78	57	16	5								18	347
Central	4	1896-00			11	37	64	82	58	32	13	4							12	313
Central	2	95-96,00			8	19	30	34	26	20	4								1	142
Central	1	1898-00			1	19	31	39	30	11	1								2	134
Boys	1	1891-94		4	16	37	41	42	34	8									2	184

Group numbers exceeding 8 % of the total known ages are outlined.
NA - no age recorded

Note: the 8 % outline conveniently separates age groups with roughly 10 % or more of the total from age groups with roughly 5 % or less.

Sources: Nanaimo Community Archives, extant Nanaimo school registers for August quarters, 1891-1901

circumstance not true of schools that native-born children attended.⁴³ Joseph Kett writes that 'it is impossible to separate age-grading from industrialization.'⁴⁴ Harvey J. Graff links the development of the dependent child to increasing segregation by age or age-grading.⁴⁵ Just as age-grading had implications for children's experience of schools, its absence mattered in the way children moved through Nanaimo's schools.

6.5 Hierarchies of Age and Gender in Nanaimo Classrooms

Some of the implications of mixing students by age and gender in Nanaimo classrooms are evident from three sets of class examination results which were left inside class registers and forgotten. The surviving examinations were for the fourth division at Central School at Christmas in 1896 and 1897 and for the sixth division at Central School in June 1899.⁴⁶ Although all students in each of these divisions worked in the same reader, they did not all participate in the examination. In the first instance, twenty-four of forty-five students participated; in the second instance, twenty-nine of fifty-eight; and in the third instance,

⁴³ Selma Berrol, 'Immigrant Children at School, 1880-1940, A Child's Eye View,' in Elliott West and Paula Petrik, eds., Small Worlds: Children & Adolescents in America, 1850-1950 (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1992), 45.

⁴⁴ Joseph Kett, 'The History of Age Grouping in America,' in Arlene Skolnick, ed., Rethinking Childhood: Perspectives on Development and Society (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1976), 222.

⁴⁵ Harvey J. Graff, 'The Beat of Different Drummers into the Early Twentieth Century,' in his Conflicting Paths: Growing Up in America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 305.

⁴⁶ Unlike the registers, two of the exam results were signed by the Principal, John Shaw.

twenty-eight of seventy-one did so. Students may only have taken the semi-annual examination when the teacher allowed them to do so.⁴⁷ The examination sheets indicated whether students passed or were promoted, were recommended for promotion, or failed. Students were ranked on the basis of their placement in the class on the examination.⁴⁸ Although this is only a small sample of the students who wrote examinations in Nanaimo in the 1890s, patterns are evident when the results are analysed on the basis of age and gender.

The examination results indicate that younger students in a class were more likely to be promoted than older ones. Of the youngest students, a total of twenty from the three examinations, 85 percent were promoted. Of the oldest students, a total of thirty from the three examinations, only 53 percent were promoted. Of the remaining twenty-nine students, 79 percent were promoted. The pattern was consistent for each of the three examinations. Also, of the youngest twenty students, girls accounted for a disproportionately high 80 percent, with the overall sample having 59 percent girls. Of this youngest group, girls accounted for 60, 88, and 100 percent respectively of those who wrote. This indicates that some girls moved up through the hierarchy of classes at a slightly younger age than boys moving at the same rate. The examination results suggest the possibility that in Nanaimo schools in the 1890s, in the hierarchy of achievement, youth outranked age and girls were ahead of boys.

⁴⁷ One indication that it was the teacher's decision as to whether a student could take an examination is the complaint by a parent to the School Trustees that her son's teacher had not allowed him 'to try for promotion at Christmas.' Nanaimo Free Press, 1 February 1897.

⁴⁸ Alice McCullough's report card, discussed above, indicates that by 1901 students were no longer ranked, at least not in the monthly reports to parents.

How did individual students move through the spaces of the school system?⁴⁹ An analysis of the spreadsheet provides some answers. The first division at North Ward School in August of 1893 was used as a cohort group. That particular class was chosen since it was the most junior division, in a first quarter, in the early part of the decade, for which register information was extant. The spreadsheet indicates that of the forty-five students, thirty-eight appeared in at least one other class in another school year. From those, the seven for whom the most information was available were selected.⁵⁰ Of the seven students, the longest any of them spent in the first division at North Ward was three and a quarter years. Six of the seven students spent two or more years in that division. Students, then, did not move from class to class on an annual basis.

Of the seven students, Flora Lawrence and Archibald Dick moved most quickly through the school system. She was seven years old in the first division at North Ward School in fall 1893.⁵¹ She remained there for two years until Christmas 1895 when she was promoted to the fourth division at Central School where she spent the January and April quarters of 1896. The spreadsheet does not show what class she was in during fall 1896, but she reached the second division at Central School by January 1897 and remained there at least until June. Again, the spreadsheet does not show what class or classes she was in

⁴⁹ Neil Sutherland encouraged me to ask how children moved through the Nanaimo schools in the 1890s.

⁵⁰ Complete information is lacking for all the students because many registers are no longer extant. See Table 6.1.

⁵¹ See Table 6.1.

during 1897-98, but for all four quarters of the 1898-99 school year she was in the first division at Central School. She was then twelve years old.⁵² The speed with which Flora Lawrence moved through the school system was matched by that of Archibald Dick. He was eight years old in the first division at North Ward in fall 1893. By fall 1898, he was thirteen years old and had reached the first division at Central School. Both these students went from a junior division to the most senior division in the school system within five years. Lawrence and Dick were successful in their High School entrance examinations in June 1899.⁵³ Both, then, completed elementary school in six years.

By the time Flora Lawrence and Archibald Dick were in the first division at Central, two of their cohort, both males and both two years older than Lawrence, were in the fourth division at Central. This meant that when Lawrence and Dick had reached the fifth grade and the Fifth Reader, two of their cohorts who were older were still in the fourth grade using the Fourth Reader. One of the seven cohort students was still in the school system at Christmas in 1900 and another was still there in June of 1901 -- seven and eight years after the cohort year. Students took very different lengths of time to move through the Nanaimo school system.

The experience of the seven students from the cohort group replicates the experience of students represented by the three sets of examination results. Of the boy and girl who were promoted most quickly through the system, the girl was

⁵² Flora Lawrence became a teacher in Nanaimo in 1905 at age nineteen.

⁵³ BC, SE, Twenty-Eighth ARPS, 1898-99, lxxv.

a year younger than the boy. He was a year younger and she was two years younger than others who moved more slowly through the hierarchy of classes. Nanaimo students moved at an individual pace through the school system. These student experiences suggest that neither youth nor gender seem to have limited the possibility of scholastic achievement and promotion.

The absence of age-grading in Nanaimo schools resulted in examples of a student hierarchy which inverted the one Trustees constructed for teachers. By the late 1890s, the Trustees had ensured that male teachers ranked more highly than those who were female and that, for the most part, older teachers ranked above younger ones. That some students reversed this ordering was perhaps a case of unintended consequences: in particular the Trustees may not have anticipated the implications of introducing co-education in classes which were not age-graded. In a sense, the leadership opportunities for female teachers which closed down during the 1890s remained open for female students throughout the decade. Patrick Harrigan reminds us what exceptional social institutions co-educational schools were in the late-nineteenth century. He argues that 'by placing boys and girls in common buildings with a common curriculum ... schools were a force for decreasing gender differences at a time when churches and independent organizations continued to differentiate them sharply.'⁵⁴ In Nanaimo, co-education without age-grading meant that girls could move ahead of boys and younger students pass ahead of older ones.

⁵⁴ Patrick J. Harrigan, 'The Schooling of Boys and Girls in Canada,' Journal of Social History 23, 4 (Summer 1990): 805.

In the 1890s, the possibility of 'youth before age' and 'female before male' being acted out by some students was open to scrutiny. School examinations were public and well attended. It is noteworthy, therefore, that in 1900 John Shaw recommended to the Trustees that examinations be conducted once rather than twice a year. Furthermore, by 1901, as Alice McCullough's report which was discussed above indicates, Nanaimo students were no longer ranked in relation to their fellow students on their monthly report cards. Whatever the reasons for these changes, they would have had the effect of veiling patterns of achievement. Making classroom spaces less visible by reducing the number of public examinations, eliminating number grades, and ending the practice of student ranking obscured what went on in the classroom. Educational historians Ulla Johansson and Christina Florin have found a similar decrease in classroom visibility in the Swedish grammar schools during this period in regard to both punishment and assessment. They conclude this was necessary because student achievement hierarchies 'did not correspond well with the social hierarchies outside the school walls.'⁵⁵

School registers encoded the organization and movement of students in Nanaimo schools. Yearly aggregates compiled in the Annual Reports represented those schools as stable and orderly. But the day-by-day and month-by-month images compiled in the registers reveal that throughout the 1890s Nanaimo students continued to experience classrooms with high enrollments, high flow through rates, and a wide range of ages. What changed during the decade was

⁵⁵ Ulla Johansson and Christina Florin, 'Order in the (Middle) Class! Culture, Class, and Gender in the Swedish State Grammar School, 1850-1914,' Historical Studies in Education 6, 1 (Spring 1994): 31 and 35.

that beginning in 1891 junior students for the first time entered co-educational classes when North and South Ward Schools opened. Starting in 1896, many of these same students moved on to take their senior elementary schooling in the new co-educational Central School. With its ten classrooms and central heating, Central School was typical of British Columbia's modern city schools. Flora Lawrence and Archibald Dick, then, were part of a new generation of Nanaimo students.

Conclusion

City schools were part of an expanding state system in British Columbia in the 1890s. Urban School Boards and City Councils worked in tandem with the government in Victoria. In discharging their responsibilities, the Boards functioned with considerable independence. They built and maintained schools, appointed and ranked teachers, and organized students. During the course of the decade, City Councils acquired the responsibility for school finance. Nineteenth-century British Columbia education history, written from a centralist perspective, has articulated the idea of a dominant centre and subordinate localities, but this interpretation is not sufficient to explain the development of public schooling in Nanaimo in the 1890s.

Nanaimo School Trustees Ralph Smith and John Newton challenged Victoria's position as the centre of the British Columbia state system. Smith, the agent for the Miners' and Mine Labourers' Protective Association and a member of the provincial legislature, and Newton, a miner, moved and seconded a revealing motion at the last School Board meeting in 1898. That motion, which passed unanimously, called on the Education Department to relocate the school inspector for the Nanaimo District from Victoria to Nanaimo 'for the benefit of School Board and scholars alike.' The Free Press reported Smith's arguments.

Trustee Smith in speaking to this motion claimed that all officials should reside in the centre of their respective fields of official duty, and on this principle not only the School Inspector, but Judge Harrison, the local judge of the Supreme Court, should reside in Nanaimo. It detracted from the importance of this city to have the officials residing at Victoria and elsewhere, for the public naturally

thought that where the officials resided was an important centre.¹

The ideas Ralph Smith expressed open a window on the philosophy of Nanaimo's School Trustees. They valued Nanaimo's status as a city and recognized the city school system as integral to a civic identity. They saw themselves as an important partner in the production of schooling. They supported the state system and wanted Nanaimo to have a larger share of it. They had no hesitation in promoting their own interests. And they understood that 'centralness' was constructed, not innate.

In seeking to reconfigure the nature and relationship of the centre and the periphery, the Nanaimo School Board engaged in a process which occupied the attention of intellectuals in a variety of fields in the late-nineteenth century. Dominant historical interpretations of the national experience in Canada and the United States, however, continued to articulate a centralist perspective. There were variations, of course, as Frederick Jackson Turner made the periphery the centre and the metropolis the margin while Harold Innis retained the metropolitan centre. In the 1970s, centralist narratives came under assault as historians began to write 'new' histories which recognized that what had been defined as 'marginal' was important in its own right, had a history, and was as much a constituent force as the 'centre.' Over the next few decades, historians of education in Ontario debated the relative ability of central and local education authorities to control the nineteenth-century school system. By the 1990s, the arguments of Bruce Curtis on this subject remain unreconciled with those of R. D.

¹ Nanaimo Free Press, 29 December 1898, 3.

Gidney and W. P. J. Millar.

In British Columbia a centralist perspective has dominated the study of the nineteenth-century school system. Centralism rests on an assumed central-local dualism. This dualism has attracted the attention of cultural theorists in the 1980s and 1990s. Scholars have raised questions about the sustainability of the categories 'central' and 'local,' and about the idea of a hierarchically ordered centre and periphery linked by a primary route of communication with authority flowing outward from the centre. These questions open the door to revisiting the production of public schooling in British Columbia in the 1890s looking specifically at the experience of Nanaimo.

Nanaimo was a city school district in the 1890s and this helped to distinguish it from the surrounding coal-mining region. The developing urban school system was integral to the city-building process in British Columbia in the late-nineteenth century and functioned as a marker of civic status. Europeans began to mine coal at Nanaimo in the early 1850s. By the 1890s, in addition to the resource based economy, the city had a mixed urban economy which served the central Vancouver Island region. Also, the expansion of government had created public sector employment. The city's economic development promoted optimism, but never a sense of security. Civic leaders saw schooling as a form of insurance for the young against the demands and contingencies of the future. Miners, who constituted the city's largest workforce, were unionized, politically active, and often occupationally mobile. They supported public schooling collectively and many did so individually. Defining racial boundaries was very important to the White community in Nanaimo in the 1890s. Many valued public

schooling because they believed it inculcated the formal knowledge systems on which the imperial project was based and constructed an appropriate cultural identity for children of European heritage. Civic leaders used schooling to push back gender boundaries and allow Nanaimo girls and women access to expanded opportunities. From the perspective of civic leaders, public schooling served multiple functions in Nanaimo in the 1890s, particularly in regard to making and unmaking social boundaries.

The 1890s were transitional years in the development of public schooling in British Columbia. Through a series of legislative initiatives the province instituted a new city school system in which the responsibility for school finance devolved to the City Councils in Nanaimo, Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster. Councils were expected to raise the necessary money through property taxation, something which Nanaimo Aldermen vigorously resisted. The provincial government responded by transferring to the cities new sources of revenue which substantially underwrote the operating costs of the schools. Nanaimo City Council also lobbied successfully for special appropriations to cover the full cost of constructing the three-story Central School which opened in 1896. Developments in school finance, viewed from the perspective of Nanaimo, do not support the centralist interpretation of nineteenth-century British Columbia education history for several reasons. City Council found itself at loggerheads with the School Board which attempted to act in accordance with provincial legislation. Some members of the provincial government acted in the interests of City Council. There were many different communication routes between Victoria and Nanaimo. Resistance from Nanaimo helped to bring about very significant changes in the system of financing schools. In sum, the categories 'central' and

'local' were fractured, there were multiple axes of communication, and the response from the periphery was as important as central initiatives in structuring the financing of public schools.

Another major change in the school system in the 1890s was its expansion. In Nanaimo, the number of enrolled students more than doubled and the average daily attendance nearly tripled. Nanaimo School Trustees were responsible for deciding how much physical space was necessary to accommodate the growing school population and for providing the required number of classrooms. The new school buildings constructed during the 1890s helped to establish Nanaimo's identity as an important urban centre in the province. In the process of building and maintaining schools, older forms of industrialism met newer ones. The Trustees continued to manage directly and acted within the context of a familiar tradition of self-help by hiring female caretakers they judged to be in need and deserving. They also supported local businesses and tradesmen as much and as even-handedly as possible. At the same time, the Trustees purchased products nationally and internationally. The Trustees' role in providing school space does not support a centralist interpretation of nineteenth-century British Columbia education history. Responsibility for this important work was decentralized to the city School Boards. In acquiring industrial products, the Trustees dealt with multiple centres along many communication routes. For advice and information the Trustees turned laterally to their counterparts in other cities in the province. The Nanaimo School Board's role in school building does not fit within the centralist paradigm. Neither do the Board's responsibilities for appointing teachers and organizing teachers and students which were integrally related to its organization of physical space.

The growth of Nanaimo's student population changed the scale of schooling in the city. By the middle of the decade, Central School with its ten classes had a more complex organization of teachers than had the small Boys' and Girls' Schools in the early 1890s. Even though qualified men applied, the Trustees hired only women, most of whom were from Nanaimo, for entry- and middle-level teaching positions. As a result, a singular and important venue for female employment in the community opened up during the 1890s. The appointment of women teachers to entry- and middle-level positions in Nanaimo was typical of urban school systems. The Trustees limited senior positions to men and were willing to go outside Nanaimo to find men with university degrees. Since few young men in Nanaimo could acquire a university degree, the possibility of teaching in the city schools was effectively closed to them. The hierarchy of teachers the Board constructed at Central School was not only gendered but aged and as a result it bore a resemblance to the model of the ideal family. In the final analysis, the Trustees' hierarchical organization of teachers created significant new opportunities for women by expanding the boundaries of what was acceptable for them to do, not by breaking those boundaries down. Women paid a price for what they gained by losing access to leadership roles. The Trustees, in effect, used the model of the family to ensure that women were contained.

The organization of students in Nanaimo schools changed over the course of the 1890s. The large Central School, of a type found only in the province's cities, brought students from across the city together. Its modern heating system may even have kept them warmer than the stoves in smaller schools. The Trustees introduced co-education at each new school they built during the decade. This

process began for junior students at the Ward Schools in 1891 and was extended to senior students at Central School in 1896. The Trustees also made changes in the number of grades in each class. At the beginning of the decade there were several grades in each classroom. When Central School opened all but the most junior classes had only one grade. The Trustees did not grade students by age, but by academic achievement. Students, then, moved through school at an individual rate. This resulted in some girls moving ahead of boys and some younger students being promoted before older ones so that the hierarchical ordering of students in Nanaimo schools did not replicate that of the teachers. Student achievement, however, became less publicly visible by the end of the decade.

Locally generated school records were essential to the reconstruction of the development of public schooling in Nanaimo with which this study has been concerned. It is fortunate, then, that both the Board and Council minutes and letterbooks have survived as well as 25 percent of the class registers. These sources delineate the role which City Council and the School Board played in financing, building, and maintaining schools, as well as appointing teachers and organizing teachers and students. The Nanaimo records make clear how much scrambling and coping went on in the city's public schools. Classrooms not only had high enrollments, they had high flow through rates and quarterly increases and decreases. The records also document the extent to which organizing physical space, teachers, and students was an unending work in progress. Little sense of the 'reality on the ground' is retrievable from the Superintendent of Education's Annual Reports. The Nanaimo school records make evident the explanatory limitations of a centralist interpretation of nineteenth-century British Columbia

education history.

This dissertation argues that, from the perspective of the city of Nanaimo in the 1890s, a centralist interpretation of British Columbia education history does not adequately represent the historical complexity of the school system. Neither does it accommodate the possibility of successful local resistance to central initiatives nor the extent to which public schooling was produced locally. It is important, then, to examine what kind of context Nanaimo constituted for state schooling in the last years of the century. The study concludes that civic leaders and significant interest groups in the community believed schooling played an important boundary making role in forging civic, racial, gender, and occupational identities. In carrying out their interlocking responsibilities for providing physical space and organizing teachers and students, the Nanaimo School Trustees created opportunities for local girls and, within limits, for women. The Trustees limited opportunities for local men, but went outside the community for men who had the professional credentials which were increasingly desirable in the late-nineteenth century. Both the traditions of self-help and the imperatives of corporate capitalism intersected in school production in late-nineteenth century Nanaimo. The focus on securing identities through the differentiating processes of boundaries and hierarchies which was evident in Nanaimo was typical of a wider colonial discourse at the end of the nineteenth century.

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Stirtan, note to Miss Dick re: Alicia from Mrs E. Bate); Central School fourth division, Aug. 1897 - Jun. 1899; Central School fourth division, Aug. 1899 - Aug. 1900, (insert: Supplement to Glasgow Weekly Herald, 7 October 1899, a large picture of the America Cup Race 1899, Columbia vs Shamrock,); Central School fifth division, Aug. 1896 - Jun. 1897; Central School fifth division, Aug. 1897 - Jun. 1899; Central School fifth division, Aug. 1899 - Jun. 1901; Central School sixth division, Aug. 1897 - Jun. 1899; Central School sixth division, Aug. 1899 - Jun. 1901, (insert: one sheet with examination results for the sixth division at Central School, 13 and 14 Jun. 1899); Central School seventh division, Jan. 1898 - Mar. 1899; Central School seventh division, Aug. 1899 - Jun. 1901; Central School eighth division, Jan. 1901 - Jun. 1901; Central School ninth division, Aug. 1897 - Jun. 1899; Central School ninth division, Aug. 1899 - Jun. 1901, (insert: one sheet with examination results for the fourth division at Central School, 7 and 8 Dec. 1897, Teacher - Flora Hartt, Principal - John Shaw); Central School tenth division, Aug. 1897 - Dec. 1898; Central School tenth division, Nov. 1900 - Oct. 1902; North Ward School first division, Aug. 1893 - Mar. 1896. Nanaimo Community Archives

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