JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Registered at the G.P.O., Sydney, for transmission by post as a periodical
The Development of State Aided Education in Newcastle 1858-1880

E. J. BRAGGETT

To a considerable degree the history of state aided education in Newcastle between 1858 and 1880 parallels the general development throughout the rest of the state. Nevertheless, one may discern certain local characteristics that either differed from the state's general pattern, or were so strong in this district that they helped to channel the state's educational development. Throughout this paper 'Newcastle' is meant to include both the city area and the suburbs in existence by 1880; this differs from the use of the term 'Newcastle District' as reported by the educational authorities during the nineteenth century.

I

The first reported school in Newcastle was begun as early as 1816 when seventeen children were gathered together in the convict settlement and were instructed by one of the convicts. This school passed under the control of the Church and School Corporation in the 1820's and was later continued as a Church of England Denominational School. It is claimed to be one of the oldest—if not the oldest—school in Australia still in existence. During the 1830's other schools were opened: Gould claims that the Reverend Father Dowling began a school for Roman Catholic children and that the Wesleyan Church established its own school. By 1845 the Presbyterian Church had entered the field of education in Newcastle and, hence, when the Legislative Council created both a Board of National Education and a Denominational School Board in New South Wales in 1848, the four religions already had existing schools in Newcastle. Private schools had existed, moreover, and had contributed to the educational facilities of the settlement.

Three important changes then occurred, influencing the type of education provided for the children, and changing the social composition of the inhabitants. In 1855 the district saw the fortunate conclusion of the dismal convict labour; although the penal settlement had been abolished in 1823, a small party of convicts had been maintained at the settlement and in 1855 had been working on the construction of the breakwater, begun in Governor Macquarie's time. Secondly, the gold rushes had an adverse effect on Newcastle for a short period. For example, the Church of England authorities were concerned about the residence of the teacher of the newly-commenced Anglican Grammar School in Newcastle in 1853. It was a fact that in a most dilapidated state, scarcely habitable ... [in which] ... in rainy weather, the shelter of umbrellas was necessary, but little could be done by the church owing to the poor conditions of the labour market; skilled labourers had migrated to the...
With such far-reaching changes occurring, the problem of education for the children became most pressing. Not only were the schools in the most densely-populated area increasing in numbers, but also large numbers of people were moving to areas where no schools existed, or where, at the best, hastily constructed slab-huts were used for schools and were taught by ill-prepared teachers. In 1854 William Wilkins was despatched by the National Board of Education to examine the schools in the Hunter River District. He wrote:

I visited most of the schools then existing in the district, inspected the school premises, and examined the pupils. With a few striking exceptions, these schools were deplorable in arrangement, and totally unsuited to the purpose of instruction; the furniture and apparatus were generally unsatisfactory, and in some cases altogether wanting. In short, there was a serious deficiency in all the means and appliances of instruction. Further, the pupils were irregular in their attendance, and in their class work. As a result, the teachers were often destitute of energy and technical skill, on which account the labours were generally unproductive.

The picture was rather dismal in 1854.

The Board of National Education did not influence Newcastle's educational development for some time although it had been created in 1848. Actually, Newcastle did not have its first National School until 1858. It was established in the basement of the Congregational Church in Brown Street and its first teachers were Mr and Mrs Webley. The rent paid was seven shillings per week. The school was known as a non-vested school: the school building was provided by the people who were also responsible for its maintenance but the salaries of the various teachers were paid by the National Board while books were provided by the same authority. The school was open the whole year and the number on the roll in 1858 rose to 125 comprising eighty-four boys and forty-one girls. The teacher who succeeded Webley was Joseph Thompson under whose influence the attendance continued to rise. In many ways this school was very defective until 1862 and in a scathing report the inspector commented on the 'irregularity and want of punctuality' of the pupils and their untidiness and inattentiveness in general. The report on the teacher revealed that 'the order is somewhat imperfect . . . the lessons often want precision and, when given, require to be more searchingly examined'.

Nevertheless, the long-awaited school had been established and the people of Newcastle were not indifferent to the poor condition of the building. The 1861 Report of the Board of National Education stated that the inhabitants of the area were making arrangements for the erection of a vested school; that it was provided and maintained by the National Board. For this purpose a Local Board for the Public Schools was elected. A site for the school was chosen in Tyrell Street on the corner of Tyrell Street and the Terrace, a site which is opposite the present Newcastle Senior Boys' High School. The land was granted by the government. The following account appeared in the Newcastle Chronicle on 29 October 1862.

On Saturday evening last . . . the foundation stone of the proposed National School in this town was laid by Mr Thomas Adam. The new school building . . . will be plain but substantial, and for what it is intended, most commodious building of some 74 feet by 34 feet broad. Early in the afternoon, the young people receiving instruction under the (National) system assembled in their present schoolroom (that beneath the Congregational Chapel) and under the escort of their teachers, preceded by a band of music, marched in procession in the spot where the stone was to be laid. (Here Mr Adam drew attention to the fact that there were at present from 80 to 90 children receiving education on the National System in Newcastle; but since that school and its progress was deficient in many respects; that the new school room would accommodate about 300 pupils; and that there was no reason to believe, large as it might seem, that that number of pupils would not be found.)

This building, together with the teacher's residence, cost about £1,800, the Local Board being responsible for one-third of the cost. The public did not rally to their support very well and these gentlemen had to bear the debt over a considerable time.
In 1867 J. Hannell, one of the Local Board, wrote to Wilkins saying:

In 1865 the school premises as they now stand were completed—

which time the patrons have made meeting appeals to the public to

pay off this debt; they have three personally canvassed the whole-

city, they have held bazaars, they have given concerts; but from all

these sources they failed to realize more than about £20 in the mean-
time [sic] they have paid out of their own pockets the sum of £220

independent of interest for renewals of the Pro; notes, and have at the

present time a Bill for £140 at the A.J.B. Bank which will be due

carly next month.22

The new school was opened on 27 October 1863, the teacher, Mr

J. Thompson, continuing as headmaster. This, then, was

Newcastle’s first Public School.26

Other schools followed the example of the Newcastle National School and also applied to the National Board for aid. Most of these were non-vested schools originally. The first was the Waratah School (now the Mayfield East Public School) which was opened on 1 July 1858,27 and this was followed by the Pitt Town (or Hamilton) School in 1859.28 During 1860 both Minmi and Stockton applied to the Board for aid: it was granted to Stockton in the same year and a school was opened in December 1860.29 Minmi’s School was opened in 1861 in ‘a good brick building, newly erected, and well supplied with furniture’.30 Wallsend was the next area to apply in 186131 and a school was commenced in July 1862,32 while the Hanbury School (now Waratah) accepted pupils under the National System from January 1864.33 After 1864 schools sprang up in many areas of Newcastle and, in 1865 alone, schools were opened by the Board of National Education at Hexham (10 November), Lambton (1 September), Wallsend (1 September), and Teralba (now called Barnsley) on 22 December.34 So by the end of 1865 there were eleven schools which received aid from the National Board in the Newcastle area. Table 1 indicates the National Schools in existence in Newcastle by 1865 and the date on which each was commenced.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National School</th>
<th>Date on which the school was commenced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hanbury (now Waratah)</td>
<td>Commenced 1864 and opened the whole year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hexham</td>
<td>10 November 1865.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambton</td>
<td>1 September 1865.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minmi</td>
<td>1861.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>Commenced 1858 and opened the whole year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallsend (now Barnsley)</td>
<td>22 December 1865.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanbury</td>
<td>1 July 1862.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallsend</td>
<td>1 July 1858.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although numbers at the various schools fluctuated considerably from year to year, Table 2 is included to give some idea of the relative size of each of the National Schools in 1865.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number on Roll</th>
<th>Average Attendance (1865)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hanbury</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hexham</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambton</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minmi</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburg</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockton</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terella</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallsend</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waratah</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the Board of National Education, there was a Denominational School Board which also granted state aid to the various Denominational Schools. By 1864 there were six schools in the Newcastle District which received aid from this Board. One of these was the Christ Church Anglican Denominational School which had been established in 1816. Apparently the school was regarded favourably by the people and patronised well by the children. It was in good condition and in 1860 the Bishop of Newcastle wrote of ‘the excellent school buildings at Christ Church’.35 St John’s Anglican School was another and it provided education for over 60 children; Elkin describes its foundation in greater detail.36 Other Church of England Denominational Schools were to be found at Wallsend37 and at Hexham. The Newcastle Presbyterian Denominational School under J. Macara was still another—a school which had been commenced in 1845. Finally, there was the Roman Catholic School which received aid from the Denominational School Board from 1864.38 It was spoken of favourably by most visitors, and the inspector’s report for 1864 stated that ‘this school is at present in a healthy condition’.39 Table 3 gives further information about these schools in 1864.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Pupils on Roll</th>
<th>Average Attendance of Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christ Church (C.E.)</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St John’s (C.E.)</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle (C.E.)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallsend (C.E.)</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle Presbyterian</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle Roman Catholic</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Until 1865, therefore, the pattern of development is quite obvious. The growing problem of education which was being experienced in Sydney before 1850 was not felt so keenly in
Newcastle, the churches being able to satisfy most of the needs of education in their limited fashion. After 1850, however, when the population increased so quickly, and when the movement to the 'suburbs' gained momentum, the cry was for National Schools. The church never again regained its exalted position in education in the Newcastle District.

III

So much dissatisfaction was apparent with the dual system of education that Henry Parkes introduced the Public Schools Bill in 1866 to abolish both Boards and to set up a single Council of Education to control both National Schools and Certified Denominational Schools. In order for Denominational Schools to receive state aid, they had to meet certain requirements in relation to numbers in their schools and distances from other National Schools. The important outcome, however, was that the Council of Education could grant state aid to Certified Denominational Schools but, in future, could not maintain them. Within weeks the clash developed into a sectarian struggle and the Newcastle Chronicle followed the district's reaction very closely, at the same time siding with the Nationalists. The outcry occurred first in Sydney, of course, but it spread quickly to the Newcastle District.

Setting an example for others to follow, the Bishop of Sydney called a meeting of the laity and clergy of the Church of England on 24 September to oppose the Bill. Similar meetings were held in Newcastle at which the Bishop of Newcastle gave his most strenuous opposition to some of the clauses dealing with Denominational education. In fairness to Bishop Tyrrell, one has to add that for many years he had led a campaign to improve Denominational Schools throughout the diocese, and in Newcastle in particular—and had done his utmost to make them efficient and popular. Admittedly, he had conscientiously attacked the Third Report of the Board of National Education in 1851 and had spoken of it as being 'confused, incorrect and deceptive', and had announced at this early date that he was preparing an article entitled 'The Superiority of the Denominational System'. This continued to be his attitude and he later wrote, 'I opposed [the Bill] most vehemently when it was enacted'. But apart from criticising the National System, he had taken steps to improve the Denominational System particularly in the Newcastle Diocese. He had written educational reports for the Denominational School Board, some of these articles being reprinted in the Annual Reports of that Board; he had brought out teachers from England to teach in the Church of England Schools; he had promoted movements to revive Church Schools; and had encouraged the residents of Newcastle to send their children to the Church Schools in the district. So the 1866 Bill was a great blow to Bishop Tyrrell and in the last few months of 1866 he solidly stood behind all meetings which opposed the unmodified Bill. He was the spokesman for the Church of England clergy in the area. However, he did not receive the unqualified support of the lay members of the Church as many of them either favoured the Bill or were restrained in their criticism.

The reaction of the other churches varied. The Roman Catholic Church never at any time gave sanction to the Bill. Under the guidance of the clergy, Newcastle members of this Church petitioned the legislature against the measure. Other denominations, numerically smaller, followed the lead of the larger congregations in Sydney and were mainly in favour of the Bill. The deacons of the Congregational Church in Newcastle petitioned the Legislative Council:

That your petitioners, believing that the Education Bill now before your Honorable House is of a comprehensive character, and is calculated to raise the standard of education generally, and the status of the teacher, trust that your Honorable House will be pleased to pass the measure into law.

Further support for the Bill was forthcoming. Within a matter of weeks petitions were signed at Wallsend, Newcastle, Lambton, Waratah, Mimi and Hexham, while expressions of opinion from other localities followed in quick succession. The mining communities were not slow to vent their true feelings and these were more in favour of the National System than against it. A few years later Newcastle was described as "the very hotbed of rationalism and ultra democratic notions" and it was the attitude of the people to the question of education and the manner in which they expressed it that partly earned this reputation for them. Notices such as the following appeared around Newcastle and in the Newcastle Chronicle:

A petition has been got up here (Lambton) for presentation to the Legislative Council in favour of Mr Parkes' Education Bill. The petition is lying at Mr Den's Northumberland Hotel for signature.

Naturally the teachers of the National Schools gave their unstinted support and they had an influence far beyond that expected of their numbers. They petitioned the government, expressed their opinions in the newspapers, and wrote to Henry Parkes personally. In this letter they expressed the opinion that "were it not for clerical influence, there would not in all probability have been a single petition against the measure."

After much heated discussion in the Parliament, during which the Bill was amended, a modified form of the Bill was passed and became law on 1 January 1867. Under the single Council of Education which was created, Newcastle was to benefit greatly during the next fourteen years.

IV

In 1867 the population of Newcastle was to be found mainly in the city area and in areas around Lambton-Wallsend, Waratah-Maxfield, Hamilton-Merewether, and Stockton—in most 'suburbs' coal could be mined. Between 1867 and 1880 the population continued to expand at an ever-increasing rate as those areas between the already populated localities were settled.
and as the bounds of the small townships pushed back the scrub. The Newcastle Chronicle reported the official population of Newcastle and its immediate environs in 1871 to be 18,665, an increase of about 15,000 in ten years. The city's population jumped from 1,462 in 1861 to 7,581 in 1871—a rise of over 500 per cent—and although the increase did not continue at the same spectacular pace, the city's population in 1881 was close to 9,000. Nobody questioned the absolute need for increased educational facilities in the district: the need was made imperative by the rapid rise in numbers. All agreed in principle that new schools were needed or that old schools required extensions in order to cope with the children. Moreover, the school inspector in 1867 reported that only four of the eleven Public Schools were both suitable in condition and sufficiently large to accommodate the number of children in attendance. Four of the six Certified Denominational Schools received no major criticism.

Gaining a new school was not a simple task and usually met with serious opposition from some quarter. One of the most serious obstacles was that of finance for even though the Council of Education met two-thirds of the cost, the local residents were still required to provide the remainder. The rule, however, produced greater difficulties as the years passed and as more and more localities were faced with the problem of meeting their financial commitments. When the Public School at Wallsend (Warden's reach) was replaced by a new one in 1869—a school which cost a total of £1,500—an amount of £1,000 was paid by the Council but the remainder had to be raised by the inhabitants. The local people set to work to find this money and the Coal Company gave a substantial donation to aid them. Tea meetings and musical meetings were held in order to gain finance to reduce the debt and numerous social events were planned: a railway excursion to Singleton added to the list of money-making activities which were arranged by the Local Board. It was a great relief to all concerned when the debt was finally eradicated. Some schools were fortunate in that the site for the school was donated by some person or company; in such cases the local inhabitants were able to deduct the full value of the site from their one-third payment. The Plattsburg Public School was granted three-quarters of an acre by Mr A. Kendrick and the full value of the land was reckoned as portion of the sum to be raised by the locals. Where the land was not donated, however, the inhabitants had to contribute one-third of its cost to the Council of Education, in addition to the one-third subscription to the school buildings.

The burden became excessive when a school was situated in a rapidly expanding suburb of Newcastle because the extra commitments for any extensions had to be met while the original debt was still being paid off. In January 1869 the plans of the new public school at Wallsend were exhibited in the township, a school building to accommodate 300 children being contemplated. Throughout that year and 1870 collectors canvassed the district for subscriptions in order to raise their portion of the money which the inhabitants estimated at £500. The Wallsend Coal Mining Company gave liberal assistance to the movement by donating the site and £200 on certain conditions but the local people had to raise a further £150—a sum that was still owing in 1872 despite the concerts and the organized train and steamer excursions which had been held to raise funds. To add to the district's problems, the population increased rapidly until there were about 400 children on the school roll in 1874 and extensions to the school were essential. The Council of Education was willing to pay two-thirds of these extensions but the Local Board of 1867 reported that only five of the eleven Public Schools were both suitable in condition and sufficiently large to accommodate the number of children in attendance. When the Public School at Wallsend was replaced in 1868 the remainder had to be raised by the inhabitants. Gaining a new school was not a simple task and usually met with serious opposition from some quarter. One of the most serious obstacles was that of finance for even though the Council of Education met two-thirds of the cost, the local residents were still required to provide the remainder. The rule, however, produced greater difficulties as the years passed and as more and more localities were faced with the problem of meeting their financial commitments. When the Public School at Wallsend (Warden's reach) was replaced by a new one in 1869—a school which cost a total of £1,500—an amount of £1,000 was paid by the Council but the remainder had to be raised by the inhabitants. The local people set to work to find this money and the Coal Company gave a substantial donation to aid them. Tea meetings and musical meetings were held in order to gain finance to reduce the debt and numerous social events were planned: a railway excursion to Singleton added to the list of money-making activities which were arranged by the Local Board. It was a great relief to all concerned when the debt was finally eradicated. Some schools were fortunate in that the site for the school was donated by some person or company; in such cases the local inhabitants were able to deduct the full value of the site from their one-third payment. The Plattsburg Public School was granted three-quarters of an acre by Mr A. Kendrick and the full value of the land was reckoned as portion of the sum to be raised by the locals. Where the land was not donated, however, the inhabitants had to contribute one-third of its cost to the Council of Education, in addition to the one-third subscription to the school buildings.

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commencement of 1877 plans were being drawn up. The population of Tighes Hill, however, continued to increase at a rapid rate and the plans had to be altered and the building extended. By mid-1877 the plans were again modified when Inspector Dwyer commented on the need for a building to accommodate an average of from 100 to 150 children, owing to the rapidly increasing population of the district. The actual tender was not accepted until December 1877.

Some areas were refused schools even though they could guarantee more than the required number of pupils. In such places it would seem that the Council refused the applications because the new localities were sufficiently close to other established Public Schools. Even though the new communities satisfied the provisions of the 1866 Act and the Council’s Regulations, it was not considered expedient to build new schools for them while there was a chance that other schools could cope with the numbers. It must be remembered that attendance was not compulsory and the Council could anticipate a two-thirds attendance only; hence, existing schools were extended rather than for new schools to be established. This was particularly variations for small communities which, from 1866 to 1880, were growing between the more widely scattered larger towns. Tighes Hill was in this position for it was close to Hamilton and Waratah, Woolloomooloo and the New Lambton Public School. Children from Tighes Hill had to walk over a mile to the New Lambton School and further still to the WallSEND School and in line of this and because of the very slow rate of administration over one hundred children were guaranteed to attend the inhabitants of Tighes Hill thought they would have little difficulty in obtaining a school. They became ‘very indignant’ when they were told by the Council that the schools at Lambton were sufficient and their application had been refused. The reason for this is to be found in the Inspector’s memorandum written after he had inspected the locality. He commented that the site is suitable . . . a population of about 250 is settled and an number of children of school age is sufficient to form a school. But he added that the Lambton Public School was within one mile, and that already 107 of the 107 children promised for the Jesmond Public School were attending the Lambton School. He concluded that should the population increase as anticipated, then, in all probability, one will be necessary. The Council of Education did this on a number of occasions in Newcastlet and it would seem that first chance that it was short-sighted and not trying to provide for the future. On deeper examination, however, two factors are obvious. In many areas of New South Wales and on the outskirts of Newcas"
erected and on 20 November 1879 the finest buildings outside of Sydney were opened capable of accommodating 1,000 pupils, and costing almost £10,000. At the same time the Christ Church School and the Newcastle Roman Catholic School experienced a corresponding increase. The attendance at Christ Church in 1867 was 629 and this had risen to 179 in 1877. More spectacular still was the rise at the Newcastle Roman Catholic School: from a mere 68 pupils in one department in 1868, it grew until it was a flourishing school organized into Boys, Girls and Infants Departments with a total enrolment of over 300 pupils.

In the suburbs this rise was even more apparent. As the population migrated to the townships and as the numbers rose, the demand for increased education facilities was felt more keenly. Public Schools were commenced at the Glebe, Carrington, New Lambton, Adamstown and Charlestown. The following table indicates when new buildings or new schools were officially opened in Newcastle between 1867 and 1880.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Buildings constructed in Newcastle by the Council of Education, 1867-1880, and the Date of Construction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public School</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanbury (now Warnabah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallsend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warnabah (The Folly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle South (The Junction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallsend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wickham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tichborne Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimili</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adamstown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlestown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onbygbambah (Carrington)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Lambton</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Establishment of the school also.

This list of schools is significant because establishment of each school or the extension of existing premises displayed the Council's assurance that the population was both settled and likely to increase. It is of further interest that each school has remained in existence and in almost all cases the buildings constructed between 1867 and 1880 are still standing and still being used. Hence, by 1880, the Public Schools in operation were those enumerated in Table 4, in addition to schools at Stockton, Hexham, Lambton and Teralba (Barnsley). Three Provisional Schools provided education at Ash Island (1876), Belmont (1876) and Hillsborough (1877).

The Certified Denominational Schools also played an important part in the provision of educational facilities in the suburbs. It was more difficult to establish such schools because of the restrictions placed upon them by the 1866 Act, and for this reason there was no great increase in the number of these schools. In addition, some of the churches were not interested in starting Denominational Schools. Neither the Baptist nor the Congregational Churches sought the establishment of their own schools and were content with the Public School System. In Newcastle the Wesleyan Church had no school of its own, and the decision of the Annual Meeting in Sydney in 1874 to convert all Wesleyan Denominational Schools into Public Schools was indicative of the feelings of the Wesleyans in this district. The Presbyterian Denominational School at Newcastle South faced difficulties, especially when extensions were necessary. In desperation the Reverend Countts convened a meeting in 1871 to consider the insufficiency of the accommodation of the present school-room, there being over 300 pupils now attending it, and as a result of the meeting, it was passed that it is desirable to have the present certified denominational school converted into a public one. Accordingly, the change occurred and Newcastle's only Certified Presbyterian Denominational School closed in 1872. The Public School created in its place is the present Junction Primary School.

The Church of England and the Roman Catholic attitudes receive deeper consideration. The three Anglican Denominational Schools in the suburbs—Saint John's, Hexham and Wallsend—continued in existence, characterized by low and fluctuating attendances. An attempt was made during 1874 and 1875 to gain state aid to commence a Church of England School at Stockton, but the Council of Education refused the certificate; the school was transferred, therefore, to the Council of Education. Apart from the Christ Church School in the city area, the attendance at the Church of England Schools declined between 1867 and 1880 and the Act of 1880 was not an unmitigated evil to the suburban schools of this denomination. Despite this numerical decline, there was still a group of staunch supporters of Anglican Denominational Schools in Newcastle led by Bishop Tyrrell. He did not make the strong claims of the Roman Catholics, even though he thought that well run church schools had so much more to offer than the Public Schools. In his address to the School of Newcastle in 1875, he advised numbers of School not to speak in terms of untruthful disparagement of Public Schools for these were neither godless nor irreligious. Although he did not acquiesce in the abolition of state aid to Denominational Schools nor in their closing, it seems that he realized the fight was a losing one; as a result, he took measures to improve the effectiveness of the Church of England Sunday Schools and to provide extra facilities for religious education during the week.

In relation to the Roman Catholic Church, two significant events affected Newcastle in 1874. The impact of the recently formed Public School League was felt in September 1874 when branches were formed in the district and the cry for 'Free,
Compulsory and Secular education was really begun. Secondly, the influence of Coadjutor-Archbishop Vaughan was apparent in the north; in August 1874 Archbishop Vaughan spoke at Maitland and alluded to the advantages of Denominational education. He appealed... to the religious sects to unite, and work together in the defense of that system of education. It was a warning which he was to repeat so often thereafter. These two events were, perhaps, timely warnings to the Roman Catholic Church; in the same year the facilities at the Newcastle Roman Catholic School were extended as we have noted. The Lambton Roman Catholic School was opened in 1875 and granted a certificate; the Roman Catholic Schools at Hamilton and Plattsburg were granted certificates in 1876, and the school at Newcastle South was likewise successful in obtaining one in 1877. The attendance at the only Certified Roman Catholic School in Newcastle in 1867 was 73 but in 1877 the combined attendance at the five Roman Catholic Schools amounted to 648. Table 5 shows the combined attendance at the Roman Catholic Schools in Newcastle between 1867 and 1877.

TABLE 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1876</td>
<td>450*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures for Lambton R.C. School missing.

So the Roman Catholic community was able to open new schools, and the attendance of the children increased under the surveillance of the clergy and the zeal of the teachers.

VI

Between 1867 and 1880 the education that was aided by the Council of Education in Newcastle was neither free, compulsory nor secular. The parents had to pay for their children's education and the fees were retained by the teachers as part of their salary. Neither was the attendance of children compulsory: the 1866 Act had not forced education on unwilling people but had left the decision to the parents. Some argued that the education provided was secular because a 'secular course of instruction' had been introduced, but, in that aid was still granted to Certified Denominational Schools, others argued that education was not strictly secular.

The actual fees charged in Newcastle varied from school to school according to the economic conditions of the different localities. Originally the Council had issued a uniform scale of fees for all schools and in 1874 this was revised to read:

For one child, 9d. per week.
For two children from the same family, each 7½d. per week.
For three children from the same family, each 6d. per week.
For four children from the same family, each 5½d. per week.

The Newcastle Inspector was asked to recommend a scale of fees for each school in the district, and after 1877 a most common scale of fees was:

For 1, 2 or 3 of a family: 6d. each per week. All over three: free. However, if the inspector thought that parents in any area could pay more, he sometimes suggested higher fees. Inspector Maynard recommended that the fourth child in any family go to the Wisham Public School he charged also, in addition to the first three children, and to this the Council gave its sanction in 1878.

It is noticeable that, although fees were charged, they were not merely accepted by all the inhabitants of Newcastle; occasional outbursts of antagonism rent the Council's peace. Some people, too, were able to show their hostility in a less forceful but equally effective fashion: they would not pay the school fees at all. Feeling against fees was most vociferous in the mining communities where a steady income was not always enjoyed. From time to time the Newcastle Chronicle discussed the absolute poverty existing in some areas where the mines had stopped production and the miners were out of work. The WallSEND Correspondent wrote of instances 'of the poverty-stricken character of the place' where 'two-thirds of the boys were barefooted, and with feet as black as sweeps, and some of the girls, too, but not many... in the same condition.'

In relation to the entire district, the Newcastle Chronicle reported that 'the non-payment of school fees, either through inability or excessive charge, has been the cause of much bitterness in the mining townships,' but only in Lambton do we read of any action being taken to bring the matter before the authorities. The Council at the time was considering raising the school fees and, in protest, a public meeting attended by 150 people passed a resolution which was forwarded to the Council of Education.

This meeting dispenses with the action or intention of the Council of Education to increase the school fees, as it will have a tendency to decrease the attendance of children at the Public School.

In the first few months of 1880 Inspector Maynard was asked to investigate a report from two assistant teachers in another coal mining centre: they said that the amount of school fees actually paid by the children was so low that their incomes were too small for them to live on. The inspector's report shows vividly the position at Minni and the distressing conditions often experienced in coal mining suburbs. Every child in Minni depends directly upon the mines for subsistence. When an order is received for coal, the miners go into the pit and how the quantity required. They are paid by the ton. When no order
is being executed there is no work and consequently no pay. None of the mines dig more than they have an actual order for. The senior proprietor of the Miami mine informs me that during the past three months there has only been work at the pit for 14 days, which means that no family has had more than an average of one day's pay per week, and that some families have not even had that sum. The consequence is that the people are destitute and have neither money, goods or credit... Mr Brown, the proprietor... says there is no prospect whatever of employment being given in future in excess of that now given, and the general feeling is that things will get worse at Miami and not better. Those who can leave will do so, but from all directions the men hear the same news that no employment is to be obtained.

It would seem then that, even though Newcastle was the 'hot-bed of radicalism' and though the desire to avoid fees at times was simply a result of coal mining liberalism, there were many genuine cases of absolute poverty and inability to pay fees for education in the Newcastle area. This would help to account for the rather staunch support given by the inhabitants of Newcastle to the Public School League which was formed in Sydney.

It is probable that an Editorial in the Newcastle Chronicle on 15 September 1874 was the first indication that most of the people received of this movement. A public meeting was convened at Wallsend by the local Mayor in October 1874 to discuss the education question and the following important resolutions were carried.

1. That no system of education, unless wholly nonsectarian, be supported by the state.
2. That the system introduced should be free, compulsory and secular.
3. That this meeting resolves to amalgamate with the Sydney Education League in carrying out the notions proposed.

To this time there had been no official notice of the extension of the League's activities from Sydney to Newcastle but three days later the editor of the Newcastle Chronicle indicated that the League was to hold a public meeting in Newcastle that night, although a matter for speculation, it is still quite feasible that the action of the members of the League in Sydney an indication of the feeling in the Newcastle population. This meeting so hastily convened was held in the Theatre Royal in Watt Street and the reports in the newspapers indicate that the building was crowded by an enthusiastic group of people advocating the acceptance of the principles of the League, "to make primary education National, Secular, Compulsory and Free". Speakers from Sydney addressed the meeting and at the conclusion a resolution was passed: "That this meeting approves of the manifesto of the New South Wales Public School League and resolves to form a Branch League in Newcastle forthwith." A committee was formed comprising six district clergymen and twelve laymen to manage the affairs of the Branch League and to add to their number whenever it was desirable. After the inception of this branch, the activities of the movement spread quickly throughout the district. Meetings were convened in the suburbs and, in rapid succession, other branches of the League were formed at Wallsend, Waratah, Lambton, and New Lambton. It is interesting to note that New Lambton had a branch before a Public School had been built in the area: perhaps the inhabitants hoped that the League would be a way of helping to extend educational facilities more quickly. Reports of the business meetings of the various branches appeared in the daily newspapers. Within one month the number on the roll had risen to 120 and even some of the ladies of the district were attending the meetings; this was a very unusual procedure and was evidence of considerable enthusiasm amongst the Newcastle population.

After the initial enthusiasm had waned, there was great need in Newcastle for the League's policy to be clarified as for the smaller details to be explained. This was done from Sydney by J.C. Kirby who became one of the official spokesmen for the League and who used the columns of the New South Wales Public School System exclusively, Newcastle Chronicle and the Newcastle Morning Herald to great advantage. Commencing late in 1874 and continuing for some years, Kirby wrote numerous 'Letters to the Editor', became involved in many clashes with those favouring a sectarian form of education, and continually presented the ideals of the League to the Newcastle reading public. His letters treated such topics as fees, compulsory attendance, school accommodation and secular instruction. Often he was willing to stir others into bitter clashes in newspaper columns and then retire, himself, for a period until the issue needed further revitalising.

The results achieved by the League were not always enduring, but it would seem that between 1874 and 1879 the Public School League in Newcastle had an important influence. It made the inhabitants aware that a doubt did exist in relation to state aid to Denominational Schools or else it helped to create one; it held meetings to extend the scope and influence of the movement, it acted as a propaganda machine stressing the need for free, compulsory and secular education in the city and suburbs. By the combined weight of all the branches throughout the entire state, the League brought pressure on the government to act, and it kept the people aware that the need was pressing. Newcastle was considered as one of the centres 'sympathetic' towards the League and one in which there was a genuine desire to see the aims of the movement realized.

VII

By the end of 1879, public opinion had moved so far towards the notion of abolishing state aid to Denominational Schools that the parliament in 1879 introduced a Bill to limit state aid to the Public School System exclusively. Newcastle was not unprepared for this Bill: the Newcastle press had followed the issue very closely and had reported it fully. In addition, Robert Wisdom, the Attorney-General, had visited Morpeth and had said that 'if there was a change in the present system, it would be a change not in the direction of Denomi-
nationalism, but in order to make the schools more national, secular and public.\(^{146}\) When the provisions of the Bill were published in the *Newcastle Morning Herald*, the reaction was immediate, and during the following three months there was much agitation by pressure groups which tried to advance their claims. At the request of a numerously signed petition from both the inhabitants of Wallsend and Plattsburg, the Mayor of Wallsend convened a public meeting at the end of November to consider the question of education. At this meeting a resolution was passed.

That taking into consideration the large number of children of school age in this colony, who are not attending schools of any kind, this meeting is of opinion that the only system of education calculated to reach all classes of the community, should be purely secular, compulsory, and free and that the State should not endow any other class of schools.\(^{146}\)

In the last two weeks of 1879 similar meetings were convened in many suburbs and in the city itself. In quick succession resolutions approving of the Bill were passed at Tighes Hill, Burwood, Hamilton, Wickham and Waratah, and although some considered that the Legislative Assembly should amend some sections so as to 'get rid of any semblance of state aid' to the different denominations,\(^{147}\) practically all agreed to the principle of the Bill. A large gathering met in the Newcastle Court House on Christmas Eve, and it was passed.

That this meeting of the citizens of the city of Newcastle is of opinion that the Education Bill now before the Legislature should become law, with the amendment of such clauses therein as will render it a free, uniform and national system of education.\(^{148}\)

Nevertheless, the decision was not unanimous, and it was therefore a better cross-section of the community's reaction than was the usual suburban gathering.

So the Bill received enthusiastic support from the majority of folk in Newcastle and in the suburbs, and there was widespread approval in April 1880 when the Bill received the Royal Assent. The Act came into operation on 1 January 1880.

### September 1968

**State Aid — Braggitt**

channels, the Public Schools with state aid and the Denominational Schools with voluntary contributions only. The way had been paved in Newcastle for the expansion of the Primary Schools after 1880 and for the development of High Schools after 1906. In conclusion we may quote Inspector Maynard who reported at the end of 1879 that:

There is but little scope for the establishment of entirely new schools for nearly every small centre of population has already a school of some kind. For some years to come building expenditure will be needed, not to open up to any extent new ground, but to make existing accommodation more perfect.\(^{150}\)

### REFERENCES

1. N.S.W. State Archives, Colonial Secretary, In-Letters, Bundle 10-12, Newcastle, 1816-1818. Entry 29. The help of V. W. E. Goodin is acknowledged.
2. Henry Wrench was the convict's name.
3. Returns of the Colony to N.S.W. 1848, p. 536, N.S.W. Archives.
6. Ibid., 9/7/1955, p. 163.
10. Ibid., p. 25.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p. 170.
14. Ibid., p. 188.
19. See Reports of the Board of Nat. Educ. 1858-1865.
23. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Wickham was in reality Newcastle's first National School but it was not in the Colony of N.S.W. 1856, p. 666.
31. Ibid., p. 19.
35. Mimi School was closed for a short period during 1861. Mimi Public School 1861 to 1916. Booklet by Dept. of Research and Planning, N.S.W. Dept. of Education, p. 3.
36. The Table is compiled from official figures given in the Appendix to the Report of the Board of Nat. Educ. for 1865, p. 7.
31f' 

42. Ibid. Compiled from the various reports of the different schools.
45. Tyrrell, W., Remarks on the Third Report of the Board of National Education in New South Wales for the Year 1880, 1881.
46. Ibid. On the back of the pamphlet.
47. Boodle, op. cit., p. 274.
49. Ibid., chapter 19, 'Education'.
50. Ibid., p. 361.
52. Petitions may be read in V. & P. of L.A., 1860. Vol. 2, pp. 715-915
53. Inglis, J., Our Australian Cousins, Chapter XIX on Newcastle, London, 1880.
54. Newcastle Chronicle, 10 November 1866.
55. Petitions from the 'Hunter River Teachers' Association' were presented 3 and 10 October 1866. See reference 57 above.
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57. Newcastle Chronicle, 3 June 1871.
58. Ibid., 8 March 1873.
60. Report from the Coun. of Educ. on Pub. Schools for 1867. See reports of the respective schools, pp. 88-91 passim.
61. Ibid. See reports of the respective schools, pp. 91-93 passim.
63. Ibid., 25 February 1869.
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65. Ibid., 11 September 1869.
66. Ibid., 10 November 1870.
67. Ibid., 20 January 1872.
68. Ibid., 24 May 1874.
70. Newcastle Chronicle 18 November 1871.
71. Ibid., 21 March 1872.
72. Ibid., 20 April 1872.
73. Ibid., 21 March 1872.
74. Ibid., 24 June 1872.
75. Ibid., 28 September 1872.
77. Memorandum of Inspector to Secretary, 17 April 1877. N.S.W. Archives. Tighes Hill, E11.
78. Correspondence N.S.W. Govt. Archives, Tighes Hill, E11. 1877.
79. Memorandum to Architect, 28 November 1877. N.S.W. Archives, Tighes Hill. E.11.
80. N.M.H. 3 June 1876.
81. Memorandum of Inspector to Secretary, 16 May 1876. N.S.W. Archives. Tighes Hill. E.11.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid.
84. Newcastle Chronicle 30 March 1872.
85. Ibid., 11 November 1869.
Mr Rex Rienits has pointed out that I may have perpetuated a fairly frequent error in my article published under the above title in J.R.A.H.S., Vol. 53, Pt 4, pp. 277-94. The illustration included by me as PI. II was captioned as being by Alexander Buchan, whereas although the drawing comes from a sketchbook ascribed to Buchan in the British Museum catalogue, as explained in my text (p. 283), Buchan in fact died before ever reaching Australia (e.g. Rex and Thea Rienits, Early Artists of Australia, Sydney, 1963, pp. 9-10). As Professor Bernard Smith pointed out several years ago (European Vision and the South Pacific 1768-1850, Oxford, 1960, pp. 15-16 and 38, n.1), the 'Buchan' sketches are in all likelihood by Sydney Parkinson who, after Buchan's death, had to add topographical subjects to the botanical and zoological studies for which he had originally been employed by Sir Joseph Banks. This question of authorship of course in no way invalidates the anthropological importance of the drawing I reproduced.

J. V. S. MEGAW

Book Reviews


'History' according to the great Napoleon 'is the fiction agreed upon'. By that cynical standard this is not history, for few if any will be found to agree with Professor Manning Clark's private vision. Napoleon was a maker of history; by contrast a distinguished writer of history, John Bagnell Bury, Regius Professor at both Dublin and Cambridge, asserted the view that 'History is in the last resort somebody's image of the past, and the image is conditioned by the mind and experiences of the person who forms it'. Bury was much concerned with the nature of history and his forceful assertion in his Cambridge inaugural lecture that 'History is a science, nothing less and nothing more' still provokes discussion and argument; but if we accept the principles set out in the other reference to him, then, provided an author bases his work on sound critical standards, examines his sources scientifically and organizes his conclusions artistically, he is fully entitled to the most serious consideration.

So far as this reviewer is concerned the two volumes so far published in Professor Manning Clark's monumental history of Australia are great and moving documents. He has a brilliant if tragic style which carries the reader even against his better judgment; he has a view of the depravity of man which no