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Prepared by *C. Bruce Fergusson,*
Provincial Archivist.

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PREFACE

This survey of the aims and achievements of Mechanics' Institutes in Nova Scotia is based upon a variety of primary and secondary sources, including records of the House of Assembly, the Journal of the Halifax Mechanics' Institute (1831-50), newspapers and quarterlies. It provides glimpses of the Nova Scotia into which Mechanics' Institutes were introduced, and traces the fruitful evolution of Mechanics' Institutes in this Province. It is a contribution to the educational and cultural history of Nova Scotia.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTES

IN NOVA SCOTIA

In Mr. George Thompson's School Room, at the upper side of the Parade, on Argyle Street, Halifax, a notable company of Haligonians, as they called themselves, assembled at 7 o'clock on Tuesday evening, 27th December 1831, for the purpose of forming a Mechanics' Institute. Members of the Halifax Mechanics' Library Association, which had been established about two months earlier, were there; and John S. Thompson, their president, who was then the editor of *The Halifax Monthly Magazine* and afterwards the father of John S. D. Thompson, was one of those. Men from a variety of callings and professions were present; including Dr. William Grigor, who presided over this gathering and became the first president of the Institute; and Joseph Howe, the young editor and proprietor of *The Novascotian,* whose facility with pen and voice were to give him a commanding position as a member of the fourth estate and as a leader in the movement for reform. Others who helped to originate the Halifax Mechanics' Institute were John Leander Starr, a prominent merchant, who was later to become a member of the Legislative Council of Nova Scotia; William Valentine, the artist; James Thomson, cabinet-maker; James Thomson, surveyor; and P. J. Holland, the proprietor of *The Acadian Recorder.* The achievement of that early winter evening was the commencement of the first Mechanics' Institute in Nova Scotia.

This was exactly eight years after Dr. George Birkbeck's efforts had resulted in the foundation of the Glasgow Mechanics' Institute, the first of its kind in the Old Country, an example which was quickly followed in London and then imitated in other centres throughout Great Britain. There adult education had received its first impetus from the Industrial Revolution "in the desire of mechanics for general scientific knowledge, and the willingness of the more intelligent part of the middle class to help supply their demand." Though some might look down patronising patrician noses at the 'learned friend' and his 'steam-intellect society', the new world, as Trevelyan stated, "could not live wholly on classical scholarship carefully locked away from common use in the close ecclesiastical corporations of the

Oxford and Cambridge of that day." If, in Britain, adult education had been given its impulse by the Industrial Revolution, had Nova Scotia by 1831 reached such a stage as would warrant and sustain a similar movement?

Those who met in the school room on Argyle Street in Halifax, on that early winter evening, in 1831, apparently thought so; and yet, in many respects, the Province was still in its infancy. Population was small; resources were undeveloped; libraries were few and educational facilities were limited.

THE ECONOMIC SETTING

Fewer than one hundred and seventy thousand people lived in the whole Province. Halifax, its capital, had not yet attained a total of fifteen thousand persons. Although representative government was exemplified in the House of Assembly, responsible government was still to be won, and elected municipal institutions were completely lacking. Much reflection and bitter debate were to ensue as Nova Scotians, during the next two decades, groped their way noisily, but without bloodshed, to self-government in local affairs.

By 1831, however, the economic foundations of an evolving colonial culture were becoming discernible. Farming, fishing, mining, lumbering, shipbuilding and trading were the chief industries. The phantom prosperity of the War of 1812, with its easy money and its heavy demand for live stock to supply the needs of garrisons and naval detachments, not only deluded Nova Scotia farmers into a sense of false security, but led them into a one-sided development of agriculture. The loss of military contracts at the end of the war abruptly ended these years of prosperity. Crop failure and a general post-war depression heightened the difficulties of the farmers. Then, in 1818, the letters of Agricola appeared and made a remarkable impact. Advocating the adoption of scientific methods in agriculture, and stressing the importance of making Nova Scotians self-supporting, John Young, "Agricola", a Scottish immigrant merchant and practical farmer of Halifax, roused the farmers of the Province to action in agricultural societies. Optimism prevailed where pessimism had previously reigned. The achievements, though not as striking as the first enthusiastic expectation seemed to warrant, were rather impressive. A better balanced agriculture resulted. Grain production was increased; stock improved; equipment made more up to date; and a more scientific approach to agriculture adopted. At the same time, through their societies, the farmers achieved a new sense of unity, which enabled them, in a measure, to counterbalance the fishing and mercantile interests. Provincial grants for agriculture provided the wherewithal for encouragement which took the form of prizes or premiums; but when the charter of the Provincial Agricultural Society failed to be renewed and the grants for agriculture were stopped, in 1826, a faggot was added to the fire of discontent.

The fishermen lost little sleep over the loss of the grants to agriculture, but they encountered difficulties of their own. By the terms of the Treaty of Paris, which was signed at the close of the American Revolutionary War, American fishermen were accorded the exceptionally generous liberty of both taking fish of every kind on the coasts, bays and creeks of Nova Scotia, and of other British dominions in America, and of drying and curing fish in any of the unsettled bays, harbours and creeks of this province, as well as of the Magdalen Islands and Labrador, so long as they should remain unsettled. Privileges to the Americans such as these stirred up resentment in the breasts of Nova Scotia fishermen, whose objective was to monopolize the markets of the British West Indies, and who persistently hoped for the exclusion of American fishermen from British coastal waters. By their declaration of war upon Great Britain in 1812, the Americans lost these privileges; and Nova Scotians petitioned against their renewal in no uncertain terms. The permanent exclusion of Americans from British coastal waters was almost taken for granted by Nova Scotia fishermen. Upon the return of peace the Americans objected to the British interpretation of the effect of war on their former privileges; and no mention of the fisheries was made in the Treaty of Ghent. Until the Convention of 1818 was signed, the British authorities attempted to exercise control over their coastal waters and many American fishing vessels found there were seized. This indicated to Nova Scotians that their rights would be safeguarded, although the seizures engendered ill feeling. By the Convention of 1818, however, the high hopes of Nova Scotians were partly dashed. Thenceforth the inhabitants of the United States were to have the liberty to take, dry and cure fish on certain coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador; they were to renounce the right of taking, drying or curing fish on or within a three-mile limit of the other British dominions in America; but they could enter such bays and harbours for the purpose of shelter and of repairing damages, or for obtaining wood and water. These concessions aroused the righteous indignation of Nova Scotians, and their legislature made a lengthy protest.

The importance of the fishery lay in the fact that it was the main staple of trade. Cod was king, but there was a growing production of mackerel and herring, and whaling attracted a spasmodic interest. Bounties on salt, on the cod and scale fisheries, and on whaling provided encouragement for local fishermen in their competition with foreign government-aided rivals.

In mining too there were grounds for future grievance. The riches of Nova Scotia in coal had been known since the seventeenth century. In the years 1825-27 the General Mining Association obtained a virtual monopoly of the underground wealth of the Province, by taking over the extensive rights of the Duke of York, and by acquiring a lease of the mines in the Sydney area. By 1830 this new company had begun mining operations both in the peninsula and on Cape Breton Island.

If those interested in farming, fishing and mining had real or imaginary complaints, the lumbermen too were not entirely happy. After the close of the Napoleonic Wars there was a decline in the lumber-trade of Nova Scotia. Prices fell; the forest in area after area became depleted; and Britain began to recede from that policy of colonial preference which, invoked by necessity in time of war, had given a great impetus to the colonial timber trade. In 1821 the first step in the reversal of policy was taken, and nine years later the British Government not only admitted Americans to the West Indies trade, but also announced its intention to reduce still further the duties on foreign timber. Now the Legislature of Nova Scotia became alarmed and warned of the deleterious effect of such measures. For a time the impending threats were averted, but only for a time.

Shipbuilding was closely linked with the timber trade, and anything that affected the one affected the other. Shipbuilding in Nova Scotia, previously limited by the old restrictions on trade, declined sharply during the War of 1812. This was partly due to the fact that prizes of war, taken in large numbers from an enemy near at hand, were bought and refitted. In all, between 1812 and 1815 more than 600 vessels of all types, including about 120 recaptured British vessels, were taken from the Americans. During the next nine years nearly 600 vessels were built on the peninsula and others were built on Cape Breton Island. But the first 600 vessels built and registered on the peninsula after 1824 took only six years to build, and had twice as many tons as the 600 of the previous decade. This great expansion was largely a result of Huskisson's Trade Acts of 1825. After 1830 sales in Britain, where vessels as well as cargoes were often sold, dropped; but local demand increased.

Trade had long been linked with the old laws of trade and navigation, against which the thirteen colonies had thundered in the eighteenth century. Nova Scotia still depended predominantly on primary production and the exportation of bulky materials in exchange for manufactured goods. It was closely tied to the economy of Great Britain by colonial trade restrictions. By the Commercial Convention of 1815 the old colonial system was to be rigidly enforced; the British colonial and the British carrying trades were to be reserved for British shipping; and the ports of British North America, as well as of the British West Indies, were to be closed to American ships and to American produce not carried in British ships. The Americans now attempted, by means of tonnage and ad valorem duties on British ships and imports, to penetrate this system and to usurp this commerce. But these devices proved unavailing; and, eventually, in 1818, the ports of the United States were closed to British colonial trade, though shipping direct from Britain was allowed, and exports to British colonial ports were prohibited. This action on the part of the United States prompted a demand for free ports, with the result that Halifax, Saint John and certain places in the West Indies were designated as such in 1818. Now certain enumerated

articles, such as food, lumber and naval stores, were allowed admittance to these free ports in foreign vessels, so long as they were the produce of the country owning the vessel, and the exportation of any commodity was permitted in these vessels to the country of registration. Re-exportation from Halifax, as well as from the other free ports, was allowed at first only to British ports and possessions; but later it was extended to any British or foreign ports in British or friendly vessels.

A Chamber of Commerce was organized at Halifax in 1822 through which prominent merchants could marshal their strength and focus their influence for political action. Their disappointment over the terms of the Convention of 1818 sparked a demand for free trade as a compensation for the admission of Americans to the fisheries in certain British colonial waters. While a free port at Halifax might have been regarded as a swallow that did not make a summer, two imperial acts of 1822 were considered as indicating a complete revolution in British commercial policy. The first of these regulated trade between British possessions and foreign countries in the Americas; it allowed certain enumerated goods to be imported from any foreign American port in British vessels or in vessels owned by the country from which exportation was made; it permitted exportation direct to those countries, in such vessels, of colonial produce, excepting fishery products, which along with imported British manufactures, were still reserved for the British carrying trade. The second statute opened a direct trade in specified articles between the colonies and the foreign ports of Europe and Africa, though this intercourse was restricted to British-owned ships sailing directly between the two ports. Two years later Nova Scotians requested a further extension of trade, particularly the right to import duty-free all goods destined for warehousing and re-export. Action along these lines was taken by the Huskisson Acts of 1825. Free intercourse was now to be allowed between British colonies and other countries, either in British ships or in ships of those countries, with the latter being permitted to carry to British colonies the products of the country to which the ship belonged, and to take from the British colonies all the articles of growth, produce or manufacture of those colonies to the country whence the ship came, or to any other part of the world, the United Kingdom and all its dependencies excepted. All traffic between British ports was still reserved entirely for British ships. Three years later, after the General Mining Association had begun its operations in the Province, free-port privileges were accorded to Pictou and Sydney. But Halifax merchants did not welcome this challenge to their favoured position, and petitions from other ports in Nova Scotia for the same privileges were turned down by the Council, on which sat a number of Halifax merchants. A Merchants' Exchange was also established at Halifax in 1828, where those engaged in mercantile pursuits might meet at a certain fixed hour and transact their business. The satisfaction which Nova Scotians felt at the relaxation of a

number of the old restraints on trade was to some extent offset by the admission of Americans to the West Indies in 1830.

Throughout the period from 1812 to 1831 Nova Scotians became increasingly aware of their economic disabilities and more purposeful and energetic in their efforts to surmount them. These developments constituted an economic awakening which went hand in hand with an intellectual awakening in the Province.

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Educational facilities were still inadequate, but progress was patent. Beginnings had been made by the French at Port Royal before the middle of the seventeenth century, and at Louisbourg in the fourth decade of the eighteenth. English pioneer efforts in education, supported by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, a Church of England organization, began at Annapolis Royal before 1730 and spread to other parts of the Province, particularly after the founding of Halifax. Actually the Board of Trade in London had invited that society to appoint schoolmasters, as well as ministers, not only for the new settlement at Chebucto, but also for any that might afterwards be formed in the Province. Accepting this challenge, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel performed a useful service in education at a time when newly established communities had few financial resources to devote to it. This process made another impress as well. It gave a sectarian cast and control to the system of education in Nova Scotia in those days.

But schools of this sort did not appeal to Congregationalist New Englanders, several thousands of whom migrated to Nova Scotia in the seventeen-sixties. They quickly proceeded to engage teachers of their own choice —itinerating schoolmasters, many of whom were disbanded soldiers, not ideally suited to their new calling, who nevertheless helped meet a clamant need, and eked out a tolerable existence with their small fees.

Other waves of immigration not only diversified the population, but greatly increased the need for schools. Returning Acadians doubled the size of the Acadian element. Yorkshiremen, to the number of about one thousand, placed themselves on the Isthmus of Chignecto between 1772 and 1774. A shipload of Scots, coming in the *Hector* in 1773, heralded the substantial influx from Scotland which was to set in nearly twenty years later. Loyalists doubled the population at the close of the American Revolutionary War. Nearly two thousand negroes arrived during and after the War of 1812; and following the Napoleonic Wars British immigrants came in increasing numbers.

It seemed that the government of the Province when it first showed an interest in education desired to preserve the favored position of the Church of England. Its act of 1766 prescribed the manner in which teachers for

grammar schools throughout the Province, and for all schools in Halifax County, were to be licensed. Licenses were to be secured from the local clergy, who were clergymen of the Church of England, or from justices of the peace, who were appointees of the governmental authorities at Halifax. Encouragement was also given to the cause of education in that land grants were to be used for the support of schools in each township, and boards of trustees were to administer and improve these lands.

Development may be discerned not only in common schools, but also in grammar schools and others institutions of learning. During the second half of the eighteenth century an interesting variety of private schools, for boys or girls, had appeared, particularly in Halifax. There were schools for reading, writing and arithmetic; for book-keeping; for "the Small Sword, Cut & Thrust;" for dancing; for sewing and all sorts of needle-work; for Latin, French and Geography; for singing and for navigation. Itinerating teachers went their rounds in the rural areas. Secondary institutions of learning, such as King's Collegiate School, at Windsor, and the Halifax Grammar School, were established in the late seventeen-eighties; the former sponsored by the Church of England, and exclusive in its nature for some years; the latter denominational in character, in that it was presided over by a Church of England clergyman.

With the coming of the nineteenth century the Province recognized the necessity for general education and approved the principle of free schools. An act of 1808—for encouraging the establishing of schools throughout the Province—did the one and implied the other. Provincial aid through a bounty system was pledged where local funds were raised by assessment. But three years of trial disclosed little public approval for this measure, and another statute was drafted in an attempt to remedy deficiencies.

This time there was explicit approval for the principle of free schools. Whenever any of the schools to be established were in part provided for by assessment, the scholars were to be taught free from all expense whatever, other than their own books and stationery, and their individual portion of fuel. Yet, to ensure general acceptance of the system, provision was made for raising local revenue by subscription or bequest, as well as by assessment; and the provincial aid was continued. The idea of schools free to all throughout the Province might be inherent in this legislation, but assessment—the condition on which it depended—was not invoked for another half century, and a system of free schools, supported by compulsory assessment, was deferred for the same length of time.

Nevertheless, the School Act of 1811 not only demonstrated the readiness of the Provincial authorities to aid settled districts to set up schools, but also continued a system of administration directed by the Court of General Sessions in each county. It had its defects and deficiencies. It applied only to districts or settlements having thirty or more families, thus

excluding rural or smaller centres. Under it the poor derived no benefit and were excluded from the benefits of a liberal education. No assessment was ever made; but sums were subscribed by individuals who seldom paid; instead, they commuted their share in board for the schoolmaster, or in kind. The act was modified on more than one occasion; but still the poor were excluded from the advantage of the Provincial grant; and in 1824 a sum was voted for the assistance of the poorer children in each county or district, to be expended by commissioners appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor.

During the next three years the Legislature renewed its effort to solve the educational problem. A statute of 1826 provided for the division of the Province into school districts; for compulsory common schools in every district of thirty families or more, on a two-thirds vote of the ratepayers; and for superintendence and inspection of the schools in each county or district by three commissioners appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor. The Legislature also set aside the sum of £2500 to be divided among the eleven counties or districts for the encouragement of schools. But hostility to assessment for the support of schools brought a disappointing result; by the end of 1827 only 44 schools were in operation. An act of 1828 increased both the number of commissioners and the Provincial allowance. Now a general improvement in the state of education took place. By the end of 1828, 204 schools had been established, with an enrolment of 6639, and in 1829 additional schools were opened and attendance nearly doubled.

Meantime there had been some achievement in secondary education. King's Collegiate School and the Halifax Grammar School survived from the eighteenth century; and after the Grammar School Act was passed in 1811 a number of grammar schools were established in other counties. The first of these was organized by Rev. Thomas McCulloch in Pictou; the last was opened at Sydney, in 1822, two years after Cape Breton Island had been re-annexed. In between those dates ten other grammar schools were organized—in Cumberland, Sydney, Queens, Colchester, Lunenburg, Kings, Annapolis, Yarmouth and Shelburne Counties. The grammar schools, almost entirely supported by government, ceased to exist as soon as the Grammar School Act expired in 1825.

Before that year there had been government support for both secular and sectarian schools. Early in 1814 Walter Bromley opened a school at Halifax, having a liberal, Lancastrian, non-sectarian basis; and a year later the Legislature granted him £200 as compensation for his services. The Royal Acadian School, in which Bromley initiated the Lancastrian system, prompted the establishment at Halifax of the National School, under Church of England auspices, and intended as a perfect specimen of the Madras System. It too received Provincial aid. The Legislature also voted sums

to the Roman Catholic School, which was established at Halifax, and to the Rev. Robert Fitzgerald Uniacke's School, in which the poor of St. George's parish were instructed without charge, and free scholars made up a substantial proportion of the enrolment. Before 1831 other secondary educational institutions were established at or near Annapolis Royal, and in Horton and Yarmouth. Annapolis Academy was founded upon non-sectarian principles; but its management was under the control of the Church of England, the majority of its trustees were of that faith, and its teachers were often of that denomination. It received Provincial grants, as did Albion Vale Academy, which emerged from the internal difficulties of Annapolis Academy. When the Council of Nova Scotia rejected Rev. Thomas McCulloch's proposal to have interdenominational cooperation for Pictou Academy, in contradistinction to the exclusiveness of King's College, which had been established at Windsor, in 1789, the Baptists went ahead on their own and organized Horton Academy. In 1829-30 the Yarmouth Education Society was formed and the Yarmouth Academy was built.

Strongly opposed to the policy of exclusion practiced at King's College, Rev. Thomas McCulloch succeeded in establishing Pictou Academy in 1816. At Windsor only those who subscribed to the Thirty-Nine Articles could qualify for a degree until after 1828, when steps were taken to open the Arts department to students of all denominations. By that time, however, the dissenters had already started on their respective courses which were to lead to denominational institutions. McCulloch's hopes for Pictou Academy received a severe blow when the Legislative Council amended the bill of incorporation to such an extent that only Presbyterians and members of the Church of England could serve on the Board of Trustees or be members of the teaching staff. Three years later McCulloch's ambition to change the Academy into a college with power of conferring degrees and to set up a chair in divinity was blocked by the Council. The request for a permanent financial grant was also rejected. For more than twenty years the Pictou Academy question was before the Legislature in every session; it was a subject round which the Assemblymen and the Councilmen could take different sides.

FINE ARTS

While developments in common and secondary schools were thus being made, there were private instructors who were ready to offer training in fine arts. For instance, M. Smith announced his intention of opening a school at James Bowen's Academy, adjoining the Jerusalem Tavern, on Hollis Street, in Halifax, on October 26, 1807—"for the purpose of teaching the elegant and useful art of Drawing and Painting Landscapes, Figures, Fruit and Flowers &c in India ink and Water Colours . . ." Five years later Ralph Stennett, portrait and miniature painter, and drawing master,

was busy in the provincial capital, painting, teaching and presenting as a public exhibition "A Minor Panorama, or Optical and Graphic Spectacle." In October 1817 Partridge declared his intention of opening a drawing school in "a very pleasant and commodious apartment in the Mason Hall," Halifax. The Ladies' School would be on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 11 till 1; the Gentlemen's, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Terms were two Guineas per quarter. For those unable to attend the School private lessons would be provided during the remainder of the week. A few years later, in September 1830, Maria Morris, who had been born at Halifax in 1813, and who had taken lessons in drawing and painting from W. H. Jones, in Dalhousie College, opened a school at her home, for the instruction of young ladies in drawing. The next year, having moved with her mother's seminary to the rear of the National School, she offered a course in oil and water-colours, besides instruction in drawing.

These illustrate, although they by no means exhaust, the work of schools of this kind. They serve to remind us that artists of some talent were active at Halifax in that period, as had been the case earlier, and was to be so later. Two of the most important were Robert Field and William Valentine, whose portraits and other works are highly prized today. Field, an Englsh artist of skill and culture, did considerable work in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore, before reaching Halifax, where he laboured with success during the years 1808-1818. Valentine, who was also an Englishman by birth, arrived at Halifax in 1818; and for much of the ensuing thirty years achieved a great deal in portraiture in oil. A number of eminent Nova Scotians were painted by him.

Something of the nature of a climax in artistic achievement was attained at Halifax in 1830 when an exhibition of paintings was held. Under the distinguished patronage of His Honour, the President of the Council, Admiral Sir Charles Ogle and Colonel Norcott, C.B., this exposition of art, containing 93 pictures, 48 of which were by pupils of W. H. Jones, ran from May 10th to May 29th. It took place in two rooms and a corridor at the north-west end of Dalhousie College building; and Jones, who had organized similar displays in Boston and Baltimore, provided energetic and prudent leadership for it. The principal object of the exhibition was that "of spreading a general taste throughout the Community." Careful persons were employed to fetch and return the pictures without any expense to the owners; and no sticks, umbrellas or parasols were permitted to be taken into the rooms in which the paintings were shown. This was the first art exhibition ever held in Halifax, and it drew a great deal of praise.

THE THEATRE

If art had its devotees, the theatre had its patrons. For many years before 1831 Halifax had had its dramtic productions—presentations by

travelling companies of players, performances by "the Gentlemen of the Army and Navy" or "Gentlemen of the Army, Navy and Town." Several plays had been acted at "the Theatre" in Halifax as early as 1768; others were performed in subsequent years; and during the last fifteen years of the eighteenth century more than a hundred different plays, operas and farces were presented. Whatever was the location of the first theatre at Halifax, it was not long before the Great Pontac, which was famous as a social meeting place in early days, and which was situated at the north-west corner of Upper Water and Duke Streets, also had its stage. The New Grand Theatre, on Argyle Street, was opened early in 1789; and another new theatre was afterwards fitted up in a large store on Fairbanks' Wharf, and opened in the autumn of 1816. The theatre at Halifax in 1831 was such that, as a visiting military officer stated in the following year, an active man might have almost leaped from the front box over the people's heads in the pit onto the stage. Yet, notwithstanding its sentry-box characteristics as a building, the theatre as an institution had already had a considerable tradition behind it; and amateur performers still provided seasonal theatrical fare.

EXHIBITIONS AND AMUSEMENTS

Spectacles or exhibitions of various sorts had intermittently provided amusement or enlightenment at Halifax for many years; and more permanent displays of natural history and mineralogy could be seen there in the year 1831. Shells, corals, stones, preserved insects, reptiles, flowers, shrubs and mosses had been presented to the interested gaze of Haligonians in 1813; three years later a live tiger had attracted attention; and seven years after that a grand caravan of living animals was shown to the public in the large and commodious warehouse, at Tremain's Wharf, Water Street. This collection of animals had included a mammoth lion, a llama, an ocelot, an ichneumon and marmosets, as well as a variety of other species; and visitors to this exhibition had been beguiled by the strains of "a famous Beloudy Organ", at the touch of "celebrated performer lately from France." Other amusements, on occasion, included performances on the slack wire, and feats of grand and lofty tumbling. Steps were taken to build a racket court in 1821; cricket was played; and curling had been introduced, during the winter of 1825, on a pond then known as Smith's mill dam, east of Tower Road. Yachting assumed a more formal organization, through the efforts of naval and military officers and civilians, from the arrangement for the regatta at Halifax in 1826; and eventually the first Halifax Yacht Club would be formed on July 27, 1837. Meanwhile, Andrew Downs, who was to establish, near the head of the North West Arm in 1847, the first zoological gardens north of Mexico, was emerging from his teens; and the Rev. Thomas McCulloch was building up at Pictou a natural history museum, which in 1834 was taken to England and sold there. By the late 1820's,

moreover, samples of geological and mineralogical specimens were to be seen in the Garrison Library, in the Library of the Army Hospital and in the Halifax Library; and a few years later Rev. Thomas McCulloch, Andrew Downs and Richard Garland, a son of a Kingston-upon-Hull solicitor and attorney-at-law of the same name, were separately to petition the legislature of Nova Scotia for aid in establishing a museum of natural history in the Province.

LIBRARIES

For the dissemination of knowledge books were of primary importance; and the intellectual and cultural growth of Nova Scotia in the early part of the nineteenth century is revealingly illustrated in the establishment and spread of libraries. There were individuals—clergymen, judges, lawyers, physicians, teachers and others—who had private libraries suited to their station in life or symbolic of their taste and discernment. The true university in those days, as well as in other times, was a collection of books; and the collection of the Rev. Thomas McCulloch was a fine example of those libraries which were prime requisites not only for the full man, but also for the effective educational institution. There were a few institutional libraries also; one was the Legislative Library, which is said to have had fewer than 200 volumes in 1819, when the Legislature moved into Province House; another was the Law Court Library, whose initial nucleus was provided by the Chief Justice, Sir Thomas Strange, in 1797; a third was King's College Library, which had had its foundation about 1800. There were military libraries, some in ships, others ashore. The Garrison Library, which later was to assume the designation of Cambridge Library, had had its origin in 1817; and the military hospitals had libraries of their own.

Besides these private, institutional or military libraries, there were others under different auspices. Some were sustained by subscription; others were sponsored by churches or missionary societies. Books of knowledge had their utilitarian value, whereas literature depended upon a developing taste.

One enterprising Haligonian, hoping to secure enough subscribers to make it worthwhile, started a "circulating library" at Halifax as early as 1806. In the autumn of that year he received from England over 300 volumes, including "a Variety of the latest and most approved Novels", and these he added to this library; and about a year later he added another considerable number of books to it. But the reading habits of the people of the town seemed not yet to be such as would make T. Bennett's venture a profitable one, for by that time he had announced his intention of disposing of his library to anyone who would engage to continue it. Nobody jumped at the opportunity; and, in the summer of 1808, having found the number of

subscribers inadequate to the support of his venture, Bennett thanked those ladies and gentlemen who had hitherto encouraged him by their patronage, and informed them that he would have to discontinue his library at the end of the year.

But it was not long before Bennett had a successor. Within two or three years Mrs. Mary Davis began a "circulating library" of the same sort; and Mrs. Cuff, after purchasing it from Mrs. Davis in 1813, conducted it for quite a number of years. It was still in operation in 1831. Meantime the demand for books seems to have been increasing, for "a new circulating library" was in operation at Halifax in 1816; but there is some indication that it was short-lived—the house and shop where it was kept were advertised to be let in a few days. Some years later—in 1825—David Spence established another "new circulating library" in the building at the head of Tobin's Wharf, in Halifax.

These "circulating libraries" were essentially business enterprises, catering to a growing demand for books, and public in the sense that anyone willing to pay the subscription fee was welcomed. But they did not fall within the category of public libraries as we know them.

Soon certain churches took an interest in providing reading material for their members; and, in 1822, two congregational libraries were formed at Halifax. One was the library of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; the other was that of the Wesleyan Society. Beginning with about 100 volumes, the former had grown to 500 volumes by May 1824; and the latter contained about 200 volumes three months after its formation. These two institutions were supported by a small annual subscription from their members. The fee was small so that the benefits of these libraries might be extended to the poorest of the people who were desirous of improving their minds by reading.

By this time, certain Haligonians had hopes of establishing a public library in the capital. George Renny Young endeavoured to impress the importance of this project upon the circle of his acquaintance; but, failing to receive a sympathetic hearing, his own ardour cooled in the coldness of its reception. A pervasive apathy had to be overcome and extreme arguments had to be met. It was argued that Nova Scotians were not ripe for this improvement; that the state of the province demanded not the higher efforts of the *divina natura* but the more profitable labour of the hand; that to create a desire for intellectual enjoyments would entail positive misery upon the population; that these tastes were incompatible with our general pursuits; and that the prosperity of Nova Scotia would rather be retarded than advanced by the more general diffusion of knowledge. Confronted by indifference, Young lost heart in the cause, although remaining con-

vinced of the advantage of a public library; but when men of "more energy & nerve" than himself enlisted in it he again took up his pen in its behalf.

As a result steps were taken in 1823 to form a library at Halifax. That a public library should have been so long wanting in an enlightened and wealthy community had been, as the editor of the *Acadian Recorder* observed, "matter of surprise to strangers and of reproach to ourselves." On October 10th, 1823, "a numerous and highly respectable meeting" was held in the Exchange Coffee House, with Hon. Michael Wallace as chairman; and several resolutions were passed containing the outlines of a plan on which a town library was to be set in motion. At a second meeting on November 19th, Hon. Judge Stewart was chairman, and a committee of nine was elected by ballot to manage the affairs of the new library. This committee comprised Hon. Michael Wallace, Rev. Dr. Inglis, H. H. Cogswell, Samuel Head, John Young, William B. Bliss, J. W. Nutting, W. B. Almon and William Minns. According to the arrangements made at the first meeting, the institution was to be composed of such persons as should subscribe within a month, the shares being £5 each and transferable, the annual subscription 30 shillings, and by the time the second meeting was held 100 shares had been subscribed, the Lieutenant-Governor having taken five. At a meeting on December 3rd Judge Stewart presented to the infant institution a complete set of Father Catrou and Roulie's *Histoire Romaine* in nineteen volumes, quarto, embellished with cuts, but the delivery and exchange of books at the library did not begin until August 9th, 1824.

During the interval the committee procured a supply of books. Its initial success in this regard was thus announced in the *Halifax Journal* of August 2nd, 1824:

> It affords us much pleasure to state, that a supply of Books has been received, and that the delivery and exchange of Books will commence on Monday next. Although, as was to be expected, from the limited funds at the disposal of the Committee, the number is comparatively small, yet the selection is excellent, and we are satisfied that the basis of an Institution is now formed which, while it must be highly creditable to the community, will be of vast and increasing importance to the rising generation.

Other Halifax newspapers also praised the project and gave it sympathetic support. "It has often struck us as absurd in a high degree", declared the editor of the *Free Press*, "when we observed parents procuring for their children and particularly the female part of them, a superior education; and then bringing them home to a place, where the means did not exist of gratifying that taste for reading and mental improvement, which had been acquired by long and ardent study. Happily this difficulty will now be obviated; and we should omit to discharge a duty, were we not to state, that the undertaking has met with a degree of support which its first

promoters could not venture to anticipate, and which has led to unhoped for success." The supply of books, then available to readers, comprised volumes dealing with history, poetry, travels and other topics.

Thus begun in 1823-24 the Halifax Library continued in existence until 1876, when the City of Halifax purchased its books for the Citizens' Free Library, which had had its beginning in 1864 when the Chief Justice purchased the Mechanics' Library and presented it to the City. In 1825 the Agricultural Library was united, under certain restrictions, to the Halifax Library, which not only received a little financial aid from the Legislature for a short time, but also enjoyed the use of a room in Province House. Its committee procured books from England and unsuccessfully sought permission to import books from the United States. Within a few years, Edmund Ward, the librarian, not only petitioned the Legislature for aid in purchasing books which would otherwise be unavailable, but stated that "abounding as this Province undoubtedly does with many valuable Minerals, it becomes desirable that some place should be selected, where a collection can be scientifically arranged, and to which access can be had by those interested in such pursuits." For the establishment and support of this library each subscriber to the number of 112, by the year 1825, had advanced the sum of £5 and paid in addition a sum of six dollars annually. Its committee claimed in 1832 that the Halifax Library had always been open to all public provincial bodies and that in fact it superseded the necessity for a library solely provincial. Its first contention was undoubtedly true; but its second one could hardly be maintained. Throughout its existence it possessed certain exclusive features which limited its usefulness as a public library. Yet it made a beneficial contribution.

While these developments were taking place in the capital, smaller communities in the Province were not content merely to watch what was going on in Halifax. Actually, at least five or six public libraries had been organized in Nova Scotia before the Halifax Library was established in 1823-24.

Truro may claim the honour of having had a library as early as 1812. Jotham Blanchard, the editor of the *Colonial Patriot*, referred to the Truro Library, in 1832, in these words:

> . . . Above 20 years ago a Library was commenced there under the best appearances. The funds at first collected were considerable, and most of the heads of families were shareholders. I well remember how great an interest was exhibited, and how regularly, on every Friday, the good people assembled to exchange their books. Alas! how changed now! I am told that the books are left to the moths and worms, and that it is gravely proposed by the remaining shareholders to sell the stock and divide the proceeds. How is this change to be accounted for? As follows:—The annual subscription was unequal to supply the demand for new books, and the taste for reading abated for lack of nourishment . . .

In the case of Truro the annual fee could not fill the demand for new books, whereas at Halifax the subscription was such that the number of readers was restricted. It was rather difficult to attain the optimum figure for fees, readers and new books.

Besides the library at Truro, at least five other libraries preceded the Halifax Library. The Granville Circulating Library was in existence in 1818, and its members at that time were "Rev'd Ansley, Jno Marshall and Thomas Spur in Annapolis, (across the river) Robert Bath, Timothy Ruggles, Silas Piper, Richard Halfyard, Stephen S. Thorne, James Hall, William Kerr (a schoolmaster) and Israel Longley." The Newport Library was organized on April 18, 1821, when Rev. John Sprott presided at the meeting, Elias Dimock submitted a constitution and a management committee was chosen. Nearly thirty members paid an entrance fee of ten shillings and annual dues of five shillings. The Cumberland Library Society, at Amherst, was formed in the autumn of 1821, with R. M. G. Dickey as president and Thomas Logan as secretary. The Yarmouth Book Society was begun on New Year's Day, 1822, with 20 members and an annual membership of $3.00. Its first president was John Moody; its first librarian Herbert Huntington, "the Robert Baldwin of Nova Scotia." This library had a movable abode for many years, and later changed its name; but it still persists, providing social and intellectual enjoyment in a building of its own. In the same year as the Yarmouth Book Society began, Rev. Dr. Thomas McCulloch succeeded in inducing a number of Pictonians to form the Pictou Subscription Library. It was organized for the purpose of affording to the mechanics and other classes facilities of improvement, by purchasing a library and making it accessible to all who were disposed to participate in its advantages. It went into "lively operation" on May 1st, 1822, with fewer than 70 volumes of "history, moral disquisitions, poetry and the more approved novels—selected however with a principal care towards the interests of religion and virtue." Although, according to *The Letters of Mephibosheth Stepsure*, this association did not altogether follow Dr. McCulloch's advice of rendering amusement an introduction to rational and religious information, and consequently failed to provide diverting stories to entice the young people of the town to read, yet it did have at least a partial success, and by 1837 the Pictou Subscription Library contained more than 700 volumes.

Before 1831 several other libraries were started. A public reading-room and exchange library was formed at Lunenburg in December, 1824, with 50 or 60 persons as members. In March 1826 the Bridgetown Reading Society was organized at a meeting held at Ezra Foster's Inn; its fees were one guinea each, and nearly fifty persons subscribed immediately. Rev. William Elder was president; Alexander H. Troop, secretary; Stephen Bromley, librarian; and Benjamin Reed, treasurer. In July of the same year, the

Kings County Library, modelled on the Halifax Library, had its beginning at Kentville. Shares were sold at 40 shillings each, and the annual subscription was 10 shillings. Its membership numbered 30 at the outset; John Whidden was its first president; C. H. Rand, its secretary-treasurer; and Andrew Black its librarian.

Oversea missionary enterprise, stimulated by local impulse, soon lent its aid to the establishment of libraries in Nova Scotia in such places as Merigomish and New Lairg. The Glasgow Society for Promoting the Religious Interests of Scottish Settlers in British North America directed its early attention to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island; and no sooner was its establishment known than applications of an urgent nature were forwarded from those Provinces for ministers of the Gospel to be sent out. Not long afterwards steps were taken to provide books as well as clergymen.

In 1827 the Glasgow Society sent to Merigomish 245 volumes, which constituted the nucleus of a library in that community. It comprised books of ancient and modern history, biographies of eminent men, religious works and magazines. A set of rules was also furnished, according to which each subscriber was to pay two shillings and six pence per annum, and the subscriptions were to be regularly sent to the Society for the purchase of additional books.

Two years later New Lairg received a collection of books from the Glasgow Society. Dispatched from Scotland in the *Thetis*, this consignment suffered from shipwreck, partial loss and damage from salt water and sand; salvaged along with other cargo, the remnant was purchased by the Rev. Dugald McKichan, who had been proceeding from Scotland, in the same vessel, towards his new station at Merigomish, and who knew the purpose for which these books were intended. They were then taken from the coast of Cape Breton to Pictou, where they were spread out in the sun to dry; shortly afterwards Robert MacDonald, a teacher in the community to which they were destined, took them by horse and cart from Pictou to New Lairg. There they were again spread out in the sun, until they were thoroughly dried; those needing repair were sewn and glued; and all the volumes, whose leaves and covers had been curled by the sun in the process of drying, were pressed back into a semblance of their former shape. As a result of this care and attention most of them could still be read; yet the pamphlets and small books, and those that were not bound, fared worse, a great many of them being rendered almost useless and not likely to last very long.

> But [as the New Lairg teacher reported in a letter of July 23, 1829 to a friend in Edinburgh] in the condition they were in, they were received with transports of joy, and with the greatest feelings of gratitude to the Honourable Society, and to the pious and benevolent individuals who contributed towards the institution of a library within

> the reach of the most needful (I may almost say) of the British dominions in North America. As soon as the books arrived in New Lairg, young and old crowded to receive them, so that with difficulty I got them withheld until the library would be instituted, and its regulations established. I immediately wrote to the Rev. John McCrae, minister of the adjacent parish (as our parish is at present vacant) who came immediately to our parish, and preached an excellent discourse from I Tim. iv. 13, "Give attendance to reading:" from which he showed the utility of reading to a great extent. At this meeting (as it was on a week day) the Library was formed according to the instructions received, with a little deviation; that is to say, three stations only placed, as there were not books for four stations, and only two volumes for each family, and three volumes for some, according to the number of readers; we could not allow each reader in the family a volume. The number that subscribed that day was 75 at 2s. 6d. each. Several applications were sent to me since from different parts of the district, wishing to become members, which I could not accept, for the want of books to supply them. According to the general catalogue, there are 47 vols. between small and great, which have not come to hand, which, I suppose, had been lost about the wreck, as the boxes were broken. There were in several of the books ⅛ of a foot of sand between the leaves. The fourth catalogue was also lost, with the most part of your instructive letters. At the foresaid meeting office-bearers were nominated, . . . Mr. William McKenzie had the goodness to send me a copy of their Rules and Regulations from Merigomish, which we purpose to follow. We are much indebted to Mr. McKenzie, who introduced us to your benevolence . . .

These examples of the beneficence of the Glasgow Society were not the only contributions made by Scotland to the dissemination of knowledge among her sons in Nova Scotia. Other instances, of a similar nature, followed the visit of Jotham Blanchard to Scotland in 1831, when he became acquainted with the system of Itinerating Libraries, which had had its beginning in East Lothian in 1817, and when he received donations in books and money for the express purpose of commencing the same system in Nova Scotia. Thus was introduced to this Province a plan which had already achieved great success in Scotland; upon the Stationary system, the whole stock of books, when once read by all, became "dead and useless stock"; but upon the Itinerating plan "the books which are in one neighbourhood this year, are in another next, and the same amount of subscription, upon the Itinerating plan, thus yields to the subscriber the reading of as many more books than the Stationary, as there are Itinerating Libraries in the circuit; . . . "

THE CHANGING SCENE

The intellectual curiosity of the rising generation was being aroused. Whetted by new developments in many fields, fed and fostered by a number of stimulating teachers and interested clergymen, and partly satisfied by new schools and libraries, it produced an ardent desire for reading and a stirring quest for knowledge. The result was an intellectual awakening and a marked burgeoning of native literature, noticeable particularly in the

writings of Rev. Dr. Thomas McCulloch, Thomas Chandler Haliburton and Joseph Howe, as well as in contributions to the *Acadian Magazine or Literary Mirror* (1826-28) and *The Halifax Monthly* (1830-33).

Adult education in Britain had been given its impetus by the Industrial Revolution; in Nova Scotia it was to receive inspiration and guidance from the movement in the Mother Country, and to rest upon a basis of expanding industry and new economic development. During the period 1815 to 1831 Nova Scotia, though still in many respects in its infancy, had its ups and downs; but there was a significant growth of existing industry—in milling, fishing, shipbuilding and trade. Signs of the times could also be discerned in a variety of novel undertakings and new evolutions; stage coaches began to be used; a banking establishment was begun; secondary industry grew; a canal was started; a more systematic exploitation of coal and iron was anticipated; and hopes were raised by steam on sea and land.

Population increased, and communications improved. The Province grew, not only by natural increase, but also through the re-annexation of Cape Breton Island and the inflow of immigrants. Isaiah Smith commenced a coach service between Halifax and Windsor, on February 14, 1816; Ezra Witter initiated one between Halifax and Pictou in July of the same year; and, in 1825, Todd, in an effort to link Halifax with the St. John packet at Windsor with the least possible delay, inaugurated a new stagecoach service on the Halifax-Windsor route, thereby providing competition for Smith. The establishment of iron works in Annapolis County and the use of steam for the ferry service between St. John and Digby prompted Kentville and Halifax promoters to take steps to provide a stage-coach service between Halifax and Annapolis. At the same time new operations in the coal fields of Pictou and Cape Breton Island, and the development of an iron industry at Pictou, furnished the motivation for improvements in communications and the opening of free ports at Pictou and Sydney.

An abortive attempt at iron mining had been made at Nictaux in 1789-90, when a number of men from New England erected a forge and a furnace, and produced a small quantity of iron; but now the Annapolis Iron Mining Company, which was incorporated in 1827, determined to succeed in a venture which others had abandoned. Its works, situated on the east side of Moose River, and about midway between Digby and Annapolis, went into operation in the year of its incorporation. Water-power was its main motive-force, and the water that drove the wheel which kept the bellows in operation was conducted under ground for a distance of about 800 feet from the river, in such a manner that, it was hoped, it would neither dry up in summer nor freeze in winter. Ore of a rich quality was abundant; the extensive forest up-river supplied sufficient charcoal; and the location was within easy reach of Digby, Annapolis and St. John. From 20 to 30

men were employed the first season, in making pig iron, castings, and hollow ware; a production of over 150 tons, enough to qualify for the provincial bounty. The plant included a smelting furnace, stock house, coal houses, stores, a dam and connecting roads. It was planned that machinery should be installed for the purpose of manufacturing malleable iron, and anticipated that forges would be built for the purpose of furnishing nails and spikes of all sizes and descriptions, as well as all sorts of culinary and agricultural utensils. By 1829 foundations were being laid for forges to manufacture bar iron.

In July 1827, the *Saint John,* a schooner-rigged steamboat, began to ply the waters of the Bay of Fundy, linking St. John with Digby and Annapolis. The steam which propelled this ferry-boat also raised the hopes of men who now undertook to establish a line of stages between Halifax and Annapolis. Subscribers organized; committees were appointed in Kentville and Halifax; and the Western Stage Coach Company was formed early in 1828. Its first coach left Halifax on June 3rd of the same year. Speedier communication fostered increasing travel.

Meantime interest in a proposal for the construction of the Shubenacadie Canal had revived, and work on the project had commenced. Lieutenant-Governor Wentworth had put forward the proposal in 1794. Great advantages were expected to be derived from its construction. Without railroads or canals, much Nova Scotian trade flowed into Saint John rather than into Halifax; but a little digging and a few locks might easily transform a natural watercourse comprising a river and a chain of seven lakes into a navigable system that would divert shipping from Saint John to Halifax. The canal would also form an important part of a projected, short, protected, all-water route, joining Halifax and Quebec, and consequently be of inestimable benefit to national defence. It would also open up the country and facilitate the exploitation of its resources. It would link Halifax by a short water route with the Bay of Fundy. It might even reduce the expenditure needed for the maintenance of roads. Surveys and reports were made at intervals; time passed; and eventually a joint-stock company was organized and work was begun. On July 25, 1826, the first sod was turned, with impressive ceremony, in the presence of the Earl of Dalhousie, Lieutenant-Governor Kempt, Rear Admiral Lake, Major General Keane, members of the Council and the Assembly, officers of the Army and Navy, church dignitaries and many others. Work proceeded; masons and stonecutters arrived from Scotland in 1827; and after construction had been suspended on a number of occasions for lack of funds, the project was at last completed in 1861. For a short time it was to be operated at a small profit; but the building of railroads and the improvement of other means of communication soon terminated its use.

Since the seventeenth century something had been known of Nova Scotia's coal resources, and for many years some coal had been mined, but

legal confusion about mining and mineral rights and the lack of a forthright policy curtailed development and hampered progress. Eventually, in 1826-27, Messrs. Rundell, Bridge & Rundell, London jewellers and goldsmiths, obtained a sub-lease of the Duke of York's mineral rights in this province, as well as a lease of certain mining rights in Cape Breton Island. The General Mining Association was then organized for the purpose of conducting mining operations in Nova Scotia; Richard Brown, its agent, investigated the mineral resources of the Province in 1826; and Richard Smith was directed to proceed to the Province as its superintendent in 1827. Smith arrived in the spring of 1827, bringing with him a number of miners and mechanics, as well as machinery and equipment; and soon the scene at Albion Mines was alive with activity—carpenters putting up houses, storehouses and other structures; mechanics installing machinery; and miners engaging in purposeful endeavour. On September 6, 1827, the first of the Albion Mines coal was raised to the surface; and, precisely three months later, "for the first time in Nova Scotia, the immense power of Steam was brought into successful requisition at the Albion Mines on the East River . . ." This steam engine of 20 horse-power was an indication that the company's works would proceed with redoubled speed and vigour.

The attention of the General Mining Association was also directed to the coal fields of Cape Breton Island. It was comforting to some Nova Scotians to find that "now since our timber has failed, resources which are likely to prove more staple, are developing themselves, and a wide field for industry is opening before us . . . " The opening of free ports at Pictou and Sydney in 1828, in its relationship to mining developments, was also gratifying to many in the eastern part of the Province.

From the time of its formation the General Mining Association had plans for making iron as well as for mining coal, and a foundry was erected and put into operation at Pictou by 1830. Like the western part of the Province, the eastern part now began the development of an iron industry.

Other new industries also began, a number of them being located at or near Halifax. Benjamin Moir began a bakery about 1815; Robert Milne Moir was making confectionery in 1818; and these were the beginnings of a business which is still in operation. In the 1820's John Ferguson was also making chocolate at Halifax. A sugar refinery was at work in the capital in 1817; tobacco-making was of some significance; distilleries were active. There were at least two turpentine distillers at Halifax in 1826; rope was being made; a linseed oil maker started a business in 1825; and at Dartmouth a glue factory was established in 1825. Tanners and leather manufacturers who had set up in Halifax during the war were feeling the pinch of competition in the 1820's; tallow chandlers were making similar complaints; and Anthony Henry Holland, a Halifax newspaperman, who had

built a paper mill near the head of Bedford Basin in 1818, was having difficulty in obtaining his raw material, rags, in 1827, since many Haligonians were buying up and shipping rags to American paper makers. These and other new industries, notwithstanding growing pains, competition and other difficulties, helped to diversify the economy; in conjunction with older ones they provided a more satisfactory economic base for the Province.

It was in this setting that Nova Scotians took stock of the present and looked to the future. Some might depict the past in rather glowing colours; others disclaimed empty boasting—the country, they said, was a good one, offering independence to all who were resolved to be industrious; but Nova Scotians had as yet done nothing of which they should be proud. Nevertheless, although they could not with pride look upon the past, they might and ought to look to the future with anticipation. From the advantage of location or the possession of extraordinary material resources, cities or countries might grow great or powerful, yet it must ever be acknowledged that the character of its inhabitants is a country's surest guarantee for prosperity and power.

> Wherever learning sheds the light of intelligence, and morality lays a foundation of virtue, national happiness and advancement are speedily obtained. The exhaustion of its physical resources, or other fortuitous circumstances, may materially affect a country whose power does not spring from the enterprise and knowledge of the people, which are the noblest pillars of greatness—the most inexhaustible mines of wealth, and furnish an endless fruitfulness of resource . . .

Nature had been bountiful to Nova Scotians, "but their minds have yet been little exercised; and until reading becomes general, and the means of improvement are placed more immediately within their reach, we cannot hope to witness any extraordinary effort."

Already—before 1831—Nova Scotians had taken significant early steps in the establishment of libraries, and they continued to look across the Atlantic for inspiration and example. Editors, leaders in public life, clergymen and others took a keen interest in the work of Mechanics' Institutes, and Nova Scotia newspapers kept their readers aware of the aims and achievements of these institutions in the British Isles, as well as of others which were formed at such places as York (1830) and Quebec (1831) in British North America. Until recently skilled mechanics and labour-saving devices had been few in Nova Scotia; but times were changing, steam had been introduced and new factories had gone into operation. To change the old state of affairs, to diffuse useful knowledge among workmen, to inspire them with pride in their pursuits, and to teach them to rely more upon the resources of science, a mechanics' library was needed, particularly at Halifax, where the new Public Library, so-called, had encouraged, if it had not created, among the higher classes of the town, a desire for general reading

and intellectual improvement. Education for all classes was the order of the day; yet something must be done for those who could neither become members of the new library, nor purchase books for themselves.

MECHANICS' INSTITUTES

Proposals for a Mechanics' Institute were put forward by the editors of *The Colonial Patriot, The Novascotian* and *The Acadian Recorder*. Jotham Blanchard described the advantages to be derived from associations for mutual improvement in an editorial on January 11, 1828; Joseph Howe, who had disclosed his awareness of the need for apprentices' libraries in 1827, resumed his advocacy of the cause on August 20, 1828, and December 31, 1829; and Holland gave the proposal his blessing on April 2, 1831. With the support of these and others, the movement gathered momentum, and action was soon taken at Halifax.

Halifax

The first step was the formation on October 17, 1831, of an association with a view to creating a Mechanics' Library in Halifax. A number of persons combined "for the purpose of supplying useful knowledge, at a cheap rate, to *all* who desire[d] it." This had been long a thing of hope and desire; the want of it had been long felt and deplored. While few or none might frown on the endeavour to call such a library into being, more than acquiescence was needed, and all who approved of informing and improving the minds of those who formed "the stamina of the community" were exhorted by *The Acadian Recorder* to give the infant establishment encouragement and support. Joseph Howe rejoiced at this effort of the working men to secure to themselves the benefit of books, and he expressed the hope that it would go on and prosper. Other editors penned similar sentiments.

Although this institution was to be called the Halifax Mechanics' Library, this name bore no exclusive interpretation. It was merely chosen as applicable to a library of useful knowledge, and of such pecuniary qualifications as might place its privileges within the reach of any industrious person. A fund was to be raised by subscriptions of 10s. each from a number of individuals, not exceeding 100; these subscribers—the shareholders of the library—were each to pay 1s. 3d. quarterly, in advance; and other subscribers, besides shareholders, were to be allowed the use of books, by paying 2s. 6d. quarterly, in advance, and signing certain by-laws. At no future period was the charge to subscribers to be more than 5s. quarterly.

A commencing stock of books was requested on loan from the shareholders, and arrangements were made to begin issuing books on Monday, October 31, 1831. Before that date the committee of the association an-

nounced that the proposed 100 shares had already been taken; it also thanked the publishers of the Halifax newspaper for the assistance which they had rendered to the institution. The initial success of the Mechanics' Library association had exceeded the expectations of its warmest friends.

Heartened by this success, the committee of the association were convinced that an Institute could now be formed, and others in the community hoped that the Library Association would be the foundation on which "that still higher medium of intellectual pleasure and profit" might be built. "We trust," wrote the editor of *The Acadian Recorder*, on December 10th, "that the Mechanics of Halifax and their friends will not let the present winter pass without making a noble effort to obtain such an establishment. The present time seems peculiarly favourable to making the attempt. Ample success, we doubt not, will follow." The committee of the Mechanics' Library determined to move forward. Thinking that, by plunging headlong into the attempt, without courting the sanction and the support of others, they might stir up resentment, and retard rather than promote the project, they concluded on December 13th that each of them should nominate one other member of the association, who would be invited to attend the next meeting of the committee, for the purpose of considering the propriety of forming an Institute. This resulted in resolutions favourable to the proposal; and a public meeting of the members of the Library Association and others interested in the project was called for December 27th, in this manner:

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

The members of the Halifax Mechanics' Library and other persons who are interested in the formation of a Mechanics' Institute, are requested to meet on Tuesday evening next, 27th inst. at 7 o'clock, at Mr. Geo. Thompson's School Room, upper side of the Parade.

By order of the Committee,

Halifax, Dec. 24. JOHN NAYLOR, Secy.

In response to this invitation, the Halifax Mechanics' Institute was created on December 27, 1831, at a meeting of "a very respectable Body of persons." Dr. William Grigor, who was the chairman of that meeting, was the first President of the Institute; and the other officers chosen on that occasion to fill the offices just authorized were as follows: John Leander Starr, first Vice-President; Joseph Howe, second Vice-President; William DeBlois, Treasurer; R. Lawson, Curator of Models and Apparatus; J. S. Thompson, Secretary; and B. Dawson, William Valentine, James Thomson (cabinet-maker), James Thomson (surveyor), R. Richardson, J. Malcolm, George Smithers, P. J. Holland and R. Davidson, members of the Committee of Management.

The objects of the Institute were clearly set forth in the second resolution passed at this meeting. It was that the attention of the Institute

should be directed to such primary aims as the accumulation of models and apparatus, the introduction of such mechanical improvements as have been discovered in other countries, or the diffusion of the knowledge of such as may be invented here, and the procuring of lectures on scientific and other subjects, from members of the society or other persons competent to deliver them.

The Institute began with a membership of fifty-two persons, who were enrolled that very evening. Its officers were to procure a place for meetings; the society was to meet every Wednesday at 7 o'clock; and a sum of 2/6 was to be subscribed quarterly by each member. Every member was required to be a shareholder in or a subscriber to the Halifax Mechanics' Library Association; and thus the privileges and the advantages of both institutions might be obtained by an annual payment of fifteen shillings. The members of the new organization were requested to present models and other apparatus to the Institute.

This promising beginning was welcomed and warmly commended by newspapers and journalists. "We cannot avoid giving our mite of praise and hearty good wishes, to this establishment", commented the editor of *The Halifax Monthly Magazine*, "which promises so much for the happiness and respectability of Halifax." "It is unnecessary to say", wrote the editor of *The Acadian Recorder*, "how much we are pleased at this evidence of public spirit, and what abundant success we wish the infant establishment. Recreation of a high order, information and improvement of the mental faculties, discovery and encouragement of latent talent and the dissemination of useful knowledge are among the fruits of such Institutions." "In the infancy of this Institution", Joseph Howe declared, "it is possible some errors may be committed, and it is also extremely probable that its proceedings may not be interesting to those whose early education and advantages have enabled them to grasp the wide range of scientific attainment; but there cannot be a doubt that its tendency will be to elevate the character of our Metropolitan Mechanics, to ripen and mature the knowledge they already possess, and to open up to them stores of which they at present are not aware. Its moral effect will be good—the pleasure of intellect will gradually obtain a triumph over the cravings of the senses—and in the language of Franklin, as men acquire a taste of 'the Madeira of learning, they will care less for the small beer of vice.' "

A measure of financial aid was also received. Hon. Samuel Cunard not only presented a donation of £2 to the Institute, but prevailed upon his copartners with such effect that the Halifax Banking Company patronized and assisted the Institute in its infancy to the extent of £25.

Prompt action followed. The Committee of Management convened twice within a fortnight of the creation of the Institute to set up a committee to solicit donations, to arrange for a list of lectures and lecturers for the

season and to choose a place of meeting. Rev. Thomas Aitken having offered his schoolroom in Dalhousie College to the Institute for a few evenings, the inaugural lecture was delivered there on January 11, 1832, by Joseph Howe. In accordance with a resolution passed when the Institute was created on December 27th, Howe's address dealt with the objects of the Institute and the advantages to be derived from the study of the arts and sciences. At that meeting each member was allowed to introduce a friend, and "a large and respectable audience" attended. This lecture, which was well received, was afterwards printed in *The Acadian Recorder*.

At the second weekly meeting a set of rules was submitted and adopted. It provided that meetings should commence at 8 o'clock, the doors being closed ten minutes later, after which no one was to be admitted until the termination of the lecture, when the doors would again be opened for admission for a period of five minutes. The chair at weekly meetings was to be occupied, in rotation, by one of the officers or the chairman of the committee. No lecture was to be delivered without its subject having been submitted to the committee three weeks previously, except in cases of exigence, when the president or other officers might decide agreeably to the other rules of the Institute. Every person who read a lecture was to be requested to leave a copy of it with the secretary to be preserved by him among the manuscripts of the Institute. All approach to discussions on party or domestic politics, or on controverted religious topics, was to be altogether prohibited. Each person who gave a donation of £5 to the Institute should be an honorary member of it. The annual meeting was to be held on the last Wednesday in December, for the election of the officers and committee, by ballot.

Joseph Howe's inaugural address was followed by a series of lectures which drew considerable numbers of listeners and demonstrated how rich and how varied a programme could be made available to adults in Halifax by the Mechanics' Institute. During the first season there were lectures on a variety of topics from cart-making to architecture, and from mechanics to music. Besides the introductory lecture on the objects of Mechanics' Institutes, agriculture took up one evening; as did algebra, arithmetic, cart-making, climate, education, friction, geometry, history, hydraulics, hydrostatics, magnetism, mechanical anatomy, mensuration and music; while architecture was dealt with in two lectures and mechanics in three. The lecturers were Joseph Howe; James Forman, Jr.; R. Watson; C. Lloyd; William DeBlois; R. Lawson; Dr. Grigor; George R. Young; Dr. Stirling; J. L. Starr; Miller; J. S. Thompson; and John Young.

Topics for lectures differed somewhat from year to year, and the range covered in a five-year span was considerable. Besides those already listed, it included glass blowing, brick making and naval architecture; phrenology,

physiology and the human eye; acoustics, optics and pneumatics; the steam engine, metals and science; drawing, painting and the manufacture of china; literary composition, poetry and the uses and abuses of classical learning; the coal fields of Nova Scotia, geology and mineralogy; elocution, chemistry and commerce; the effects of ignorance, the influence of women and occult sciences. There were other subjects as well.

Substantial numbers of Haligonians quickly took advantage of the opportunities offered by the Institute. Fifty-two became members the evening it was created; others soon followed their example; and about 200 persons, on an average, attended the lectures given during the month of January 1832. The number of tickets issued to members, ladies and youths varied from year to year—213 in 1837; 197 in 1842; 168 in 1844; 237 in 1846; 174 in 1848; and 140 in 1849. Particularly interesting is it to know that the number of youths who were ticket-holders in 1837 was 59; in 1839, 44; in 1842, 35; 1846, 47 and in 1848, 40. For several reasons, however, interest began to wane in later years; and, at last, in 1868, every vestige of the Institute disappeared when its museum was turned over to the Provincial Museum.

For twenty-five years or more the Halifax Mechanics' Institute contributed a great deal to the educational and cultural life of the Provincial capital. It was an adult education movement, varied in content, providing vocational training and education in the arts and sciences. It might fittingly be called the University of Halifax, or "a poor man's university"; for, in addition to useful knowledge for tradesmen, it offered courses comparable to those offered elsewhere to college students. At a time when Dalhousie College was still in its "stone age", with a stone structure, but without either a teaching staff or students to give it real form and vitality, the Halifax Mechanics' Institute helped fill a gaping void; and the animation it gave to the Dalhousie College building on the Grand Parade on the evening Joseph Howe inaugurated its first season was only the first sign of that vital force which was to be concentrated there from the autumn of 1833 to the time when the Institute went into its decline in the 1860's.

The Halifax Mechanics' Institute had been framed in connexion with the Mechanics' Library, which had been formed a little over two months earlier; but these two institutions never merged into one. At the outset, however, every member of the Institute was required to be a shareholder in, or a subscriber to, the Library; and for several years the Institute advocated a union of the two organizations. On September 10, 1832, Joseph Howe was requested to prepare a constitution of union; this was referred by the Institute to the Library later in the same month; and for several expressed reasons the Library refused to agree to a complete merger. The proposal of the Institute was that the two organizations should be so united

that all members of either should have an interest in and be members of both. To that end it advocated that in future all shareholders of the Library must qualify themselves and become members of the Institute, in the same manner as members of the latter were then required to be members of the former. This proposition also provided that the business of the Library and the Institute should be managed by two separate and distinct committees; that the committees and officers should be appointed at one general meeting of the subscribers to both societies; and that the same room should contain the books of the Library and apparatus, models and museum of the Institute, so that free access might be had to them by all the members. There were also provisions dealing with financial matters. But the Library did not deem it advisable to oblige all future members of it to join the Institute as "such a step would probably affect minors and many others who are not able to pay both or to attend Lecture Meetings." Nor would it recommend that the officers of the Library and the Institute be chosen on one night, or their reports be read on the same evening. It would, however, recommend that the books of the Library and apparatus and museum of the Institute be kept in the same room or rooms; that the Library should not be open in lecture hours; and that both associations should petition the Legislature for aid jointly.

For a time—but only for a time—the books of the Library and the models, apparatus and museum of the Institute were accommodated in the same quarters. This was the case from the autumn of 1832 to the autumn of 1833 when Mrs. Grover's room, on Hollis Street, was used. In October 1833, however, the Institute obtained accommodations in Dalhousie College, where the museum was from that time to be maintained and the meetings of the Institute were to be held.

Meantime the Institute had again proposed union, and had again been rebuffed. This time the Institute, aroused by the rejection of its proposal, decided that no longer would its members be compelled to subscribe to the Mechanics' Library; and this decision was confirmed in November 1833. When the Institute revived the proposal for union on later occasions, no amalgamation resulted.

The Halifax Mechanics' Institute never had a building of its own, but its hopes of acquiring one persisted for many years. This was a project dependent in large measure upon the financial resources of the organization; and, although funds were raised in various ways, the monetary means were never regarded as adequate.

The Legislature granted some aid. It voted £75 in 1833, £25 of which was to be for the Mechanics' Library and £15 to be paid to Titus Smith to assist him in making a collection of specimens of geology, botany and min-

eralogy for the museum of the Institute; £45, in 1834, part of which was to be applied to each of the same other two purposes; £30 in 1835; £50 in 1836; £30 in 1837; £50 in each of the next three years, as the combined grant to Institute and Library. Subsequently, on account of the increasing number of similar petitions from other parts of the Province, the Legislature discontinued its support.

The Institute had also considered the possibility of raising a fund by subscription. In May 1833 it decided that a subscription would be opened for the purpose of procuring money to purchase a site for a building, and several of the officers and members of the committee of management put down their names for certain sums; but proceedings of this sort were quickly halted and adjourned to some other opportunity. The subject was taken up again, and committees were appointed in 1836 and 1840. At a special meeting in December 1840, Andrew McKinlay, the President, reported that he and George Renny Young had obtained names on a requisition calling on the sheriff to convene a public meeting for the purpose of considering the erection of a building for the Institute and other literary and scientific uses. Young submitted three resolutions designed to further the project, and certain persons were selected to present these resolutions at the forthcoming public meeting. When that meeting took place on December 29th, these resolutions, with some modification, passed, and a committee was appointed.

In 1844 there was some discussion of a proposition respecting the cooperation of the Mechanics' Institute and the Harmonic Society for the purpose of erecting a building for literary and scientific uses; but by May 1846 no progress had been made for such a structure in Halifax, although the Dartmouth Mechanics' Institute had purchased a lot and begun to put up a building of its own.

The Institute also initiated a number of other projects with a view to raising money. It held a bazaar in 1844, a festival in 1846 and an exhibition of pictures in 1848. The bazaar netted about £180, the festival about £200 and the exhibition of pictures about £50. But the gross total was not very large, and before much more was done the fortunes of the Institute began to decline.

In 1849 the committee of management recommended that the funds and other property of the Institute should be vested in the hands of trustees for the benefit of the institution, and an act of incorporation for that purpose was passed the next year.

The Institute had come into existence at a meeting on December 27, 1831, in George Thompson's schoolroom, on the upper side of the Parade;

and thereafter, for a time, it had held its weekly meetings and its committee meetings at various places until Dalhousie College became its rather permanent abode. The weekly meetings, from the time of the inaugural lecture to the end of January 1832, were held in Mr. Aitken's schoolroom, in Dalhousie College. On February 8, 1832, they began to be held in the Acadian Schoolroom; later in the same year the lower part of the premises occupied by Mrs. Grover as a boarding house, in Hollis Street, was chosen not only as a place for meetings of the committee of the Institute, but also for its museum. Subsequently, in October 1833, the Institute obtained the use of two rooms in the west end of the Dalhousie College building on the Parade; the museum was removed to this building, and the meetings of the Institute continued to be held in it, except for a few instances of temporary removal on account of special circumstances, until the Institute ceased to exist. In the autumn of 1838, when Dalhousie College began to hold classes of its own, under the direction of Rev. Dr. McCulloch, its first President, the museum of the Mechanics' Institute was transferred to the large room in the east wing of the College building.

The museum contained a mixed collection, obtained through donation or by purchase. Shortly after the Institute was formed, Francis Alger, who had collaborated with C. T. Jackson in a survey of the geology of Nova Scotia and in the preparation of "Remarks on the mineralogy and geology of the province of Nova Scotia", which was published in Silliman's *American Journal of Science* (1828), presented a set of minerals. Other objects received in 1832 included a wheel and axle; a large map of North America; insects and minerals; South Sea curiosities; "a colossal marble bust of Napoleon"; specimens of West India woods; and a portrait of Dr. Grigor, President of the Institute, which was donated by William Valentine. During the next year such things were added to the collection as a planetarium; a war spear; letters of marque; spear heads; a young turtle; and three silver pennies. Later acquisitions included the sword of a swordfish; boxes of minerals; portraits of Lord Brougham, Dr. Birkbeck, Andrew Angus, Sir Humphrey Davy, Sir Gilbert Davies, Dr. Woolaston and S. G. W. Archibald; Miss Maria Morris's paintings of the wild flowers of Nova Scotia; elephant's teeth and an armadillo's skin; a model of a fire-escape and a model of a sailing vessel; sand from Sable Island; gunlocks used at the Battle of Trafalgar; a stuffed deer; two dolphins; and a great many other objects and books.

Besides the objects in the museum, the Institute possessed models and apparatus, which were used for illustration and demonstration at lectures, and for other educational purposes. Although Rev. Dr. Thomas McCulloch declined to act for the Institute in the importation of apparatus in 1832, he did at that time give advice as to how the required articles could be procured through an agent from Glasgow. Subsequently other pieces of equipment were purchased. At a meeting on Wednesday, March 5, 1851,

when F. N. Gisborne gave a practical lecture on the electric telegragh, "a spirited confab", as *The Morning Chronicle* described it, "was kept up for some time with the Literary Society of Pictou", by means of wires which had been introduced into the lecture room. This lecture was later repeated to the members of the Legislature and other persons.

Many distinguishd Nova Scotians lectured at the Halifax Mechanics' Institute. J. W. Dawson gave several addresses on geology; Dr. Abraham Gesner spoke on geology, mineralogy, the coal fields of Nova Scotia and the resources of Nova Scotia; Dr. McCulloch gave discourses on chemical affinities and education; and Titus Smith expatiated on mineralogy, natural history and painting. Two of the most frequent lecturers were Joseph Howe and George Renny Young; Howe dealt with history, commerce, poetry, the towns of the Province, the influence of women and the history of the Institute, as well as with the objects of Mechanics' Institutes; Young provided instruction on climate, magnetism, glass blowing, the manufacture of china, education and the novel. These and many other speakers contributed much to the enlightenment of the members of this institution.

Another branch of the Institute to which attention was given was that of initiatory classes—the possibility of appending educational classes to the usual departments. This was done in Institutes in the Mother Country, and there seemed to be merit in following that example. It was considered on a number of occasions, and adopted in 1836, when applications respecting the Initiatory School were received from McKenzie, Eager and J. S. Thompson, and J. S. Thompson was chosen as teacher of geometry and perspective. The fees for this school were 10 shillings per quarter; and classes were held on Monday, Tuesday and Friday evenings, from 8 to 10, beginning on the first Monday in session. This branch of the Halifax Mechanics' Institute, however, had a career of limited duration.

One way in which the Institute provided motivation for worth-while effort was by offering prizes for worthy projects. Prizes of four sovereigns, two sovereigns and one sovereign, or medals of equal value, were offered for specimens of art or ingenuity, and awarded in 1836 to men who had submitted drawings of a cottage and of a building in the Grecian style. Two years later a more memorable competition was initiated, when a medal was offered for the best essay on the early history of Halifax, and T. B. Akins set to work on his research for his contribution. Akins had already had an introduction to historical research in the help that he had given to Thomas Chandler Haliburton, and he was subsequently not only to advocate the establishment of a depository for public records in Nova Scotia, but was to become the first Provincial Archivist; now he wrote an essay for which he was awarded the Mechanics' Institute Medal in 1839, and which was afterwards expanded into book-size and printed as volume VIII of the *Col-*

lections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society. In another year — 1846 — the Institute offered prizes for the best plan and explanatory essay on the improvement of the Halifax Common; the best essay on popular education in Nova Scotia by means of assessment; and the best essay on the zoology of Nova Scotia, with suggestions for the preservation of moose, beaver or other valuable wild animals of the Province.

Throughout most of its existence the Halifax Mechanics' Institute was fortunate in having competent, influential and active officers, and their roster represented a galaxy of varied talent. Dr. William Grigor, the first president, held that office from December 27, 1831 to December 23, 1833, when he was succeeded by Joseph Howe, whose incumbency continued until January 7, 1835. Normally the annual meeting would have taken place on the last Wednesday in December, but in 1834 that day fell on New Year's Eve, and on that account the annual meeting was deferred until January 2, when the attendance was so small that the meeting was further postponed to January 7th. John Leander Starr was then selected as president, and he occupied the office until December 29, 1835. His successor, George R. Young, was president from that date to December 27, 1837, when he was followed by Andrew McKinlay, who after being nearly eleven and a half years in the office terminated his tenure on May 16, 1849. Actually the regular date for the annual meeting had been changed in 1838 from the last Wednesday in December to the first Wednesday in May; but in 1849 it had been postponed to May 16th. Dr. Daniel McNeill Parker stepped into McKinlay's shoes and held the presidency until 1851. It appears that Dr. James Allen and J. S. Thompson, in turn, occupied the office for the next year, and that the Rev. Dr. Alexander Forrester filled it for the three following years. After that Andrew McKinlay had a second rather lengthy tenure, from 1855 until his death on September 29, 1867. The presidency remained vacant thereafter; but James Thomson continued as vice-president until about the autumn of 1868.

The office of secretary of the Institute was held by three men. Especially noteworthy is the fact that John S. Thompson filled that office for the first twenty years, contributing much to this organization in many ways, and at the same time playing an important part in the promotion of the public good through other agencies. His successors in the position of secretary of the institute were James Thomson and James Barnes.

Attendance at weekly meetings was a testimony to its success in its better days. But as early as 1847-48 "several other meetings, of attractive and improving character, divided public attention, and occupied time to the prevention of the usual attendance at the Institute." Moreover, so much time and attention were taken up with the Picture Exhibition sponsored by the Institute in the summer of 1848 that delay and then hurry both left their

mark upon the lecture list for the ensuing season. The retiring committee of management therefore recommended to their successors early attention and more than usual care concerning that department, so that the Institute might maintain its useful and popular position among the other kindred assemblages of the community. Besides the impact of other societies somewhat akin in character, and the effect of the Picture Exhibition on the course of lectures, there was also the comparative smallness of the otherwise commodious lecture room. That prevented the issuance of single tickets by means of which the places of absent members might be occupied, as in other societies. The selfsame cause and the very same result also prevented the engagement of regular lecturers at remuneration, a practice that was usual elsewhere. "At present", it was declared, "gentlemen prepare lectures hurriedly, and the Committee have not the liberty of direction, respecting subjects, or respecting laborious and expensive illustration of lectures, which have been found desirable and sources of attraction, where more means are at command."

Courses of lectures were provided throughout the 1850's, with a more rapid oscillation in the pendulum of interest. On occasion the lecture room was crowded, as on March 5, 1851, when Gisborne spoke about the electric telegraph, and on January 4, 1859, when William Young delivered the opening discourse. At other times there was a hint in the newspapers of lecturers appearing before a "beggarly account of empty benches."

Competition was becoming keener for the Institute. Other lectures cut into its membership and attendance — lectures sponsored by church organizations, the Y.M.C.A., divisions of the Sons of Temperance, and other societies. Dalhousie College had begun to function as a college in 1838; although its activities waned occasionally, it revived first as a high school, then as a high school and college, and subsequently reopened in 1863. Perhaps even more potent in its immediate impact upon the activities of the Institute was the burst of military ardour at the end of the 1850's. The same causes that led to the formation of the Volunteer forces in Great Britain spanned the Atlantic and sparked the organization of Volunteer companies of militia throughout the Province of Nova Scotia. Companies formed in 1859 and 1860 mustered, trained and drilled; public meetings were enthusiastic in support of the movement; and by April 1860 eleven Volunteer companies in Halifax had a strength of 868 men, while thirty-two effective companies in the Province had a combined strength of 2,341. For a time the military authorities occupied Dalhousie College. Interest in the Institute was dying; yet this was the very time when a new Literary and Scientific Society was established at Halifax, by some of the leading members of the Institute itself. This new society started in 1859, with Andrew McKinlay as president, Dr. Cramp and Dr. Cogswell as vice-presidents, S. L. Shannon as treasurer, and Hugo Reid and W. Garvie as secretaries, and con-

tinued in its course until 1862, when the Nova Scotian Institute of Natural Science was organized.

While there had been fluctuations in the fortunes of the Halifax Mechanics' Institute in its earlier years, its museum had expanded steadly, its reserve fund had increased gradually, and it had won and held a high place in public estimation until the 1850's. Even in that decade it had its moments; but by the end of it interest in the Institute had markedly waned and the old enthusiasm for it had practically vanished. For a few years it remained in suspended animation, its ghost marching on in the names of personages listed in almanacs as its office-holders, and then it expired. By October 1869, Joseph Howe could but hope that the Institute would be revived, so that the mechanics might have a permanent centre around which to rally, a room where they could meet each other, where they could display their handiwork, and exchange their thoughts, with a view to mutual improvement and combined co-operation.

Meantime the Halifax Mechanics' Library had also run its course. It had originated on October 17, 1831; and with 50 volumes and a membership of about 20 the issuance of books had begun on October 31st of that year. Over the first year, functioning without interruption, it had averaged a circulation of more than 100 books weekly; and at the end of its first year its shareholders numbered 219. Early in 1832 the books of this library were removed from John Naylor's to a room in the corner house above Boyle's Country Market. That room was open on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 7 to 8, and on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings from 7 to 10, with a member standing as librarian for each evening. Soon afterwards, however, it was found desirable to provide permanently for this work, and a regular librarian was procured at a remuneration of £13 per annum. Eventually — in 1856 — a lot of land was obtained by lease, opposite the Halifax Grammar School, as a site for the library, and a building was erected on it. Although one Halifax newspaper lamented that this institution did not receive the measure of patronage from mechanics which its merits justly demanded, it contained over 3,000 volumes in 1857. Seven years later the trustees of the library offered the whole collection for sale at auction, with the avowed preference of selling all the books to some town or county, at a nominal price, if applied for before February 17th, the day of sale. His Honour, William Young, the Chief Justice now offered to purchase this library and present it to the City for the free use of the citizens, provided the City would procure and furnish a suitable room for it. This offer was accepted; a room was fitted up in the City Court House; a committee of the City Council was appointed for the management of the library; and at the beginning of the Citizens' Free Library two city officials devoted two hours a day, alternately, to the duty of librarian, without charge. On June 15, 1864, the new free library went into operation.

OTHER INSTITUTES

The Halifax Mechanics' Institute was the first but not the only branch of that adult education movement to be established in Nova Scotia. From it as the centre there soon radiated through the Province a network of similar institutions. Institutes were formed at Sydney, Antigonish, Liverpool, Windsor, Dartmouth, Guysborough, St. Andrews, Pictou, and perhaps New Glasgow or other places; and related institutions were organized, under other designations, in other communities.

Sydney

The Sydney Mechanics' Institute was formed in 1837. It went into successful operation immediately, and two years later petitioned the Legislature for aid in purchasing books for a library and apparatus for illustrating and explaining lectures. The grant of £20, voted by the Legislature in 1839, was used in partial payment of books. T. H. Clarke was the president of this Institute in 1840 when, at the beginning of its third session, it again sought provincial aid. By 1842, when the Rev. O. S. Weeks and other members of the committee petitioned for similar assistance, so many like demands were being made that the Province discontinued its help.

Newspapers disclose something of the specific nature of the programme of the Sydney Mechanics' Institute. One of the lectures of the year 1846 was that given by Richard Huntington, editor of *The Spirit of the Times,* on the steam engine; in 1848 Dr. Cooper lectured on the fallacy of spectral illusions and H. Munroe on education; in 1850 Mr. Read delivered an address on architecture; Major Sutherland one on biography and the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties; and D. N. McQueen one of the rights of women. Two years later one of the lectures — by W. C. McKinnon, newspaperman and writer — dealt with the question, "Who were the first inhabitants of America, and when was it discovered?" The lecture list for 1852 included Richardson on the rights of the red man of North America; H. Davenport on the decline and fall of the Roman Empire; E. B. Sutherland on geology; A. O. Dodd on the rights of women; R. Martin on taste; James Anderson on the wines of scripture. In 1855 Rev. Richard John Uniacke spoke on astronomy; in 1861 Rev. W. E. Gelling delivered a lecture on the study of words, and Rev. Isaac dealt with the association of ideas. At that time, as *The Morning Chronicle* reported, the Sydney Mechanics' Institute was in lively operation and diffusing a taste for literary refreshment throughout the whole community. The intellectual bill of fare for 1862 was a varied one; W. H. Waddell with readings from Count Gobineau's work on the colonies; Rev. Mr. Huestis on atmosphere; Rev. Mr. Gelling; John Bourinot on lost opportunities; J. L. Hill, the president, on the cultivation of the mental, physical and moral capacities; Rev. J. A. Richey, of Gabarus, on

emigrant squatters; Rev. S. F. Kendall on Egypt; A. H. Bourinot on whale fishing; James Anderson, a reading of *Rob Roy;* R. Martin, the model wife; and C. H. Harrington on the dignity and power of honorable labour and useful employments. Two years later one of the lectures was that of Rev. Mr. Uniacke on Cape Breton.

It is clear that for a number of years the Sydney Mechanics' Institute was a flourishing organization, shedding light and learning throughout the community, and providing some knowledge of science as well as of literature. Then, for a time, it ceased to function; and early in the twentieth century an attempt was made to revive it.

Antigonish

At Antigonish a Mechanics' Institute was organized on March 20, 1840, and for a number of years much interest was taken in it. On December 14, 1840, it began its first winter session, with introductory remarks from Dr. Alexander Macdonald, its president, and a discourse on the importance of scientific knowledge to all classes, and the utility of Mechanics' Institutes as a means of diffusing it, delivered by A. McDougall. The programme for the season included lectures by G. A. Blanchard, Rev. T. Leaver, Dr. Macdonald, W. A. Henry, E. H. Harrington, Dr. Currie, Charles Leaver, Charles Creed (secretary), Mr. Fitzgerald and others. Early in 1841 a petition of this Institute was referred to the committee of the Legislature on education. Before the winter session for 1842-43 began, the Antigonish Institute had procured an electrical machine and apparatus from Halifax, and had obtained a more satisfactory room for its meetings. The lecture list for that session included an introductory address by G. A. Blanchard, the president; a discourse on the pre-eminence of poetry over painting and music, by Dr. Currie; an historical account of the manners and customs of the Moors, together with an account of their conquests in Spain, by A. Macdonald; and lectures by E. H. Harrington, the secretary, on mechanical power; Rev. Mr. Leaver on manners and customs of the ancients; Rev. Thomas Trotter on geology; Dr. Currie in continuation of his previous discourse; G. A. Blanchard on electricity; A. McDougall on dramatic poetry; Rev. Thomas Trotter on geology; Charles Leaver, Mr. MacDonald, of South River, and E. H. Harrington, on various topics; as well as Rev. Mr. Trotter for a third time on geology; Dr. Macdonald on a periscope of ancient and modern arts and sciences; and Dr. Currie on atmosphere. This Institute appears to have thrived for a few years and then to have faded away.

Liverpool

On the South Shore a Mechanics' Institute was created at Liverpool in November 1841, but it continued for only a very few years. On February

1, 1842, a petition from this Institute was presented to the Legislature; it declared that the officers and members had formed themselves into a society for the advancement of useful knowledge in Liverpool, and were desirous of obtaining assistance in getting "some philosophical apparatus for the promotion of the same . . . " Subsequently this petition was withdrawn. It was signed by James Barss, John Campbell, J. O. Morse, George Payzant, Andrew Cowie, John W. Scott, Inglis VanBuskirk, G. Seely, James N. Knaut, Robert Roberts, S. P. Freeman, and 35 others. Shortly afterwards the Queens County Friendly Society appears to have rapidly increased in numbers, while the Institute declined.

Windsor and Dartmouth

At least two Mechanics' Institutes were formed in Nova Scotia in 1842 —one at Windsor, the other at Dartmouth. Both flourished for a time, and played a significant part in the life of their communities.

The Windsor Mechanics' Institute was begun at a public meeting at the Crown Inn, Water Street, Windsor, on Thursday, January 20, 1842. More than fifty persons attended this meeting, presided over by Benjamin DeWolf, and convened for that purpose. DeWolf explained the purpose of the meeting; Irons and Randall discussed the matter; and then three resolutions establishing the Institute were passed. Officers and a committee were appointed. These included the following: B. DeWolf, president; Dr. B. D. Fraser and David Scott, vice-presidents; James O'Brien, secretary; James L. DeWolf, treasurer; and James Irons, Thomas Randall, James Thompson, Peter Shand, N. H. Calkin, James Burgess and James Shand, members of the committee.

The Dartmouth Mechanics' Institute, established in 1842, was in successful operation for a number of years. Dr. John McDonald was its first president, and the opening lecture was given by J. W. Munro, schoolmaster, on Friday evening, November 11, 1842. This Dartmouth institution then drew on Halifax for lecturers; with Alderman McKinlay, president of the Halifax Institute speaking on heat, and Joseph Howe on history. In that part of the year the steamboat discontinued her trips across the harbour too early to carry visiting lecturers back to Halifax the same evening, and the Dartmouth Institute provided a boat for that purpose. At the opening of the second session, in January 1844, Joseph Howe was the speaker; and in the autumn the lecture list contained the names of Rev. A. S. Hunt and Dr. Teulon of Halifax.

For several years the meetings of the Dartmouth Mechanics' Institute were held in hired rooms, until such success had been achieved that it was decided to erect a building. In order to raise funds for that purpose a grand

bazaar was arranged during the strawberry season, on McNab's Island, for July 10, 1845. Suitable arrangements were made, under the patronage of Lieutenant-Governor Falkland; the band of the 43rd Regiment supplied delightful music; quoits, balls and swings were provided for the amusement of those who chose to participate; two ferry steamers were employed throughout the day, in conveying people to and from the island; and nearly 4,000 persons attended. The result was that the sum of £491 was added to the funds of the Institute. Plans for a building were afterwards prepared by Henry Elliott, and the building itself was erected under the joint skill and superintendence of himself and his father.

A lot was acquired in January 1846, during the presidency of John Burton, and soon afterwards a building with a ground plan 37 x 57 was begun. It was designed to have a lecture hall about 36 feet square and 18 feet high, with two smaller apartments 14 x 18 for library and committee rooms; and over those rooms there was to be a gallery connected with the lecture room. In the words of *The Provincial:* "The work went speedily forward, and the inhabitants had soon the gratification of seeing the Mechanics' Institute take its position, and stand as a common platform where persons of all classes and creeds might meet to receive instruction, during the long winter evenings." The building was formally opened on Monday evening, December 7, 1846, when people from Halifax and Dartmouth assembled to hear the first lecture in it delivered by Hon. William Young, Speaker of the House of Assembly, and with E. H. Lowe presiding.

A varied programme was provided during ensuing years. Henry Elliott, the Dartmouth native, who had designed the Institute building, lectured on architecture on February 7, 1848; Joseph Howe, Rev. Mr. Knapman and George Blanchard were among the speakers that autumn. Although the attendance now increased, and then decreased, during the winter of 1851-52 the Institute was well patronised, and nearly 100 seasonal tickets, each entitling two persons to admission, were distributed. During the session of 1862 the lecturers included Joseph H. Weeks, F. W. Passow, Henry Elliott, H. Blanchard, M.P.P., A. McDougall, C.E.; and the topics heard were "The Past and Present of the United States"; a reading; "Architecture;" a reading; and "Gold Mining." Two years later S. L. Shannon, Rev. Mr. Gunnison, Hiram Blanchard, M.P.P., and Rev. J. C. Cochran were among the speakers; and the subjects dealt with included "Walks about Rome"; "Mahometism;" "The Skeleton in the Cupboard"; in addition to readings.

Eventually—in 1877—the Dartmouth Mechanics' Institute building was purchased from the surviving trustees and made ready for occupancy as a Town Hall. It was renovated, handsomely fitted up for civic purposes, with seats and lights, and formally opened with a concert in October.

Guysborough

Guysborough also boasted a Mechanics' Institute for a time. It held its first meeting on January 3, 1843, arranged a list of lectures for the season and decided to petition the Legislature for financial aid. It appears that Dr. Edward Carritt was the president at that time; and E. J. Cunningham was the secretary. At the first meeting of 1843 the president announced that an electrical machine and chemical apparatus had been procured, and Stewart Campbell delivered a lecture on the pleasures and advantages of science. The list of lectures, as announced on that occasion, was as follows:

Introductory lecture—	S. Campbell
On the Wealth of Nations—	Jno. J. Marshall
Origin and Progress of the Arts—	Rev. Mr. McGregor
On the Heavenly Bodies and the probability of their being inhabited—	Rev. Mr. Shreve
Ancient History—	C. Shreve, Esq.
Mechanics—	S. Russell
Electricity—	Dr. Carritt
Modern History—	C. Shreve, Esq.
Mechanics, continued—	S. Russell
Chemistry—	Dr. Carritt
Naval Architecture—	Mr. Biglow
Chemistry, continued—	Dr. Carritt
The benefits that accrued to mankind from a knowledge of the Arts and Sciences—	J. H. Weeks
Magnetism—	Dr. Carritt
Agriculture—	Robert Hartshorne
Practical Mechanics—	James Hattie

The petition of the Guysborough Mechanics' Institute, which was presented to the Legislature in 1843, was referred to the Committee on Education. On it that Committee reported as follows, February 24, 1843:

> . . . Your Committee have had under consideration the Petition of Doctor Edward Carritt and others, for aid to the Mechanics' Institute at Guysborough. This Institution appears to be in its infancy, three lectures were delivered in the early part of the season, but it was proposed to continue them weekly, and your Committee think that a small sum given in aid of their laudable efforts to improve the minds of the rising generation in that part of the Province would not be misapplied . . .

A year later the Guysborough Mechanics' Institute again sought Provincial assistance—this time for the purchase of philosophical apparatus. But by that time the Legislature had discontinued voting money to institutions of this kind.

St. Andrews

There was also a Mechanics' Institute at St. Andrews. It was formed in the autumn of 1846, and during the ensuing winter months a series of

lectures was presented. These were delivered by the teacher and the minister in the community; McDonald, the teacher, giving lectures on astronomy, geography and history; and the minister dealing with subjects connected with natural and revealed religion. Thus, as a subscriber to *The Novascotian* stated, "even in the rural district of St. Andrews, a taste for knowledge [was] rapidly becoming general, and will, I trust, progress until its benign influence is practically known and appreciated over the length and breadth of our native land."

Pictou

This adult education movement did not spread over the Province without having an effect on the district or county of Pictou. The town of Pictou, the seat of Rev. Thomas McCulloch's early labours, had had a subscription library in 1822 and a Literary and Scientific Society in 1834; and both it and New Glasgow had a Mechanics' Hall. The Pictou Literary and Scientific Society was a noteworthy institution which fostered a taste for literary and scientific pursuits and was the means for disseminating a great deal of useful and interesting information on a great variety of subjects. It boasted many a distinguished lecturer, from among the clergymen, laymen, physicians, lawyers and men of business. Many of the lectures were of a high standard; and they were often followed by sparkling discussions, evoking displays of wit, humour and oratory, or eliciting useful information. Among the notable lecturers were Rev. Dr. McCulloch, Rev. Mr. Trotter, J. D. B. Fraser, J. W. Dawson, Dr. Anderson and Hiram Blanchard; and there were others. After making steady progress for a number of years, interest in this institution declined and it finally expired on April 12, 1855. It had had an existence of twenty-one years. While it was still in operation, a Pictou Men's Debating Society held meetings in 1846 and the Pictou Mechanics' Joint Stock Company was formed in the same year. On several occasions there were attempts to revive the Literary and Scientific Society or to organize a new one of a similar kind; but—in October 1863—as one of the young men of Pictou declared, "Neither Reading Room, Philosophical Society, Debating Club nor indeed many other societies which might be mentioned for the promotion of the welfare of the place" at that time existed. One reason for the lack of societies of this sort in Pictou was alleged to be that so few of the young men could attend them, their time being so much taken up with their business; and it was suggested that the early closing system should be adopted there to remedy this situation. Early in 1864 a literary society, boasting the name Pictou Mutual Improvement Association, was formed; and two years later the Pictou Mechanics' Institute Reading Room and Library went into operation. It was located on South Market Street, opposite Messrs. Forbes and Dwyer's Auction Room, and was opened about the middle of March 1866. Terms of admission, as announced by the secretary, were as follows:

Terms of Admission

Annual subscription for one person $1.50
" " " a Firm of two 2.00
" " " a Firm of three 2.50
Non-subscribers may obtain the privileges of the Room by depositing in the Box on the table an Entrance Fee of Two Cents.

Hours of Opening and Closing

From May 1st to November 1st ..... 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Remainder of the year ..... 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.
The Keeper, Mr. David Cameron, is authorized to receive subscriptions at the Room.
Pictou, March 15. W. G. Pender, Sec'y.

A few weeks later, the Pictou Mechanics' Institute Savings Bank was established, and the Pictou Mechanics' Institute Employment Office was opened. A little later a special meeting of the Pictou Mechanics' Institute was held in the Engine House.

KINDRED SOCIETIES

Besides the network of Mechanics' Institutes which spread over the Province of Nova Scotia, kindred societies sprang up in quite a number of its communities. The Pictou Literary and Scientific Society and the Yarmouth Literary Society had been formed in 1834, and they were followed by the Colchester Literary and Scientific Society, at Truro, in 1838-39. Other institutions of the same sort were established, or were in operation, at Stewiacke and Tatamagouche, in 1839; at Musquodoboit and Middle Musquodoboit, in 1843; at Musquodoboit Harbour, in 1844-45; at Barrington, in 1858; at Bridgetown, in 1862; and at Amherst, in 1864-65. Similar associations, with somewhat different names, included the Sydney Young Men's Debating Society, in 1842; the East Cumberland Society for the Promotion of Political Knowledge, formed in 1844, meeting alternately at the Gulf Shore, the head of Wallace Bay and Pugwash, and of which John Reid was the first president; the Pictou Men's Debating Society; the Chester Reading Room, which was opened in 1856; the Yarmouth Free Discussion Club; the Westport Free Discussion Club; and the Halifax Debating Club, which held meetings early in 1858 and was reorganized in 1861. These associations and others disseminated useful knowledge, fostered a taste for literature and science, provided a means for training in public speaking and debate and contributed a great deal to the intellectual improvement of their members.

NEW INSTITUTIONS

With the passing of the years, new educational institutions emerged to improve the standard of education in the Province and to take away some of the need for Mechanics' Institutes. The Normal School (later the Nor-

mal College) first opened its doors to teachers-in-training on November 14, 1855; free schools were inaugurated in 1864-65; the Provincial School of Agriculture was established in 1885; a Summer School of Science—a peripatetic institution, designed and utilized for advancing the scientific and literary culture of teachers during the holiday season—was started in 1887; the Victoria School of Art and Design, in the organization of which Mrs. Anna Leonowens was the moving spirit, began its career in the same year; by legislation of 1889 schools of instruction for coal miners were established at a number of centres; by statute of 1890 Government Night Schools for Adults were created; manual training was commenced in the regular schools by 1891 and domestic science by 1897. By 1891 there were Government Night Schools at Lunenburg, Parrsboro, Springhill, Thorburn, Stellarton, Westville, Victoria Mines, Little Bras d'Or, Bridgeport, Cow Bay (Port Morien), Reserve, Sydney Mines, Glace Bay and Caledonia Mines. By the next year the number of such schools had more than doubled. They were then in operation at West Ingonish, Englishtown, West Arichat, D'Escousse, Springhill, Joggins, Bridgewater, Chester, Albion Mines, Trenton, Westville, Beaton, Kingsville, S. E. Margaree, Sydney Mines, Caledonia Mines, Little Bras d'Or, Mitchell, Reserve Mines, Low Point, Little Glace Bay, North Sydney, Bateston and Bridgeport. During 1895-96 there were 28 Government Night Schools in the Province; a year later there were 27; the year after that 14; the next year 7; and 7 also for the year 1900-01. During 1902-03 there were seven Government Night Schools in operation too; one at Plaster in Victoria County; one at Gold River in Lunenburg County; two in Pictou—at Lyons' Brook and Stellarton; and three in Richmond County—at Poulamond, Arichat and St. Louis. By that time, Dalhousie University had decided to establish a mining school at Sydney, and plans were made for its opening in May, 1903, with courses on geology, mining, chemistry and mining gases, as well as field studies. In the same month a proposal was put forward, though not taken up, for the establishment of a technical school in Cape Breton.

ANOTHER SYDNEY MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

Meantime there had been a brief Indian summer for Mechanics' Institutes in Nova Scotia, as well as a reorganization of the coal industry and the establishment of an iron and steel plant at Sydney. The Whitney syndicate had transformed the coal trade in 1893 by expanding markets in New England and along the St. Lawrence, and the beginning of new developments in iron and steel provided a hopeful outlook for the Sydney area. It was in these circumstances that a Mechanics' Institute was organized at a meeting in the County Hall, Sydney, on Tuesday evening, March 26, 1901. George Lamb was elected president of it, and W. Dakin was chosen as secretary. The admission fee was set at $2.00, and the Institute was to be open to all interested in mechanics. During that spring season a programme was

provided, with lectures on various topics, as well as a musical evening. R. Smallwood gave an address on the characteristics and work of eminent inventors, and illustrated lectures on improvements in the use of steam. The audiences were appreciative but rather small; and this institution was short-lived.

CONCLUSION

The day of Mechanics' Institutes in Nova Scotia seemed ended, but it had been one of solid benefit to the Province. The Mechanics' Institute, seen at first in the efforts of Dr. George Birkbeck in the Old Country, and tempered at last in the environment of the New World, contributed much to adult education in Nova Scotia, both by achievement and example; its accomplishment lies embedded in the educational and cultural development of the Province, and its inspiration is enshrined in its history. From the time that its exemplar appeared at Halifax in 1831, to its last disappearance from the Provincial scene, the Mechanics' Institute did a great deal for the elevation of the standard of education and for adult education generally, often when and where its beneficence was sorely needed, while its example and its inspiration pointed the way to other institutions.