

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

JOSEPH MEAGHER

INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS

GASPESIA

FROM 1855-1865

SUCCESSOR TO INSPECTOR PETER WINTER, WHOSE
FIRST REPORT ON THE STATE AND NEEDS OF
EDUCATION IN THE DISTRICT OF GASPÉ WAS
RECALLED IN THE ARTICLE " GASPESIA'S
FIRST SCHOOL INSPECTOR", PUBLISHED BY
SPEC ON JANUARY 3, 1984.

KEN ANNETT

JOSEPH MEAGHER

INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS

MEAGHER FAMILY NOTES

The Meagher family of Carleton in Gaspesia was of Irish, Catholic origin and had been resident in Halifax, Nova Scotia prior to settlement on the Gaspé Coast in the 1830's. John Meagher, the brother of Joseph, had been active in the Labrador Fishery for some years before locating on the shores of Carleton harbour. He became well-known and wealthy as a merchant-trader in Bay Chaleur and in 1854 was elected to represent Bonaventure County in the Legislative Assembly of Québec where he served until 1861.

A sister of John and Joseph Meagher married Dr. Labilloy, originally of Carleton and later of Miguasha Point - a family still well-known in the District,

Joseph Meagher married Ann Mann, descendent of the Loyalist Mann family of Gaspesia. Their three sons and three daughters were born over the years from 1832 to 1845.

Following the death of Ann Mann Meagher, Joseph remarried, in 1848, with Mary Mowat. Two sons were born of this marriage in 1849 and 1850 respectively.

A daughter of Joseph Meagher became the wife of Joseph Guillaume Le Bel, Notary Public and Registrar of the County of Bonaventure in his time.

In brief, the Meagher (pronounced MARR) family of Carleton was prominent and well-connected in the District of Gaspé.

CHALLENGE OF THE INSPECTOR'S TASK

The first official report of Joseph Meagher's predecessor, Me. Peter Winter, in 1851, had brought to the attention of the Superintendent of Education and the Legislature of Québec the sad state and urgent needs of public education in Gaspesia. Any change for the better would be a slow and painful process, particularly as the independent and strong-willed people of Gaspé were resistant to any suggestions from a representative of a remote authority in Québec. Two years later, in the autumn of 1853, Winter submitted another report and as his review of the educational situation summed up the situation that faced his successor, Joseph Meagher, as he took up his duties in 1854, it is relevant to recall his observations:

Copy of a Report of P. Winter, Esquire, School Inspector for 1853.

PERCE, 5th September, 1853.

Dr. J. B. MEILLEUR, Esq.
Superintendent, &c.,
Montreal.

SIR,—In obedience to the provisions contained in the 4th section of the provincial statute, 14 and 15 Vic., cap-97, and in compliance with your instructions, I have the honor to submit for consideration the following result of my last visit throughout the extent of my jurisdiction, as Inspector of Common Schools for Gaspé.

Could I have performed such visit previous to the vacation which takes place yearly at the close of the scholastic year, I believe that I would have been better enabled to ascertain the actual state of education. The reasons contained in the annexed circular addressed by me to the several Municipalities, will I hope, be a sufficient justification for not having performed such visit at an earlier period.

Among other inconveniencies were the following:—

1st. The several changes which takes place in the several corporations in the beginning and in fact during the whole month of July, by the election or appointment of new Commissioners, that period being the commencement of the scholastic year.

2nd. The schools not being yet properly re-organized either by the changes of teachers from one place to another or vacancies being just filled, in some instances not yet being provided because of the scarcity of teachers.

3rd. The most capable of the pupils being detained at home (some to return again, others not), to assist their parents in the fisheries or for agricultural purposes.

Therefore the attendance was generally very thin, and mostly of the very youngest or beginners, which is sufficient to forbid pronouncing at this time an

opinion in respect to the state of education. It will also, I apprehend, be sufficient cause for not accompanying this Report with tabular statements.

I have proceeded with my visit in conformity with the notice thereof contained in my circular above-mentioned, beginning by the County of Gaspé, and will now report the result accordingly. As I may not hereafter refer to that circular it is well to state here that none of the Municipalities have received the circular No. 3, and that several have not received No. 8, (both from the Superintendent to the Inspectors,) which were announced as being sent to the several Municipalities, and that the French version was received by Commissioners understanding only the English language. Upon this I will suggest that the Inspector, being acquainted with all the Commissioners, would be the proper channel whereby to distribute any such documents.

Municipality of New-Port and Pabos (united).

The Commissioners of this Municipality, appointed under the 3rd section of the Act 9th Victoria, cap. 27, neglected to organise themselves into a body, though they showed much willingness to act when called upon by the Inspector, either verbally or in writing, until at last being threatened with prosecutions, they met on the 11th July last, and then declared that they could not proceed, because "three of them had not the property qualification required." But upon being informed that no property qualification is now required, the 51st section of the 9th Victoria, cap. 27, being repealed by the 28th section of the 12th Victoria, cap. 50, and that complaints from many of the inhabitants had been addressed to the Inspector, they have promised to meet again, and proceed to business.

Municipality of Grand River.

In this Municipality the two schools seem to give satisfaction, although they cannot be ranked as the best. No. 2 was discontinued from the 30th April, the teacher (Mr. Louis Boucher) having completed his engagement; and the same was re-opened on the 25th day of July last by Mr. Fidèle Boudain.

Municipality of Percé.

The several teachers having completed their engagements the schools were closed (examinations satisfactory). One only has been re-opened, in No. 1, where it was intended to have a superior teacher from Quebec, as one could not be obtained even at a salary of £75 offered. It has been resumed as a primary school. The other schools are vacant for want of teachers.

Municipality of Fox and Griffin Cove.

The school formerly held at Fox River was discontinued upwards of a year ago, as mentioned in former reports and correspondence, because of being indebted to the teacher, in consequence of the Government grant being inadequate, and difficulties in collecting arrears, owing, in a great measure, to want of energy.

At a meeting of the Commissioners and several other inhabitants held on the 17th of July last, the Inspector then present having assured them that under the last Census they should be entitled to a more considerable assistance from Government than heretofore, it was resolved forthwith to take necessary steps towards collecting arrears, paying up their debt, and re-opening their school. Copies of correspondence between the Commissioners and the Inspector respecting the affairs of this Municipality will shortly be forwarded.

Municipality of Cap-des-Rosiers

In this Municipality school No. 2 which had been closed since last, because of the teacher's sudden departure (mentioned in 1st report), has been re-opened. No. 1 has continued regularly, and the examination of both was satisfactory.

A demand has been lately made by some of the inhabitants of District No. 3, that a house be erected and a school opened, was to be considered as soon as the Commissioners would be acquainted with the amount to be allowed them under the new census.

Municipality of Gaspé North and Sydenham.

Some difficulties having arisen between the contractors of house No. 2 and the Commissioners, the former not having fulfilled their contract, and having disposed of some materials, prosecutions were advised. However, it seems that the matters in dispute will shortly be settled amicably.

The means at the disposal of the Commissioners being limited, it was resolved to employ only one teacher for both School districts. Four of the Commissioners and the Secretary-Treasurer being away at sea, at the time of the Inspector's visit, and the school now held in No. 2 having been resumed but very recently by the teacher who was lately employed in No. 1, it was considered useless to proceed thereto. Teacher qualified.

The foregoing information was communicated to the Inspector at Gaspé Basin by Mr. Ascah, the only remaining Commissioner.

Municipality of Gaspé, South.

The former Commissioners having resigned last year, two of them were re-appointed with others; two of the five (Messrs. McCallum and Belleau) are disposed to act, but the majority have refused, alleging certain reasons which will be fully considered in a supplementary Report to be prepared when the Inspector shall have visited *de novo* this and the three following Municipalities. An independent school is held in a private house.

Municipality of York and Haldimand.

This is a new Municipality the Township of York being detached from that of Gaspé South and Haldimand to Sandy Beach, detached from Douglas, and united for school and I believe for Municipal purposes.

The Commissioners appointed under the 3rd section of the 9th Vic. cap. 27, have not organized. They allege that the people are opposed to taxes and their means so limited that they (the Commissioners) are loath to enforce the law. This will be referred to, and considered in the supplementary Report above mentioned, so far it may be considered as *opposition d'inertie* against the assessment system. A good school house, but no school held.

Municipality of Douglas.

The vacancies occasioned by the eldest Commissioners leaving office were not filled on the 21st July last; the attention of the Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer was directed to the subject by the Inspector. The only teacher employed having completed his engagement in June last, gave full scope to an old habit of inebriety and suddenly left the District of Gaspé; thus the school was closed and is awaiting another teacher to fill the vacancy. The absence of that teacher is a subject of regret, because he not only possessed knowledge, but had the rare talent to communicate that knowledge to his pupils to an extraordinary degree. The assessment system is opposed in this Municipality.

Municipality of Stabray.

In this Municipality the only school house is occupied by the teacher formerly employed by the Commissioners, and keeps an independent school therein. The number of pupils is about the same as per last Report. The Secretary-Treasurer still persists in not rendering his accounts. Like the Commissioners for York, the Commissioners here express themselves favorable to education, but to raise the means is the great difficulty; we find here the same *opposition d'inertie* against the assessment system. This as well as Douglas, York and Gaspé South, will be the subject matter of the supplementary Report above mentioned.

Townships of Matapedia and Ristigouche, (united)—County of Bonaventure.

In this Municipality one school only was kept in operation during the last two years, that is in No. 5, by William Pollock, till last fall, thence to May last in No. 4, by John Donnelly, in a private house, and since last June in another private house, up the River Matapedia, by Miss Sarah Howard. In both the last mentioned, the pupils being all beginners, no progress could be ascertained.

The last named mistress is single and aged 22, gets in lieu of salary for the current six months, 2s. 6d. per month for each child attending. No journal was yet kept, but was ordered for the future. No. of scholars present boys 9,—girls 5. All protestants. Reading, writing, arithmetic and needle work taught. Sunday remarks were made respecting engagement, mode of teaching, books, &c. Mistress sufficient for a primary school. No register had yet been kept up to the

5th August, and no accounts, but merely memorandums of returns made to Superintendent. Hitherto no assessment was raised, but merely a monthly fee or voluntary contribution collected by teacher in the District where school was held.

Remarks were made by the Inspector during each visit to the Commissioners respecting such irregularities, informing them at same time, that unless they do comply with the requirements of the law, Government assistance may be stopped. In consequence it has been resolved to adopt the assessment system, to continue the buildings which are begun, and promise was made that hereafter the law and instructions will be adhered to more punctually.

Township of Mann.

In this Municipality the Commissioners leaving office were the Revd. Mr. Olscamps and Mr. Wilson, the latter was re-elected with consent, and Daniel Phelan in the room of Mr. Olscamps, as appears by the Report of election herewith forwarded. The total value of property is £4817 10s. assessed 2d. per pound, as well for two buildings in progress as to equalize Government grant.

The Commissioners were expecting to have a school in operation during this summer, or at farthest at the beginning of January next, but are impeded in their progress by resistance or refusal to pay on the part of the largest proprietors, who should be foremost to shew good example, upon which legal proceedings are to be adopted in the next January circuit.

The number of Indian (Micmacs) families in this Municipality is about 130. Few (if any) of them can contribute towards the maintenance of schools. Mention has already been made of this tribe in former reports in a manner to call forth the attention of Government. Their zealous Missionary (Rev. Mr. Béland) has been exerting himself much to prepare a building for a school-house in the Indian village; but as they are unable to maintain a teacher it is hoped that Government will not treat them worse than other tribes, who receive a special grant for the purpose. It should be strongly recommended to the Superintendent of Indians and to the Provincial Government.

Hitherto (since two years or more), only one school was kept in operation in three different Districts, and alternately discontinued before the pupils had time to make any progress, owing, in a great measure, to want of means and scantiness of Government assistance, which was not according to the present population. The Commissioners depend much upon the correctness of the last census, which entitles them to a much larger sum than heretofore was received.

In this expectation the Commissioners have determined to adopt the assessment system, rated the same at 1d. per pound, and have undertaken to build two houses, and to complete them within a short period. A second school was about to be opened about the 15th of August last, and the Commissioners have expressed their intention to make further progress.

Township of Carleton.

In this Municipality a third school has been opened since last report. A good deal of zeal is manifested by the Commissioners and the population, and the children in the several schools have made remarkable progress. In Nos. 1 and 3 both languages are taught, and in No. 2 French only. The latter is kept by a married female teacher. Examinations very satisfactory. No. 1, total pupils, 33—average attendance, 30—Alphabet, spelling and reading (only) 18—Writing, 15—Arithmetic, 12—Grammar, French, 2—English, 4—Geography, 2. No. 2, total, 44—average, 37—Alphabet, spelling, and reading (only) 30—Writing, 14, (beginners mostly very young). No. 3—Do 35—Do 28—Do 15—Writing, 20—Arithmetic, 10.

Township of Maria.

In this Municipality two of the schools, Nos. 3 and 4, have discontinued since last winter. One of the teachers discharged for misconduct, the other having completed his engagement. The Commissioners are in quest of teachers and will probably join the two under one teacher.

The schools Nos. 1 (English,) and 2 (French,) have continued regularly; progress is impeded by a great deficiency of books. With a view to supply them the Commissioners have ordered £4 worth from Montreal through the Inspector.

No. 1, total pupils, 49—average attendance, 30—Alphabet, 13—Spelling and reading, 29—Writing, 7—Arithmetic, 3— 2 : — : — : 50— : — : 35— : 40— Writing, and arithmetic 10. Since last report a house has been erected in No. 5, which will, it is expected, be fit to receive a teacher before next winter. The inhabitants and Commissioners exhibit good dispositions towards promoting education, but complain of lack of means. To this circumstance may be attributed the want of furniture, and of necessary improvements to school property, to which the attention of the Commissioners was called.

Township of New Richmond.

In this Municipality schools Nos. 1 and 2 had discontinued, and were about being re-opened under one teacher who is to attend the same alternately. In school No. 3 the teacher had completed her engagement, and it was uncertain whether she or another teacher would hold the school. In No. 4 the same as last; only 9 pupils in attendance, the remainder being kept at home to assist their parents during harvest.

In No. 5, school was opened by Miss Rachel Follow on 16th June last; age, 35 years—number of pupils about 30. This school was closed at the time of being at a considerable distance, it was thought fit to return thereto until next trip to this Municipality.

New Richmond.

Dissentient school—total 33, pupils—(5 to 16)—average attendance 26, the result of examination was tolerably good. Here as elsewhere, there is a variety of books and not sufficient of useful ones. Recommendation better to provide was of course made.

Township of Hamilton.

Until last spring, schools Nos. 1 and 2 were in operation, the latter ceased at the end of teacher's engagement, and the Commissioners are since in quest of a teacher. Another school was opened since last Report in No. 5, thus they have still the same number of schools in operation.

No. 1, total 26 pupils, average attendance 19—Alphabet and reading (only) 19—Writing and arithmetic 7. The result of examination is good.

No. 5—:—45—average attendance were present only 19, all beginners, the better scholars being retained at home during harvest.

In the former, French is taught, in the latter English; great deficiency of books, &c., in both.

Township of Cox.

In this Municipality there are four schools in operation, viz: In No. 1, total 67 pupils, average attendance 39—Alphabet, spelling and reading only 46—Writing, grammar and geography 11, both languages, mostly French. Result of examination very satisfactory. In No. 4, total 30 pupils, present attendance very thin and only beginners; a very neglected school; deficient in furniture, books, paper, &c., teachers time up and not re-engaged as yet.

In No. 2, a female teacher lately engaged, pronounced by the Commissioners (after examination) to be fully qualified for a primary school. Kept in a hired house.

In No. 3, a male teacher lately engaged, qualifications superior to last mentioned. The two last mentioned schools were not visited, because of being but lately opened and not yet fully organized, the next visit will probably tell better.

The Commissioners having assessed and procured materials were immediately about to erect a house in No. 2, upon a resolve to accept a tender made and forthwith to enter into contract.

Township of Hope.

In this Municipality there are, as heretofore, 2 schools regularly kept in operation.

No. 1, total pupils, 63; average attendance 40; Alphabet and reading 35; writing, 28; arithmetic, 19. A few are taught the elements of grammar and geography. Result of examination very satisfactory.

No. 2, total pupils, 44 ; average attendance 24 ; Alphabet to reading 30 ; arithmetic 12 ; writing 14 ; many of the best scholars were absent and therefore the result of examination was not so good as otherwise might be expected. Both these schools are English.

Township of Port Daniel.

In this Municipality a second school has been opened since last general Report, and is held by Mr. Resche, late teacher of No. 2 in Hamilton township, who teaches principally in French and partially in English. In No. 1 the English only is taught. No. 3 is vacant. No. 1 total pupils 60 ; average attendance 45 ; Alphabet, spelling and reading only 38 ; writing 22 ; arithmetic 14 ; tables, all who write and more. Result of examination satisfactory.

No. 2, total pupils, 38 ; average attendance 25 ; alphabet, spelling and reading only 28 ; writing 10 ; arithmetic 10 ; geography 1. Result of examination good. The whole respectfully submitted.

(Signed)

P. WINTER
Inspector of Schools,
Gaspé.

INSPECTOR JOSEPH MEAGHER'S FIRST REPORT.

It was late in 1854 that the new Inspector of Schools paid his first official visit to the schools of the Gaspesian communities from Restigouche to Fox River. The hardships of travel along the more than two hundred miles of coastline with roads in primitive state can be imagined. Though no reference is made to where and how he was lodged and fed during his travels, one can equally imagine that his experiences must have been interesting. In March, 1855 Joseph Meagher drafted his report on the state of education in his vast inspectorate - a report that has survived the 130 some years since it was written.

Report of MR. MEAGHER, Inspector of Schools for the Counties of Bonaventure and part of Gaspé.

CARLETON, 20th March, 1855.

SIR,—

I visited all the schools during the months of December, January, February and a part of the present month of March, and would beg leave to observe that much of my time was occupied in adjusting difficulties between the School Commissioners, Teachers, and Secretary Treasurer, as well as complaints made by the rate-payers. And before proceeding, I have also to state that I was unable to procure in some of the municipalities all the information requisite to enable me to fill up the statistical tables which accompany this Report, so accurately as I could have wished. These arose, in some instances, from the loose manner in which the registers and books of several of the Secretary Treasurers were kept, and in other instances from the want of school journals.

I regret to say that the state of education is very backward in this district, more particularly in the County of Gaspé. There are some schools in operation

and also some good teachers; but they are few, compared to the wants of the district; great indifference being manifested by many of the inhabitants about the school law, and much opposition to the system of assessment. One great cause prejudicial to the interest of education in this district is the difficulty of procuring competent teachers, the poverty of the inhabitants and the great reluctance to forced contributions, together with the difficulty in many of the municipalities of securing Commissioners who have the will or power to put the law in force, the Government grant being so small that, when apportioned among the school districts, the proportion would only be from £5 to £10 to each teacher, in money, and the balance of his salary he is obliged to take in farm produce at very high prices. In the County of Gaspé, however, the inhabitants are more hostile to the working of the school law than those in the County of Bonaventure. The schools that are in operation in the former are kept up by voluntary contributions, and receive their proportion of the Government grant.

I must admit that I was everywhere received with much respect and attention, and I have endeavored by my advice and counsel to better their position. Many of the School Commissioners and the leading gentlemen (friends of education) in the district have promised to assist me in forwarding the cause. I thereby anticipate, on my next inspection tour, to find the school law working well in those municipalities where I found it opposed.

The following is a statement of my visit to each municipality, shewing the state of education throughout, commencing at the western extremity of the

COUNTY OF BONAVENTURE.

1st. *Townships of Metapediac and Ristigouche (united).*—This municipality is divided into five school districts; only three schools were in operation at the time of my visit: they are kept by men who are paid by the inhabitants by voluntary subscription and with the Government grant, which is generally divided among the schools in operation. No registers have been kept, nor school journals, merely memorandums. The Commissioners have promised to put the assessment law in operation forthwith, and keep a register.

2nd. *Township of Mann.*—This municipality is divided into two school districts; no school in operation. They are now at work finishing a school house; and having been furnished with the property valuation, have advertised for the collection of the assessment. I was requested to attend a public meeting last month; many persons who refused to pay were present. I read and explained the school law to them; they then appeared satisfied and willing to pay up their assessments. I am in hopes that one school will be in operation in May next.

There is a tribe of Micmac Indians in this municipality. The chiefs thereof invited me to a meeting in December last, where I was requested to write to Colonel Napier, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, praying for assistance to build a school house, and to which I have since been favored with a satisfactory reply. They intend commencing to build a school house immediately. It is to be hoped that the Government will also assist them by granting a sum to enable them to support a teacher.

3rd. *Townships of Nouvelle and Shoolbred (united).*—There are eight school districts in this municipality, but only one school is in operation, which was commenced in November last, and is kept by a female; the age of the teacher is fifty-six; number of pupils, 21, all beginners; consequently no progress could be ascertained. A male teacher was engaged in December last by the Commissioners, but the inhabitants refused to send their children to school. The difficulty is not yet settled. In this municipality the greater part of the school rates has been collected; the School Commissioners having sued all the defaulters, much difficulty thereby has been created between the rate-payers, Commissioners and Secretary Treasurer. The matter, however, is settled, and two schools are now in operation, to be opened about the end of this month.

4th. *Township of Carleton.*—In this municipality there are three school districts; two schools in operation, Nos. 1 and 3, wherein both languages are taught, the children making great progress; examinations are satisfactory. There exists much difficulty in this township to get the people to pay up their assessments; a large amount of arrears is still due.

5th. *Township of Mars.*—There are five school districts in this municipality; three schools in operation, one male and two female teachers. These schools are well attended; the children are making much progress, and are well provided with books, the Commissioners having imported a supply from Montreal last season; and the people pay their rates cheerfully.

6th. *Township of New Richmond*.—This municipality is divided into six school districts; three schools are in operation, one male and two female teachers, Nos. 2, 5 and 6; Nos. 1, 3 and 4 are vacant. School No 5, kept by Miss Rachel Fallow, is well attended, and the children making rapid progress. No 6, kept by Mrs. Meekle, has not been long enough in operation, to judge of the improvement made by the pupils, they being all beginners. In No 2, kept by Mr. Andrew Clark, since last November, the pupils are beginning to make progress. Result of examinations, however, very satisfactory throughout. In school district No. 2 there is a dissentient school, but it has not been in operation for a year past. A number of dissentients are anxious to abandon the dissent and join the schools under the control of the Commissioners. I am to meet them and their Trustees shortly on the subject, and have no doubt the dissent will be abandoned.

7th. *Township of Hamilton*.—In this municipality there are five school districts; three schools in operation. No. 2, kept by Genevieve Poirier, is an excellent school, and the children are improving rapidly. The funds of the corporation in this municipality are in a flourishing condition, as you will perceive by the table of monetary affairs: this is owing to the great interest taken in the cause of education by their worthy *Curé*, the Reverend J. L. Alain. All the teachers have certificates from the late Inspector.

8th. *Township of Cox*.—This municipality is divided into four school districts; three schools only, however, are in operation. Nos. 1 and 3 are good schools, and the children improving rapidly; the teachers are good; result of examinations very satisfactory. No. 2 having only been in operation for a short time, I could not judge of its merits. The teachers from Nos. 1 and 3 have certificates from the late Inspector.

9th. *Township of Hope*.—There are two school districts in this municipality; one school in operation in No. 2, kept by Mr. Wm. Leek for several years past; examination very satisfactory. No. 1 has been vacant for the want of a good teacher for a few months past; but I understand that one is now engaged.

10th. *Township of Port Daniel*.—There are two school districts herein, and three schools in operation; result of examination satisfactory.

This finishes the County of Bonaventure. I then proceeded to the eastern extremity of the

COUNTY OF GASPE,

under my jurisdiction, and commenced with the municipality of

Fox and Griffin Cove.—It is divided into two School Districts, but no school in operation under the law. There is a person keeping school at Fox River for the winter, who has consented to receive the Government allocation for his payment. The inhabitants have resisted the school law, but have promised to put the schools in operation before my next visit.

Municipality of Cap des Rosiers.—In this municipality there are three school districts; two schools in operation under the voluntary system, the teachers receiving the amount of the Government grant among themselves.

Municipality of North Gaspé and Sydenham.—There are two school districts in this municipality; but one school in operation under the voluntary system, the teacher receiving the amount of the Government aid.

Municipality of South Gaspé.—In this municipality there are no schools in operation, nor do I know how many school districts there are, owing to the late Secretary Treasurer, (to whom I applied for information,) refusing to give me the same.

Municipality of York and Haldimand.—This is but a new municipality, the Township of York having been but lately detached from South Gaspé, and united to Haldimand: it is divided into two school districts; one school in operation. In York proper, the people are very desirous for a school, but state that the aid from Government being so small, and being in poor circumstances, it is impossible for them to support a teacher, unless they receive an additional aid from Government. The school at present in operation is kept by a very competent teacher; 32 scholars in attendance; result of examination good.

Municipality of Douglas.—Is divided into two school districts; but no school in operation. I visited school house No. 1, and must say it is an excellent building 36 x 24 feet, divided into three apartments; the school room furnished with benches, black board, &c. The school house in district No. 2 is partly finished. The person who had been acting as Secretary Treasurer while the schools were in operation informed me that he had a balance of £5 in his hands for the finishing of No. 2. I expect before my next visit both schools will be opened and in operation.

Municipality of Malbay.—There are two school districts; one school in operation, kept by Nicholas Hubert, who resides in the school house, keeping an independent school for the last three years; has received no part of the Government grant; as he is a good teacher and highly recommended, he is entitled to the consideration of the department. Several gentlemen of this municipality called on me, who were very desirous that the schools should be put into immediate operation, and placed under the control of Commissioners; and since my return home I learn that Commissioners have been appointed, and the School Reports forwarded to you, at which I am highly pleased.

Municipality of Percy.—This municipality is divided into three school districts; three schools in operation. At the time of my visit, it happened to be during the jubilee days; I therefore had no opportunity of examining schools Nos. 1 and 3, the children being absent. The teacher of No. 1 informs me that he has a diploma, and I am told he is an excellent teacher. I examined school No. 2, kept by Mr. Tilly, of Cape Cove, and found the pupils making great progress.

Municipality of Grand River.—There are two school districts; one school in operation. I visited school No. 1: pupils, 33 in number; examination satisfactory. School No. 2 is to be put into operation in the spring of this year.

Municipality of Newport and Pabos.—No school in operation in this municipality; the inhabitants are anxious for schools, but are not able to support them, owing to their poor circumstances. School Commissioners were elected last July; and I flatter myself that schools will soon be established, there being a great anxiety on the part of the parents towards the well-being of their children.

The foregoing Report will, I have no doubt, be found defective in many respects, but I trust my next will be more satisfactory, and the statistical tables better filled up, should care be taken to establish schools where there are none, and where they are required, and the children be made to attend them.

You will observe that all the schools in the County of Bonaventure, with the exception of those in the townships of Metapediac and Ristigouche, are supported by rates and assessment, which is not the case in the County of Gaspé.

During my visit to the different schools in operation, I found many of the children read very well, and understand the elements of grammar; some few of the teachers teach the branches prescribed for model schools, but, for want of a Board of Examiners in the County of Bonaventure, they (being teaching therein) are unable to obtain diplomas to keep such schools. As to the ages of the teachers, they are from 23 to 65; the females 18 to 30; the unmarried from 18 to 45. All the school houses are in very good order. There is a great deficiency of books and stationary, which, however, cannot be easily procured in several parts of this district. I have advised the Commissioners to make an attempt to form a fund for the purpose of procuring the same, and I expect ere long that such will be the case.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed,)

JOSEPH MEAGHER,

School Inspector.

STATISTICAL TABLES

- . 10 School Municipalities in Bonaventure County and 10 in Gaspé County.
- . 64 School Districts with 31 schools open.
- . 24 male and 7 female teachers.
- . 12 teachers with certificates.
- . Average male salary £ 40; average female salary £ 25.

YEARS OF UNIQUE RESPONSIBILITY

During the five year period, 1855-1859, Joseph Meagher had the total responsibility for the inspection of schools in both of the Counties of Bonaventure and Gaspé. It was not until 1860 that the task was divided on a County basis and responsibility for Gaspé County assigned first to M. Béchard of Grand River and later to Thomas Tremblay.

Though it is not possible here to recall in detail the reports of Joseph Meagher for the years 1856 - 1859 the following, selected items may be of interest.

1856

- . Gaspé Bay South had one school with 23 pupils.
- . Gaspé Bay North and Sydenham had one school, "with an excellent master."
- . Malbay had lost, through death, "a very aged teacher, Hubert by name".
- . Cape Cove school was "under the direction of Mr. Tilly, a very highly qualified master".
- . Bonaventure Island school had 37 pupils.
- . No schools were open in Grand River, Newport and Pabos.
- . Of three schools in Port Daniel only one had a capable master.
- . Hope had three good schools under competent masters.
- . Of the three schools in Cox only one had a capable master.
- . The dissentient school of New Richmond had 56 pupils.
- . Schools of Maria and Carleton were judged good.
- . There were no schools open in Mann - "a lamentable state of things owing to a spirit of dissension among the inhabitants"
- . The Indian School under Rev. Dumontier had 65 pupils.
- . Matapedia and Restigouche had three schools open.

1857

- . No schools open in Fox River and Griffin Cove.
- . One school in Cap des Rosiers was very inferior.
- . Gaspé Bay South. A private school in the South-West. Visited with Rev. De la Mare and John Eden.
- . No schools open in York and Haldimand.
- . Mr. Redmond Lee very competent master of Douglas school.
- . School in Percé's Irishtown kept by William Furlong.
- . Mr. Renouff the master at Grand River school.
- . The Port Daniel schools kept by James Ryan and Mr. Brotherton.
- . Mr. Leek and Mr. St. Croix the masters of Hope schools.
- . Cox. #1 school, kept by Mr. Decan, excellent.
 - #2 school kept by George Anney (Anez ?)
 - #3 school kept by Mr. McCoubray.
 - #4 school kept by Miss Clarke.
- . The very inferior school at Hamilton with Alfred Beauبران, master.
- . New Richmond. No schools under Commissioners. Two dissentient schools of the Trustees - #1, 69 pupils, Mr. Moir, master; #2, Mrs. Fallow, 60 pupils. Great progress noted.
- . The Maria teachers were Miss Gauvreau, Mr. Dugas and Miss Pritchard.
- . A school at Nouvelle kept by "an aged female".
- . Shoolbred's two schools with Thomas Verge and Ed. Russel, masters.
- . No schools open in Mann, Matapedia and Ristigouche.

1858

- . Still no schools open in Fox River and Griffin Cove.
- . Resistance to school tax in Cap des Rosiers. 7 pupils in school.
- . Peninsula school supported by voluntary contributions. Good progress.
- . No schools open in Gaspé Bay South, York and Haldimand. Public resistance to school taxes.

1858(CTD)

- . Douglas school visited with Rev. Fafard. 48 pupils.
- . No school at Malbay as teacher had left.
- . Two of three Percé schools open with Messrs. Béchard and Furlong as masters.
- . No school open in Bonaventure Island.
- . Donald McTavish the master of Newport-Pabos school.
- . Rev. G. Milne a strong supporter of schools. No staff changes in schools of Port Daniel, Hope and Cox.
- . Mr. Tierney the master of the Hamilton school with 52 pupils.
- . Teaching at New Richmond were William Fallow, John M.S. Fallow Neil Campbell and Miss Pritchard.
- . Maria schools kept by L.P. Reche and M. Poirier. Daniel Lawler taught the Irish school.
- . The two Shoolbred schools were kept by Thomas Verge and Mr. Chamberlain.
- . Mann had no schools open owing to serious tax collection problems. The frame for a school house had been erected.
- . High praise given to Rev. Dumontier for the Mission Point school with 66 Indian pupils.
- . A new school in Matapedia-Ristigouche kept by William Donaly.

THE GASPESIA INSPECTORATE DIVIDED

From 1859-1860 onward Joseph Meagher ceased to be responsible for the inspection of Gaspé County schools but retained his post as Inspector of Schools for the County of Bonaventure. He was to continue in that post until the end of the year 1865 when he resigned and was replaced by Ludger Lussier (Lucier) Esq., a graduate of the Jacques-Cartier Normal School. As noted above the inspection of Gaspé County schools fell first to A. Béchard

for the years 1860 and 1861 and then to Thomas Tremblay.

As Joseph Meagher came to the end of his work as Inspector of Schools momentous political events beyond Gaspesia were in motion to culminate in Canadian Confederation and the passage of the British North America Act. A reminder of those events is to be found in an item of the 1866 EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL OF QUEBEC which noted the sailing from Québec in November, 1866 of the Superintendent of Education, Pierre Chauveau, in company with the Hon. G.E. Cartier and Hon. A. Galt who were bound for London to discuss the terms of Confederation. Those discussions produced the Article 93 of the B.N.A. Act that has had profound influence on Québec education to this day. Chauveau would go on to visit and study the school systems of England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Belgium, Germany, Austria and Italy. He would, in time, become the Premier of Québec. Few, if any, of the Québec Premiers, have had his knowledge and grasp of educational issues in our Province.

This recall of the career of Joseph Meagher will conclude with one of the last reports that he submitted to Superintendent of Education, P. Chauveau :

No. 2.—EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF INSPECTOR MEAGHER.

COUNTY OF BONAVENTURE.

I have the honor to transmit the following report of the state of education in this county for the first six months of 1864. I visited all the schools in the county during the months of February, April, May and June, and am now happy to state that, only with two exceptions, all the school municipalities are provided with teachers holding diplomas.

In this report I will, as usual, give a statement of the state of education in the different municipalities, in the same order as they stand in my last report, commencing at the eastern boundary of my district of inspection.

Township of Port Daniel.—In this municipality I am sorry to say there has been no schools in operation for the last three months; the teachers of Nos. 2 and 3, finding the salary too small, and the mode of payment not suitable, abandoned the schools; the teacher of No. 1 was discharged by the commissioners for misconduct. I saw the president and secretary-treasurer last month; they informed me that they had advertised for two teachers and expected to have schools in operation early this fall.

Township of Hope.—In this municipality a considerable interest is taken in the cause of education. There are two excellent schools in operation, with excellent teachers holding first-class diplomas. The examinations were very satisfactory.

Little Nouvelle.—There is one Catholic school kept by a young lady, very competent. At the time of my visit, on the 23rd June, there were 56 children in attendance. The Rev. M. Tournier was present at the examination, which was very satisfactory. The inhabitants are finishing a very neat schoolhouse, which will be in operation by the first of next month.

Township of Paspebiac.—Only one school district in this municipality at present; the school is in full operation; 62 pupils in attendance; the teacher, Mr. Joseph Dorais, a gentleman holding a diploma from the Normal School, and well qualified. I regret to say that he intends leaving the school on the last of this month, July, owing to difficulties existing between the rate-payers and school commissioners, which difficulties, I now trust, are all arranged.

Township of Cox.—There are three school districts in this municipality, two of which are in operation; kept by male teachers provided with diplomas. These teachers have only been engaged since May last. They are both very young men, and have not yet acquired the art of teaching. I was attended on my visit to school No. 2 by Judge Winter, the sheriff, and several other gentlemen, and I was sorry to find the schoolhouse in a very dirty state and the teacher having no control over the pupils; he was severely reprimanded by me, and also by the judge. I regret to say that very little interest is taken in the cause of education in this municipality by the majority of the rate payers. When I visited that place last week I found that an election of the school commissioners was going on; the friends of education had proposed four gentlemen who, if elected, would have done much to improve the state of education in the township, but, unfortunately, they were opposed by another party, who proposed four others; the election lasted two days and the friends of education were defeated. I attended at the election and advised the people, but to no purpose.

Township of Hamilton.—There are five school districts in this municipality; two in operation: one kept by Mr. Picard, holding a first-class diploma, an excellent teacher; the school well attended; the pupils improving rapidly; examination very satisfactory. The other school, kept by a Mr. Kaiche, was very inferior; his engagement expired on the 1st instant, and the commissioners are about engaging a more efficient teacher.

Township of New Richmond.—There are nine school districts in the municipality, six under control of school commissioners and three under dissent. Of the former there is at present only one school in operation, kept by a female, an excellent teacher. The school is well attended. Examination very satisfactory. There is much difficulty in procuring qualified teachers; the commissioners are expecting two from Quebec shortly. There are two schools in operation under the dissent; one male and one female teacher. Both schools were well attended, and examination satisfactory.

Township of Maria.—Six school districts in this municipality; four at present in operation. Two male and two female teachers, all efficient. Teachers holding diplomas. All the schools were well attended, and satisfactory.

Township of Carleton.—There are two school districts in this municipality. One Model School kept by Mr. Lucier, holding a diploma. The school is regularly attended by from 75 to 85 scholars. All the examinations have proved very satisfactory.

Township of Nouvelle.—Four school districts in this municipality.

Township of Shoolbred.—Six school districts in this municipality. Only two at present in operation, kept by male teachers. Both schools are well attended, and examinations satisfactory. The commissioners are endeavoring to engage other teachers for the vacant schools.

Township of Mann.—Two school districts; one in operation. This school is very inferior. The school has very poor attendance, considering the number of children in this municipality of the age to attend. The examination was not satisfactory.

Indian Mission.—This school has been kept for the last two years by one of the French Acadians, and attended regularly by from 75 to 80 young Indians, who have made wonderful progress. The Rev. Mr. Saucier visits the school very often, and takes interest in the improvement of the children.

Township of Ristijouche.—Two school districts in this municipality. The commissioners had engaged two teachers for the schools, but they not being provided with diplomas, I advised them to appear before the Board of Examiners in May last. They attended, but failed in obtaining diplomas. Both schools are at present vacant, but the late teachers are to appear before the Board of Examiners at its next sitting, to undergo the required examination and obtain diplomas.

Township of Metapédia.—One school in operation, kept by a male teacher holding a diploma.

New Rustico.—There are two school districts in this municipality, and two schools at present in operation, one kept by the former teacher of the Indian Mission School, and the other by a young Acadian settler, both very well qualified for the requirements of the children of the municipality. Neither being provided with diplomas, I have advised them to appear before the Board of Examiners at its sitting in August. These poor Acadians deserve encouragement, as they are using every exertion to promote education in their little colony.

A CLOSING NOTE

From the appointment of Me. Peter Winter in 1851 as the first School Inspector for the District of Gaspé until the year 1873 the public and private schools of the Counties of Bonaventure and Gaspé were inspected, without confessional distinction, by Winter and his successors. It is to the great credit of these pioneer inspectors, including Joseph Meagher, that they served Boards of Commissioners and Boards of Trustees, Catholic and Protestant Clergy and teachers of both confessions with equal interest and devotion to the common good of education. This may be a significant factor in the attitudes of mutual respect and tolerance that have long prevailed in Gaspesia.

It was not until 1873, by which time the educational system of Gaspesia had greatly expanded, that the first Inspector of Protestant Schools was appointed by Order-in-Council in the person of the Rev. W.J. Lyster. Thus began a new era which must await future recall by GASPE OF YESTERDAY.

Charles Antoine Le Bel Sup. Marine

Born at Carleton Bon Co Oct 5 1843
son of Joseph Guillaume and Marie
(Meagher) Le Bel. His mother was a
sister of Joseph Meagher and niece of the
Hon. John Meagher who for many
years was a Member of Parl for Co.
of Bon

His maternal grandmother was a Miss
Fouquet who had been lady-in-waiting
to Marie Antoinette of France but had
fled with her family from France at
the time of the French Rev. They sailed
from France, coming to Halifax, N. S.
There she met and married John
Meagher who was drowned shortly
after their marriage
She subsequently removed to the P. / Que
settling at Carleton.

Mr. Le Bel's father was a N. P and
Registrar of Bon Co - well known
and highly respected citizen of Goysee

Archives Fr. Am. Mar. 30

MEAGNER (MAHER)

Carlton (Anastasia)

John m. Carliton to Anastasia Dugas

- ↓
1. Anastasia m. 1825 Guillaume Michaud
2. Marie m. 1834 Guillaume Lebel N.P.

wid John m. Anna Drake

↓
Mathilde born Carliton 1849

A grain drowned 333 at age 50 at Seal Cove

Joseph m. Ann Mann

prob. about 1820

- ↓
Charlotte b. Carliton 1832
Edouard b. " 1835
John Auguste b. " 1838
Emilie Jane b. " 1841
Esther b. " 1843
William b. 1845

Widowed Joseph m. Carliton 1848 Mary Mawat

- ↓
James Albert b. Carliton 1849
Charles Francois b. " 1850

Prof. Garpe & Bon Dev.

(1) Garpe' Co + Col' Hope + P.D

(2) Bon. Co part

1900 Rev. James A. Sutherland N.C.
Bon. except Col. Hope P.D

1 Oct 1899 Rev. I-M Kerns Shigawake
Garpe Co + Col Hope P.D.

Kerns 1st Report in 1899-1900