

National Pressure Groups and Provincial Curriculum Policy: Temperance in Nova Scotia Schools 1880–1930

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This article explores the support for, the introduction of, and the content in temperance courses in the schools of Nova Scotia between 1880 and 1930. By examining temperance organizations, in particular, the Sons of Temperance and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, it assesses outside influence. By looking at comments from teachers, inspectors, and superintendents it appraises the sentiment of professional educators. The textbooks, examination questions, and curriculum guides explain the actual program. This article is a case study of the factors in Nova Scotia society which precipitated a curriculum change. It suggests that the role of national organizations must be considered in determining how curriculum policy was set in a country lacking a national system of education or even a national office.

Cet article porte sur les cours de tempérance donnés dans les écoles de la Nouvelle Ecosse entre 1880 et 1930: sur leur contenu, la façon dont ils ont été introduits dans le programme, et les appuis qu'ils ont reçu. Il s'intéresse aux influences venant de l'extérieur du milieu scolaire en étudiant les sociétés de tempérance, notamment les Fils de la Tempérance et la Société de Tempérance des Femmes Chrétiennes. Les commentaires des professeurs, inspecteurs et surveillants permettent d'évaluer l'opinion des éducateurs professionnels à l'égard de ces cours. Le programme lui-même est analysé à partir des manuels, des questions d'examen et des guides d'enseignement. Cet article constitue une étude de cas portant sur les facteurs sociaux qui ont entraîné un changement de programme en Nouvelle Ecosse. Il suggère que pour comprendre comment les politiques éducatives s'établissaient dans un pays ne disposant pas alors d'un système national d'éducation ou même d'un bureau national à cet effet, il faut tenir compte de l'influence des associations nationales.

The growth of temperance sentiment in North America increased dramatically and changed radically in purpose and in tactics between 1820 and 1920. From voluntary associations at local levels working on a personal, one-to-one level to save the individual, the temperance movement embraced national and international organizations, used coercive methods to achieve legal prohibition of alcoholic beverages, and summoned all institutions of the society, including the schools, to further its aims. By 1920 the movement had achieved much success. Some sort of prohibition legislation had been passed in all North American jurisdictions, the organizations supporting a temperance theme had cooperated

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with and supported one another, and schools, churches, and other societal agencies had been coopted to the cause.

The interest in temperance courses in the schools had early and widespread support among temperance organizations, particularly the important worldwide Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Sons of Temperance, an international educational and beneficial, fraternal organization. The members believed that the supervision and education of children would result in the children's proper moral behaviour and be an influence of good for their parents. Temperance instruction in the schools would include compulsory curricula, WCTU endorsed temperance textbooks, examinations at every level and methodology training for student teachers in the normal schools. The success of this program varied over time and place.

This article explores the support for, the introduction of, and the content in temperance courses in the schools of Nova Scotia between 1880-1930, and relates this support to the depth of temperance sentiment in the province. It is a case study of the factors in Nova Scotian society which precipitated a need for a curriculum change in the schools, and the manner in which the public school in the province reacted to that need.

I

Concern about the overuse of alcohol developed early in the nineteenth century in Nova Scotia. Stories abound concerning liquor abuse, not only at weddings, funerals, christenings, and elections, but in the daily lives of ministers, politicians, businessmen, and the worker. According to reports, a half of a puncheon of rum (70-72 gallons per puncheon) was an average store per family for the winter; a daily allowance of two glasses of liquor was part of a worker's wage; and a loss of property and lives was attributed to drunkenness on the job (*Centennial book*, 1947, p. 11, 12). An open temperance society was formed at Beaver River, Yarmouth Co. in 1828 and the Halifax Temperance Society became active in 1831. These and a variety of other open temperance groups were not prohibition minded. They argued against strong liquor, but not against beer and wine, and did not try to enforce pledge signers. At least one only restricted the amount of hard liquor - to two glasses a day (*Centennial book*, 1947, p. 13-19; Strople, 1975, p. 3).

The Halifax Female Temperance and Benevolent Society was formed in 1844, not only a first as an organization for women, but also first in promoting "total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks."¹ Unfortunately, little else is known about this group. It was followed by the Sons of Temperance, a fraternal organization, established in the U.S. in 1842 in the belief that drunkenness had one cause - moderate drinking, and one remedy - total abstinence (*Centennial book*, 1947, pp. 20, 76; Strople, 1975, p. 4). With the formulation of this Order in Nova Scotia in 1847 interest in

the whole question of alcohol use and abuse became more widespread. A number of petitions to the legislature followed, including one signed by 20,000 women, asking for prohibitory laws (*Centennial book*, 1947, pp. 78, 79). These prompted the legislature of Nova Scotia to establish a Committee on Temperance. This committee seems to have been influenced by a similar committee of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom which advocated two stages of action, immediate and ultimate. Immediate solutions recommended the separation of the retail sale of spirits from the sale of groceries and provisions, and "a national system of education which would ensure ... accurate information as to the poisonous and invariably deleterious nature of ardent spirits as an article of diet in any form or shape." Ultimately, both the Nova Scotia Committee and the Committee in the United Kingdom believed that absolute prohibition would become necessary.²

During the next twenty years amendments to the Liquor License Law placed restrictions on the granting of licenses:

in 1863 a License Law amendment ruled that no license would be granted in any polling district where a majority of the ratepayers petitioned against the license, Halifax City excluded;

in 1869 a further amendment ruled that application for a license had to be accompanied by a petition signed by two thirds of the ratepayers of the polling district, Halifax City excluded;

in 1874 an amendment referring to Halifax City only, ruled that all applications for license to sell liquor had to be accompanied by a petition signed by a majority of the ratepayers in the district concerned (Strople, pp. 4, 5).

The Canada Temperance Act or Scott Act as it was commonly called, allowing for local option legislation by parliamentary constituencies, was passed in 1878. By 1886, 13 of 18 Nova Scotia counties were dry under this act. Lunenburg, Halifax, Antigonish, Richmond, and Victoria came under the Liquor License Act which approved three kinds of licences: wholesale, shop or retail (1 pint to 2 gallons), and hotel. Very few licences were granted except in the city of Halifax. Halifax, a seaport and naval base, was the centre of the legalized liquor traffic in the province with more than 100 shops and hotels licensed to sell liquor. The temperance forces, although encouraged by their gains outside the city, were dismayed by the prevalence of outlets in Halifax and by their inability to prevent the trade in the city from shipping liquor into dry counties to supply personal needs and illegal sellers (*Centennial book*, 1947, pp. 82, 84; Strople, 1975, p. 6; Report of the Royal Commission on the liquor traffic, 1895, p. 661).

A plebiscite in Nova Scotia in 1894 resulted in 42,756 to 12,355 votes in favour of prohibitive legislation; a dominion plebiscite held in 1898 saw a small majority for prohibition. Nova Scotia, like the other English-

speaking provinces, voted heavily in favour – 34,678 yeas to 5,370 nay votes. Neither government acted and the temperance forces were left with a hollow victory. The formation of the Nova Scotia Temperance Alliance in 1906 by the WCTU, Sons of Temperance, and the temperance committees of the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches pooled temperance resources and in 1910 the Nova Scotia Temperance Act prohibited the sale of liquor in the parts of the province not under the Scott Act, with the exception of Halifax City. As in a number of other provinces, wartime legislation in 1916 brought in full-scale prohibition. Halifax was finally dry. Although it had been promoted to support the war effort, prohibition remained in effect in Nova Scotia until 1929 when a plebiscite brought in government control (Forbes, 1975, pp. 62–86; Strople, 1975, p. 6; *Centennial book*, 1947, pp. 84–8). Forbes cautions that “one could easily exaggerate both the extent of prohibition and the sentiment supporting it ... before 1900” (p. 63). Yet on a comparative basis with other provinces Nova Scotia had more far reaching legislation, it had a lower consumption rate, and prohibitory legislation lasted longer (Popham and Schmidt, 1958, pp. 54–70).

II

The temperance campaign in Nova Scotia spanned a full century from the first temperance society in Yarmouth in 1829 to the Government Control plebiscite of 1929. During this period of time organizations multiplied, petitions were signed, churches, including the Catholic church, offered support and various institutions were used by prohibitionists to further their cause. One of these was the public school. Generally in North America the campaign to use the schools to promote temperance was spearheaded by the WCTU, through its Department of Scientific Temperance Instruction (STI). Most jurisdictions responded to WCTU agitation with some attempt at a curricula change. In particular, legislation was passed in every state compelling all schools to instruct the WCTU version of temperance, with approved textbooks and state-wide exams. Other temperance groups, the Sons of Temperance, farmers' organizations, evangelical churches etc. generally supported the WCTU's campaign in the schools (Mezvinsky, 1961; Timberlake, 1970; Mitchinson, 1977; Sheehan, 1980).

An interest in using the schools of Nova Scotia to promote temperance surfaced in the early 1880s, and did so before the WCTU had organized in the Maritimes. Supported by the Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance the Council of Public Instruction placed Sir B. W. Richardson's *The Temperance Lesson Book* on its list of school texts with recommendation that teachers give their pupils “according to age and capacity, oral lessons based on its contents” (*Centennial book*, 1947, p. 104; Annual Report, Nova Scotia Education).³ The Halifax School Board

recommended the book to all teachers but supplied no public funds for its purchase. The Halifax Divisions of the Sons of Temperance raised funds to purchase enough texts for all city teachers (*Centennial book*, 1947, p. 104). Although a beginning had been made it quickly proved unsatisfactory to many. By 1889 a petition from C. J. Lettery and others of Digby in the southeast asked that temperance be made compulsory and a better textbook be authorised (*Report of the Committee on education*, 1889, p. 1); the teachers' association for inspectoral district #4, Annapolis County, passed a resolution in sympathy with temperance teaching in the schools ("Report of the 10th session," 1889, p. 11); the WCTU asked to have *The Pathfinders Series* approved and made compulsory in the schools⁴; the Supervisor of Halifax Public Schools indicated that temperance received a very small portion of the attention demanded by the magnitude of the problem⁵; and the Sons of Temperance asked the Council of Public Instruction to include questions on scientific temperance instruction in provincial examination papers (*Centennial book*, 1947, p. 106).

"Pathfinders Physiological Series" had been reviewed in 1887 by *The Educational Review*, a magazine for teachers of the Maritime Provinces, indicating that "we will be glad when just such books are placed in the hands of every student in the Maritime Provinces." This series, endorsed by the National WCTU, was in use in New York and a number of other states ("Pathfinders Physiological Series," p. 11). In a second mention of this series in November 1889, *The Educational Review* again endorsed these texts, and suggested that interested teachers should correspond with Mrs. R. H. Phillips of the WCTU of New Brunswick ("The Pathfinder Series," p. 104).

The New Brunswick Educational Institute, which was attended by teachers from Nova Scotia, heard a paper by Mrs. Phillips of the WCTU on "Scientific Temperance Instruction in the School"⁶ ("Report of New Brunswick Educational Institute," 1889, pp. 53, 54), and the Nova Scotia Summer School of Science in its Physiology offering in 1889 used Blaisdell's *Our Bodies and How We Live*, which included the effect of narcotics and alcohol on the general health ("Nova Scotia Summer School of Science," 1889, p. 10). A letter in the *Educational Review* from a teacher supported the teaching of temperance in the schools from a moral standpoint, as well as a scientific one.⁷

Then the Board of School Commissioners for the city of Halifax asked the council in 1891 to broaden the authorized temperance texts suggesting five titles for the various grades of the urban school. The council refused this request, indicating that they were not disposed to special texts for particular localities, suggesting that teachers already had some leeway with regard to texts.⁸ The council also refused the recommendation of the Superintendent of Education for a regularly graded course of lessons on hygiene, including the "teaching of science regarding temperance; the Pathfinder Series for the elementary schools; and Martin's Physiology for the academy." The council was not ready to act on its own.⁹

Finally in 1892 the legislature of Nova Scotia acted. It was obvious that there was a growing interest in the role of the school in the fight for a temperate society. Teachers, supervisors, inspectors, and trustees were making pleas for compulsory courses, approved textbooks, and definitive guidance in this area. Petitions from the general public, from members of the WCTU and from the Sons of Temperance were requesting teachers, trustees, and the Council of Public Instruction to increase temperance teaching, to use a better textbook and to make the course compulsory. There appeared to be a genuine interest among both educators and the general public in the school's role – an interest that made decisive action easy and necessary.

The act, passed by the legislature in 1892, provided for the “more thorough study in the public schools of the effects of alcoholic drinks on the human system.” This act required that appropriate instruction be given regularly in the public schools to all pupils, that authorized textbooks be supplied and contain a certain percentage of space devoted to “the nature and effects of alcoholic drinks and narcotics,” and that failure to follow the provisions of this act would result in withholding provincial and county grants (*Health Reader No. 1*, 1983). The Council of Public Instruction, which had been dragging its feet on this issue, was now required to implement a program. The regulations were three-fold: teachers were examined on hygiene and temperance when competing for professional certification; *Health Readers No. 1 and 2* were prescribed for the common grades and Martin's *The Human Body and the Effects of Narcotics* for the high school; and the approximate average time devoted to teaching the subject was to be reported in every teacher's register and sworn to in the teacher's return.¹⁰

The Health Readers clearly promoted prohibition, not temperance. The first reader stated: “Alcohol hurts both the body and mind. It changes the person who drinks it. Generally it will make a good and kind person cruel and bad; and will make a bad person worse” (p. 44). In the second reader each of the systems of the human body was discussed, emphasizing the deleterious effects of alcohol: hob-nailed liver disease (p. 93), paralyzed muscles, deadened capillaries, weakened hearts and death were the results of drinking alcohol. The consumptive diseases and insanity were almost always the result of drinking. Unfortunately, according to the reader alcoholic problems could be inherited: “the word of a drunkard, especially with regard to his drinking habits can not be trusted. An old, but true, proverb says: ‘A drunkard is a liar.’ His love of truth seems entirely destroyed. And, the tendency to untruthfulness often descends to his children” (p. 158). The high school text continued the above arguments against the use of alcohol suggesting that “one of the worst features of the poisonous characteristics of alcohol is its power even in small quantities to create a craving for itself that often becomes irresistible ... A continued increasing use of alcohol results in drunkenness” (Martin, 1892, p. 30).

With the new regulations and the availability of the textbooks inspectors noticed an increase in temperance teaching in the schools. Mr. Craig, inspector for the Cumberland and Colchester District reported that “the subject of temperance at one bound has leaped into the foreground.” The aim of prevention, and the possibility of success were uppermost in the mind of Mr. Roscoe, inspector in the Hants, Kings District. He believed that the use of Health Readers and particularly the chapters on “foods, alcohol and other narcotics” would have a more lasting effect because they were given at an age when impressions were easily made. Alexander McKay, the Supervisor for Halifax City Schools, noted an average of 30 minutes per week devoted to temperance, which he believed was “ample time in which to do the subject full justice, seeing that the pupils have *Health Readers* for home study.”¹¹

Temperance questions also began to surface on provincial examinations, appearing on the Useful Knowledge, the General Science, and the Physiology exams. These questions were compulsory on the Grade VIII or the Academy and High School Entrance Exam, and the Teachers’ Minimum Professional Qualification Exam (MPQ). The Physiology and Science exams often had temperance questions as optional questions. The Useful Knowledge, Science, and Physiology questions tended to query the what and the why of alcohol, while the MPQ’s tested the students’ knowledge of methodology in this area. Questions such as “What is the effect of using alcoholic drinks even in moderation?”; “how do alcoholic drinks injure the body?”; “the drink habit is our worst enemy. Explain” were typical questions and emphasized the prohibitive rather than the temperate emphasis of the program.¹²

By the mid-1890s, therefore, Nova Scotia had a compulsory temperance course for both elementary and high schools, graded textbooks, examination questions, and training for prospective teachers. There was a good deal of support within the educational establishment, from teachers, inspectors, supervisors, and the chief superintendent for the program. Since by this period Nova Scotians had taken advantage of local options to create 16 of 18 counties dry, there is also the likelihood that the idea of temperance teaching in the schools received widespread support outside the educational establishment.

The role of the WCTU is interesting. The schools appeared to have had a very successful temperance program – perhaps with little WCTU input. Certainly initial interest in temperance teaching came from the Sons of Temperance, who recommended the Richardson textbook and donated hundreds of copies to teachers throughout the province (*Centennial book*, 1947, p. 104). Although the Maritime WCTU promoted STI, the STI leader and WCTU president were New Brunswick residents and tended to concentrate on the schools in their own province. There is record of only one letter going to the Superintendent of Schools in Nova Scotia from the WCTU asking to have the “Pathfinder Physiological Series” introduced.¹³ Very few Nova Scotia unions had STI departments this

early, and the women exhibited a strong reluctance to get involved in this activity. The superintendent of STI for the Maritime WCTU spent a good deal of time answering questions on the purpose and methodology of STI but seemed to have little actual activity to report.¹⁴ She explained that “this is a department for which it is very hard to get new suggestions for work ... because the subject is usually well attended to in the schools, and consequently unions do not feel the same necessity for this as for some other lines of work.”¹⁵ The Halifax WCTU was not active in STI for several years because “so many of the public school teachers are members of the Union and say that instruction in that line is given in the ordinary school work.” Complaints by the leaders that “we are content to let things drift and be satisfied with what we have already attained” were made.¹⁶ The strong, general feeling in the province with regard to temperance, and the fact that the provincial school superintendent, A. H. MacKay, the supervisor of Halifax schools, Alexander McKay, and numerous teachers and inspectors were pro-temperance meant that temperance teaching had strong support both within and without the schools. Pressure from the WCTU was not crucial in Nova Scotia as it appears to have been in other jurisdictions.

III

The temperance and prohibition movement of the nineteenth century in Nova Scotia was for the most part one that viewed intemperance as a sin, urging total abstinence through moral suasion and the power of prayer. This approach was reflected in the attention paid to personal character, to individual pledge signing, to missionary efforts to save the drunkard, and to early knowledge of the evils of alcohol – through courses in the schools. By the turn of the twentieth century temperance forces had shifted their goals and their tactics. Intemperance was now viewed as a social problem and a cause of poverty, disease, accidents, and family unhappiness. Therefore, federal and provincial legislation was absolutely necessary, and the temperance forces needed to organize to be able to use their resources to their best advantage. The resulting Nova Scotia Temperance Alliance, the passage of the Nova Scotia Temperance Act in 1910 and the amendment to it in 1916 were examples of these changing tactics, goals and results (Forbes, 1975, pp. 62–86).

The place of the school system in this changed movement is difficult to assess. Over the first three decades of the twentieth century the WCTU, whose membership averaged 1000 women, and the Sons of Temperance, many thousand strong, maintained their interest in the work of the schools. The WCTU had three general concerns: that oral instruction in the early years was neglected because there was no text and teachers were on their own¹⁷; that a newly prescribed text, the *Ontario Hygiene*, was not satisfactory in the amount of content devoted to alcohol¹⁸; and that temperance had been dropped from the high school curriculum and the

only exposure to temperance beyond Grade VIII occurred in the Normal School or in preparation for the MPQ examination.¹⁹ Despite these concerns, however, the subject was compulsory, upper level students had texts, and compulsory questions appeared on the Grade VIII General Knowledge exams and the MPQ exams throughout the time period to 1930.

The WCTU tactics over these years, as evidenced by the STI department, were: (1) to act as a watchdog "to see that the teachers in the public schools are giving the intended prominence to the subjects in the Health Reader"; (2) to supplement the work of the school with essay contests, and the distribution of blotters and leaflets to schools and schoolchildren; (3) to donate books and journals to school libraries; and (4) to interact with the department of education to upgrade the textbooks and to introduce texts for the younger children.²⁰ In the year of the greatest STI activity less than half the unions reported any action whatsoever. The provincial essay contest was not held every year, the war diverted the ladies' attention to the care of soldiers and sailors, superintendents were hard to find, and a lack of interest was general. The prohibition legislation of 1916 preceded by local option success everywhere except Halifax City, and the long-standing interest by professional educators were certainly factors. Teachers and other school personnel reported time and again that temperance was on the curriculum and was well and often taught.

The Sons of Temperance also participated in educational activity, but their efforts were directed at individual students and teachers at the local level rather than the provincial department and the hygiene curriculum. Very active in the early years in promoting a compulsory curriculum and in donating hundreds of the approved textbooks to teachers throughout the province, once the course became widespread in the schools the Sons concentrated their educational activity on giving prize essays, distributing temperance literature, giving short temperance talks in schools, and donating blotters "with a temperance fact" (*Centennial book*, 1947, pp. 104, 106, 108).

Two reasons might be suggested for the Sons of Temperance lack of interest in the curriculum itself after 1900. The Sons may have left that work to the WCTU, which had an excellent "school" reputation elsewhere and which by 1900 was active and flourishing in the province. A second suggestion is that like the WCTU they may have felt that with a compulsory curriculum, prescribed textbooks, and examination questions the school was doing its job. Since many teachers, school inspectors and trustees were abstainers and/or members of the order, the Sons believed they could concentrate their efforts elsewhere, leaving the children in the hands of professional educators, men like Alexander McKay, Supervisor of Halifax Schools, who was not only an active member of the Sons of Temperance, but for a time president of the Temperance Alliance ("Alexander McKay, MA," 1971, p. 69).

There is no question that the educational system appeared to be doing

its job. For example, in 1909 the *Oral Lesson Book in Hygiene* was recommended for school libraries and for primary teachers to the satisfaction of the WCTU²¹ ("Supplementary Texts"). At the Union's request "Good Manners," Book II of the Gulick Hygiene Series, was advocated in the course of study as "an excellent book whose treatment of the topics may well be imitated by the teacher" ("Handbook for Teachers", 1912, p. 120). The course of study in Hygiene and Temperance stated that it was fundamental that the teacher should: "... emphasize the moral, physical and economic loss accruing from intemperance; and warn pupils against narcotics and alcohol whether disguised in patent medicines, or in any other way" ("Hygiene and Temperance", 1917, p. 244; *Manual of the public instruction arts*, 1911, p. 201). Provincial examinations continued to ask the student to explain statements such as "The Drink Habit is our worst enemy"; or to give reasons "Why the State should prohibit the use of alcoholic beverages" ("Provincial High School Examinations", 1915, pp. 39, 47). In a 1910 address Archdeacon Maddan of Liverpool spoke of Canada as a leading nation for its sobriety and chastity, and of Nova Scotia as being in a better position than any province of Canada, which he attributed in part to the textbooks used in the schools.²²

Teachers received encouragement from their own *Educational Review*. In an article in 1925 they were encouraged to report any persistent rumours of stills, and the names and locations of moonshiners to the Rev. H. R. Grant, of the Nova Scotia Temperance Alliance, who would inform the authorities. The *Review* believed that "... one unmolested bootlegger will teach your boys in one month more intemperance than fifty teachers can teach out of him in a year" ("Temperance and the Teacher", 1925, p. 223). The magazine reported on prohibition activities around the world, often referring to the effect on growing boys and girls, and the needless temptation caused by lax and/or changing liquor laws. Although the educational system was temperance minded, some expression of concern over the schools' role continued to surface. The WCTU, concerned about the changing role of the school in a modernizing society, worried that the school in competition with "moving pictures," "cartoons," and "the phonograph" in the job of "spreading knowledge and creating ideas" was falling behind. Was the school temperance program strong enough to withstand this increasing assault from technology?²³

The answer of course came in 1929 with the defeat of prohibition and the victory for government control, the last province in Canada, except Prince Edward Island, to introduce this measure. The school program had not been good enough to maintain prohibition as a viable government measure, particularly when the provincial coffers were so short of funds. The immediate result of the defeat of prohibition was to strengthen the temperance program in the school. The department of education authorized a supplementary text, the *Canadian Lesson Book on Temperance and Life* published by the Dominion Scientific Temperance

Instruction Committee and issued these instructions: "... This book must be on each teacher's desk and instruction shall be given from it by the teacher in grades 6, 7, 8. This is imperative." A lecture course designed for rural schools was introduced and a travelling temperance exhibit readied to supplement the course.²⁴ Certainly the women were pleased with the government response. But they did question the policy of a government that teaches one thing and does another. In the annual report for 1932 the president commented: "The legal sale of this poison in our midst is a complete contradiction of the teaching that the children receive in school," and "example is still stronger than precept."²⁵

The WCTU responded to the government control legislation by making a more concerted effort to reach the children. Essay contests, the making of posters, blotter distribution in the schools, short temperance talks, and *Northern Messenger* subscriptions to schools were increased. The women also put extra effort into Sunday School work and sponsored essay and poster competitions through the churches. In 1930 the STI department reported: "This has been in every way our best year. So much interest has been taken in this department, and we are slowly but surely waking up to our opportunities."²⁶ Temperance work in the schools which had been legislated since 1892 and accepted as at least adequate by most Nova Scotians, with the exception of a few WCTU members, now received a new influx of attention from both the government and the WCTU.

How effective the school program was in combatting the evil effects of alcohol use is difficult to assess. Obviously statistics showed a decline, but with most counties dry throughout much of this period and province-wide prohibition in effect to 1929 official statistics would be comparatively low. However, Nova Scotians did use the black market, smuggling was common as were illegal distilleries, and some people drank moonshine. In 1929 a majority of more than 15,000 voted for government control and the Nova Scotia Liquor Commission was established just as the Depression got underway. An increasing decline in sales after the first year was attributed in part to the RCMP whose work was making it more difficult for the rum runners to land cargoes on the coast (Report of Nova Scotia Liquor Commission, 1935-36, p. 6). Once the Depression began to ease sales increased. However, in 1951 plebiscites in Sydney and five towns on the sale of beer and wine by the glass in taverns and hotels were defeated – by a population that would have been exposed to temperance teaching in the schools in the 1890-1930 time period (Report of Nova Scotia Liquor Commission, 1951-52, p. 7).

IV

The temperance and prohibition movement in Nova Scotia was part of a world-wide crusade to persuade and eventually prohibit people from drinking alcoholic beverages. Two of the organizations whose sole

purpose was to enhance this cause were the WCTU and the Sons of Temperance. Although they differed in numbers, in organization and in strategy both used educational means to help accomplish their goals. In particular they concentrated on a temperance program for the public school, a program consisting of a compulsory course of study, WCTU endorsed textbooks for the pupils, provincial examinations on the material and training in temperance teaching in the normal school. Such a program was adopted in 1892 and remained, with only minor changes, through 1930.

The depth of temperance sentiment in the province generally and the fact that many of the educational people shared this sentiment certainly helped the school develop and implement the program. However, other provinces in Canada, including Ontario, were also adding compulsory temperance programs to their courses of studies at this time; and groups like the Sons of Temperance and the WCTU were active in these provinces. As in Nova Scotia they initiated the school temperance campaign, supplemented the work with informal school-related activities, and acted as watchdogs to make sure that the temperance policy was being implemented in the schools (Sheehan, 1980, pp. 67–182; McGovern, 1977, pp. 100–145; Mitchinson, 1977, pp. 144–252).

What we have is an example of a national issue, in this case sobriety or temperance, having an effect on the curricula of schools all across the country. In a country with a decentralized system of schools, without even a national office to act as a co-ordinating body, the phenomenon of all school systems adopting an almost identical temperance program needs some explanation. The traditional answer has been that what was important in developing the curriculum was what was going on elsewhere. Provincial educational decision makers, in the absence of national direction, looked to other jurisdictions to help them in formulating policy. This was particularly true in regard to the smaller and/or newer provinces and their adoption of many facets of the Ontario curriculum model (Lupul, 1970, pp. 266–87; Stamp, 1970, pp. 290–313; Child, 1978, pp. 279–301; McDonald, 1944, pp. 14–28; and Johnson, 1979, pp. 29–36).

However, this may not tell the whole story. This study suggests that at least in Nova Scotia, the Sons of Temperance and the WCTU were instrumental in effecting school policy. Since we know that these two groups were active across the country, the notion that national and/or international organizations lobbied provincial departments of education needs to be entertained. The fact that these organizations, especially the WCTU, had an organizational framework that linked local and provincial units with a national body which co-ordinated activities meant that the lobby to each provincial department of education would carry the same message. In effect the national organizations with an educational mandate had the effect that a national system of education might have – a temperance curriculum policy that varied little from coast to coast. In the

CSSE Yearbook 1979, *The Curriculum in Canada in Historical Perspective*, George Tomkins suggests that "... in the absence of a national system of education, national issues have become curriculum issues" (p. 3). Lobbying of individual departments of education by national groups interested in a specific issue or problem may be one explanation for this phenomena.

Differences in temperance curricula did, of course, appear. The intensity of the implementation, the length of the programs, the grade level affected, and the use of particular textbooks were differences that were noticeable. However, these were minor variations in the *administration* of the program. The *policy* to have a compulsory course with textbooks and provincial examinations remained the same. In Nova Scotia the differences were effected by the depth of temperance sentiment – by the fact that some form of prohibition was in effect in most of Nova Scotia for over fifty years, and because temperance groups, the general public and professional educators believed that the school had a role in this matter.

NOTES

- ¹ Halifax Female Temperance and Benevolent Society Constitution, 1844 (pamphlet) AK, HV F 34, Public Archives of Nova Scotia, hereafter PANS.
- ² Report of the Committee on Temperance, House of Assembly, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1852, pp. 1–12, MG 20, Vol. 365, PANS.
- ³ Annual Report of the Department of Education of Nova Scotia, 1889–1890, p. xv, Micro Ng35, E24, Reel 3, PANS (hereafter AR Education NS, 1889–1890).
- ⁴ Annual Report of the Maritimes Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1890, p. 12 MG 20, Vol. 357, PANS (hereafter MWCTU AR, 1890, MG 20, Vol. 357, PANS).
- ⁵ AR Education NS, 1889, p. 11 (Report of the Supervisor of Halifax Public Schools for the year ended October 31, 1889).
- ⁶ MWCTU AR 1889, p. 121, MG 20, Vol. 506, PANS.
- ⁷ Places. Pictou Academy Reel #7, 1890, pp. 115–116 (excerpt from Educational Review) PANS.
- ⁸ Minutes of the Council of Public Instruction, 31 May, 1981. RG 14 Reel 1 (1864–1924), PANS (hereafter Council of Public Instruction, date).
- ⁹ AR Education, NS, 1890–91, p. 121.
- ¹⁰ AR Education NS, 1893–94, p. xiv, xv.
- ¹¹ AR Education, NS, 1893–94, pp. 105, 76, 114.
- ¹² Provincial examination questions are found in the *Journal of Education* (Nova Scotia). See the journal, 1893, for the useful knowledge exams for County Academy Entrance and the teachers' minimum professional qualification examinations; journal, 1894, for Grade XI Physiology exam, as well as the useful knowledge and mpq exams. The kinds of questions and the exams themselves remained stable through the 1890s.
- ¹³ MWCTU AR 1890, pp. 12, 80, 81.
- ¹⁴ See "Scientific Temperance Instruction" reports in the MWCTU AR, 1890 through 1895.
- ¹⁵ Annual Report of the Nova Scotia Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1902, pp. 67–69. MG 20, Vol. 356, PANS (hereafter AR NS WCTU, date, MG 20, Vol. 365).

- ¹⁶ "Halifax report," AR NS WCTU, 1908, p. 81 and 1907, pp. 55, 56, MG 20, Vol. 356.
- ¹⁷ "Scientific Temperance Instruction," AR NS WCTU, 1905, pp. 65, 1908, p. 83, MG 20, Vol. 356.
- ¹⁸ "Scientific Temperance Instruction," AR NS WCTU, 1910, pp. 81, 82; 1911, pp. 86–88; 1915, p. 72. MG 20, Vol. 356.
- ¹⁹ "Scientific Temperance Instruction," AR NS WCTU, 1906, p. 71; 1907, p. 56; 1908, p. 83. MG 20, Vol. 356.
- ²⁰ "Scientific Temperance Instruction," AR NS WCTU, 1908, p. 81. MG 20, Vol. 356.
- ²¹ "Scientific Temperance Instruction," AR NS WCTU, 1909, pp. 87, 88. MG 20, Vol. 356.
- ²² "Maddan Address," AR NS WCTU, 1910, p. 23, MG 20, Vol. 356.
- ²³ "President's Report, AR NS WCTU, 1922, p. 27. MG 20, Vol. 356.
- ²⁴ "Scientific Temperance Instruction," AR NS WCTU, 1930, p. 86; 1932, p. 41. MG 20, Vol. 357.
- ²⁵ "President's Report," AR NS WCTU, 1932, p. 41, MG 20, Vol. 357.
- ²⁶ "Scientific Temperance Instruction," AR NS WCTU, 1930, pp. 82–90. MG 20, Vol. 357.

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Dieser Aufsatz untersucht die Verteidigung, die Einführung und den Inhalt der Enthaltsamkeitskurse in den Schulen von Nova Scotia zwischen 1880 und 1930. Durch die Untersuchung von Enthaltsamkeitsorganisationen, insbesondere die Söhne der Enthaltsamkeit und die Christliche Enthaltsamkeitsunion der Frauen, bewertet der Aufsatz den Einfluß der Außenwelt. Durch die Betrachtung der Lehrer-, Aufseher-, und Oberaufseherkommentare beurteilt er die Gesinnung der Berufserzieher. Die Schulbücher, Prüfungsfragen und Lehrpläne erläutern das Programm. Der Aufsatz ist eine Einzelfalluntersuchung der Umstände in der Nova Scotia Gesellschaft, die eine Lehrplanveränderung verursacht haben. Er schlägt vor, daß die Funktion nationaler Organisationen in Betracht gezogen werden muß, um festzustellen, wie der Lehrplan in einem Land ohne ein staatliches Bildungswesen oder gar ein staatliches Amt gestaltet wird.

Este artículo explora el respaldo, introducción, y contenido de los cursos sobre sobriedad en las escuelas de Nueva Escocia, entre 1880 y 1930. Al tiempo que examina las organizaciones pro-abstemio, en especial al Sons of Temperance y al Woman's Christian Temperance Union, evalúa las influencias externas que se hicieron sentir. El estudio evalúa los sentimientos de los educadores profesionales por medio de los comentarios de maestros, inspectores y supervisores. Los libros de texto, preguntas de examen y pautas de currículo

explican el programa actual. Este artículo es un estudio de caso de los factores en la sociedad de Nueva Escocia que precipitaron el cambio en el currículo. Indica que el papel de organizaciones nacionales debe tomarse en consideración al determinar cómo se habían establecido las políticas de currículo en un país donde no había ni un sistema nacional de educación ni una oficina nacional.

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