



SCHOOLS, SCHOOL COMMUNITIES AND THE STATE  
IN MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY NEW SOUTH WALES, SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND  
VICTORIA

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relations between schools, the communities in which they were situated and the state in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. It focuses principally on the schools affiliated with the state education boards established in the three colonies from 1847 onwards, although it also notes the existence of large numbers of schools independent of the boards and their relation to state supported schools. First, it provides a description of the ways in which schools were provided, their material conditions and the educational practices they adopted, emphasising the diversity of forms of schooling in the period and the construction of a socially and regionally differentiated network of schools. Second, it examines the material conditions enabling different groups to support teachers, secure accommodation and send their children, and the extent to which they might depend on the state to assist them in this. It considers the interests of various groups, individuals and local institutions in providing schools not only for their own children but for those of others, noting on the one hand the importance of patronage and on the other the existence of often conflicting vested interests. It analyses the value different groups attached to education and the diverse assumptions and cultural values and practices from which they drew their characteristic notions of what constituted good schooling. These rival interests, assumptions and norms generated conflicts over almost all aspects of school provision, both within local communities and between them and the central boards. Finally, it explores the construction of means of governance of schools and the different capacities it secured parents, leading settlers and institutions with local communities, and the state to shape schools.

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

I consent to the thesis being made available for photocopying and loan if applicable if accepted for the award of the degree.

Malcolm John Vick

14 January 1991

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CS	Colonial Secretary
NBNE	Board of National Education, New South Wales
NCE	Council of Education, New South Wales
NDSB	Denominational Schools Board, New South Wales
<u>NSW V&amp;P LA</u>	Votes & Proceedings, New South Wales Legislative Assembly
<u>NSW V&amp;P LC</u>	Votes & Proceedings, New South Wales Legislative Council
ML	Mitchell Library, Sydney
<u>SAGG</u>	<u>South Australian Government Gazette</u>
<u>SAPD</u>	<u>South Australian Parliamentary Debates</u>
<u>SAPP</u>	<u>South Australian Parliamentary Papers</u>
SCBE	Central Board of Education, South Australia
SMortL	Mortlock Library, South Australia
VBE	Board of Education, Victoria
VBNE	Board of National Education, Victoria
VDSB	Denominational Schools Board, Victoria (including Denominational Schools Board, Port Phillip District [N.S.W.]
VLaT	LaTrobe Library, Victoria
<u>VPP</u>	<u>Victorian Parliamentary Papers</u>
VPRS	Victorian Public Record Office, Series number



## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of the provision of schools in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. It examines the roles of both local communities and centralised institutions such as the churches and the state education boards in establishing schools, the character of the schools they established, and the construction of a complex network of schools catering to a finely differentiated clientele. It analyses the conditions and often conflicting interests and norms which shaped the involvement of parents, community leaders, the churches and the state agencies, and the various forms of education they sought to establish. Finally, it explores the conflicts which arose in the process of establishing and maintaining schools, the institutions of governance which the state constructed and the tension ridden, constantly changing sets of powers they generated by which parents, community leaders, churches and the state sought to shape colonial schools. It sets these issues in the broader context of the formation of colonial society and the colonial state.

The thesis takes its starting point in the historiography of mid- nineteenth century Australian education. Liberal accounts focus largely on the politics of church and state in the formation of state school systems, understanding the state as the symbol and guarantor of the common good. Revisionist accounts also focus on state school systems. They see them as shaped by, and serving, the imperatives of the dominant class and gender, and analyse both the classed and gendered character of schooling and the conditions shaping popular participation. Most recently, a handful of post-structuralist accounts have challenged the liberal and revisionist accounts, providing a critique of the conceptual structure of their work and some elements of an alternative interpretation.

Several problems arise from these analyses. First, there are empirical gaps. The very small number of post-structuralist accounts necessarily limits the ground they cover. Liberal accounts, concerned principally with politics and the problems of the formation and administration of state systems, largely ignore popular educational activity. Most revisionist accounts focus on the later nineteenth century, after the formation of state mass school systems. Insofar as they deal with the mid-nineteenth century they address either the general relation of educational development to the broad transformations of western society or the class and gender dynamics of the formation and working of state school systems, the curriculum or elite private schools. This leaves several issues of potentially great importance to the revisionist position unexamined, in particular, class- and gender-differentiated popular cultures and educational practices, the organisation of popular interest in education, and the relation of this interest to the growth of state activity in the field. While revisionists address these issues to some extent, they do so narrowly, either through the material conditions shaping school attendance or, once in school, through the concept of resistance.

Second, there are theoretical problems. Liberal and revisionist accounts tend to see the developments of the 1850s and 1860s within a teleology which focuses on the movement towards the settlements of the 1870s rather than analysing the internal dynamics of the prevailing ensemble of institutions and relations. They also share a tendency to isolate particular strands of development and deal with them as distinct entities rather than in relation to other educational developments. For instance, revisionists readily treat working-class education in isolation from middle-class education. The liberal accounts, individualist and empiricist in character, lack any

adequate theory of either social structure in general or particular aspects such as class, gender, ideology or the state, and they see good education in idealist terms, dissociated from other social concerns.

The revisionist accounts frequently take the structures of class and gender, and the differentiated cultural formations they entail as given, glossing over their problematic character. At times they fall prey to the dangers of reductionism: a sense of agency disappears in a preoccupation with structure; culture too easily lacks any real grounding outside the economy and the material living conditions consequent on it; and the diversity of everyday life is assimilated too readily and immediately to aspects or consequences of class and patriarchy. There is also a tendency to romanticise working-class life and 'resistance' to both class oppression and such institutions of ideological domination as the state schools. This renders it difficult for revisionists to explain the level of working-class support for state schools. There are further problems in conceptualising the relation between class and gender, and the relation of both to age.

Some post-structuralist accounts, in contrast to those of the revisionists, dissociate the discursive formations and their institutional and administrative practices from any analysis of social relations. Where they do seek to link discourses on education, class and gender to concrete social relations and practices, the theoretical relation between discourse and material reality is unclear. Finally, while both revisionist and post-structuralist lines of analysis are hostile to liberalism, their relations

with each other are problematic.

This study attempts to fill several of the empirical gaps in the literature. In particular it documents the wide diversity of types of school and indicates the cultural roots of popular educational interest and practice. It characterises the emergent teaching profession and professional norms of school practice and traces the range of social interests arrayed in support of these professional norms. It maps the complex relations between schools and local school providers, supporters and users on the one hand and the state agencies on the other, including the range of conflicts over both the form and governance of schools, and the development of the state education agencies themselves.

The thesis addresses a number of broad questions about the character of colonial society from within a general revisionist framework which attempts a rapprochement with some aspects of post-structuralism. At the most general level, it accepts that the development of mass schooling cannot be understood without reference to class, gender, and race, structural relations characterised by fundamental tensions and conflicts, and the role of the state in constructing and articulating these relations. Consequently it is concerned with the character of the state, which it sees as a constantly changing set of institutions with a complex, problematic relation to the structure of social relations. The thesis explores four aspects of the state: the expansion of the scope of its activity; its institutional growth; its actual penetration of social life; and its role in constituting and mediating class and gender relations. It is

also concerned with the construction of class and gender relations beyond the role of the state in that process. It explores this issue not at the general level of 'whole societies' but at the local institutional level, although it recognises that these are in some sense both constitutive of that general level and seriously constrained by it. Moreover, it is concerned not so much with what some Marxists might call the 'economic base' but with social, institutional and cultural hegemony. Finally, it is concerned with the place of schools in both the articulation of social relations at the local level and the mediation of those relations by the state. While the thesis addresses these questions, it is important to note that it does so indirectly, through the construction of a theoretically informed 'description' of school provision rather than through explicit, abstract theoretical analysis.

The topic can be approached in several ways. One is to explore in detail the relations between state, school and community in a handful of localities. This offers the advantage of dealing in depth with at least four sets of issues. First, the economy, institutional, social and political life of the local community. Second, its economic, political, social and cultural relations both to the region of which it formed a part and to the capital. Third, the development of schooling, the ways it was shaped by both local conditions and the activity of the state and the ways it in turn reacted back on the development of local society. And, fourth, the development of both the activity of the state in the local community and of the apparatus of the state itself through such activity.

A second possible approach is to make a case study of each of several specific types of localities or regions: urban, suburban, mining, agricultural and pastoral. This offers some of the same advantages of depth as the first approach, while making it possible to explore the effects of different local economies.

A third possibility is to select evidence from a large number of widely diverse localities. While this approach clearly forfeits the possibility of studying communities in depth, this is offset by the possibility of delineating, or at least indicating, the range of possibilities which were practically available in colonial society. This approach is adopted in this study as it crosses colonial and regional boundaries, minimises the risk of seeing local peculiarities as general tendencies and allows an exploration of common characteristics as well as differences.

There is an extensive body of sources which makes such a study possible. First, there is a mass of published official papers, ranging from parliamentary debates through the reports and minutes of evidence of select committees to the annual reports of the various education boards and an enormous volume of manuscript records of the boards. These provide ample material through which to examine administrative practice, ideology of education and the construction of official norms of school practice.

The boards' routine records also provide an extensive body of evidence concerning popular involvement in education, both as it was seen by the boards and their officers, and as parents and local school supporters documented it in their own letters. These sources not only illuminate the schools the boards supported but often

provide incidental evidence of other schools in their localities. Not all boards have equally extensive records. The National boards' and their successors' correspondence files run to thousands of volumes and boxes. The New South Wales Denominational board's records are much sparser, since they left much of the management of schools to the denominations, and consequently many of the issues which generated much of the National boards' correspondence never reached the board. The correspondence records of the South Australian boards established in 1847 and 1852 are also relatively meagre; most of the letter files have been lost or destroyed, the only surviving files being those held in the records of other departments and some of the letters concerning the erection of about one hundred vested school buildings.

Individual schools, school societies, denominations and other institutions with a history of involvement in schools also hold a range of records relating to education in the period. Metropolitan and regional newspapers provide extensive reports of public debate on education, as well as evidence of popular involvement in schools and schooling. Finally, there is an array of unsystematic and usually fragmentary evidence of schools in the diaries, account books, letters, autobiographies and other records of the lives of private individuals.

This thesis draws on a small portion of these records, their sheer volume prohibiting any 'exhaustive' use. In developing its account of local educational activity it draws heavily on the correspondence files of the state education boards, in some cases taking selected localities and following their records over an extended period,

in others sampling widely to ensure that a range of different types of communities was represented. These are supplemented by private sources and rural newspapers from South Australia and Victoria. The official reports of the boards as well as the observations and reports of inspectors and other officers of the boards in the correspondence files provide the main material from which the account of the boards' norms of educational practice, and policies and procedures to secure them has been constructed. The decision to leave the parliamentary debates, major newspapers and the records of the denominations and other educational bodies unused reflected four considerations: the constraints of time and access to major metropolitan archives; the method of sampling widely to develop a sense of the range of conditions and provisions; a judgement that the records selected were sufficient for the present purpose; and the recognition that traditional accounts have already extensively explored the parliamentary debates and the major urban newspapers in mapping the politics of education.

The character of these records creates a number of methodological problems. In particular, it makes it virtually impossible to avoid a number of imbalances. The disparity between the volume and type of public and private records weights the study heavily towards public education. Within the public sector the massive volume of records concerning the National boards and the relative lack of correspondence for the Denominational boards produces a bias towards the secular state schools. Within the private sector the records contain evidence mainly on the schools patronised or

established by the more affluent sectors of colonial society. Insofar as they portray popular educational activities, these records frequently characterise them condescendingly and unsympathetically, often to the point of caricature. The overwhelming bulk of these records were also generated by men and refer to the public domain of men's activities; even where women appear in these records it is usually through the eyes of men. The main exceptions are those public records generated by women teachers and a number of the private records.

Consequently, it is easier to generate a seemingly full and comprehensive account of secular state schools than it is of the small, ephemeral schools of the poor in town or country. However, there are also major problems in dealing with the state schools which dominate the records. For example, it is not possible, in most cases at least, to identify precisely where the initiative to establish schools came from. Where the first sign of a move to establish a school is found in a pamphlet, it is impossible to know whether, for example, the idea had been suggested first by the author's wife over the dinner table. Where a denominational newspaper claims that a priest had established a school in a new parish, it is impossible to know whether the priest himself, rather than members of his parish, took the initiative and did the work. Where the first documentation of steps to establish a school in a remote hamlet is a petition to a central board, it is not necessarily correct or reasonable to assume that those signing the petition were the prime movers? Brian Matthews' account of the establishment of a school at Eurunderee in his recent biography of Louisa Lawson

illustrates the problem well:

Louisa had begun agitation for a school in the district some time earlier. During 1875 she renewed the campaign, pointing to the increased population in the area ... and the dangers of sending small children across the honeycombed diggings to an existing school at Old Pipeclay. Whatever others thought of her, they responded to her energetic sponsoring of a petition to the education authorities for a school. She persuaded various people to promise financial aid and obtained a free grant of land for the school building. When she suggested a building committee, one was immediately formed from which, as a woman, she was excluded. The committee met in the bar of the old inn, and its dynamic motivator, prevented from joining in, followed proceedings through a crack in the back wall.<sup>1</sup>

Similar problems arise concerning other aspects of schools. However, it is possible with careful reading of fragments of evidence at least to suggest some possible characteristics of those schools which most easily escape the major historical records. While this leads to much more tentative descriptions and interpretations than might be desirable, the alternative is not to notice the gaps that are there, not to even attempt to indicate matters which were intimately related to those things which are more fully documented and to foster the illusion that a description of the part is a description of the whole.

A third methodological problem in this approach to nineteenth century schooling concerns the peculiarities of the different state boards and their respective systems. In the period under consideration, there were eight such boards.<sup>2</sup> Each board was differently constituted, had different powers and developed different policies from the others. Any account of schooling in the period must take into account these differences. In a thematically organised account, in contrast to one organised chronologically or in parallel colonial narratives, there is a danger of constant repetition

or a blurring of characteristic differences. In part this problem is addressed by taking colonial society rather than educational politics or administration as the starting point. For example, newly established farming communities faced comparable problems regardless of which colony's border enclosed them, whether in clearing land and establishing their homes, or in establishing churches and schools, and these problems were different from those of established country towns. Moreover, small farming communities were being established in each of the colonies throughout the period, regardless of whether a dual system or a single system was in place in the colonial capital. Arguably the educational problems they faced owed more to their common conditions than to the idiosyncrasies of educational legislation or administration.

The thesis is constructed in seven chapters. The first discusses in some detail the various interpretations of Australian education in the period and the problems they raise. It argues that the main centre of interest lies in the tension between marxist-feminist revisionists and post-structuralists, outlines a number of key empirical and theoretical issues and problems which need to be addressed, and indicates the empirical findings and theoretical possibilities offered in a body of North American and British work on comparable educational and social systems.

Chapter Two sketches some social, political and legal characteristics of the colonies of New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. It argues that they were patriarchal capitalist societies, although the structures of class and gender were constantly in a state of re/construction. It

outlines ways in which production and trade established asymmetrical relations of power between the metropolitan centres, towns and farming, mining and pastoral areas. It also argues that these social relations were highly problematic and that various individuals, institutions and groups sought to press the state to intervene in these relations in their favour. Further, it suggests that the state had independent interests of its own. This unstable ensemble of relations and interests, and of representations of the problems of colonial society, led the state in each of the colonies to establish means for systematically funding and regulating schools. These established boards with limited powers within which they could secure staff, develop detailed policies and procedures under the eye of governments and legislatures. These bodies of social relations and institutional arrangements provided the context in which colonial schools were formed, patronised and governed.

Chapter Three examines the character of colonial schools and their clientele. It argues that the schools were extremely diverse in their teachers, curricula, methods of organisation, instruction, discipline and in the texts they used. These 'internal' differences were mirrored in the character of school accommodation. Schools occupied domestic dwellings, churches, cellars and barns as well as buildings erected especially for school purposes. While some of the buildings were spacious and comfortable, many were cramped, dark and unhealthy and in serious disrepair. Some school grounds were large, securely fenced, shaded and equipped with playground equipment and sturdy and discretely located toilets; other schools had no grounds,

equipment or toilets, occupied large unfenced properties, or opened directly onto roadways, making it difficult for teachers to supervise their pupils and dangerous for the children themselves.

Chapter Four looks at the means by which schools were established and supported, at the distribution of schools throughout the towns, suburbs and rural districts of the three colonies and at the social differentiation between them. Further, it examines the relations between the schools and different social classes, genders, ages and religions, reflecting, and providing further material basis for, these divisions and groupings. It also examines the symbolic relations tying some schools to church and religion, some to the private or domestic sphere, and others to the public sphere of the state.

Chapter Five explores the social conditions, cultural backgrounds and individual and institutional interests which shaped the patterns of school provision mapped in chapters three and four. It also examines the interests of the central boards, and the norms of schooling they articulated and pursued. It argues that these norms were couched in universal, scientific terms, in contrast to the pragmatic, local, empirical formulation of judgements of schools characteristic of parents and other laypeople in the schools' communities. Further, it argues that these norms legitimated the boards' judgements of schools and allowed them to condemn widely both schools and parents' and other laypeople's right to determine the educational character of schools.

Chapter Six analyses a range of conflicts over schools, between local

communities and the central boards and between rival groups within the school communities themselves. It argues that such conflicts were characteristic of schooling in the period and are indicative of the level of local interest in education. It also argues that teachers were in a particularly vulnerable position in many conflicts, caught between rival interests or views, both of which they needed to satisfy in order for their schools to succeed.

Chapter Seven analyses the means by which the various interested individuals, institutions and groups sought to shape the character of schools. On the one hand, it examines the construction of increasingly complex and comprehensive regulations, powers and procedures by the central boards. On the other, it examines a variety of informal means parents and others in local school communities used to shape their schools. However, it argues that while throughout the period, the range of powers available to even the strongest of the central boards gave many parents the capacity to send their children to schools of their own liking, regardless of the boards' approval, the boards increasingly marginalised local and, especially, parental controls over state supported schools.

The thesis argues that parental and other forms of local educational activity were much more widespread and important in providing schools than has hitherto been recognised. Such activity produced a highly diverse body of schools characterised by different types of teachers, accommodation, curricula, methods of organisation, instruction and discipline with different types of schools characteristically supported by,

and for, distinct social groups. While the state played a significant part in school provision its role centred around providing financial support for local initiative. The diversity of schools was premised on the different concerns, assumptions, financial capacities and interests of those involved in providing and supporting them. While many of these educational concerns were articulated in particular, immediate and, essentially, local terms, the education boards, their chief officers and the professional teachers aligned with them constructed a series of general norms governing educational practice. These norms were generally hostile to the practices and concerns of working-class and other relatively poor families and constructed significant differences between boys' and girls' schooling. Where different individuals, groups and institutions with divergent interests were involved in the same schools, they frequently disagreed strongly over a wide range of issues: the numbers of schools needed and their location, what accommodation was needed, how schools should be funded, the choice of teachers, the content and organisation of curricula, teaching methods and discipline. However, starting with relatively limited and minimally defined powers, the state education boards generated a range of regulations, policies and procedures, implemented by a gradually growing body of clerical and field officers, through which to secure increasingly extensive controls over schools. Insofar as they allowed a role for members of the local communities in the governance of their schools, they limited that role and favoured community leaders rather than the parents whose children might attend the schools. The boards encountered recurrent problems in their strategies and

procedures, causing them to revise them constantly and often leading them to support legislative change. The processes of providing and governing schools produced three general outcomes: the development of an increasing range of means of surveillance and bodies of knowledge about colonial populations; the construction of the institutional, social and political character of local communities, and of new relations between local community and the central state; and the growth of the machinery of state and the re/definition of the boundaries of the institutions of the state.

While the thesis is limited in the range of documentary sources it uses, in its bias towards state 'secular' schools and in its indirect rather than explicit treatment of theoretical issues it provides sufficient evidence to document key aspects of the relationship between mid-nineteenth century schools, their local communities and the state. The analysis provides a basis from which to address some of the theoretical issues which a critical reading of liberal, revisionist and post-structuralist interpretations raise. It also provides material for a more extensive comparison of Australian developments with those in other Western countries in the period. Finally, it provides grounds for a further critique of liberal interpretations of the period as a whole, an assessment of post-structuralist accounts and their critiques and a refinement of revisionist interpretations.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. B. Matthews, Louisa, Ringwood, Vic., 1987, pp.111–112.
2. In South Australia there was a single board from 1847 to 1851 and again from 1852 to 1875. In New South Wales and Victoria there were initially two rival boards from 1848 and 1851, to 1866 and 1862 respectively. These were replaced by single boards which effectively amalgamated their predecessors from 1862 to 1872 in Victoria and from 1866 to 1880 in New South Wales.

## CHAPTER I

### INTERPRETATIONS OF MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLING

Every history is written in the context of existing histories of the subject it creates and explores. The starting point for this account of mid-nineteenth century Australian schooling is defined in important respects by a number of distinct ways of constituting the field, analysing its components and interpreting their significance. There is a long standing, well developed tradition of liberal historiography, well represented in the work of writers such as A.G.Austin.<sup>1</sup> This tradition sees the period as a battle between progressive liberal democratic forces and the conservative interests of would-be elite social classes and, especially, the churches with their concern to secure a hierarchical social order. In dealing with education these accounts typically chart the formation of state elementary school systems through analyses of the politics of church and state. Alongside this liberal tradition there is a more recently established body of revisionist scholarship which sees the period as a struggle for the construction of a capitalist and patriarchal society. Most revisionist accounts are also concerned with state schooling but are structured around class and gender formation and conflict. There is, finally, an emergent post-structuralist approach which sees the period in terms of the construction of new forms of knowledge underpinning new state-regulated technologies of power. These accounts are also concerned with state school systems but focus on development of the state as regulatory agency and the construction of new techniques of surveillance and the construction of a new social order.

In this chapter I examine what each of these approaches has to say about several key themes concerning the relations between schools, school communities and the state. First, I examine what they say about the character of the schools

themselves. Second, I consider how these different accounts deal with the question of the role of the state in education. Third, I outline what the different accounts say about parental and other community interest and involvement in schools. Revisionist and post-structuralist historians explicitly situate their analyses within the broader context of changes in western society generally and North American and British accounts of those changes, I also discuss significant examples of this literature, particularly where they complement Australian work.

Having completed this thematic survey I turn to some more general considerations, noting the characteristic arguments and theoretical underpinnings of each approach, the problems they entail and the possibilities they open up. I argue that the liberal tradition, while rich in empirical accounts of the politics of church and state and the formation of state school systems, is narrow in its range of concerns and naive in its theorisation of social structure. Revisionist accounts, while theorising the structure of social relations more adequately are empirically limited and have paid little attention to a range of important aspects of mid-nineteenth century education. Post-structuralists offer even less new substantive evidence but their analyses, especially of the state and its formation of new regulatory techniques and of the socially constitutive role of discourse, indicate important limitations in alternative theoretical approaches and suggest some promising lines of analysis. The relations between local communities on the one hand and their schools and the state on the other emerge as significant empirical gaps in our collective knowledge of the period. I argue that while the relation between the revisionist and post-structuralist approaches remains problematic, between them they offer a range of theoretical possibilities for a fruitful analysis of the evidence bearing on these substantive issues.

## FORMS AND NORMS OF EDUCATION

Most histories of education in the period, regardless of their general orientation, pay some attention to what the schools themselves were like. In particular, they construct a range of norms defining good schools and schooling, in terms of both their purposes and their forms. Typically, liberal historians see the proper principal purpose of the school as education, the induction of children into the mysteries and pleasures of intellectual cultivation. In most cases they see this as closely, if not necessarily, associated with the development of moral and/or religious character. This is further linked to a set of social purposes: by cultivating character and mind, schools would promote individual well-being and lay the foundations of social order. To some extent, especially in the case of middle class boys on the one hand, and the very poor, on the other, they also see schools as legitimately concerned with vocational preparation. They should fit the former for professional or commercial careers and the latter to obtain a variety of industrial occupations. These accounts also establish a number of conditions schools generally needed to satisfy in order to function effectively for these purposes. They required buildings which were designed and built to accommodate specific educational practices and formally well educated and, in the case of elementary schools, specially trained teachers. They had to adopt a planned curriculum, based on a hierarchical, developmental programme in reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, some form of religious instruction. At the higher levels, they should teach range of subjects chosen from classical or modern languages and literature, mathematics, natural sciences and commercial subjects such as book-keeping, ensuring a balance between 'practical' and 'academic' components. The school day should be organised on the basis of a schedule which carefully balanced

the time devoted to each subject and pupils were to be grouped and instructed in classes, using simultaneous methods of instruction and class sets of purpose-written texts.

These norms, especially regarding elementary schools, are constructed as universal, abstract, transcendent ideals; with few exceptions, they are seen as minimally dependent on social considerations. Indeed, schools are often adjudged good where they established organisational and pedagogic practices which flew in the face of circumstances. There are exceptions to this, however. In the case of middle-class boys' schools and industrial schools for the very poor social circumstances are seen to be relevant in determining what constitutes good education. Moreover, in a rather different way, the social position and cultural characteristics of Aborigines is seen to make all the forms of schooling available in settler society problematic. And, finally, the case of middle-class girls' schools is difficult and ambiguous. On the one hand, liberal historians implicitly reject the notion that education should prepare women for the leisured life of a 'lady', as the discussion of the 'accomplishments' curriculum below indicates. On the other, there were no 'occupations' for women for which extensive academic education, the only 'legitimate' form of education for middle-class women, was a pre-requisite.

These norms are rarely explicitly stated, critically examined or justified. Rather, they are established, implicitly, by a range of textual devices. At the most general and diffuse level, the educational character of schools is established by discussing schools and their problems in terms of their 'educational' or 'pedagogical' rather than their social characteristics and effects: they are seen as belonging to the 'realm of intellect'.<sup>2</sup> Further, the quality most necessary to the proper administration of schools

by state education boards is seen as 'expert knowledge in education'.<sup>3</sup> And, finally, schools are seen as good because they provided good education or criticised because they did not.<sup>4</sup> The vocational character of good schooling is established by similar means. Schools for the very poor, for instance, are criticised for not providing pupils with the basis for securing employment.<sup>5</sup> Middle-class boys' schools are seen to have to establish a compromise between their academic concerns and the 'legitimate' claims of parents to have their sons prepared for professional or business life. To place too much importance on this vocational concern is to 'concede' to 'prejudice' and 'philistinism', while to place too much weight on the classics is to 'retard' educational development.<sup>6</sup>

The principles defining good schooling are often established simply through labelling particular practices as 'good', 'efficient' or 'superior', while the boundaries of acceptable practice are set by describing other practices as 'poor', 'incompetent' or 'unsuitable'. Placement of a given practice on a continuum of progress from 'outmoded' and 'old-fashioned' to 'most modern' produces a similar effect.<sup>7</sup> In other cases, the term 'education' is used interchangeably with specific forms of schooling practice, or, less directly, with other terms which signify particular practices. Thus, for instance, Jean Ely positively endorses the National system's programme, suggesting, for instance, that the 'main educational problem' was the difficulties facing the National schools; 'education' and National schools are virtually identical.<sup>8</sup> National schooling itself is widely established as signifying a range of principles including teacher training, standardisation of curricula, the adoption of Irish National class texts and the provision of specially designed schools. Elsewhere they juxtapose description and judgement to produce a similar effect. Alan Barcan, for example, states that by the 1860s 'girls'

[superior] education had improved a little. But, in general, a high class of academic education exerted [little appeal].<sup>9</sup> The 'but' indicates that 'improvement' meant 'providing a high class of academic education'. Moreover, this 'high class academic education' refers back to the previous paragraph, where it is more concretely defined as 'the compromise curriculum of classical and commercial subjects'. Yet another way in which liberal historians establish their educational norms is by uncritically incorporating in the text the educational principles articulated by particular historical protagonists. B.K. Hyams and Cliff Turney, for example, both argue that trained teachers were essential to the quality of schools. Yet they draw this view directly and uncritically from the writings of William Wilkins making Wilkins' judgements interchangeable with, and indistinguishable from, their own.<sup>10</sup> Finally, even where historians carefully avoid making such value judgements, insofar as they share in the characteristic problematic and interpretation of liberal historiography, the relation between their own work and that of others effectively ties them to the more general normative framework.

Liberal historians have paid considerable attention to the material conditions of schools, in particular, the elementary schools. They have noted that they occupied a wide range of premises from huts and dank, dark cellars through private cottages to churches and purpose-built schoolhouses. To a lesser extent they have also noted that many private academies occupied domestic dwellings while the larger advanced schools, in particular the corporate colleges, occupied large buildings with separate classrooms, often designed for the purpose.<sup>11</sup> Characteristically they pay most attention to the purpose-built schools. Lawrence Burchell, for example, in a careful and extensive study of Victorian school architecture, considers in detail large numbers

of plans for purpose built schools, and discusses at some length schools conducted in, or schools designed as, churches.<sup>12</sup> Those in more makeshift accommodation are typically dealt with in more cursory fashion, although J. Burnswood and J. Fletcher in their New South Wales state education centenary volume pay them some attention.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, school buildings are dealt with from mainly in terms of their 'suitability' for school purposes, their architectural styles (especially their affinity with churches), the models from which they were derived, their cost and their comfort.<sup>14</sup> They also note a range of related aspects of schools, noting the crude conditions of many privies, the range of texts used in schools, from sets of Irish National books to small collections of miscellaneous books and papers in others, and the character and extent of desks, forms, blackboards, maps and other equipment. Frequently, however, each aspect of the material provision for schools is described, not positively, in terms of what was there, but negatively, in terms of what was not there.<sup>15</sup>

Teachers also receive considerable attention. As with buildings, large numbers of teachers are rather summarily dismissed, and described in terms of what they lacked – in this case, specialist training for school teaching. However, many studies, especially of prominent individual teachers or of those who later became leading figures in educational administration, pay careful attention to the details of their qualifications, careers, methods and ideas.<sup>16</sup> A few studies, however, focus on less prominent teachers, notably those in the Not so eminent Victorians collection.<sup>17</sup> These studies indicate well the range of temperaments, skills, teaching and disciplinary methods, educational qualifications and interests of nineteenth century elementary teachers, although some focus more on their relations with their employers and others in the community.

Finally, these accounts examine the institutional forms and pedagogical practices of schools. They often note that monitorial schools, developed in the first half of the century, were still widely used in denominational schools, but that, especially in the National schools, new forms of class instruction by trained teachers were becoming more widespread. They also document the continuing widespread use of individual instruction in large numbers of small elementary schools conducted by untrained teachers.<sup>18</sup> In the field of advanced education, they note the emergence of middle class proprietary private schools on the model of the Scottish academies and corporate colleges on the model of the English 'Arnoldian' public school. Although there were indicate significant differences between them, both were relatively large schools, occupied large buildings either built or specially converted for school purposes, were run by their headmasters (only occasionally, headmistresses), often with a body of highly qualified teachers and offered commercial and modern and well as classical curricula. In practice, most of these schools were for boys, although some historians note the formation of convent schools which provided a rough equivalent for girls.<sup>19</sup> Some also explore the provision of advanced education in the form of advanced classes in subjects such as classics and mathematics in larger state elementary schools.<sup>20</sup> They note the continued existence of what they see as the older, outmoded forms of 'middle-class academies' and 'seminaries for young ladies'.<sup>21</sup> And, finally, they deal with education at home, under governesses. Marion Amies, in particular, explores in detail who taught, the forms of instruction, material provisions for teaching and learning, the organisation of lesson time and the inclusion of both formal and informal teaching in what were essentially middle-class homes.<sup>22</sup>

Given the norms which liberal historians construct, it is not surprising that they

judge most of these schools harshly – indeed, as I suggested above, one of the procedures through which they articulate these norms was by implied contrast to their descriptions of 'bad' schools. Elementary schools generally, and dame schools in particular, are described as ill-equipped, poorly housed, taught by incompetent teachers using outdated and inefficient modes of organisation and instruction to teach a narrow curriculum.<sup>23</sup> The private venture academies and ladies' schools are seen in comparable terms; Barcan, for instance, having recognised that these provided the most common form of middle-class schooling, simply comments that the children taught in them were generally poorly educated.<sup>24</sup> Helen Jones sees the best of them as beset by weaknesses, leaving the impression that many others were ephemeral, lacking intellectual rigour and otherwise generally unsatisfactory, while Amies explicitly contrasts them with a 'vision of what education for girls could be'.<sup>25</sup> However, Amies also provides a rare exception to this trend, arguing strongly that the education middle-class families provided at home was often well organised and provided a solid grounding in a range of literary, practical and social skills.<sup>26</sup>

Some see even the 'better' schools as narrow, concerned more with securing authority and obedience than with the cultivation of the mind. Their buildings, R.J.W. Selleck points out, were incapable of providing conditions to allow the earnest engagement of teacher and pupils in the discovery and exploration of the treasures of a literary tradition.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, liberal historians typically see the 'emergent' forms as vastly better than those they sought to replace. They represent the larger state schools, especially the central model schools, with their trained teachers, more middle-class clientele and broader curriculum, as relatively rare examples of true efficiency, and some lavish generous praise on the best of them.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, they portray the

advanced schools offering a more modern, 'academic' curriculum as a massive improvement over the academies and ladies' seminaries, suggesting that the education they offered was far more solid.<sup>29</sup>

Post-structuralists, in contrast, examine the forms of schooling as regimes of order. They see pedagogy, classroom organisation, curriculum, school record keeping and architecture as means of constructing a particular order of subjection and subjectification. They identify school records, which receive little attention in liberal accounts except as means to administrative efficiency, as forms of teacher knowledge by which to rank and order pupils on the one hand, and as forms of pupil knowledge by which to identify and place themselves on a range of normative scales (punctual/unpunctual, clever/dull), on the other. And, they explore school architecture in terms of the social relations it makes possible.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, for instance, the monitorial schoolroom with its large and spatial, pedagogic and disciplinary organisation constituted a means for surveillance and the construction of hierarchies and norms which simultaneously constituted pupils as an ordered mass and defined their individualities by their placement within the mass. In this context the teacher was in the position of supervisor of a machine. The shift to the liberal classroom involved shifts in size, spatial organisation and pedagogy, reducing the physical and symbolic distance between teacher and pupils and creating the conditions for the cultivation of 'personal influence'. Where power in the monitorial school worked through the physical and symbolic ordering of classroom space, a carefully wrought economy of reward and gratification and a minutely regulated ritual of learning, the liberal classroom worked through the construction of conditions under which pupils routinely engaged in socially correct behaviour and through the formation

of modes of knowing and reasoning.<sup>31</sup>

They see the newer forms such as the liberal classroom replacing 'older' forms such as monitorialism. However this does not represent 'development' or 'progress', as it does in liberal accounts, but rather a radical discontinuity – the supersession of one technology premised on a particular discursive formation and strategy by another directed towards quite differently constituted objects. Their concern with schools as social apparatus rather than 'educational' institutions leads the post-structuralists away from making distinctions on the basis of formal curricula. Instead, some see the construction of curriculum differences, and their naturalisation as 'elementary' or 'advanced', 'academic' or 'accomplishments', as ways of converting different capacities to purchase schooling into markers of cultural difference and social distance. Equally importantly, they see schools as positioning pupils differently in relation to bodies of knowledge, validating their own cultural backgrounds in the curriculum, or locating them as outsiders, spectators of knowledge which is alien to, and beyond, them. Finally, they see the curriculum in terms of the construction of representations of national identities.<sup>32</sup>

Post-structuralists also judge schools differently from the liberal historians. Indeed, some adopt a careful neutrality, seeing the liberal classroom as neither good nor bad. Bruce Smith, for instance, sees it as the necessary institutional form for the state in its pursuit of a particular means of social regulation. His concern is to understand its place in that strategy and how it worked rather than to pass moral judgement. Others, implicitly pass judgement not on 'qualitative' or 'educational' but on social and political grounds. Jane Kenway, in particular, and James Donald, less emphatically, clearly place their analyses of the forms of schooling firmly in the context

of marxist and feminist concerns and see them as playing in key role in the construction of class and gender relations.

Revisionists have stressed and, to some extent, examined the variety of forms of education. In their accounts of elementary schooling they agree with liberal and post-structuralist historians that, increasingly, the schools provided by the state were characterised by specialist accommodation, trained teachers, class-based methods of instruction and a set curriculum with prescribed texts. Unlike them, however, they analyse this set of practices in terms of class and gender relations. They examine the curriculum in terms of its social content, arguing that it was saturated with capitalist and patriarchal ideology, and note the different curricular forms offered to girls and boys. They characterise the organisation of schools as a set of disciplinary relations, designed to establish habits of order in future workers and citizens and they see the general confinement of working-class schooling to the elementary curriculum as offering only a limited, confining training rather than a 'real' education.<sup>33</sup>

They have also argued that alongside the 'provided' forms of elementary schooling there was a distinctive popular educational tradition, including both informal individual self-education practices and working-class private schools. While revisionists have not extensively explored either of these forms in mid-nineteenth century Australia, they have drawn freely on overseas studies of 'indigenous' popular education. They draw on the work of English historians such as T.W. Laqueur, Richard Johnson, Simon Frith, Phil Gardner and Jane Purvis and North Americans such as R.D. Gidney, Michael Katz, Bruce Curtis, Alison Prentice and Marta Danylewycz, first, to argue that such traditions were well established and, second, to indicate their general character.<sup>34</sup> In particular, they suggest that self-provided

elementary schools were conducted by a wide range of teachers, although Gardner argues that despite traditional accounts, most were reasonably literate and able to impart at least the rudiments of reading and writing. They were usually housed in the teacher's dwelling and used whatever books were available. Pupils were instructed, and worked, individually, often learning by rote. Crucially, these practices accommodated irregular attendance. Some revisionists have also noted the persistence of traditional popular forms within the early systems of state schooling, in particular, the colonisation of state supported schools as small family businesses, and the continued domestic ambience of such schools.<sup>35</sup>

Feminist revisionists, in particular, have also paid considerable attention to advanced schooling. First, they have noted that the schools which have traditionally been taken as representing the most progressive forms of advanced education were boys' schools, and characterised their practices as overwhelmingly based on norms of masculinity. Their curricula were constructed from elements of what had been defined as (ruling class) male culture, they stressed distance, formal authority and competitiveness in social relations and were oriented to public performance and a future in the public sphere.<sup>36</sup> Insofar as revisionists have considered advanced schools in class terms, they have seen them as offering a more 'cultural' curriculum than elementary provided schools, designed to produce members of the dominant social class with the appropriate marks of social distinction to set them apart from the working class, and provided them with what they would claim was evidence of their own intellectual superiority and what would pass as qualifications for entry to the learned professions.<sup>37</sup>

Unlike the post-structuralists, with their careful neutrality, and the liberals with

their general enthusiasm for state-sponsored forms of elementary education, revisionists are generally critical of the provided forms, seeing them as hostile to their intended clients and ill-adapted to their material circumstances.<sup>38</sup> Implicit, here, is a set of assumptions about good education, at least for working class children and girls generally. First, it must be adapted to their material circumstances and, second, it must be rooted in their culture and amenable to their interests. Not surprisingly, therefore, they tend to see those forms which they see as indigenous, or organic, to working-class and women's cultures as potentially, at least, positive, constructive means to provide an education which addressed their needs within the constraints imposed by prevailing social relations. In contrast, their analyses of ('indigenous' or 'organic') advanced education for bourgeois boys are highly critical, seeing it as playing a key role in the maintenance of class power.

#### THE STATE AND EDUCATION

The state figures prominently in virtually all accounts of nineteenth century schooling, especially at the elementary level. In many liberal accounts the state is effectively defined principally as government and parliament, while in others it includes the emergent bureaucracy as a major component. The focus on parliament is often tied to the analysis of legislation, in particular the process of shaping it. Some of this deals narrowly with parliamentary debate and political manoeuvring. Denis Grundy, for example, explores the production of the 1872 Education Act in Victoria through a minute examination of the parliamentary debates preceding it, while Margaret Pawsey deals with both the debates and machinations surrounding the 1862 Act in similar fashion.<sup>39</sup> Elsewhere, the analyses address the organisation of support for particular legislative proposals and the conflict this entailed. Jean Ely and Pawsey, for instance,

analyse the political manoeuvres of members, officers and supporters of the National Boards in New South Wales and Victoria respectively in their attempts to defeat the rival Denominational Boards.<sup>40</sup> Much of Austin's, Barcan's and Hyams' analyses concern the general struggle between the supporters of denominational and secular schooling respectively to secure state support for their preferred forms of education.<sup>41</sup>

Many studies of the state in education focus on the men who figure as key actors in the formation of state education systems: governors or politicians (Bourke, Parkes, Lilley, Higinbotham), administrators (Wilkins, Hartley, Rusden, Arnold, Adkinson) or churchmen (Barker, Broughton, Perry, McEncroe, Hale, Gibney, Tenison Woods).<sup>42</sup> Others focus mainly on the development of administrative and bureaucratic structures and procedures. Ely, often adopting a Weberian language of rationality, rule-boundedness, impartiality and efficiency, traces the development of increasingly centralised and comprehensive administrative powers in both the denominational and secular systems in New South Wales.<sup>43</sup> J.H. Lawry addresses the question of political control over the boards and their policies, arguing that the administrative boards were effectively independent of their respective governments and legislatures.<sup>44</sup> Grundy and Pawsey, in contrast, argue that the internal workings of the state machinery were characterised by struggle and tension, and that the relations between government/legislature and the boards was far more complex than Lawry's account suggests. Pawsey examines the manoeuvres of convinced denominationalists such as O'Shanassey and Haines and their manipulation of such things as the procedures for appointing the Board of Education.<sup>45</sup> Grundy teases out the tensions and contradictions within administrative structures (between the inspectorate and secretariat), between government and administration, and within government and

administrative policies themselves.<sup>46</sup>

In these accounts, the state's main role is delivering or guaranteeing the provision of good education. Hyams, in his study of South Australian teachers, for example, argues that under the Central Board of Education teachers were largely their own masters and mistresses, free from close central regulation or control and subject to little local supervision. The result was that the standard of teachers and teaching was poor. In order to raise standards it was necessary for the Board to regulate teachers more carefully.<sup>47</sup> A similar argument applies to the provision of schools. There was little private initiative to establish schools, teachers were generally only prepared to establish them where they were assured of a good living and the churches set up rival institutions in larger towns and left the smaller localities unprovided. Only the state was capable of ensuring that good schools were provided within reach of all. Indeed, this role is elevated to a normative definition of the function of the state: a general criticism of virtually all forms of state provision of education in the third quarter of the century is that it failed to secure either a sufficient number and proper distribution of schools or high educational standards, a criticism which clearly implies that this was its proper responsibility.<sup>48</sup>

The state is also crucial to post-structuralist analyses. However, it figures neither as the embodiment of the common good, as in liberal accounts, nor simply as the agency of the dominant class and gender that, as I suggest below, it is in revisionist accounts. Rather, it is a critical social institution in the construction of technologies of power whose interests in securing means of social regulation are its own and cannot be reduced to those of capital or patriarchy. Moreover, the state is seen as a complex ensemble of institutional apparatus, embodying its own internal

rivalries, contradictions, discourses and strategies. Through its educational agencies it plays a key role in articulating and disseminating these discourses and organising the provision and regulation of schools. In the process it constructs means of surveillance and bodies of knowledge which form a crucial element of its general regulative social strategies. Simultaneously, this re/constructs the apparatus of the state itself.<sup>49</sup>

Revisionist accounts also see the state as a central institution in the development of colonial society and schooling. They conceptualise the state principally as a key institution in the organisation of capitalism and the structure of class and gender. Further, they see it as playing a key role in securing the economic interests of capitalists and the more diffuse social interests of the dominant class and gender, although in some cases they recognise the complex, contradictory and contested nature of the relation the state and these various conflicting interests. Typically, they see the state as fostering the formation and development schools calculated to replace indigenous educational practices under popular control with forms of education calculated to inculcate patriarchal and capitalist ideology and discipline in working-class children.<sup>50</sup> Recently, revisionists such as Curtis and colleagues in Canada, have drawn on post-structuralist theory as well as marxism to posit a degree of independence of the state from such direct class interests and postulate a rather more complex version of what state intervention in schooling was designed to effect, and there are signs that some Australian revisionists might follow this direction.<sup>51</sup>

Some revisionists have analysed the development and form of state educational institutions. In an earlier analysis, I, for instance, examined the state education board in South Australia, noting its complex positioning within the state apparatus more

generally and the internal contradictions in its administrative and policy making structure.<sup>52</sup> Marjorie Theobald, while less directly concerned with the institutional forms of the state, has noted the ambiguity, or lack of precision in the definition of the boundaries of the state in mid-nineteenth century Australia, a consequence of the involvement of teachers, parents and institutions such as churches in the administration of state schooling. Both have noted the importance of conflicts both between local communities and the state and within local communities themselves in prompting the development of state regulatory procedures.<sup>53</sup>

### PUBLIC INTEREST IN SCHOOLS

Liberal historiography identifies two main sources of initiative and interest in education apart from the state: leading school masters, and the churches and their clergymen. The churches, liberal historians argue, played a major role in the formation of the major advanced schools, especially the corporate colleges. Most accounts within this tradition also argue that they played an important role in elementary and Aboriginal education. A few see the churches' educational role in positive terms, as an important provider of schools and a guarantor that the education schools offered would integrate moral and religious teaching with secular instruction. Most, however, argue that they hindered the efficient development of good elementary schooling by sectarian division and the proliferation of small and necessarily inefficient schools.<sup>54</sup> Some accounts also note the role of private initiative, usually from leading squatters in the country and prominent businessmen and clergymen in the cities, in providing education for the children of their poorer neighbours.<sup>55</sup>

Very few accounts within the liberal tradition provide any analysis of the involvement or interest of working-class parents or residents in elementary schools in

the communities in which they were situated. Characteristically, they mention popular involvement in schools only in passing, when organised into political protest by churchmen or educationists or, negatively, as a lack of popular support for schools.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, the major documentary collections by Turney and Austin and Selleck provide no sources illustrating popular interests, attitudes or practices. While Turney makes no comment on the omission, Austin and Selleck explicitly dismiss the class for whom state supported schools were principally intended from their consideration, noting that the most articulate advocates of, and commentators on, education came from the middle class and adding that working-class people 'do not seem to have concerned themselves greatly with establishing [schools].'<sup>57</sup>

Despite this widespread failure to analyse popular involvement in schools, many accounts provide strong, unequivocal judgements of parental and other popular concerns. They see parental ignorance and apathy as crucial factors in the failure of the mid-nineteenth century forms of state provision for schooling. Moreover, they suggest that where parents did involve themselves in schools affairs, they were meddlesome, unreasonably harassing the teachers. Further, the structure of the historical narratives themselves privilege central activity. The changing character of debates in parliament, synod and the press over the place of religion in education and the problems confronting education, and the legislation which is seen to have followed these debates, provide the framework around which the narratives are structured. Colonial society and the problems of the education boards in providing good schools simply provide the 'context' or 'background'.<sup>58</sup> This holds true for many studies which one might reasonably expect to run counter to this tendency. A number of theses, for example, have examined the provision of education in particular towns, districts or

regions. Yet, many of these have focused on the role of the state in development of schooling, still effectively attributing the agency to the central authorities and marginalising other forms of local activity and constructing it largely in relation to central initiatives.<sup>59</sup> Consequently, local bodies appear to have no significant contribution to the development of schooling in the period at all. This creates the illusion that localism has been shown to have failed, while in fact it has scarcely been examined at all.<sup>60</sup>

Some liberal accounts pay closer attention to educational activity at the local level. Austin, for instance, in discussing Rusden's rural rides, notes that many parents showed considerable interest in education in general and that he evoked widespread enthusiasm for National schooling in particular.<sup>61</sup> Ely and E.J. Payne both examine local management of National schools.<sup>62</sup> Payne and argues that sectarian rivalry deprived them of the only local leadership capable of resisting the centralising tendencies of the National system, namely, the clergy. Ely, in contrast, claims that in fact local school committees generally neglected their duties and that what local involvement there was characterised by petty squabbling. While Austin, Ely and Payne all allow that there was some local interest (of whatever quality), they implicitly reject the notion that working-class parents might have played any significant role; rather, the only local activity they see as worth having was that of the leaders of local society. Some studies of education within particular regions also note the role of members of the local community in educational affairs. Kenneth Davies, for example, notes the involvement of members of the community in Deniliquin in disputes over the National/Public school there, but sees these as petty factional squabbles.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, while they recognise the existence of popular involvement, these

historians judge the character of that involvement to be inadequate.

They invoke several explanations to explain the apparent lack, or failure, of local initiative. First, local people could not, even if they had wished, provide adequately for schooling. Small isolated settlements could not provide the substantial resources needed for schools or other social and economic infrastructure, and local communities were both necessarily and happily dependent on the assistance of the state.<sup>64</sup> J.B. Hirst has argued convincingly that such a view is untenable: small and isolated communities provided churches and, in many cases, schools, often without state assistance. Moreover, much rural settlement was not mainly in isolated 'scrubby gullies', as some arguments suggest, but in relatively concentrated areas.<sup>65</sup> Second, parents and other representatives of local communities generally were insufficiently educated themselves to be able to judge the relative merits of different teachers or to provide the necessary professional oversight of their work. Moreover, they were so divided by religion that they were unable to cooperate in the task, preferring to provide small rival schools than a single efficient one.<sup>66</sup> Third, parents simply did not care about their children's education. Thus, they 'could see little use for education and kept their children home for trivial reasons,' and were thus generally 'indifferent' to education, seeing schools as of little use except as child-minding facilities when youthful labour was not required.<sup>67</sup>

Of those accounts within the general liberal paradigm which deal with elementary education, only a few adopt a more positive view. Hirst looks briefly at the extent of local involvement in school provision in South Australia, in particular at the role of District Councils. He argues that while there were clearly some areas in which councils were inactive in educational provision many others promoted schools and

played an active role in their management. There is, he concludes, sufficient evidence of local involvement to argue that local administration of education was possible.<sup>68</sup> A number of studies of individual teachers, such as those mentioned above, also cast light on local educational interest and activity. Amies, Selleck and Martin Sullivan, for example, provide considerable evidence of parental involvement and interest in their children's education even when citing teachers' and others' claims that parents were apathetic or ignorant. They reveal that parents contested teachers' disciplinary powers and measures, in some cases actively supported, and in other opposed, individual teachers and subscribed funds for buildings.<sup>69</sup> However, these indications of parental interest are fragmentary and offer no basis for a systematic reinterpretation of their role in educational development. Grundy, while not examining local involvement as such, suggests the possibility of such a reinterpretation in his account of the significance the Denominational board attached to it in the development of its system in Victoria in the 1850s; underlying Grundy's account is the clear assumption that middle-class parents, at least, were actively involved and, indeed, a key element in the development of schooling in the period.<sup>70</sup>

Those offering a pro-denominational interpretation also see a more positive role for local activity in elementary education. Predictably, they see the churches generally as key institutions in the local community in promoting or supporting elementary education.<sup>71</sup> Others, however, examine local lay activity. Ronald Fogarty, for example, sees local involvement in Catholic elementary schools as both important and to some degree successful, certainly in South Australia. Not surprisingly, however, he also sees this as largely dependent on clerical leadership.<sup>72</sup>

Liberal accounts of advanced schooling often see parents as playing a

significant role in education. On the one hand, they argue that parental interest was crucial to the maintenance of such schools, whether they existed as corporate colleges or as senior classes or departments within the state supported schools.<sup>73</sup> Frequently, while noting that they showed some interest in providing schooling for their sons and, to a lesser extent, their daughters, they conclude that they, too, were hostile to the more general, cultural claims of education and sought a largely vocational form of schooling.<sup>74</sup> On the other, they argue that their concerns with practical, vocational needs played a key role in shaping the curriculum, ensuring that schools struck a proper balance between modern subjects and the classics. Importantly, however, this was not a leading or initiating role, but simply one which modified the initiatives of others.<sup>75</sup> In contrast, Carole Hooper suggests that parents of children at the more prominent state supported schools in Victoria urged the provision of more classics, presumably to increase the prestige of their education and perhaps their eligibility for the professions.<sup>76</sup> In either case, however, parental interest in education appears to come from a limited social group and to be limited in its adherence of the liberal norms of education.

Post-structuralists are also generally uninterested in popular or local interest in education. In practice, they consider it only as it figures in official discourses and strategies.<sup>77</sup> Smith, in particular, argues that despite the disposition of men like Wilkins to institute forms of local involvement and the desirability of parental control on liberal political grounds, the logic of the liberal classroom and the strategies of which it formed a part demanded the exclusion of all non-professionals from the control of schools. Indeed, he suggests that from the perspective of the advocates of the liberal classroom the fact that the denominationalists accepted the principle and practice of

local control was proof of the inferiority of the system and its schools.<sup>78</sup> However, Kenway notes the crucial role of private activity and initiative in the formation of education as a means of remaking social division and constructing corresponding power relations. In the mid-nineteenth century, philanthropic provision of schooling for the poor gave members of the dominant class direct control over those they were 'rescuing' and enabled them to provide a form of education which marked their inferiority. Later, the difference between state and private schools signified the critical difference between elementary provided schooling for the working class and higher education for the middle class regulated through the marketplace. It allowed for the maintenance of class and gender differences, in part through the definition of advanced education as a private, not public, concern and enabled the dominant social class to define, in part, the constitution of its own gender-divided culture through schools.<sup>79</sup>

Australian revisionist accounts, in contrast to the main current of liberal historiography, have argued that there was considerable popular interest in schooling and that this interest was a significant factor in the development of colonial education. In part, the argument that there was a wide range of forms of popular education is premised on the existence of working-class interest.<sup>80</sup> Earlier, I argued that, at least in South Australia, working-class parents played a key role in initiating and supporting elementary schools, including many of those which were accommodated within the state education system.<sup>81</sup> Others have considered parental involvement in the form of resistance to aspects of 'provided' state schooling, including the appointment of male teachers to teach female children, the demands for regular attendance, special texts or school buildings, and the forms of curriculum and discipline.<sup>82</sup>

Some also examine the relations between education and the structures of class

and gender in terms of the conditions shaping participation in schooling. They argue that fluctuating wage levels and irregular employment for most members of the working class allowed them access to only the cheaper schools and made prolonged regular attendance impossible.<sup>83</sup> They also argue that the sexual division of labour and its attendant ideology of gender difference ensured that girls' education was different from boys'. At the elementary level, this was reflected in parental concerns that their daughters be taught by female teachers, and that they be taught 'essentially female' subjects such as needlework. At the advanced level, it was reflected in the preference of private schools for girls in contrast to the wide parental support for state schools, and in the dramatically different forms of girls' and boys' private schools.<sup>84</sup>

While there are relatively few of these studies, none of which would claim to be at all comprehensive, they draw sustenance from a number of overseas and later nineteenth century Australian studies. Pavla Miller, Ian Davey, Kerry Wimshurst, Ann Larson, Alison MacKinnon and Theobald, for instance, examine a range of issues in later nineteenth century Australian schooling which have their roots in the earlier period.<sup>85</sup> Gardner, Laqueur, David Vincent, Johnson and, to some extent, Frith in Britain and Gidney in North America develop the case for a deep and extensive popular interest in education general and schools in particular. Further, Curtis, Gidney and D.A. Lawr, Gidney and W.J.P. Millar, J.M. Goldstrom, Katz, B. Madoc-Jones and W.E. Marsden have explored the complex issues and conflicts which arose in local communities over schools, supporting the more general claim that there was widespread parental involvement in education and that this played a significant part in shaping popular schooling. Danylewycz and Prentice in North America and Purvis in Britain, have also further explored the gender dimension of such interest and conflicts,

Danylewycz, in particular, arguing that these varied systematically according to regional histories, cultures and circumstances. Finally, Katz and Davey have explored the relations between families, work and school attendance.<sup>86</sup>

### THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Each of these approaches and its interests in, and perspectives on, schools, the state and community involvement in education reflects the social theory which underpins it. Liberal historiography, for instance, is grounded in a liberal theory of society. Colonial society is frequently conceptualised in two apparently opposite, but closely linked, ways. On the one hand, it is seen as a unified whole, at least in principle. On the other, it is merely the aggregate of individuals living within its boundaries. Liberal theory renders these apparent conflicting interests compatible, since it allows no concept of fundamental or structural divisions which might mediate between the individual and society. Indeed, the wellbeing of each individual, understood as the unfettered development of all aspects of the person to their full potential, is integral to the wellbeing of the whole and vice versa. Social divisions such as class, therefore, represent differences in occupation and wealth but not basic social structures; even when classes are seen to hold conflicting interests these are represented as partial and, in some sense, illegitimate, properly subordinated to the greater common good.<sup>87</sup> The fundamental unity of society is sometimes argued explicitly; more commonly, however, it is assumed in the evocation of a common interest or sense of community or remains implicit in the absence of any discussion of social division.<sup>88</sup>

Two divisions, however, figure prominently in these accounts. Most importantly, colonial society is seen as divided by religion, often tied to ethnic identity, in particular

between Irish Catholics and British Protestants. Pawsey's analysis of the social context of education, for instance, focuses exclusively on sectarian and associated ethnic divisions.<sup>89</sup> The other major division is between urban and rural areas. This is seen as a geographical phenomenon with social consequences, rather than a deep social division. Indeed, one of the main issues these historians see politicians and educationists addressing is the means to overcome the problems this division generated for those in the rural areas. These problems are in turn seen in terms of distance and population density rather than conflicts of social interests.<sup>90</sup> Neither religious nor geographical divisions are seen as fundamental structural relations in colonial society; rather they are portrayed as divisions to be overcome in the interests of the society as a whole.<sup>91</sup>

In this context, the state is seen as the symbol, embodiment and organiser of the common good.<sup>92</sup> It comprises principally the institutions of government and parliament on the one hand and the administration on the other. Politics, focusing on the formation of legislation, is a conflict ridden process for negotiating and securing this common good, while the role of administration is to translate legislation into practice efficiently. Frequently, administration is conceptualised as the neutral delivery of policies determined elsewhere, the chief 'problem' being the development of organisational forms and procedures which permit that.<sup>93</sup> However, as I suggested above, some accounts see such tensions as fundamental characteristics of the state rather than as problems in particular practices to be resolved by the development of more perfect legislation or administrative machinery.<sup>94</sup>

This body of social assumptions goes hand in hand with both the characteristic methodology and substantive concerns of liberal historiography. First, it lends itself to,

and follows from, an individualist methodology. The state can readily be represented in the persons of governors, politicians and administrators, and the major interests (the churches) whose differences must be resolved in pursuit of the wellbeing of the society as a whole can also be readily identified with their individual representatives (the leading clergy). Many accounts select 'great men' as the central objects of historical study while the narrative is so structured as to accentuate their importance. Turney's study of Wilkins, for example, consistently portrays him as a man of vision and skill, crucial to the progress of education.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, G.A. Saunders sees John Hartley as the prime mover in South Australian developments from the early 1870s. As a member of the Central Board of Education he stirred his lethargic colleagues into action; indeed, it was not until he was appointed that the board showed any sign of real initiative. The changes he wrought are seen as necessary to raise educational standards and administrative efficiency. Hartley's significance is highlighted by the fact that many of his initiatives were 'obvious', even though they had not in fact been thought of by his predecessors.<sup>96</sup> Sometimes this stress on the central role of the 'great man' is muted or qualified by the recognitions that the subject was relatively unimaginative, short sighted, lacking in vision or skills, or, in the case of Arnold, rather lazy!<sup>97</sup> Those accounts which are concerned to understand educational developments in a more social perspective construct the context in terms of individual action. Pawsey, for example, in her detailed study of the social context of the 1862 Education Act in Victoria, largely restricts her analysis to the small articulate 'society' of the press, pulpit, pamphlet and parliament and continues to focus closely on the activities of individual politicians and clerics.<sup>98</sup> Finally, these individualist assumptions lead liberal historians to construct social context as 'background' to the central

concerns with individuals and centralist institutions.<sup>99</sup>

Second, liberal historiography rests on empiricist assumptions about knowledge, in particular, historical knowledge. Many liberal historians are concerned principally with uncovering facts about the past and with ordering those facts into a coherent narrative. Austin's classic text illustrates the point well. In his preface to the third edition, Austin identifies the problems in writing a general history in terms of 'locating and collating material' (i.e., factual evidence). Equally importantly, he fails to identify any more 'theoretical' problems concerning the constitution of 'facts' or 'evidence'.<sup>100</sup> 'Interpretation', in this context, is a matter of weighing the different facts in order to understand the significance of each in shaping what happened. Austin's discussion of the causes underlying the development of secular state school systems is concerned with the relative significance of agnosticism, voluntarism and sectarianism.<sup>101</sup> Crucially, this approach takes many of its key issues, categories and the significance of much of its 'factual evidence' uncritically from its central sources.

The combination of their substantive concerns, theoretical assumptions about society and empiricist approach to knowledge leads them to constitute the field in ways which appear merely to represent 'what is there' but which have a far more constitutive role. Crucially, they define it as education, not society. In contrast with revisionist and post-structuralist approaches, liberal theory lacks any concept to tie knowledge systematically to social structure, interests and power. Consequently, liberal historians typically see schools as institutions concerned with individual and social development in ways which see no tension between the two, and which do not see education in terms of the mediation of social relations, themselves understood in terms of power.

This shows clearly in their treatment of the major divisions within education. First, they take the division into elementary and advanced or superior forms. In many respects, elementary and advanced education are treated as independent, self-contained entities, defined principally in terms of their own knowledge content – their curricula – rather than by their relation to each other.<sup>102</sup> In other respects, however, they are seen as standing in a linear relation to each other: advanced education follows, and builds on, elementary.<sup>103</sup>

Second, liberal historians divide education into what can be seen as residual and emergent forms. In some cases and contexts, these are seen as positions on a continuum of improvement in educational technique, established in particular through the repeated invocation of terms such as 'development' and 'progress'. The National schools in their most developed form, for example, represent an historically evolved and practically improved means of attaining the same aims as previous elementary schools had pursued.<sup>104</sup> In other cases, they are seen as fundamentally discontinuous: the 'new' academic curriculum for middle-class girls is seen as essentially different, and tailored to different aims, from the 'old' accomplishments curriculum.<sup>105</sup>

In contrast to the liberal historians, revisionists structure their field in terms of social relations, in particular, those of class and/or gender, rather than in terms of 'education'. In the case of class, revisionists argue that these relations derive more or less directly from the relations of capitalist production, although they are also constituted, contested and maintained in a wide range of social and cultural institutions. They see gender in terms of the formation and maintenance of a sexual division of labour in the home and/or as ideology, similarly constructed through a complex

process of struggle on a broad front. They conceptualise the state as a key institution in the organisation of both class and gender, both complexly determined by prevailing material conditions, social relations and ideology, and intervening in virtually all aspects of colonial life in the interests of the dominant sector(s) of the society. Typically, they see schools as institutions concerned with the reproduction of these social relations rather than with 'education' in any ideal sense, and the intervention of the state in education as one means of attempting to maintain the interests of the dominant social groups.<sup>106</sup>

This theoretical position demands a methodology which focuses on the structural determinants of particular developments rather than on the ideas and initiatives of individual politicians or educationists. On the one hand, it suggests the need to place the invention of particular institutional forms of education in the context of long term structural changes, cultural or ideological formations and forms of social organisation generally. On the other, it stresses the interests, organisation, material capacities and cultural/ideological articulation of both dominant and subordinate groups and the sites on, and over, which they struggled at any particular moment. Further, by placing social relations prior to educational practices, it allows Australian revisionists to draw ideas relatively freely from analyses of school provision in other contemporary patriarchal capitalist societies.

This concern with education as an integral element in the struggle over class and gender relations leads to a stress of the social character of knowledge and the forms of schooling. The key concept, in this context, is ideology, which immediately links the production, forms and distribution of knowledge to social relations and material interests. This clearly ensures that the central focus of revisionist analyses

of curriculum, for example, is on the ideological character of the knowledge it selects and gives most revisionist accounts a critical edge in dealing with 'provided' forms of schooling. Moreover, the construction of 'knowledge' as 'ideology' readily supports a strong sense of cultural relativism. At times, however, notions of 'true' education emerge or lurk beneath the surface, framed in terms of accommodating the material conditions and constraints of working-class families' or women's lives, on the one hand, and some congruence with popular, or women's culture and allowing for full personal development.<sup>107</sup> This reflects two crucial structural divisions within the field of education as it is constituted by revisionists. First, revisionists largely accept the distinction between elementary and advanced curricula posited by liberal historians and the relations between them, although they also see them as reflecting class differences in capacity to afford extended schooling or, sometimes, culture. Second, they see a fundamental discontinuity between 'indigenous' or 'self provided' (elementary) educational forms and those 'provided' for them by others, and drawn from the culture and tailored to the needs of others.

Post-structuralists construct the field of schooling in two ways: as a part of a more general field, not of 'education', but of strategies of social regulation; and, in terms of modes of representation, or discursive practices, in particular, of social relations.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, they argue that schools function, not by cultivating the potentials and characteristics of pre-formed individuals, nor by 'imposing' ideologies on them but by constructing ways of knowing them and of allowing them to know themselves as subjects. In this context schools figure as social apparatus and technologies of power. Moreover, post-structuralist historians place the construction of different forms of schooling in the context of changing strategies and technologies

of power. As strategies rather than specific material practices, different forms of schooling exist more in their 'governing rationalities' or 'normative regimes of concepts' than in the details of particular exemplars.<sup>109</sup>

While their concerns with power, and the role of knowledge in constructing and articulating power, encapsulated in Foucault's term 'power/ knowledge', have a partial resemblance to the revisionist approach, post-structuralists reject the arguments of Marxists and many feminists that accounts of education should start with analyses of social structure. Rather, they stress the need for the state to construct means of governance quite independently of class and patriarchal interests. Education was crucial in this as a means of rendering the subjects of the state easily governable if not self governing. Indeed, in contrast to marxists, in particular, some argue that the knowledges built through the practices of state schooling provided crucial descriptions through which class was constructed as a major way of knowing, and acting in and on, society.<sup>110</sup> Others stress the role of schools, and school knowledge as dividing practices, also constructing the relations of class and gender.<sup>111</sup>

Their theoretical starting point leads post-structuralists to focus on discourses and the regulatory strategies they articulate and to analyse schools in terms of the discursive construction of their purposes and forms. Moreover, in contrast to both liberal and revisionist accounts they reject any attempt to reduce the variety of discourses surrounding schools to a unitary field of representations. Rather, they argue, it is important to note the specificities of educational discourse and the ruptures between different elements through which the discourse of schooling was itself constituted. This stress on the constructive role of discourse leads post-structuralists to conceptualise the different forms of schooling and their mutual relations quite

differently from either liberals or revisionists, as discursive definitions, rather than descriptions, of difference.<sup>112</sup>

#### POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

This account of the field establishes both a starting point for this thesis and an indication of some directions in which research might proceed. In particular, the analysis of the theoretical underpinnings of the three major approaches I have identified indicates some conceptual pitfalls and possibilities. In general, it suggests that the individualist understanding of society and the state and idealist conception of knowledge in liberal theory gives little purchase on questions of social interest, conflict or the role of rival ways of knowing in constructing them. Further, it seems clear that within the field as a whole, general questions concerning the social significance of education have become central and displaced those of liberal historiography from the hegemonic position they once occupied.<sup>113</sup>

Much revisionist work embodies a number of critical problems. Most obviously, perhaps, much of the class oriented work has been blind to questions of gender and age relations.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, revisionists have largely ignored race relations; where they have considered them they have treated them descriptively in terms of Aboriginal education, rather than analytically, have not integrated them into the overall theoretical framework and have allowed them to remain marginal to the overall account of colonial education. Where they have considered both class and gender, they have difficulty in resolving, theoretically, the relation between them.<sup>115</sup>

There are also problems in the practical use of the concepts of class and gender. In dealing with class, many revisionists slip too easily between abstract formulations derived principally from the relations of production to classes as concrete

social formations, oversimplifying the latter in the process. Consequently, the concept and analysis of 'class culture', implicit in many accounts, remains underdeveloped and allows an oversimplified dichotomy between working-class culture and middle-class culture. Both the status of the categories themselves and the complex relations between them remain largely unexamined. There are similar problems in the treatment of gender, further complicated by the tension between approaches which see gender as derived from the sexual division of labour and those which see it as fundamentally an ideological formation.

Many revisionist accounts deal unsatisfactorily with the relation between class and gender, on the one hand, and the state, on the other. Revisionists readily see the state as the embodiment of bourgeois and patriarchal interests, even though they recognise that the resolution of conflicts within the range of those interests in any particular historical context is a serious practical problem. In contrast, they usually fail to consider the relation of the working class to the state except as the object of its disciplinary strategies. Further, the form of state intervention in education is characteristically dealt with in terms of the construction and arrangement of institutional machinery within what are assumed to be known, fixed, un-problematic boundaries of 'the state' itself.

These problems in translating the theories of class, gender and their relation to culture and the state into concrete historical analysis are particularly critical when it comes to dealing with schooling itself. First, they allow the division between 'provided' and 'indigenous' forms of working-class schooling to be taken as relatively simple and given, whereas it is just as problematic as the concept of class cultures from which, in part, it springs. Importantly, the comparable problem in dealing with gender – the

relation between forms integrally related to middle-class women's lives and cultures and the emergent 'masculine' forms – is generally handled rather more complexly and satisfactorily.<sup>116</sup> Similarly, they permit the division between elementary and advanced education to be taken at face value rather than subjected to critical scrutiny. Second, and to some extent as a consequence of the first problem, revisionists often fail to deal satisfactorily with the relations between the working-class and provided elementary schooling and, to a lesser degree, between middle-class women and emergent 'masculine' forms of advanced schooling. In particular, they often clearly presume that working-class families should reject provided forms of schooling while in practice the relation is far more ambivalent. A corollary of this is a marked tendency to romanticise 'indigenous' forms of working-class schooling. This takes no account of the way in which relations such as class are theorised as oppressive, exploitative and alienating for subordinate social groups and the probability that extensive 'hidden injuries' must flow from those relations into all the social and cultural practices which constitute those groups.

There are also crucial problems in post-structuralist analyses. Some have difficulty in establishing the relation between discourses and strategies as abstractions and concrete social practices (even granting their premise that those practices can only be constituted discursively). This readily leads to a tendency to treat ideas quite apart from social relations and interests; in short, to slip into idealism. Further, their focus on the state and the discourses which articulated its strategies necessarily neglects oppositional or even alternative discourses and (following the previous point) the movements they represented. As the work of Smith, especially, demonstrates, this establishes the basis for an implicit, if not explicit, privileging of the state and the

creation of an identity between 'necessary for the state' and 'necessary'.<sup>117</sup>

A number of studies suggest the possibility of fruitful interaction between Marxist–feminist revisionist analyses and post–structuralism. Most notably, the work of Curtis in North America, Donald in Britain and Kenway in Australia points to the possibility of articulating materialist analyses of social relations with Foucauldian conceptions of power/knowledge and subjectivity. Such approaches draw cautions from post–structuralism regarding materialist tendencies to reduce complexity and to construct unitary fields of representation where there are both social and discursive discontinuities. They also affirm the need to tie the analysis of discourse to the formation of concrete social structures and political interests.<sup>118</sup>

The existing literature also provides a rich source of empirical material. Liberal historiography, especially, provides a substantial and complex body of work on the formal politics of church and state, leading public figures and the social/educational ideas and strategies of the dominant social groups. Moreover, while liberal historians traditionally have offered few accounts of what was happening 'on the ground' there have been a number of recent moves to explore such substantive areas as localism, women and the family.<sup>119</sup> Revisionists have provided analyses of state institutions and policies, class interests and the social context of education at a general level of class and gender formation, curriculum and other aspects of school practices and the social differentiation of forms of schooling. Australian studies of the later nineteenth century have also done useful work on school attendance and the conditions shaping it. Post–structuralist studies have provided little Australian empirical work, although they have offered a re–reading of the work of William Wilkins, assessment and the history of forms of schooling and the regulatory and disciplinary strategies they

embodied.

More importantly, these three bodies indicate both potential sources and ways of dealing with them. Liberal historians have typically used parliamentary debates and metropolitan newspapers as major sources. However, these sources overwhelmingly document the views of those in favour of centralised educational provision, whether by church or state, views which were likely to denigrate or dismiss popular interest. The other major source of evidence is the records of the state education boards, records which again focus on the activity, and privilege the perspective and judgement, of the agents of centralism. Revisionists have pointed to rather different sources.

More importantly than the sources themselves is the way they are used. As I have argued above, liberal historians have adopted an a-theoretical, empiricist approach to their sources. Revisionists and post-structuralists, however, have both indicated ways in which even the standard sources of liberal accounts might be re-read. Revisionists' approach their documentary sources not so much to ask what they say but, to explore them for what they reveal about the practices that constitute class and gender as structures of social relations account of class and gender. In particular, they treat documents not simply sources of fact, and to take statements not simply at face value, but as ideological constructions. Post-structuralist approaches are superficially similar to this 'ideological' reading of source materials. They are concerned with the concepts and categories used in the documents but, characteristically, they regard these not as reflections of entities (such as class) constituted apart from, and prior to, their representation, but as constructions of the very categories through which those entities have their existence. Further, they are concerned to analyse the particular discourse constituted by different sets of concepts and categories and the regimes of truth they establish.<sup>120</sup>

This analysis of the historiography of mid-nineteenth century Australian education establishes a starting point for further research. On the one hand, it identifies critical problems in the existing theoretical approaches to the field and the 'empirical knowledge' they generate. On the other, it suggests some potentially fruitful ways to address both the conceptual problems and the substantive gaps in our understanding of the period. Crucially, it indicates the need to set any exploration of schools and schooling in a more general social context. The following chapter, therefore, outlines the character of colonial society, the interests and tensions it gave rise to, the ways different groups identified schools as important institutions in securing their interests and the means by which the state sought to shape the conditions under which they were established and run.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. A.G.Austin, Australian education, 1788–1900, 3rd edition, Melbourne, 1972. While many accounts do not fit particularly neatly into any one of the categories I identify here, I have considered those historians whose theoretical assumptions or problematics are largely those of liberalism as liberal historians, even where their substantive concerns differ from those of the liberal mainstream, eg., M.Amies, Home education and the colonial ideals of womanhood, Ph.D. thesis, Monash University, 1986; R.J.W.Selleck, 'A goldfields family' in M.R.Theobald & R.J.W.Selleck (eds.), Family, school & state in Australian history, Sydney, 1990; M.Sullivan, 'Bryce Ross' and 'Marmaduke William Fisher' in R.J.W.Selleck & M.Sullivan (eds.), Not so eminent Victorians, Melbourne, 1984. For a rationale for this see S.Macintyre, 'Radical historians and bourgeois hegemony', Intervention, no.2, 1972. Similarly, where historians draw on both marxism/feminism and post-structuralism, I treat them under the approach which appears more central; thus, I identify J.Donald, "'Beacons of the future": Schooling, subjection and subjectification' in V.Beechey & J.Donald (eds.), Subjectivity and social relations, Milton Keynes, 1985 and J.Kenway, Private schooling and the politics of school knowledge: re-reading history, Unpublished paper, ANZHES conference, Canberra, 1988 as post-structuralist accounts despite the way they construct their concerns with class and gender.
  
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10. B.K.Hyams, Teacher training, pp.13–4; Turney, 'William Wilkins', pp.196–217.
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94. Grundy, 'Formation of a disordered teaching service' and 'The schools inspectorate'; Pawsey, 'Backroom politics'.

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many 'elementary' schools provided 'advanced' subjects and vice versa does not substantially affect this argument.

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111. Kenway, Private schooling. esp.pp.4-7.

112. Donald, "'Beacons of the future'"; Smith, Australian monitorialism.

113. Kenway, Private schooling, pp.2-4; M.R.Theobald & R.J.W.Selleck, 'Introduction' in Theobald & Selleck (eds.), Family, school and state.

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116. See, notably, Theobald, "'Mere accomplishments'", 'Women's teaching labour', and 'Discourse of danger'.

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118. Curtis, Building the educational state; Donald, "Beacons of the future"; Kenway, Private schooling.

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120. See, especially, Hunter, Culture; Meredyth, Examinations.

## CHAPTER II

### COLONIAL SOCIETY, THE STATE AND EDUCATION

Schools are shaped by the society in which they exist. Material conditions, cultural traditions, social relations and political interests jointly determine their conditions of existence. Since the early to mid-nineteenth century in Britain and its colonial outposts, these conditions have been mediated by the state. These same conditions, in conjunction with the legal and administrative arrangements for state support and regulation, also shape the ways in which parents and other interested individuals, groups and institutions educate their children. This chapter outlines the social context of schooling in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria around the middle of the nineteenth century.

The first part of the chapter sketches the forms of colonial economic organisation, the development of structures of class, gender, race and age, and the characteristics of metropolitan centres, country towns and rural districts and the relations between them. It indicates the place of major institutions such as the family, church and state in articulating social relations. And, finally, it notes the range of tensions and contradictions colonial society gave rise to and the ways in which they were represented as 'social problems'.

The second section examines the ways in which leading colonists thought schools might address these problems. It notes the various institutional means they proposed to promote the establishment of good schools throughout colonial society, in particular, the roles they envisioned for the state and the churches in supporting and regulating schools. It outlines the Acts and other instruments establishing centralised state education boards around the middle of the century, and sketches the boards' powers, the administrative and fiscal constraints which limited them and the

administrative structures they developed.<sup>1</sup> Finally, it notes that these arrangements were not settled but continually contested, leading to new educational legislation and the reformation of educational administration in Victoria in 1862 and New South Wales in 1866.

This account of the social and legal context of colonial schooling lays the ground for an exploration of the conditions under which families sought to educate their children and, hence, their capacity to establish and support specific types of schools. The account of the tensions in colonial society and the ways in which they shaped middle-class purposes for popular schooling provides a further foundation for understanding official and professional views of good schooling and their criticisms of much popular education. The analysis of regional development provides a basis for understanding the causes of tensions between local and central bodies, and between and within individual regions over both the allocation of resources and the control of schools. Together, these aspects of the social and institutional structure of mid-nineteenth century schooling provide a framework within which to interpret the range of conflicts over schools and the seemingly constant growth of centralised control.

#### THE CHARACTER OF COLONIAL SOCIETY

In the mid-nineteenth century, New South Wales, South Australia and (after it was formed as a separate colony in 1851) Victoria were outposts of the British empire, locked into an imperial economy and politics. They were governed by representatives of the British Crown, depended largely on British capital for economic development, imported goods largely from Britain and produced raw materials, notably wool, for a British market. This imperial connection had profound implications for colonial society.

In the first place, British control of the forms of colonisation produced a largely

British population and, consequently, the adoption of a British-derived culture: literary traditions, national identity, everyday knowledge of 'how to do things', the values of hierarchy and the means of articulating social difference. And it made it almost inevitable that institutions heavily derived from, if not directly replicating, those of 'home', including, notably those of religion would play a key part in the organisation of social life. These economic, cultural and institutional elements ensured the formation of particular forms of family life and the age and gender relations attendant on them as a crucial element in colonial society. The role of British society and culture in forming white society and culture in the colonies was reinforced by the continued recourse to Britain as a major source of literature, news of the world, precedents, fashions, ideas and models for institutions.<sup>2</sup>

Second, the imperial connection placed enormous constraints on economic development. It ensured that the society would be organised around capitalist forms of production and exchange. Moreover, the British government controlled the generation and expenditure of colonial revenues, while British capital determined the levels and forms of investment, and the demand for wool and, later, wheat, thereby powerfully shaping the forms in which the economy was constructed. Crucially for the Aboriginal inhabitants, this meant the inexorable expansion of territorial claims, which undermined the very bases of indigenous society and seriously limited the ways Aborigines could respond to settler society.<sup>3</sup>

Third, the relationship with Britain shaped colonial political development. British government policy played a major role in the formation of the colonial state. To a large extent, it decided the degree of control it would exercise over colonial governments and their policies, and dictated the terms on which colonists participated in

government. Further, and less directly, political, social and economic relations with Britain shaped the development, character and concerns of colonial political movements and the groups which formed and dominated them.<sup>4</sup>

The colonists were by no means passive observers of these developments. Within the limits imposed by British government and capital, on the basis of imported cultural traditions and in response to colonial social and material conditions they established a broad and complex array of local social, economic and political institutions. Some campaigned for greater local control over colonial government and a diminished British role, demanded a role in determining the forms of colonial government and, in particular, pressed for control of colonial revenue. They sought to determine for themselves (differing among themselves as they did) the nature of the church–state relation and the position of the Church of England in the colony. They fought important aspects of British policy, including the transportation of convicts to Australia. They generated import replacement manufactures and campaigned for a more favourable market for colonial produce in Britain.<sup>5</sup>

The development of capitalism, central to the colonial economy, involved the private ownership of the means of production, a system of waged labour, and production for markets, whether local, regional or international. In an economy based on primary production, land ownership was crucial; vast expanses of land occupied by Aborigines, already claimed by the Crown, was made over to private settlers. Apart from large land–based enterprises, most production, whether in trade, manufacturing, farming or mining, was conducted on a small scale, and the means of production were relatively inexpensive, allowing individuals with only meagre capital to establish themselves in business on their own account. Wages fluctuated and varied widely between men and women, different occupations and skill levels within individual trades,

and between town and country. However, under boom conditions some sectors of the working class could secure relatively high incomes.<sup>6</sup>

While capitalism was clearly the dominant mode of production, many facets of colonial economic life were also organised in non-capitalist ways. Some important means of production remained outside the system of private ownership, notably roads, bridges and jetties, and Crown lands. There were also important forms of non-waged labour. In many small businesses, whole families worked together to produce enough to live off their sales in the market. Much unpaid production of consumables such as food and clothing, soap and candles also took place in households. Since considerable production was labour intensive rather than capital intensive, the unpaid labour of family members was often crucial in small scale enterprises. Finally, most household production of food and clothing, soap and candles, was for immediate use rather than sale, while some was for exchange with neighbours for other household consumables. However, even these non-capitalist forms were often tied to the capitalist economic structure. State infrastructure served capitalist needs for good transport and communications. A substantial proportion of non-waged labour was directed to production for market, and, increasingly, domestic production was in competition with a market in commercially produced equivalents.<sup>7</sup>

The colonial economy established, in part, the conditions for the construction of the basic structures of colonial society. Most notably, colonial society was structured by race and ethnicity. While all people living in the colonies were formally subject to British law, Aborigines were effectively denied the protection of the law, and infringements of the law against Aborigines were commonly treated far more leniently than those against white settlers. Other non-British people also faced a range of legal

limitations, such as the ineligibility to own land, until they were naturalised. British settlers saw the colonies as British societies and represented, and treated, non-British groups as occupying marginal positions in colonial life. By the 1850s, they generally considered Aborigines on the frontier as a threat and in 'settled' agricultural or pastoral districts as pests. They saw Chinese miners on the goldfields as an economic threat. Finally, they regarded both Aborigines and Chinese as sources of moral and physical contamination. There was a minimum of fraternising across racial lines, except in frontier areas where a 'shortage' of white women led male settlers to form sexual relations with Aboriginal women, or in the goldfields and towns where white women were prostituted to Chinese men and a handful of whites of both sexes fell prey to the evils of Chinese opium dens. These race relations, underpinned by economic, physical and moral concerns, were articulated and legitimated by an ideology of white racial superiority. Even among white settlers, however, English, Irish, Scottish and others maintained residual cultural distinctions, embodied in different churches, festivities, public houses and speech patterns.<sup>8</sup>

Colonial society was a class society. In each colony a relatively stable ruling class comprising the families of leading capitalists and professional men. They constituted themselves as a class at both a local and a colony-wide level through family and business connections and a range of institutions in economic, political and social life. They shared a sense of identity, patterns of consumption, and codes of manners, behaviour and dress which set them apart from the rest of society. The bulk of the population shared a range of experiences and cultural characteristics which makes it possible to regard them as a colonial working class: waged labour, recurrent insecurity and poverty, patterns of consumption, dress and leisure activities. In many

cases, small farmers, and other marginal family enterprises also shared the poverty and insecurity characteristic of the working class. Workers' and farmers' associations, ploughing matches, public houses, churches, visits from one household to another and casual conversations on the streets provided an array of contexts in which these commonalities were transformed into networks of relations which concretely constituted the labouring and farming men and women as the working class at a local level. It is also possible to speak of a colonial middle class: those whose relative security, education, independence of wage labour and patterns of consumption enabled them to see themselves as the backbone of colonial society, on the one hand, consciously superior to the working class but, on the other, excluded from the ruling class. However, neither the working or middle classes had means of common social, economic or political organisation on a colonial level comparable to those of the ruling class.<sup>9</sup>

Colonial society was also fundamentally structured by gender. Typically, men were heavily involved in paid occupations outside the household, while women's lives were far more extensively organised around the household and family, much of their work unpaid. Consequently, men secured a high degree of economic power and an authority which rested on their participation in the world outside the home, while women characteristically exercised general control of the household affairs, and constructed a moral authority within the home. In particular, women routinely took responsibility for children, fathers' authority often being appealed to only as a 'last resort'. Men and women had different political and legal rights, reinforcing and helping secure the economic dependency of women, their confinement to domestic work and their general subordination in principle to men. Indeed, whether as minors or wives,

women scarcely existed as legal entities for many purposes. This differentiation of activities went hand in hand with differences in knowledges and cultural activities: men monopolised knowledge of many trades, business and politics, while women shared knowledge of childbirth and care, food and diet, and often of arts and 'culture'.<sup>10</sup>

Children had few social, political or legal rights; they were subordinated to parental authority, in particular, and adult authority in general. What rights they enjoyed, either legally or by common consent, were exercised on their behalf either by their parents or the state. The legal definition of childhood was ambiguous: the age of sexual consent, for instance, was only twelve years, but the age at which boys were recognised as political subjects – as citizens – was twenty-one. Moreover, adult-child distinctions were further blurred by the fact that many young people worked in a range of waged jobs. Consequently, young people, especially in working-class and petty-bourgeois families, often juxtaposed activities in which they were regarded as children and placed under adult authority, with those in which they were effectively adults, working for wages, while even socially, many children were not strictly segregated from adult activities. Middle class children, especially girls, however, were far more likely to be strictly supervised and generally confined to the family house and property.<sup>11</sup>

Such structurally defined categories did not represent monolithic groups; rather, each category was crossed and divided by others: the working class, for example, was internally divided by both gender, age and race or ethnicity. Moreover, there were important elements of colonial life which tended to mask the differences between these categories. In the newly occupied pastoral areas, for instance, class differences were blurred by the fact that both employers and employees lived under harsh conditions

and often worked together. Moreover, working men often accumulated sufficient wages or took advantage of boom conditions to open business on their own account, without necessarily losing much of their working-class culture and sympathies or sharing the perspectives and cultural attributes of the ruling or middle classes. Gender differences were blurred by the fact that many women, for instance, engaged in business on their own account, large numbers of working class women engaged frequently in paid labour and many ruling class women were active in philanthropic work, while many institutions in the public sphere provided roles for women as well as men. Age differences were blurred by the fact that working-class boys might work alongside their fathers during the day and visit the public house with them at night, while middle-class girls, confined to home like their brothers, often shared their mothers' worlds.<sup>12</sup>

To some extent, these structures and their composition, were also fluid. The economic and political dominance of the pastoralists, for instance, was yielding to that of the urban bourgeoisie, while both the constitution and organisation of the working class, and the relative political powers of the working and ruling classes were changing. Women gained rights to divorce and husbands' rights to use physical violence to 'discipline' their wives was increasingly restricted. At the same time, women's paid workforce participation was becoming increasingly limited. The notion that childhood was a period of moral innocence to be protected while the moral character was carefully cultivated, and its practical corollary, the rigid separation of children from public adult life and their attendance at school five days a week was becoming increasingly widespread, especially among middle-class families.<sup>13</sup>

These structures of age, class, gender and race or ethnicity existed as

ideological representations as well as concrete social relations and practices. Classes, and the 'natural' characteristics of men and women, adults and children, and different nationalities and races were also identified and defined in novels, travel accounts and poetry, the daily press, parliamentary debate, pulpit oratory and other public forums. Such representations were far from homogeneous, consistent or unitary; on the contrary they were riddled with contradictions, tensions, ambivalences and ambiguities. Aborigines, for instance, were often represented as both 'saviours' and 'dangers', 'kindly' and 'treacherous' to men and women in the bush. Class, too, was represented as a major social division, on the one hand, and as nothing more than the differences in natural talent or education, on the other.<sup>14</sup>

Insofar as these media offered individuals a range of subject positions with which to identify and constructed norms to which they should conform they contributed materially to the construction of their consciousness of age, class, gender and race or ethnicity as dimensions in social life and their own positions within the colonial social structure. This, in turn, contributed to the formation of the social structures themselves, including their complexities and contradictions.<sup>15</sup>

One of the central institutions of colonial society was the family. Most white settlers lived in households comprising a family made up of a father/husband, mother/wife and their several children, often born two or three years apart over a period of many years. Yet there were many exceptions to this pattern: in some regions, such as the alluvial goldfields and the remote pastoral districts, this type of household was relatively unusual, while even in the larger centres there was always a significant portion of the population living outside the institution of the family. Moreover, many working men, in particular, were forced to tramp the country in search

of work from time to time, leaving their families to fend for themselves for indefinite, often prolonged, periods.<sup>16</sup>

Family forms and practices were both shaped by the structures of class, gender, age and race or ethnicity, and played a crucial role in constructing them. In ruling-class families, wealth and security made it possible for the husband/father to maintain his wife and children in economic dependency, effectively tying women and children to the domestic sphere. Within the household, most labour could be delegated to domestic staff leaving the adult women to divide their time between supervising the servants, (unpaid) philanthropic work, maintaining the social networks which helped define and maintain the class and the pursuit of feminine accomplishments. Children of such families were frequently maintained in dependency until well into their teens, prolonging childhood and allowing a relatively late entry into paid work. Families with small businesses or farms conducted their affairs differently. While they employed a domestic servant to assist with household work, family and business affairs were inseparable, and all members of the family who were able contributed to the family enterprise. The laws relating to the holding of property within marriage ensured that the power of the male head of household was firmly secured, underwriting patriarchal forms of family discipline. Working-class families differed yet again. The dependence of such families on the paid or unpaid labour of all and the lack of property combined to undermine the economic power of the male head of household. Children and women worked when and where they needed and were able, in addition to the 'normal' employment of the male head of household. Moreover, the frequency with which male workers needed to travel to find work often gave their wives effective management of the household. These conditions placed working-class families and their members

under great stress: they were conducive to violence as husbands sought to enforce the authority they claimed over their wives and children, as well as desertion by husbands or wives and effective neglect of children. While wealthy landowning men were also often away from their wives and children for prolonged periods attending to business this did not entail the material privation and consequent stresses it did for less privileged families. The churches, ruling and middle class moralists, social reformers and philanthropists increasingly place high value on the family, enshrining it as a sacred institution, crucial to the wellbeing of both individuals and society. In doing so, they characteristically privileged the family form based on a life-long monogamous marriage between a bread-winning man and a woman whose work centred around the maintenance of the home and the bearing, physical care and moral formation of children.<sup>17</sup>

A second major institution of colonial society was the state. Through property laws it underwrote and defined the limits of capitalism. It regulated the relations between capital and labour and deployed large portions of state revenue to the maintenance of a labour market favourable to employers and to the development of the infrastructure necessary to the profitable investment of private capital. Laws governing marriage and the welfare of children were especially important in regulating age and gender, both supporting particular ('bourgeois') forms of family life and establishing sanctions against practices which did not conform to them. Moreover, it provided both a legal and a police system to enforce adherence to the laws regulating society, while the precise forms for the administration of the law almost necessarily favoured the wealthy against the poor, men against women, adults against children, except in cases of what the state defined as neglect where it favoured the state

against parents, and British settlers against those of other origins, especially Aborigines and Chinese. Despite its importance, the boundaries between the institutions of the state and those of 'society' were not clearly defined. In particular, the state included 'private citizens' as local, unpaid magistrates. In this regard, too, the state favoured men of substance and public standing: local magistrates were selected by and, where possible, from the ranks of 'respectable' landowners, employers and professional men. Notwithstanding this use of leading local settlers as magistrates, and despite occasional rhetorical gestures in the direction of local government, the dominant groups in colonial life generally opposed all but the most limited devolution of power to municipal or district councils.<sup>18</sup>

The third major social institution shaping social relations and in particular defining and legitimating the structures of class, gender, age and ethnicity was the church. The leading denominations, notably the Church of England and the Catholic church, both reflected and strongly endorsed the principles of hierarchy in age, class, gender and racial relations. Both supported the values of capitalism and preached the necessity of subordination to 'constituted authority', although both were critical of the state's failure to offer what they regarded as due support to their own claims to authority and state funding. The other protestant churches were less hierarchical in their organisation although they, too, generally supported the principles of both capitalism and the authority of the state. All were unreservedly patriarchal institutions: all offices of importance were reserved for males, and all similarly endorsed the forms of the patriarchal family characteristic of the middle and ruling classes, and the principle of female subordination within it. The place of the churches in colonial society was reinforced by the widespread view that morality was inseparable from religion and

both from social well-being. The churches were also important institutions dividing colonial society, setting up not merely differences but, often, deep antagonisms between themselves. Their influence was limited, however, by their difficulty in generating sufficient resources to support the maintenance of churches in the more remote and sparsely settled areas.<sup>19</sup>

As was the case with the major structures of colonial society, these central institutions of social life could be understood only through their ideological representations. The family, understood as co-resident mother, father and children in which the adult male exercised authority over his wife and children, was widely seen as 'natural', as ordained by God and fundamental to social well-being. The state was commonly represented as the embodiment and guarantor of the unity and well-being of the people as a whole, an institution standing over and above sectional interests, balancing and mediating between them in pursuit of the common interest. The churches represented themselves as the guardians of morality and the custodians of spiritual and religious knowledge. Critics frequently acknowledged their moral and religious claims, but also represented them as divisive and factional. While the churches conceptualised their role and sphere of legitimate activity in the widest terms, their critics claimed that they should confine themselves largely to the 'private' sphere of personal religion and that where their own interests clashed with larger public concerns they should yield precedence to the state.<sup>20</sup>

Such representations were not only widely circulated by the middle of the nineteenth century but remained current well into the second half of the century. Only in the case of the centrality of the church, and the relations between church and state did these normative visions change significantly. While the state was already being

seen as necessarily independent of the churches by 1850, the moral panic accompanying the goldrushes, especially in Victoria, led to a temporary re-vision of the two as essential allies, united by a common concern with morality and social order. However, even this change concerned the balance and proper relation of the two in the regulation of colonial life rather than the 'nature' of the institutions *per se*.<sup>21</sup>

The dynamics of colonial society generated characteristic and uneven forms of regional development. The early establishment of Sydney, Adelaide and later Melbourne as colonial capitals and their early growth as social and economic centres established them as the hubs from which settlement and social organisation radiated. They remained the major centres of population, supporting and supported by complex and diverse economies, including manufacture, marketing, finance, farming and dairying, transport and construction. They were centres of government, administration, law, and of the churches and other major colonial institutions. In times of economic distress, many relief schemes were organised from the capitals, providing work either there or in the surrounding districts. They were also the centres of education: most of the leading schools were located there and after the mid 1850s both Sydney and Melbourne had universities, joined by Adelaide from 1874. Moreover, the colonial ruling classes were concentrated there: even many families of substance those who lived in the country maintained houses in the city, and many ruling class clubs and associations were organised there. Finally, within the cities themselves there was an increasing degree of demarcation between those suburbs dominated by the wealthy and those identified as 'poor' neighbourhoods.<sup>22</sup>

Away from these centres there was a handful of large towns, such as Gawler and Goolwa in South Australia, Albury, Maitland and Goulburn in New South Wales,

Geelong and Belfast in Victoria and, most importantly in the early 1850s, the mining towns, such as Bendigo and Ballarat in Victoria and Burra in South Australia. These towns were major points in the colonial systems of communications, populous enough to support a range of marketing, manufacturing and other economic activities. They were important administrative centres, especially for criminal law and in the case of the gold towns in Victoria, the official regulation of mining itself. They generated considerable wealth, allowing them to develop substantial and imposing buildings, both public and private. As they became well established, they developed a range of institutions from churches to pubs, cricket clubs to newspapers, exclusive social institutions for their local elites and working men's societies. The range of their economic, administrative and social institutions in some respects paralleled the colonial capitals, if on a smaller scale. Their economies generated characteristic class interests, dominated by local landowners and professional and business men. These interests were organised and articulated through the full range of local institutions, sometimes identifying with similar interests in a wider colonial context, but marked with their own particular local concerns.<sup>23</sup>

These towns were surrounded by mining fields, agricultural and pastoral districts. The agricultural districts were numerically and, sometimes, socially and economically, dominated by small producers, whether owned by the occupiers or worked by tenants. This created relatively concentrated patterns of settlement with small towns and villages scattered across the landscape, each linked to the larger market and communications centres. These villages and their surrounding farms might boast a church or two and a handful of small businesses but their economies were small scale; much production was for a local market although the bulk of agricultural

produce was destined for a wider market. However, the farming families themselves often had access to that wider market indirectly, notably through local shopkeepers from whom they received credit for purchase of goods against their crops. Many of these villages were dominated by a single ethnic or religious group, with a consequent close-knit sense of community. Much of the remainder of the land within the 'settled' districts was generally sparsely populated, with large tracts of bushland which white settlers had barely penetrated, cutting one district or settlement off from the next. In the early years of settlement even many of the suburban districts on the fringes of the capitals were virtually agricultural villages isolated from each other by areas of bush.<sup>24</sup>

The mining fields themselves were far less differentiated economically and less developed socially and institutionally than the mining towns. This was most noticeable in the early, alluvial, stages of gold mining, but remained characteristic of the more stable, deep lead and quartz reef mining, settlements. While, especially in the latter, stores, schools and churches were established, production for market was largely limited to minerals and many services were available only in the nearby towns. Also, in the more established fields, quantities of foodstuffs and other daily necessities were produced locally on a small scale, much of it geared to consumption within the family.<sup>25</sup>

The outlying and pastoral districts were generally sparsely populated by colonists. Production depended on large tracts of territory grazed by large herds and flocks under the care of a mere handful of settlers. Especially in the earliest days of white occupation, men massively outnumbered women, and even after pastoral control of the land was secured, the white population remained small and widely dispersed. Necessarily, institutional life and other forms of sociability were extremely limited, and

access to centres of population, and the institutions and services they offered, was difficult. Indeed, while pastoral owners frequently worked on their properties in the early days, those who had generated substantial wealth – especially those whose properties were in areas which remained remote and undeveloped – either shifted into the major centres or spent considerable time there. This situation was less pressing in the better watered tracts of Victoria and some parts of New South Wales and South Australia, but as agricultural settlement expanded in the aftermath of the gold rushes and then following the land selection Acts of the 1860s, many of the pastoral holdings in these districts were broken up.<sup>26</sup>

It is important to recognise that the growth of population and economic activity generated constant changes in the social geography of the colonies. The cities, towns, villages and the rural districts grew in size, early institutions expanded and new ones were created, and their economic structures became more complex. Importantly, this involved the continuous construction and elaboration of a series of hierarchical relationships, centre–periphery relations between them. The range of economic, administrative and social services the towns provided made them important centres for their surrounding districts. However, they were also tightly tied to the capital centres, linked by the main roads and, eventually, railways along which supplies were obtained and produce marketed and by their political and administrative dependence. Moreover, while they exported enormous wealth, especially in the case of the mining towns, they imported many of their other necessities, either from the capitals or from the surrounding agricultural and pastoral areas. In this context, the development of local, regional and wider colonial communications, especially in the form of roads and railways, was crucial.<sup>27</sup>

These relations between centres and peripheries both within the colonies as a whole and within local regions were highly ambivalent: peripheral areas both depended on and cultivated this relationship and resisted and contested many of its consequences for them. In Victoria, Kyneton, for instance, sought a direct rail link to Geelong to provide an alternative to trading through Melbourne, while Geelong sought to challenge the hegemonic position of Melbourne within colonial trade. However, the limits to their independence are clearly illustrated in the case of Portland, which began its life quite independent of the metropolitan centres, but was rapidly subordinated to Melbourne once that settlement was formally established as the seat of administration. The relationships between the mining, agricultural and pastoral districts and the towns were similarly ambivalent: on the one hand they valued them as sources of funds for such things as local roads; on the other, they criticised them for monopolising district expenditure. This dual sense of being both dependent on their respective centres and not receiving a fair share of public resources supported a keen sense of localism and hostility to the central towns, at a regional level, and to the capitals, at a colonial level. Despite their keen defence of their own local interests against the claims of rival neighbourhoods, towns and regions, local communities were not only structured by class, gender, race or ethnicity and religion but, in many cases, they were deeply divided by personal factions.<sup>28</sup>

#### PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS: THE PLACE OF SCHOOLS

The patterns and conditions of colonial development gave rise to a range of immediate, material difficulties and hardships, often resulting from direct, physical clashes of interest. Aborigines, Chinese and white settlers died in violent confrontations on the frontier and goldfields. Aborigines also died from introduced

diseases, suffered malnutrition as white settlers drove them from large tracts of land and otherwise depleted their sources of food, and their social organisation crumbled as their numbers fell and they were denied access to sites which were crucial to the maintenance of law and their systems of meaning and value. Frontier pastoralists lost stock to Aborigines and white bushmen and found it difficult to get labourers; both they and their workers faced discomfort, privation and isolation from services and, in many instances, their families. Working-class families on low wages found it difficult to make ends meet. Their menfolk often found it necessary to travel in search of work, leaving their families to fend for themselves, many of them verging on destitution. The combination of economic hardship and unequal gender and age relations frequently led to conflict within families. Poverty and overcrowding left working-class families, especially, vulnerable to disease, while the primitive conditions of roads and streets, and the volume of traffic in cities and larger towns, placed children at risk.<sup>29</sup>

Other conflicts arose as individuals, groups and institutions, in pursuit of conditions favourable to their own interests or which they believed essential to social well-being, encountered others who failed to conform to their vision of colonial society. While such tensions stemmed from the complex and contradictory character of social relations and conditions, the ways in which they were defined as 'problems' depended on the perspective from which they were seen. While undoubtedly all colonists identified a variety of problems it was the definitions of the dominant groups in colonial society which received the widest, most public, circulation.

Capitalists were plagued by uncertain and often limited profits, inadequate infrastructure, high costs of production and what they regarded as an inadequate workforce. Leading settlers in many country districts were perturbed by what they saw

as unfavourable treatment by the governments in the capital cities. Many men were concerned with disquieting signs of indiscipline and insubordination in their children and by their failure to control their wives, especially when they were away from home for prolonged periods. Many women were deeply concerned about issues of public morality – drunkenness, the attractions of public houses for men, prostitution and 'loose women' in public places – which had a direct bearing on their safety and comfort in their homes, the security of their marriages and their economic capacity to care for their families. White colonists in the country towns were concerned about the dangers of physical and moral contamination from Aborigines, while those on the goldfields shared a similar anxiety about the Chinese.<sup>30</sup>

Middle-class moralists and philanthropists faced widespread irreligion and moral and social disorder in colonial life. They widely discussed, and clearly feared the degradation of colonial society as, lacking in the institutions which secured propriety and order at home, it slipped from civilisation into barbarism. They widely observed the failure of working-class families to provide a proper physical, social and moral environment for their children, attributing it largely to lack of character in parents. The churches, collectively, shared this fear, while at the same time each denomination was confronted with competition for adherents from its rivals, problems of internal discipline and financial difficulties.<sup>31</sup>

The state was confronted by racial conflicts which were costly and difficult to suppress, by conflicting interests regarding immigration, public works, tariffs, labour relations and so on. In such cases, it was often compelled to intervene in favour of some groups and against others, undermining its claims to represent all sectors of society impartially, and, consequently, its legitimacy. More generally, it was concerned with the extension and maintenance of law and order, under pressure from the

uncontrolled expansion of white settlement prior to 1850 and the massive influx of population which followed the discovery of gold after that.<sup>32</sup>

At the same time as they articulated these problems, colonists also framed a range of possible solutions to the problems confronting them. Many such solutions involved direct intervention by the state in a range of issues, from labour relations through the development of infrastructure on a grand scale to the removal of children from 'unsatisfactory' parents. Such 'solutions', however, threatened to generate new problems. Large scale immigration, for example, might produce seasonal gluts of unemployed workers agitating for state relief works, while intervention in the family undermined the sanctity of patriarchal authority. Many leading citizens sought the introduction of colonial self-government as a means to control state policies and secure what they saw as proper policies. However, this raised further difficulties: the British government clearly intended that local government should be constructed on a broadly-based elective principle with more narrowly-based Upper houses. This raised the additional problem for colonial capitalists of how to ensure that representative government worked to secure their interests. In part, this might be solved by creating a voting system which ensured that those Lower house electorates which were dominated by working men's votes carried relatively little weight. Yet this in turn might lead working men to question the impartiality of the state itself.<sup>33</sup>

However, one strategy offered to unite the interests and concerns of the state, the churches and the dominant classes, gender and race and even, in some measure, to appeal to the working class: the formation of general institutions for civilising the populace at large. The advocates of this strategy recognised that newspapers, self-help societies and the churches themselves were important. However, in general they

saw schools as the linchpin of the project to secure a desirable social order. In this, they drew heavily on the increasingly dominant view in England and elsewhere that schools had a central role to play in the governance of society. Most importantly, schools were aimed at 'the rising generation', those on whom the future of colonial society would be built. They would not simply develop formal knowledge or outward forms of social behaviour, but individual moral character, a love of truth, decency and rational recreation and a disposition to conduct themselves with propriety.<sup>34</sup>

In the short term, schools would keep children out of mischief and under proper adult discipline, especially working-class children who lived surrounded by squalor and immorality and whose parents could not supervise them closely. By making such children into examples of moral rectitude and good conduct they might even improve their homes by their good influence on their parents. The real benefits, however, were long term. Children of good character would grow to be hard working men and modest and virtuous women. They would form strong, virtuous families, their homes places of such order, cleanliness, charm and beauty that husbands and fathers would not be attracted to the local public house and children would be obedient and respectful.<sup>35</sup>

Further, by building character and intelligence schools would fit young men for citizenship. They would acquire a respect for private property, the knowledge and wisdom to use the ballot box to 'select the best senators' and not be led astray by popular 'demagogues', and equip those whose economic fortunes had raised them from the lower grades of society to occupy positions of power and influence. Moreover, in forming new societies from a heterogeneous population, schools might provide the basis for a common culture and national identity, essential to 'the safety and unity upon which the wellbeing of the colon[ies] rests'.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, schools would teach the young the habits and disciplines of industrious activity, regularity, punctuality and subordination. Indeed, they might even make it possible to transform Aborigines into civilised human beings, able to take their place in settler society as industrious members of the working class. More generally, they would provide pupils with a body of knowledge which presented the social relations of capitalist production as natural and unalterable and provide powerful arguments against 'combination' of workers in opposition to their employers. Such lessons, if appropriated by future employees, would minimise the conflicts between capital and labour over wages and conditions by securing popular assent to the interests of employers. It is important to note here, however, that there was little concern that schools teach skills relevant to particular occupations, except to delinquent, orphaned, neglected or Aboriginal children who might grow up to be destitute or criminal unless given the means of securing employment.<sup>37</sup>

These functions were stressed and articulated in varying forms from colony to colony and, within each colony, according to a variety of immediate concerns and general perspectives. Church leaders, for instance, stressed the crucial role of religion in education in securing social order. In New South Wales there was a more pronounced concern with the dangers of lawlessness stemming from the colony's convict origins than in Victoria, where, in the early and mid 1850s, the overriding concern was the impact of gold, the enormous population it brought and the problems of lawlessness and government under such unsettled conditions. However, the commonality of these concerns on the part of the leading sectors of society, and the ways they thought schools might meet them overwhelmed both inter- and intra-colonial differences.<sup>38</sup>

For capitalists, such a project of re/forming the young offered the prospect of industrious, tractable labour. Some denominations saw the prospect of an alliance with the state to bolster their own financial and social positions. For philanthropists, reformers, politicians, newspaper editors, novelists and others it offered a social environment free from corruption and degradation. For husbands and fathers it offered a means of disciplining their children and reinforcing the values of the patriarchal family. For the state it offered the prospect of social conditions in which the populace accepted legitimately constituted authority in all spheres of life and was, moreover, largely self-regulating within the limits endorsed by the law. This would, in turn, keep social conflicts and the costs of containing them to a minimum and reduce poverty as the values of hard work and self-reliance became more widespread. Finally, some working-class advocates of the widespread provision of schools argued that sound education would sharpen the working class's sense of its own importance and their concern for political and social justice.<sup>39</sup>

#### COLONIAL SCHOOLS: PROBLEMS AND PROPOSALS

Those concerned that schools fulfil these functions were generally critical of the existing state of educational provision. In the first place, they argued that there were simply too few schools, and that large numbers of children had no access to them. This, they claimed, was particularly true of the rural areas, most critically so in the sparsely settled pastoral districts. Settlers in the agricultural districts, often pointed out that they had established schools but were unable to support them adequately. In New South Wales, the state had long been providing financial support to schools through the churches but this had failed to remedy the problems of supply and in some respects had exacerbated them. In the larger centres, wherever one denomination

established a school, others followed, fearful of losing members to their rivals in the faith and each school undercut the other. In South Australia, state funding had been available only since 1846, but early critics of this support pointed out that there was no means to regulate the distribution of schools and that the procedures for obtaining assistance unduly favoured those in Adelaide at the expense of the rural districts. In both colonies, the form of state support for schools compounded the tendency to a serious oversupply where they could most readily be supported without assistance, and a shortage of funds to support them in the more sparsely settled areas where local resources were less likely to be able to support schools.<sup>40</sup>

According to leading teachers and critical middle-class observers, however, the principal problem was the quality of schooling. The fact that teachers could canvass a neighbourhood and open a school at will meant that there was no check on their qualifications for the task of shaping the intellectual and moral characters of their charges. Many, they claimed, could barely read or write, many of those who could were poorly educated in other ways, and very few had any special training for the work. Usually, they saw this as a reflection of their working-class origins. Indeed, they often argued that these teachers were the dregs of the working class, together with a sprinkling of teachers of middle-class origins who had failed at all else and turned to teaching as a last resort. These judgments clearly referred to male teachers, but they also expressed concern at the large number of women teachers. Leading teachers, attempting to transform teaching into a profession comparable to medicine and law, claimed that the large number of women teachers lowered the standing, prestige and incomes of men such as themselves, with whom they identified the interests of the profession as a whole. In many cases, critics suggested, these women

had turned to teaching for the same reasons as their male counterparts – mere financial need.<sup>41</sup> 'Teaching,' wrote one, voicing a widely expressed view, 'has become the refuge of broken down tradesmen and unprotected females.'<sup>42</sup>

Other aspects of existing school provision were also widely seen as unsatisfactory. Many schools were conducted in dark, dank cellars, crowded and poorly ventilated rooms in small cottages, or in huts, barns and sheds with earthen floors and leaking roofs. Discipline was poor or brutal and disorder reigned. The curriculum was unsystematic and its content poorly selected and often factually incorrect. In many schools, even those conducted by churches, religion, crucial to the functions of schooling, was often poorly taught, if it was taught at all. Often, where books were used, they were unsuitable morally, politically or from the point of view of pedagogical technique. The organisation of teaching was inefficient, based on individual instruction which ensured, so critics suggested, that most children did nothing most of the time. Teaching methods were unsatisfactory and they were based on rote learning. Indeed, according to some, the teachers did not teach at all, but merely set the children work to learn by themselves and then 'heard their lessons'.<sup>43</sup>

There were also problems with attendance. The overwhelming majority of children attended school only for a brief period, certainly not long enough for the schools to have performed the work of transforming their characters. Moreover, when they attended they did so irregularly, missing days or even weeks at a time, so that the cumulative effects of schooling, either morally or intellectually, were lost on them. Finally, they arrived and left at all hours of the day, disorganising even the best run schools and never forming those habits of regularity and order which it was the schools' task to establish.<sup>44</sup>

The critics attributed these problems to a number of causes. First, they argued, many parents and communities did not have the economic capacity to provide adequate support for good teachers. In the country, sparse populations and the need for small landholders to use their children's labour on their farms resulted in uneconomically small schools. In the poorer urban areas many working-class parents were unable to pay remunerative tuition fees.<sup>45</sup>

Second, the critics argued that the bulk of parents, poorly educated themselves, were also ignorant and incapable of judging the merits of different teachers, or unable to appreciate the real benefits superior teachers offered. They were, therefore, attracted by those who offered tuition for the lowest fees. This was particularly important in the urban areas where good and bad schools stood almost side by side, but large numbers of parents supported the latter at the expense of the former. Critics also accused more respectable settlers, especially in the rural areas, of failing to take a proper interest in the education of their poorer neighbours. They should, it was suggested, be providing the supervision and paternal interest in the schools which could help ensure that better rather than worse teachers were employed, and that children were encouraged to attend more regularly.<sup>46</sup>

Third, and crucially, the critics argued that the bulk of the populace was not sufficiently interested in education or their children's welfare to secure a proper schooling for them, a concern which continued to be a major refrain through the period with which this thesis is concerned. True, there were some dissenting voices prepared to see this apparent disregard as the result of circumstances, or even to argue that there was a general popular concern for education. However, in the dominant view, even when many parents appeared to value schooling it was for merely instrumental

purposes such as learning to read, write and run up accounts.<sup>47</sup>

Some of these problems were portrayed as temporary and self-correcting: sparsity of settlement, undeveloped country towns and the high value of labour in an underdeveloped economy would disappear with 'time and the establishment of a more settled society'. Others could be corrected by judicious assistance or regulation by church or state or by leading citizens in their local communities. However, they suggested, the fundamental problem was a deeply rooted lack of moral will in parents and the consequent failure of working-class families, in particular, to form proper character in their children. This, it seemed, was unlikely to spontaneously remedy itself.<sup>48</sup>

These criticisms, and the analyses of their causes, clearly implied a need for drastic changes in popular education, and, indeed, many accounts of existing education also included suggestions for increasing the number of schools, distributing them more widely, improving their quality and securing better attendance. Discussion of the means of improving education drew heavily on colonial knowledge of developments overseas, in particular, in Britain, Prussia, Canada and Massachusetts. The Irish National system was especially widely discussed, since it had seemingly successfully addressed the problems of common school provision, the quality of education and local control with central regulation in a society deeply riven by sectarian hostility.<sup>49</sup>

In the light of both local circumstances and overseas models colonial discussions canvassed three main approaches. First, schools should be given financial support, especially in isolated and sparsely populated rural districts, country villages and poorer urban areas. This had to be sufficient to attract superior teachers by the

prospect of good remuneration and to enable them to survive long enough to drive out their inferior competitors by the operation of market forces. Further, it had to be sufficient to enable schools to provide the requisite facilities for good teaching, such as books, blackboards and buildings. However, it was important not to provide too much support, since that would be expensive, risk 'pauperising' the recipients and undermine the very moral fibre the schools were to build by destroying families' sense of self-reliance and responsibility. This last possibility was particularly dangerous since it would then reduce the levels of local support and require even more funding. Financial support had to be regulated to ensure that it was economically deployed, that large sums were not spent supporting rival schools in populous neighbourhoods at the expense of localities in real need.<sup>50</sup>

Second, the quality of schools should be carefully regulated. It was important to ensure that teachers conducted their schools competently and efficiently, that what they taught was not only useful but edifying and improving, that they employed proper methods of instruction and discipline and that their schools were well equipped and conducted in suitable premises. To this end, proper standards should be defined, and teachers and schools should be required to prove their eligibility for financial support, carefully monitored, and corrected where necessary.<sup>51</sup>

Third, a body of teachers capable of providing the soundest education with a minimum of regulation should be created. Young men and (in some proposals) women should be introduced to modern methods of organisation, pedagogy and discipline, familiarised with the best texts and other apparatus, and imbued with a sense of professionalism and commitment to teaching as a vocation, through rigorous training in a normal school (an institution created in the 1830s for the systematic training of

teachers). Such preparatory training should be complemented by systematic improvement of those already teaching without training through instruction by itinerant master teachers, lectures and literature on modern methods of education and visits to other schools to observe the best methods of teaching.<sup>52</sup>

Such proposals required institutional means to translate them into practice. In general, public discussion of possible institutional arrangements was conducted within limits defined by the existing means of providing and supporting schools, established interests, material conditions and ideological considerations. Many of those who contributed to the public debate on education argued that the churches should play a crucial role. Many maintained that this arrangement was necessary, since religion was central to education, while some argued that the churches had already secured state and public recognition of their right to such support, and Anglican and Catholic leaders claimed that church discipline and polity required that the education of their flock be controlled by their bishops. Many argued that the church should work in close partnership with the state. In particular, they argued that the state should provide the funds for the churches to administer at their discretion. Some, however, argued that the state had no legitimate place in educational affairs which should be recognised as the sole prerogative of the church, or that the churches risked their doctrinal purity if they received money from the state. Other supporters of denominational education, in contrast, admitted a need for the state to provide a parallel administration to the churches in order to meet the needs of those small settlements and remote districts where separate denominational schools could not be maintained economically.<sup>53</sup>

Many, however, contested the churches' claim either on pragmatic grounds or in principle, and argued for a much stronger role for the state. While generally not

hostile to religion, and usually committed to education with a religious–moral base, they maintained state funding of denominational schools had in fact generated some of the main problems evident by the mid and late 1840s. In particular, they argued that denominational control of state funding was wasteful and produced an irrational distribution of schools, failing to reach the sparser rural areas. The state was the most obvious source of revenue and, moreover, had already undertaken considerable responsibility for supporting schools. In New South Wales it had done so virtually since the establishment of the colony, and had put this on a somewhat systematic basis in the 1830s. In South Australia in the face of considerable ideological and political opposition from those who favoured voluntary support, the government had offered a few fragmentary gestures of support in the early 1840s before putting its (admittedly rather meagre) assistance on a more systematic basis in 1847. The state could frame regulations for the distribution of funds and define educational standards with the full legitimacy and power of the law. Some argued that the state should go further, and establish administrative boards to implement the regulations, distributing funds, monitoring teachers and schools and training teachers.<sup>54</sup>

Supporters, as well as critics, of state education were cautious about the extent and degree of state powers in education. In New South Wales, in particular, denominational leaders were nervous about the prospects of a state grown so large and powerful that it could override or perhaps dispense with the support of the churches, marginalising them in the governance of colonial society. This fear was intensified by their awareness of the shifting balance of power in colonial politics. By the late 1840s established conservative forces, centred around the wealthy pastoral interests and secured by strong gubernatorial powers and very limited electoral

representation in the Legislative Council were facing a sustained challenge from an alliance of urban capital and working-class groups and the prospect of a more democratic form of government. In South Australia, the dissenting churches and important sections of the Anglican laity were committed to voluntarism in religion. Moreover, the centre of colonial politics had been the liberalism of small urban capitalists from the start. Many of those active in, or allied with, these progressive, liberal forces in both colonies supported state provision of 'secular' schooling. However, while these groups opposed the claims of the churches to act as the educational arm of the state, they also feared the growth of power in the hands of an irresponsible government. Leading teachers, too, some of them organised in professional associations, sought to minimise official control over their work, while conceding the need for surveillance and the eventual elimination of their inferior competitors. There were models of regulation which did suit their purposes, however, such as the model of a professional regulatory body of highly trained teachers incorporated by the state along the lines of the British College of Preceptors or the medical registration boards. While the state might provide the funding and decide how funds should be distributed, these teachers argued that central control over the actual selection and work of teacher should be in (their) professional hands. Many residents in rural areas, often in any case critical of the centralisation of power and resources in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, saw excessive state regulation as a threat to their control of their own affairs. In some respects this concern reflected a wide range of rural interests, but certainly the more influential groups in communities outside the urban centres claimed that they were quite competent to manage their own affairs and could be sensitive to local conditions and needs in ways not possible to a

central government. In this context clergy, especially those of the Anglican and Catholic churches, were often in a somewhat ambivalent position. As representatives of centralised bodies they were not necessarily distrustful of the power they represented, but as local men of influence with a vested interest in church rather than state control they sought to minimise its claims.<sup>55</sup>

However, the main public debate was an urban debate, conducted principally by urban residents in urban newspapers and central legislatures and church offices, many of whom saw the interests of the colonies as a whole as pivoted around those of the capitals. The claims of the rural districts to a significant role in shaping education provision, even in their own localities, were marginalised. However, they resurfaced as part of the wider suspicion of a too powerful, 'hypercentralised' state. Almost all proposals for central intervention, whether by the state alone or by church and state together allowed considerable scope for private initiative. While the details were rarely spelled out and varied from argument to argument, most discussion at least assumed that private individuals would have a significant role in providing and managing schools. These 'private individuals' were often a somewhat select group: clergy, landowners, professional men and others of education and respectability. Such men might act as local deputies for central bodies, checking that the teachers kept at their work, that buildings were adequate and well furnished and maintained and, crucially, that their less elevated neighbours sent their children. They might preside over, or even conduct, periodic examinations, provide prizes to encourage diligence, obedience, regularity and progress and to attract at least a few more children and their parents to an interest in the school.<sup>56</sup>

Importantly, proposals for educational reform largely skirted the question of

attendance. There were certainly, as suggested above, frequent references to the need to secure better attendance, but rarely did proposals for doing so go beyond the recommendation that respectable citizens should encourage parents to pay more attention to their children's schooling. Occasionally, there were references to the Prussian compulsory attendance laws, but most commentators considered that, for ideological and political reasons, a democratic, British community would not tolerate compulsion, even if it were in principle desirable. To a large extent, this reflected the sacrosanct position of the family in the dominant colonial ideology: control over children lay firmly in the hands of parents, and could not be interfered with except in extreme cases where families could be seen to neglect the physical and moral needs of their children.

The general strategies for intervention, then, were those of a centrally funded regulation of the educational market. The state would not so much provide the schools as support their provision by private initiative and selectively fund schools so as to promote them in areas of need and ensure that schools seeking or receiving assistance conformed to the models of the good school on which intervention was founded. There were in fact at least two contradictions in this strategy. In the first place, there was a deep tension between the plans to support schools in remote localities and the plans to control the proliferation of inferior schools in the urban areas by offering funds. In the second, the schemes rested on the capacity of parents to recognise and support 'good' rather than 'bad' schools when they had the choice even though the analyses on which intervention was based represented most parents as incapable of judging the quality of education. As I argue in subsequent chapters, these two contradictions were crucial to the way state intervention worked prior to its

reorganisation under the free secular and compulsory Acts of the 1870s.<sup>57</sup>

### STATE INTERVENTION<sup>58</sup>

The precise forms in which these strategies were implemented depended to a significant extent on the balance of political forces concerning the respective positions of church and state in education and society. In New South Wales by the late 1840s the churches were able to maintain sufficient support for their common interest to ensure that they would be included in any form of state support to education. At the same time, the advocates of a uniform, secular system of schools were able to secure a widespread recognition that the churches were unable to provide for the more sparsely settled rural areas and marshal strong support for at least a limited introduction of a general system based on the Irish model. In 1848 Governor FitzRoy appointed three boards by executive fiat, one to sponsor schools on the model of the Irish National system, and two to regulate state assistance to schools in connection with the various denominations, one in Sydney and one in Melbourne. Several months later the general board was incorporated by an Act in the Legislative Council.<sup>59</sup>

In South Australia, Governor Robe's 1847 Ordinance which allowed state funding to schools regardless of their religious affiliation remained in force until 1851. In that year a new, largely elected Legislative Council, with a radical liberal Attorney-General introduced a new 'secular' Education Bill which was passed on the votes of a tiny majority of liberals committed to religious voluntarism. The Act reconstructed the board and provided it with more comprehensive, systematic and powerful means of supporting and regulating schools than its predecessor had enjoyed.<sup>60</sup>

The situation in Victoria upon separation from New South Wales in 1851 was rather different. Most importantly, it had no history of local, independent political

struggle over the respective roles of church and state in education. Moreover, it had a Denominational board already operating in Melbourne, while the handful of National schools was administered from Sydney. The Denominational board continued in existence and the new legislature hastily passed an Act creating a National board in terms which would enable it to inherit the Victorian property of the National board in Sydney. Thus local struggles over the forms of state intervention largely followed rather than produced the settlement of 1851.<sup>61</sup>

T h e

National boards in both New South Wales and Victoria had broad, minimally defined powers to financially support and superintend the formation and management of schools to be established on the model of the Irish National system and to regulate the government of those schools. The Denominational boards, in contrast were authorised to distribute funds to support schools established under the major denominations and to regulate their temporal affairs. The South Australian board was empowered to subsidise the payment of teachers and the building of schools, regulate the kind of instruction offered, to inspect schools, to provide a supply of books and to establish a normal school for training teachers.

The boards' locations within the broader structures of the state had a number of consequences for the ways they intervened in colonial education. First, it meant that their powers remained flexible, but within limits imposed by governments and legislatures. Governments and legislatures could change the education laws, governments or the boards could initiate negotiations to modify their powers informally, or the boards could surreptitiously extend their established jurisdictions by purely administrative procedures. However, all proposed regulations had to be tabled in the legislatures, where they could be rejected, and modifications suggested, giving

governments and elected members a degree of control over such covert growth of the boards' prerogatives.<sup>62</sup>

Second, and crucially, the government and legislature had control over the boards' budgets. A notable exception was the South Australian board which was given the power to raise funds for a normal school and district school buildings by the issue of government bonds, giving it a degree of financial autonomy, a potential shield from the uncertainties of annual state budgets. In contrast, the Victorian Denominational board, for instance, not only engaged in a constant battle to secure what it regarded as a satisfactory share of the total annual education vote, but fought, unsuccessfully, to wrest the right to determine the basis on which it distributed its funds from the government. Each of the boards frequently received funds which were not even sufficient to maintain its system of schools at existing levels, let alone allow it to expand. While the boards fought for increased funding, they rarely secured all that they regarded as desirable or even necessary. Within the limits established by each annual budget and the broad restrictions on the ways the boards were permitted to deploy their funds, they secured considerable flexibility and control, often beyond the limits normally applying to government departments.<sup>63</sup>

Third, the boards' positions in the state determined both the appointment of members of the boards and, in some cases, the boards' capacity to appoint staff. In South Australia, for instance, the board had to apply to the government for all appointments; if the government approved their request, it advertised the position, officially appointed the officer and determined his salary. While the government referred most applications to the board and in most cases made the appointment on its advice, it reserved the right to question, negotiate or even reject the board's choice.

Moreover, to some extent at least, the board's officers were subject to civil service regulations, limiting the board's controls over them. The National boards in the eastern colonies, in contrast, secured independent powers to appoint and pay staff in their Acts of incorporation, frequently reminding governments that their officers worked outside the civil service.<sup>64</sup>

Fourth, the boards' locations within the state established the possibility of using other government departments' services. In some cases this was attractive to the boards: they sought the services of the governments' agents in London, for instance, in purchasing books, and of the post office for free transmission of mail. In other cases, especially where the government obliged them to use the services of other departments, this could be as much hindrance as help. The South Australian board, for instance, was obliged to use government law officers and the government architect but found the processes slow and unsatisfactory, whereas the National boards, employing their own architects and buying private legal advice, avoided such problems.<sup>65</sup>

One consequence of the terms in which the boards' powers were defined was that there remained considerable scope for local initiative and involvement in educational provision. Thus the boards were virtually forced to construct relations with members of the local communities in which the schools they were to support and regulate were located. Further, the Denominational boards had little choice but to establish working partnerships with the heads of the major denominations. Finally, under the dual systems, and given the political conditions which underpinned the very existence of pairs of boards, the rival boards necessarily had to determine and negotiate their relations with each other.<sup>66</sup>

Despite these complex structures tying the boards to other institutions of the state and constraining them, they secured a considerable degree of autonomy, most noticeably in matters of daily routine, but extending to far reaching questions of policy. The removal of J.H.Plunkett as chairman of the National board in New South Wales illustrates well both the constraints and the independence the boards enjoyed. Plunkett was dismissed over his and the board's decision to introduce new regulations allowing non-vested National schools despite the government's opposition. Yet the government was unable to prevent the board from establishing its new policy and associated procedures. In South Australia, the government had in fact already enunciated a general principle admitting that the board was 'essentially and necessarily independent of direct control by the government'.<sup>67</sup>

While the boards were central to the implementation of the various strategies of state intervention in education, from the outset they began establishing bodies of salaried officers. The growth of staff varied considerably in both numbers, roles and the qualifications of the men appointed. In South Australia, the board immediately secured the appointment of an inspector and a secretary. The three boards established in New South Wales in 1848 each appointed secretaries immediately they were formed. The National board also quickly appointed two agents, G.W. Rusden and J. Kinchela, to tour the country disseminating information about the National system and promoting and assisting the formation of National schools. It also sought the appointment of a headmaster and mistress for a proposed model and training school in Sydney, although its concern to obtain persons of experience and good standing from the Irish National system itself inevitably delayed the filling of this position until 1851. The Victorian National board appointed both an inspector and

secretary almost immediately it was established, and shortly thereafter, sought to emulate the New South Wales board in establishing a model school, and constituting the position of principal as a senior office within the system. The National board in New South Wales did not formally appoint its first inspector until 1854 when William Wilkins, the headmaster of the model school assumed that office. The Denominational board in Victoria also appointed inspectors, the first in 1851, approved by the denominations but independent of them and answerable to itself, in addition to the secretary appointed in 1848. The National boards, in particular, also appointed a growing clerical staff to handle the rapidly increasing volume of routine correspondence between schools and the boards, and within the administration itself. Finally, they appointed a number of miscellaneous officers, including Henry Robertson, the New South Wales board's architect, and Alexander Oliver, its examiner, who straddled the division between professional and secretarial staff.<sup>68</sup>

The staff of the New South Wales Denominational board and the South Australian board remained relatively small. Both continued to employ a secretary and small office staff. In South Australia by 1855 there were two inspectors, but no additional appointment was made until 1874. By 1857 inspectors had been appointed within the New South Wales Denominational system, although their relations with board itself remained ambiguous until 1860.<sup>69</sup>

The significance of the growth of a more or less numerous and complex staff lay not principally in their numbers and the proportion of funding they absorbed but in their roles, their relations to the boards, and their relative capacities to shape policies and procedures. Initially, the Boards themselves took the key role and initiatives in formulating policies, a role reflected in the relative frequency of meetings in their early

years. In the New South Wales National system, the agents played no part in policy formation, while Wilkins, as head of the model school became the key officer from the moment of his appointment. Under the Victorian National board, the inspectors were the most important officers, although they played a limited role in shaping policies and procedures. In South Australia, the inspector was regarded as virtually a de facto member of the board and played a key role in shaping policies, regulations and administrative procedures, while the secretary's duties were almost solely clerical. Similarly, under the Victorian Denominational board, the crucial officer in the foundation years was H.C.E. Childers, the board's first inspector. In contrast, in New South Wales the Denominational board's secretary, C.E. Robinson, played an important part in early deliberations.<sup>70</sup>

Despite the prominence of these officers, the boards sought to define clearly their positions and, in most cases, establish clear controls over them. In South Australia the board allowed Wyatt considerable autonomy and established only minimal control over his work. The National systems defined far more precisely the roles and powers of their key officers, although the heads of their model schools and, in Victoria, Inspector A.B. Orlebar, enjoyed considerable discretionary powers within those roles. The New South Wales Denominational board, in contrast, encountered great difficulties asserting its authority over the denominational inspectors against the heads of their respective denominations. Nevertheless, by the early 1860s it had secured direct and uncontested control over them.<sup>71</sup>

Initially, many of the key offices were not clearly defined: B.F. Kane, the secretary to the Victorian National board, Wilkins as headmaster of Fort Street, and Campbell as secretary of the Victorian Denominational board all inspected schools in

the early years of their respective systems. Further, the initial administrative arrangements were flexible and subject to change. In New South Wales, the centre of gravity in the National administration followed Wilkins from the office of headmaster of Fort Street to that of inspector. Similarly, under the Victorian Denominational board, Childers held the key position in the board's structure whether initially as inspector or subsequently as secretary. However, following his resignation, power was consolidated in the office of secretary as his successor, Colin Campbell, played a central role in articulating board policies and practices. Even with the appointment of R.H. Budd as Normal Inspector in 1856, Campbell's position remained largely unchallenged and undiminished. In South Australia, with the appointment of Edward Wickes, a prominent teacher and founding member of the board, as secretary in 1854, that office became far more discretionary and important. Moreover, as the various systems established the core of their policies and procedures and the sheer volume and complexity of administration grew, the role of the boards tended to diminish while those of their senior officers became correspondingly more powerful.<sup>72</sup>

These legislative and institutional arrangements for reshaping colonial schooling were far from fixed or stable. Public debate over the state of education continued, old criticisms of schooling generally being supplemented by new criticisms of the particular failings of the current systems. Moreover, vested interests, such as the churches and the boards and their officers, and representatives of more general ideological positions such as the secularists, voluntarists and denominationalists continued to manoeuvre against each other, while opportunist politicians sought to capitalise on shifts in public opinion and parliamentary alliances. These concerns continued to be articulated in the context of a continuing anxiety about the general tenor of colonial social life, as well

as new issues arising from the establishment of 'full' parliamentary government. Further, they intersected continuing tensions over both the proper role of the state in society and the position of local interests in government and administration. Such conflicts kept educational politics, particularly in the eastern colonies where the dual system provided an institutional basis for maintaining hostile interests, in an almost constant state of uncertainty, as bill after bill was introduced in the legislatures to redefine the forms of state intervention.<sup>73</sup>

In 1862 in Victoria and 1866 in New South Wales, new Acts were passed, in both cases amalgamating the rival systems under single boards. In general terms, however, the underlying strategies for state intervention in education remained relatively unchanged, although the relations between the state boards and the denominations were redefined, effectively weakening the position of the latter. Moreover, the respective positions of the new boards within the state also continued largely as they had been under the dual systems. The governments continued to exercise a range of indirect controls over the boards' policies and regulations, the appointment of members and, crucially, budgets, while the boards continued to negotiate their effective powers and claim a high degree of practical, administrative autonomy.<sup>74</sup>

The new boards maintained an active role in the construction of policy, regulations and, to a lesser extent, procedure which had characterised the National boards. They both effectively inherited large staffs, the New South Wales board from the National system, its Victorian counterpart taking over many officers from both previous boards. In New South Wales, the internal administrative arrangements of the National board provided the basis of the new system, with Wilkins, this time as

secretary, straddling both secretarial and professional staffing hierarchies as the key officer. In Victoria, in contrast, B.F. Kane, the secretary, became the key officer, with the professional staff (including the Inspector-General, nominally the senior officer) clearly subordinated to him. Despite the degree of continuity in administration and the prominence of their principal officers, the boards also moved quickly to assert their authority over their staffs and to institute clear divisions of labour and structures of control.<sup>75</sup>

Colonial society, with its characteristic structures and patterns of development, generated a range of problems and tensions which the dominant class, gender and institutional interests sought to resolve through education. However, in their view, existing schools were poorly fitted for the purposes they proposed for them. To remedy this situation, they proposed various strategies, notably financial support for schools, regulation of their curriculum, pedagogy, moral tone and material conditions, and the creation of a body of trained, professional teachers. To implement these strategies they secured the formation of state education boards, some independent of the churches, others working with them, while the boards themselves developed often substantial and complex bodies of officers to assist in both policy development and routine administrative procedures. The boards' positions within the structures of the state ensured both a degree of routine administrative autonomy and the means of continued close political scrutiny. Generally, they ensured that the general direction of the administration of state intervention could be kept within the broad limits defined by the Acts and other instruments which established the boards.

These boards, and the Acts they were to implement, established a powerful,

although minimally coercive, role for the state in colonial education. Together with the social, cultural, political and economic conditions of colonial life they formed the context within which schools were provided, shaped and used. The following chapters explore the character and extent of educational provision within this context.

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## CHAPTER III

### THE CHARACTER OF COLONIAL SCHOOLS

In the schoolroom – there was only one – with an outlook on the street over a little garden there were two Misses Tilney who were teachers, and their somewhat aged mother. She sat close by the window in her black suit and employed herself in doing netting with a shuttle and a mesh. ... The boys and girls would sit on forms on each side of a long wooden table and go through their various exercises and perform their several tasks with one of the teachers at the head, and the other to walk from one of the boys and girls to another and direct them and help them as might be required. They received marks according to merit and these were entered to their credit or otherwise. ... One afternoon the Principal asked him towards the end of the afternoon – "Have I had to ask you to-day to take your elbows off the table?" and he meekly and happily was able to answer "No! Ma'am" and was gratified to hear her reply "Then I will give you five marks for 'Attitude'."<sup>1</sup>

J. L. Young was the teacher in most subjects and his method was this. He would sit on his high stool on his low platform, both slightly raised above the level of the scholars before him. These were ranged before him in rows seated behind their long sloping desks. He would deliver a lecture for about half an hour on some subject, which would be resumed every week. They would take as full notes of this as they thought fit. During the evening at home they had to write a 'Theme' upon the lecture of the day, sign their name to it and put it into a certain box in the school, on or before a certain day. Mr. Young would read this theme and allot to each student a certain number of marks, according to its excellence, and correct any mistakes in it. ... The subjects were well illustrated by diagrams, paintings and pictures which decorated the walls. ... There was never any attempt at oratory in his lectures which were delivered in a familiar, quiet conversational manner, and with an apparent desire and endeavour to impress us with the outstanding features of his subject, and to excite our interest in them. In his deliverances on the history of the different countries, he not only tried to fix the leading events in our mind, but tried to create in us an ardent love of liberty and justice, and an admiration for those who had striven and suffered, and even died in their cause. ... In the Chemistry lectures, he was quite capable of demonstrating them by appropriate experiments, which were greatly enjoyed by his audience.<sup>2</sup>

These two brief descriptions offer sharply contrasting images of schools in Adelaide in the 1860s. Neither is necessarily typical of schools in the period. Rather, they are indicative of the absence of any single type of school which could be described as 'typical', and point to the diversity of educational practices to be found in

the colonies.

This chapter explores the range of these practices. First, it outlines the characteristics of teachers, curricula, forms of classroom organisation, instructional techniques and disciplinary regimes. Second, it examines the physical characteristics of the schools: the buildings they used, the playgrounds, toilets and other amenities. It argues that the overwhelming feature of colonial schools was their diversity. Further, it argues that particular educational practices were closely articulated with particular physical characteristics of the schools to form a number of loosely defined types of schools, widely recognised in colonial society as offering characteristic forms of education. Moreover, within the state supported systems in particular, despite a continuing diversity in most aspects of the schools, an increasing proportion of teachers had undergone some training for their job, while the schools themselves adopted a standardised, gendered staffing hierarchy, curriculum, form of classroom organisation and texts and occupied purpose designed and built premises.

### TEACHERS

The staffing of schools varied in a number of ways. First, the teachers themselves were highly diverse. At one end of the scale were those with a high level of formal education: a sprinkling of male teachers had degrees from British and continental European universities. Females necessarily lacked this qualification, but, as with male teachers, many could evidence distinction in their own educational attainments in other ways through authorship of books, and demonstrable accomplishment in languages and music, wide ranging reading in literature, science, theology and so on. At the other end were those who could barely read and write, more had a limited knowledge of grammar, geography, history, mathematics and other

subjects, while many embarking on teaching had done little reading or formal study for some considerable time and were, on their own admission, intellectually rather rusty. Between these two extremes was a large number with either a sound formal education or an extensive and continuing self education. An incalculable but almost certainly growing proportion of teachers, of varying general educational qualifications, had some form of education or training specifically directed towards the work of teaching, in teacher training institutions and model schools in Britain, continental Europe or the colonies.<sup>3</sup>

The social and occupational backgrounds of teachers also varied widely. Many were of relatively humble, working-class origins, while others came from families enjoying more prestigious social positions; in particular, many of the women who opened select 'Seminaries for Young Ladies' claimed very respectable origins, while many were wives of professional men such as doctors and clergymen. Many had occupied the position of school teacher for most of their adult lives while others had held related positions such as governess or private tutor. Many others had worked at a variety of occupations from labourers, carpenters and masons, to accountants, engineers and ministers of religion. A very large proportion was married, some were unmarried but living in family households (of fathers or married siblings), and some were widowed or deserted. A significant number of both male and female teachers occupied the dubious position of unmarried independent adults within the gender order of colonial society. Many teachers were of English, Scottish or Irish origins, whether they migrated to, or were born in, the colonies and regarded themselves as Australian (or South Australian, Victorian or New South Welsh), and there was a sprinkling of Germans and a handful from elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

Teachers also differed according to their interest in, and views of the necessary qualifications for, teaching. Some saw teaching as a lifelong profession demanding commitment, deliberate preparation, a knowledge of the science of education and high standards of performance in return for social standing, a measure of security if not a degree of affluence, and the recognition of professional peers. For many males of relatively humble origins, and for many women, it offered an exceptional opportunity to venture into independence. For others, teaching was a form of missionary activity, a means of saving potentially lost youth from a life of degradation and misery. For yet others, teaching was simply one of a number of jobs which allowed them to make a living; they could drop in and out of the job according to other circumstances, or combine it with other occupations such as running the post office, farming or shopkeeping. Many of those teaching as a lifelong vocation saw it as a profession, analogous in some respects to law, medicine or religion, demanding high levels of commitment, and requiring specialised preparation, knowledge and skills. Many others clearly saw little need for a sense of vocation or special qualifications beyond the ability to read and write, or a broad general education and a capacity to tolerate long hours of drilling children in the three Rs. Many women taught because the terms of their husbands' appointments as teachers almost inescapably entailed their own assistance teaching female pupils. With the development of centralised colonial education systems with clear rules governing appointment, a more or less guaranteed basic income and the possibility of promotion there was almost certainly an increasing number of women and especially men who engaged in teaching as a secure, long-term career.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, teachers varied in a range of more personal characteristics. Many

teachers were young. Most obviously, those apprenticed as teachers, who were both pupils and part-time instructors under their mentors, were almost necessarily young, many only twelve or thirteen years of age. But many of those who established schools on their own account were not much older. Others were considerably older, some in their fifties and sixties when they turned to teaching. Inevitably, of course, many of those who had embarked on teaching as a lifelong career were relatively old, having been working in schools for twenty or thirty years or more. Some suffered a range of disabilities and infirmities: loss of limbs, deafness, nervous debility, tuberculosis and other diseases. Some displayed a variety of personal quirks: irritability, bad temper, minor obsessions and so on. Teachers' moral characters varied widely: some were given to drunkenness or sexual 'immorality', others were models of piety and religious devotion while yet others displayed offensive self-righteousness, pride and arrogance; some were models of thriftiness while others were repeatedly in debt.<sup>6</sup>

The staffing of the schools varied in several ways other than the qualities of the individual teachers themselves. Most obviously, the levels of staffing differed, whether considered in terms of the absolute numbers of teachers in individual schools or the ratio of teachers to pupils. It is impossible to give an accurate account of numbers of teachers in different schools since anything remotely resembling systematic figures are only available for state-supported schools. Moreover, even these figures refer only to those who were formally employed, while there is ample evidence that in many cases others, not formally 'employed' as staff, assisted in the instruction and management of the pupils in some capacity. Nevertheless, some schools were conducted by a single teacher: parents occasionally defended male teachers who conducted small country schools without female assistance, while elsewhere,

unmarried women were appointed as the sole teachers and evidently conducted their schools without assistance of any type. In contrast, larger schools, such as the model schools of the state education boards and the major denominations had correspondingly large teaching staffs, while many relatively small schools also had more than one teacher. In many single teacher schools, the small number of enrolments necessarily produced low pupil-teacher ratios. In larger schools, whether taught by one or more teachers, the ratios were larger: some teachers had a hundred or more children under their supervision at a time.<sup>7</sup>

Where more than one person was involved in teaching in a school, there was normally a clear hierarchy. This was certainly the case in the schools under the National and later amalgamated schools where roles and responsibilities were to a considerable extent defined by the central authorities. In private venture schools, in the licensed schools in South Australia, and in some denominational schools in New South Wales and Victoria, this reflected the fact that the principal was also the proprietor, who selected, appointed and dismissed staff. A similar situation prevailed in some other denominational schools, where the principal, while not the proprietor, had general control over staffing. In many cases, this bureaucratically or economically based structure was reinforced by the patriarchal structure of the family, as many schools were staffed by families rather than individuals from different families.<sup>8</sup>

This hierarchy was paralleled by a division of labour. Principal teachers often taught either the core subjects in the curriculum, the older and more advanced classes or, in mixed schools, the boys classes. Subordinate teachers taught the 'extra' subjects, in particular needlework for girls in mixed schools, and dancing, foreign languages and other 'accomplishments' in select girls schools. In other cases the

teachers taught the whole school together, the principal having general control of instruction, the assistant helping individual pupils. Principals also took control of a range of additional aspects of the school life: determining duties, constructing timetables, defining the curriculum and, in the case of state supported schools, taking responsibility for the school records and instructing apprentice teachers where they were engaged.<sup>9</sup>

The staffing of schools was also structured by gender. Where schools enrolled children of one sex only, the principal was almost always of the same sex as the pupils. Where additional staff were employed in boys' schools they were almost always male teachers. In girls' schools, however, they might be of either sex: many dancing teachers, for example, were men. In mixed-sex schools, especially where they were relatively large, the teaching staff also usually comprised male and female teachers. In these cases, males typically monopolised the senior positions with females almost always holding subordinate positions, in particular, as assistants and sewing mistresses. In mixed, single-teacher schools under the state education boards the teachers were most often males. However, there was at least a sprinkling of women teachers appointed in charge of single-teacher schools under each of the boards. This imbalance in the ratio of male to female teachers in charge of schools is especially significant since substantially more teachers were women than men, even when only those formally employed are counted. The situation may have been different in those private schools represented in the official statistics. The number of women teachers in such schools outnumbered the men even more markedly than in the state schools. However, the proportion of girls' schools was comparably greater than in the state systems, so that there was more scope for women to control their

own schools than under the boards. Moreover, many of the mixed schools catered principally to girls, with only a handful of young boys, and these schools, too, were usually run by women rather than men.<sup>10</sup>

### CURRICULUM

What was taught in schools varied widely, although it is generally difficult and often simply impossible to get any really detailed notion of precisely what was taught. It seems likely that at most schools the knowledge in which students were to be instructed was organised into distinct 'subjects' with more or less well defined boundaries, largely inherited from long established and widely diffused educational practice in western Europe generally. The core of instruction in most schools was reading and writing in English, and arithmetic, widely acknowledged as the basis of the elementary curriculum. Some schools provided no more than this rudimentary instruction, while others added little more than formal instruction in morality and religion. In many schools this was supplemented by a selection of subjects such as history, geography, group singing, simple English grammar, Christian religion (either dogmatic or of a more general character) and needlework. Many schools also taught what were seen as 'advanced' subjects. These not only included extensions of elementary arithmetic and grammar but algebra and geometry, natural sciences and modern languages, bookkeeping and accounting, instrumental music and individual singing, 'classical' languages (reading, writing and grammar) and literature, dancing, drawing and watercolour painting, deportment and elocution, and what were identified as 'industrial' subjects, in particular, agricultural work in the case of boys and domestic work in the case of girls. In many schools the individual subjects were organised sequentially, so that pupils had to complete one level before embarking on the next;

often, the various levels of different subjects were grouped so that pupils had to complete all subjects at the one level before proceeding in any.<sup>11</sup>

A more detailed indication of what the elementary curriculum comprised can be gleaned from the board inspectors' reports. For instance, the national school at Heidelberg in Victoria at the time of the inspector's visit in 1860, comprised 28 boys and 20 girls. All were being taught to read, write and spell. First, they were taught to identify letters, then to read 'little words'. From there, they began reading, first by spelling words before they pronounced them, then without spelling, then proceeding to more advanced books. In writing, children were first taught to form letters on slates, progressing to writing short words and, later, to copying or even composing extended passages. Spelling must have been taught simultaneously with reading and writing from the start, although the inspector made no mention of this. By the time they were beginning to read at all fluently they were required to write passages from dictation with attention to both handwriting and spelling. At about the same time, they were introduced to the study of grammar, in particular to the naming of 'parts of speech'. All children were taught arithmetic. At the beginning, they learned tables, then to work addition sums. From there they proceeded to 'the first four rules' and notation of three figures followed by the 'compound rules', proportion and long division and notation to seven figures. Some boys and girls who had advanced thus far were taught book-keeping, while a handful of boys were also taught mensuration and geometry. All who had begun to learn to read were instructed in geography and scripture history, while all girls were taught needlework from the outset.<sup>12</sup>

While this description refers to only a single school, it is characteristic of

inspectors' reports on national schools rather than outstanding or exceptional: it exhibits the same general selection of subjects and the same general description and sequencing of content as many, if not most, others. However, it is important to note that at a more general level, inspectors in all state-regulated systems observed that the level of instruction varied widely and, especially beyond the three Rs, was often extremely elementary if not uninformed and inaccurate.<sup>13</sup>

This picture of the elementary curriculum can be contrasted with that which Joseph Verco painted of the more advanced curriculum at John Young's boys' school. Subjects included book-keeping, penmanship, spelling, history, geography, English literature, mental and moral philosophy, political economy, geology, astronomy, anatomy and physiology, Latin, Greek, French, German, mathematics, mechanical drawing, surveying, chemistry and physics. History included both biblical and modern British and European history, while English literature ranged from Bede to the romantic poets.<sup>14</sup>

In many schools, the curriculum included other elements which cut across the division of knowledge into subjects. Most importantly, in many cases instruction in social propriety and proper behaviour and action appear to have permeated the whole curriculum. This was often firmly based on the knowledge of 'moral' social and behavioural principles which were often in turn rooted in general christian ethics. These concerns were paralleled by a concern with the shaping of attitudes, dispositions and habits: individual respect for other persons, property and authority, perseverance, honesty, and sobriety. In some cases there was an underlying concern with 'manners' or cultural style, which included the proper manner of comporting the

body, whether walking, sitting at table or performing a range of other actions. The curriculum in many schools also offered pupils a composite of knowledges, attitudes and values which stressed the superiority of European over non-European cultures and peoples, the rightness of a capitalist mode of production and its attendant class structure and the necessity and propriety of a patriarchal gender order centred on the co-resident family. Within that general framework many taught the superiority of Irish, Scottish, English or, in some cases, German people and their preferred (Catholic or Protestant) versions of Christianity over their fellow Europeans and their religious allegiances in ways which sat awkwardly with other aspects of their more general values. Yet critical observers claimed that in many schools these concerns were largely absent and that teachers concentrated solely on the formal, explicit content of the subjects. Since they often identified the schools which most often 'failed' as those most like the unregulated working-class private schools, it seems likely that these characteristics were relatively widespread.<sup>15</sup>

It is important to recognise that what teachers taught and what pupils learned might diverge markedly. Inspectors complained about pupils' misunderstanding of even the most elementary knowledge. At the Heidelberg national school, for instance, the inspector claimed that while children were taught to read they generally did so poorly, that they showed little knowledge or understanding of the geography and scripture history they were taught, could not work arithmetic sums they had supposedly learned to do and wrote poorly.<sup>16</sup>

Further, children either failed, or refused, to learn the important lessons in morality and good behaviour which many of the schools claimed to teach and added

to their repertoires of 'immorality' and bad behaviour from their peers. Parents complained that they learned 'bad language' at school; teachers and pastors complained that they wrote sexually improper graffiti; newspaper editors complained that they threw stones at Chinese and others; and some pupils' books reveal racist slurs on 'niggers', 'wogs' and 'frog eaters', sexual innuendo and preoccupations with 'low life'.<sup>17</sup>

### ORGANISATION

The organisation of schools also varied widely. In many schools, however, children were gathered as a whole in an undifferentiated group or divided only crudely by age and gender. In many others they were grouped into 'classes', according to their progression through the curriculum; in particular they were based on their progress in reading, especially where reading was taught from the graded series of class books published by bodies such as the Irish National Schools Commissioners, the British and Foreign Schools Society and the National Society. In the largest schools, children were grouped into as many as five or six such classes, while in others there were only two or three. Where schools were small, the attempt to classify children in this way produced groups of as few as two or three rendering the classification almost illusory and largely pointless. Moreover, while in larger schools the different classes often had different teachers and sometimes different rooms, in many others the same teacher taught several classes together.<sup>18</sup>

To some extent, age complemented the curriculum as a basis for organising pupils, and very young pupils were often segregated from others into 'infants' departments. Gender often articulated with the curriculum to provide a further basis

of organisation. Within the elementary curriculum needlework divided the sexes, often giving boys more time for arithmetic, while advanced subjects were often clearly directed at one sex only: dancing, instrumental music and drawing for girls, classics, sciences and accounting for boys. However, in those subjects in the elementary curriculum which were common to boys and girls, gender cut sharply across the organisation of children into curriculum-based classes. In the larger mixed schools they were frequently put into different classes even though they were taught the same formal content; in the smaller schools they were often in the same class but formally distinguished and even physically separated. Age and gender also interacted in shaping school organisation: boys and girls were often taught together to about the age of seven, and then separated.<sup>19</sup>

Where teachers adopted no systematic scheme of class organisation of their schools, pupils necessarily must have proceeded at their own rate, a process doubtless reinforced by a high incidence of movement from one school or teacher to another. Where schools did adopt class-based curricular and pupil organisation, progression from class to class was also organised in a range of ways. In most cases, substantial groups of pupils were promoted simultaneously from one class to the next on the basis of examination on an annual or semi-annual basis, while in some cases pupils were promoted individually at the discretion of the teacher. In many cases, however, while teachers formally employed such procedures, their efforts were largely negated by the high turnover of pupils and the irregularity of their attendance while they were enrolled. Moreover, in many cases, parents insisted that teachers place their children in particular classes or either 'retard' or 'accelerate' their progress from

class to class.<sup>20</sup>

The marshalling of pupils into classes also involved the organisation of time and space in the school. Beyond the definition of physical and social boundaries marking off the school from the rest of the community, the most basic division of space defined the areas constituted as instructional areas and those as non-instructional, such as domestic, religious, or recreational areas. In many cases there was minimal differentiation between these areas, notably in churches and private dwellings, but also in school buildings in which teachers found it necessary to sleep or eat. In many others, however, the demarcation was far sharper: the school building, or a clearly defined section of it, was appropriated solely for instruction and all instruction was carried out there.<sup>21</sup>

The space set aside for instruction was also used in a wide variety of ways. Classes, for instance, were arrayed in adjacent groups, separated by partitions or allocated to different rooms. In some schools different classes within a single room took turns working in the forms and at the desks respectively. The layout of some school buildings meant that some classes frequently passed through the space allocated to others. The provision and distribution of furniture also varied widely. In some schools chairs and stools were arranged about the room in ways which seemed quite disorderly and indiscriminate to visiting school inspectors. In others, desks were fixed around the walls, with rows of forms in parallel rows in the centre of the room, facing the teacher's desk or lectern, or grouped in smaller collections of rows. Where schools were held in chapels, the forms or pews the pupils occupied were arranged as they were for worship, in parallel rows occupying the bulk of the nave. In other

cases, forms were arranged on either sides of long tables. Finally, many schools had desks and forms arranged in groups of parallel rows facing a blackboard and teacher's desk at the front.<sup>22</sup>

The definition of the days in the week, and the hours of the day set aside for instruction, as well as of holidays, varied in detail within generally common limits. Characteristically, schools were open for instruction from Monday to Friday or Saturday with vacations of a week or two at mid-year and Christmas, but many schools closed for occasional days for a variety of reasons including the weather, local events and for health and other personal reasons of the teachers. Others closed seasonally to accommodate the demands of the local economy for labour during planting and harvest times. The fact that a substantial number of schools enjoyed only spasmodic lives, opening and closing irregularly, compounds this general picture.<sup>23</sup>

Most schools had formally fixed hours. Nine o'clock was a common opening time, although in some areas other times were customary – at St. Kilda, Melbourne, one teacher commented that no school opened before 10 o'clock.<sup>24</sup> Lunch was commonly of one to two hours in the middle of the day, many schools allowed their pupils mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks, and four o'clock was a common closing time. However, many of the less formally constituted schools may have had no fixed hours and, in some cases, even where hours were formally set, teachers varied them widely either out of personal irregularity or in response to such factors as weather. Even when teachers adhered rigidly to set hours, the effective hours of schooling varied widely. Pupils attended as their involvement in other activities, or the exigencies or weather and roads or the lack of watches or clocks at home determined.<sup>25</sup>

Within the hours of schooling in many schools, the division of time was very flexible with lessons sliding into each other and occupying longer or shorter periods during different parts of the day according to the teachers' decisions at the time. In many schools, however, the time was divided quite strictly into periods allocated to different purposes: instruction and play, and instruction in different subjects. In some, this time was tightly planned and regulated by the teacher, according to a written timetable, which was displayed in the classroom and allocated different but fixed proportions of time to different subjects. In others, it was followed in general outline rather than in detail.<sup>26</sup>

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

In almost all schools pupils spent much of their time working individually although, especially in those schools organised into classes, they spent a substantial portion of it working as whole class groups with their teacher(s). The balance between collective and individual activity not only differed from school to school but between and within subjects in schools which did employ class organisation; teachers commonly taught arithmetic individually, while they more often taught reading and geography to whole classes. In some cases they alternated between collective instruction and individual attention or employed simultaneous and individual methods at the same time, one teacher instructing the group while another moved from pupil to pupil. In most cases, teachers directly instructed or examined their pupils, whether individually or collectively. Occasionally, they taught them indirectly, requiring them to observe the formal lessons being taught to others. In sharp contrast to this strongly teacher-focused approach, pupils sometimes actively worked together, discussing and sharing

knowledge as part of the routine classroom procedure.<sup>27</sup>

Teachers widely presented much of the subject matter of lessons orally; many used blackboards, maps and illustrations of objects, and much instruction was based on the use of texts. Arithmetic, for instance, was widely taught 'from the book', while reading almost inevitably rested heavily on texts. In many schools, children used whatever texts they brought from home, while in many others they used sets of texts written specifically for class use in schools, notably the Irish National, British and Foreign and a range of denominational series, various texts by colonial writers such as Bonwick and Wickes, and specialist works such as Colenso's arithmetic, Morell's grammar, Magnall's history, and Hullah's and Curwen's song books and manuals. In a few schools, especially for the very young, formal teaching proceeded in part by oral instruction but to a large extent by giving the children concrete objects such as models and coloured blocks to play with, pictures to look at and a variety of games and physical exercises, all under the careful supervision of the teacher.<sup>28</sup>

Oral instruction often took the form of lectures or short expositions followed by questions and pupil answers which they corrected where necessary. Blackboards were often used to provide pupil exercises, lists of facts or examples of correct working of exercises in support of oral instruction. Maps were most commonly used in geography and to a lesser extent in history, especially bible history, while illustrations often supported teaching the natural sciences. Occasionally, teachers conducted excursions on which pupils mapped the features of local landscapes or identified plants. Texts were used in at least two characteristic ways. Often, in reading and arithmetic, for instance, pupils worked individually from them, the teacher then

examining the work done. Alternatively, teachers, individual pupils or classes read portions of text aloud, the teachers interrupting or following the reading by asking pupils to spell words, repeat from memory or answer questions from what they had read.<sup>29</sup>

Much teaching focused on the memorisation of both texts and lists of facts derived either from them or from the teacher's expositions. Instruction was followed by drilling – the repetition by pupils of lists of facts learned – or (in arithmetic, for instance,) by exercises in the procedures learned. Some teaching, however, was more concerned with 'understanding'; pupils were asked to explain meanings and principles, to demonstrate in their 'expression' in reading that they understood the text, or to show through written essays or other constructive projects their mastery of orthographic and other skills, language and subject matter.<sup>30</sup>

Schools exhibited widely divergent forms of discipline and behaviour. In many classrooms pupils sat in an upright position at desks or on forms, their placement, and movement in and out of the room, and from place to place within it, was quiet and strictly regulated by the teacher. Inside the classroom, they spoke largely when asked to by the teachers. Other classrooms were much noisier and pupils talked and entered, left and moved around far more freely, adopting a much wider range of postures.<sup>31</sup>

These differences, in part, reflected both teacher expectations and disciplinary techniques. First, teachers adopted differing forms of surveillance. In some schools teachers consistently set out to observe as much pupil activity as possible, both in the classroom and outside it. In others teachers largely attended to only those pupils with

whom they were directly involved in instruction or examination. Some in fact left their pupils unattended for lengthy periods during lesson times, while others attended to their classrooms in varying states of drunkenness.<sup>32</sup>

Second, they used a variety of means of asserting their authority. Many, perhaps most, rested principally on physical violence or the threat of it, administered either specifically for defined offences and against particular individuals or more generally, even arbitrarily, for a range of ill-defined or undefined activities and on groups as well as individuals. Physical violence was probably more widely used against male pupils than females and by male rather than female teachers, but was certainly not restricted to them. Other punishments widely resorted to, either in addition to or instead of corporal punishment, included confinement, ridicule, detention, extra work, and exclusion from school. In some cases, discipline and teacher authority were cultivated not through repression and threat, but through the teachers' attempts to cultivate the affection of pupils (being friendly), through appeal to reason, morality or religion (lectures of exhortation and admonition), or through rational self-interest (giving prizes and rewards, either individually or to whole classes indiscriminately).<sup>33</sup>

These different aspects of schools were articulated in a number of ways. The different curricular elements, for instance, were formed into several standard groupings: the three Rs, perhaps with geography, history and religion and needlework for girls, formed what was commonly labelled a sound elementary English education. What was known as a commercial curriculum characteristically included history, geography, grammar, accounting and bookkeeping. Moreover, particular forms of school organisation tended to go hand in hand with particular pedagogies: particular

arrangements of furniture, for instance, were designed to support Lancastrian monitorial methods, while different arrangements were required for class teaching models developed in the second third of the century. More generally, particular curriculum groupings, organisational principles, pedagogical and disciplinary methods and selections of texts articulated with teacher characteristics to form several distinctive types of school. For instance, the liberal, modern elementary school featured class organisation and instruction, Irish National readers, the 'sound elementary curriculum' defined above, a fixed timetable and highly regulated pupil activity enforced by rational rather than corporal discipline. It also featured trained teachers and a division of labour which arranged them hierarchically according to the class level they taught. A markedly different form of elementary school, stigmatised as the 'dame school', was characterised by individual instruction in the three Rs, pupils assembled as a single group, rote learning, untrained teachers, flexible use of time, relatively loosely regulated pupil behaviour but free use of corporal punishment and a variety of texts. A third contrasting type of school was characterised by a curriculum which gave considerable prominence to modern European languages and literatures, music, and other elements of middle-class female culture, a well educated staff, and a division of labour based in part on teacher expertise in specific subject areas, individual and group instruction (but not necessarily on the basis of organised classes) and relatively close, 'personal' relations between teachers and pupils.<sup>34</sup>

These combinations and their labels were flexible. The accomplishments curriculum for instance, could describe various combinations of fancy needlework, drawing, painting, speaking modern European languages, reading English and other

European literature, dancing, deportment, instrumental music, writing poetry and so on. Many schools taught both elementary and advanced subjects. Many of the 'modern' elementary schools had untrained teachers or loose timetables or merely notional classification of pupils, or used principally oral rather than text-based instruction, or corporal rather than rational discipline. Nevertheless, within the systems of state supported schools an increasing standardisation, a narrowing of the range of variation in the organisational, curricular, instructional and disciplinary practices of the schools was evident.

#### ACCOMMODATION

The buildings in which schools were housed and the grounds on which they were situated shaped the range of possibilities open to teachers for organising and instructing pupils in school and supervising them out of lessons. School buildings, in fact, varied as widely as the educational practices conducted in and around them. Many schools in the cities, suburbs, towns and rural districts of the three colonies were conducted in private dwelling houses. Some teachers advertised quite explicitly that their establishments were conducted in their own residences. The School Commissioners, reporting on their tours of inspection of school in New South Wales in 1855, the later inspectors under the Denominational board and Council of Education in that colony, and the Chief Inspector of Schools in South Australia all identified numbers of schools which were held in teachers' dwellings in their published annual reports. The reports of the Director of Catholic Education in South Australia indicated that a number of Catholic schools occupied dwelling houses. Applications for financial assistance under the various education boards and the inspectors' reports on them

revealed additional schools in domestic accommodation. Occasionally, parliamentary select committees or systematic returns in response to questions asked in the legislature yielded further evidence of teachers conducting schools at home. Finally, scattered memoirs and reminiscences recall either conducting or attending schools in private homes.<sup>35</sup>

In many of these cases the premises served as both schools and residential quarters for the teacher. In others, however, the building had been appropriated solely for teaching. Elizabeth Whitelaw opened her first school in a cottage she rented specifically for the purpose, separate from her family residence. At Camden in New South Wales in 1849 and at nearby Menangle nearly twenty years later, school promoters searching for temporary school quarters rented vacant cottages. At Berwick in Victoria, a local farmer made a cottage on his property available for school purposes where it had been used as a residence by a tenant farmer but had become vacant. The Port Elliot and Goolwa District Council in South Australia secured a vacant cottage at the village of Currency Creek to house the school. Sometimes, it was impossible to separate educational and residential functions: the teachers of many boarding schools stressed the familial ambience of their school, making the domestic character of the arrangements central, and demanding the integration of residence and school.<sup>36</sup>

Some of the residences used for schools were large, spacious and solidly middle class; others, in contrast, were smaller and less imposing, sometimes even squalid, working-class cottages and rooms. In South Australia, for example, William Wyatt, the Inspector of Schools, frequently complained about the number of schools

held in domestic quarters and identified those held in the 'hovels' of the poor as the least satisfactory, describing them as cramped, dark and stuffy. While Wyatt was referring to licensed schools, such schools had to be established as private schools first in order to apply. Moreover, many of the schools the Board refused to license, especially in the early 1850s, were held in premises which the inspector described in precisely the same terms.<sup>37</sup>

As noted earlier, schools were also conducted in churches and chapels. In the capital cities of the three colonies this appears to have been relatively and increasingly rare, although instances could still be found in the 1870s. This practice was more common in the suburbs, and increasingly so in the country towns and chapel-schools were relatively widespread in the rural districts outside the towns. Not all buildings serving the double function of church and school were designed principally as churches; many, in fact, were built principally as schools. Wyatt, for example, often referred to schoolrooms in which worship was held, implicitly distinguishing them from churches in which schools were conducted. The Council's inspectors, asked to report on the numbers of schools used for religious services identified many but carefully stressed that none was principally designed for or used as a church. The Board of Education inspectors, too, insofar as they commented on the use of building for church purposes, characteristically referred to schools used for worship. Elsewhere, such reports were carefully ambiguous: H.C.E. Childers' report on schools in Victoria visited in the course of his tour of inspection in 1850, for example, stated that 23 of the 60 schools he visited were used as places of worship. Finally, many schools shared their premises only temporarily.<sup>38</sup>

In many places, teachers and communities made use of a variety of other forms of makeshift accommodation for their schools. Church schools in both town and country often made use of existing rooms attached to the local churches, while others occupied buildings which were designed neither for worship nor school but had been appropriated to both purposes. The proposed national school at Berwick, for instance, shared a vacant farmhouse with the church, while the Anglican school at Wilberforce in New South Wales shared the upstairs rooms of a large house. Others appropriated large buildings such as warehouses and stores, while one occupied a disused windmill and another a former hospital. Some used smaller and perhaps less impressive buildings: workshops, bakeries, huts, barns, lofts, skillions and dairies.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, many schools were held in buildings erected especially for school purposes. The National boards, the later amalgamated boards in New South Wales and Victoria and (belatedly) the South Australian board erected large central schools on their own account and supported local school committees throughout the colonies to provide purpose-built schoolhouses, both as initiatives of the central denominational organisation such as their central model schools and as local parish undertakings. Some individual churches, too, erected rooms especially for school purposes. In Sydney, for instance, the Presbyterians had specially built schoolrooms at Woolloomooloo and at the back of J. D. Lang's Scots church in the city. The Wesleyan's Surry Hills school under the Denominational board occupied rooms built for the purpose. And St. Lawrence's Church of England also had a building erected as a parochial schoolhouse. Some teachers, especially the proprietors of larger and more lavish enterprises, landowners interested in local education, and some school

committees, also provided purpose-built accommodation. Finally, institutions such as the Randwick Asylum for Destitute Children also taught their inmates in rooms provided especially for the purpose.<sup>40</sup>

It is impossible to calculate the incidence of different types of school accommodation. First, there is a simple lack of relevant statistical or other information as there are no systematic records of those private establishments which comprised at least half the schools. Even for the schools under the various state boards, the evidence is patchy. The South Australian board, for instance, provided figures for the numbers of vested schoolhouses, but not all these were purpose-built or even used solely for school purposes.<sup>41</sup> Under the National board in New South Wales until the late 1850s all schools were vested schools. However, not all were purpose-built and the published statistics do not unambiguously indicate which or how many were. In Victoria, where many schools under the National board were non-vested schools, the situation is even less clear.<sup>42</sup> Under the Denominational boards, many premises built with central assistance on the condition that they were used for school rather than church purposes were, in fact, used for both and, in some cases, were designed more for church than school.<sup>43</sup>

Second, the task of assessing the changing relative proportions of different types of school accommodation is conceptually, as well as empirically, difficult. For example, many purpose-built schoolhouses contained residential accommodation for the teacher and family. The Kempsey and Glenwilliam schools, for example, were among the earliest of the New South Wales national schools and both included residential quarters for the teacher, either under the same roof as the schoolroom or

immediately adjacent to it. By 1878, 224 of the 564 schools under the Council of Education in New South Wales were held in schoolhouses which included teacher residences. Most of these were in the rural districts. Of the schools in the Sydney district, for example, only those at Manly and Botany had residences attached and, even in the country, many of the larger schools in towns such as Armidale, Bathurst, Newcastle and Wagga Wagga provided no teacher residence. In contrast, nineteen of the thirty-five, schools in the largely rural Armidale district and twenty-two of the forty-two in the Mudgee district incorporated residences. In South Australia, none of the vested schools was in Adelaide. In the country districts, however, where most of the vested schools were built, over half of them included teacher accommodation: sixty-three out of one hundred by 1873.<sup>44</sup>

Further, many of the residential buildings used as schools effectively established themselves as schoolrooms rather than residences, retaining their function as a succession of teachers moved in and out. In New South Wales, for example, Springdale House, Parramatta, was maintained as a school after James Bradley shifted to Annan Grove, and when Mrs Symons removed her school from Sunbury House, Surry Hills, Mrs Metcalfe immediately shifted her school there.<sup>45</sup> This, and the number of schools with resident pupils, makes the task of assessing the balance between purpose-built and dwelling house school accommodation even more difficult.

Moreover, many of the buildings originally designed for other uses and appropriated to school purposes had been extensively adapted to school purposes. Jane Lillywhite, in North Adelaide, and James Jolly, in suburban Walkerville, occupied former chapels which had undergone substantial changes in order to adapt them as

schools. The promoters of a licensed school at Mount Pleasant in the Adelaide hills bought the Bible Christian chapel and extensively modified it for school purposes. At Hunter's Hill in New South Wales, the Municipal Council offered its Chambers for school purposes and after some modification the building was appropriated to its new function. At Kenny's Point the local proprietor provided a disused hut on his property for a school, offering to add windows, a floor and furniture to render it more suitable to its new role. And in many cases teachers modified the dwellings in which they conducted their schools to make them more suitable for school use. At Bathurst the teacher removed an internal wall to convert the front two rooms into one much larger one. Even Fort Street national school in Sydney, the flagship school of the national system in New South Wales, was held in a converted military hospital.<sup>46</sup>

Despite these problems, two general points can be made. First, the numbers of purpose-built schools grew throughout the third quarter of the century. In South Australia, for instance, both the absolute number, and the proportion of licensed schools held in vested premises steadily increased from 1855 to 1875. In addition, the board reported at least a handful of licensed schools in premises built by teachers for the purpose and some of the private schools were similarly provided for. In the eastern colonies, the National board vigorously promoted the provision of purpose-built premises, although the recognition of non-vested schools in Victoria from its inception and New South Wales from the late 1850s weakened their campaign. Nevertheless, in both colonies, many new national schools were provided from the start with 'proper' buildings and many existing schools gradually replaced makeshift premises with purpose built rooms. And, in Victoria, some of the reports of the inspectors indicate

that the number of denominational schools in buildings erected and set aside solely for school purposes was also increasing. Second, large numbers of schools continued to be conducted in both church buildings and private dwellings.<sup>47</sup>

School buildings, whether purpose-built, or adapted from other uses, were constructed of a wide variety of materials. The National and Denominational boards in Victoria provided a number of tent schools constructed of canvas on wooden frames as well as several prefabricated iron buildings. Many schoolrooms were built of rough timber slabs. Others were of sawn and seasoned timber planking, nailed horizontally to vertical struts and, potentially, far better sealed against the weather. The largest, as well as many smaller schools – whether public or private, or in domestic dwellings, churches or purpose built accommodation – were generally of brick or stone. Roofing materials were similarly diverse ranging from bark or thatch on many of the slab buildings, through iron or zinc sheeting, to wooden or slate shingles.<sup>48</sup>

Most purpose-built schools were designed with fireplaces, although many of the two-roomed schools had a fireplace only in the main room. However, in some cases the design was poor so that even with a fire it was impossible to warm the room. In others, iron stoves were placed in the centre of the schoolroom. It is highly probable that most domestic dwellings had fireplaces, although there is no systematic or extensive evidence bearing on the point. Often, however, where schools were conducted in barns, huts and other rough makeshift buildings, no effective heating was provided. Fireplaces also formed no part of church design, although it is possible, as Burchell suggests, that stoves were placed in church buildings used for schools. Even in some purpose-built schools, including the Denominational and National boards'

tents, there was no provision for heating and, in at least some of the pre-fabricated iron schoolrooms, the fireplaces were missing.<sup>49</sup>

The larger and more elaborate purpose-built schools often made careful provision for ventilation, with high roofs or ceilings and a variety of wall grates and roof ventilators, and windows which either pivoted or hung on sashes allowing them to be opened. The proprietors of many of the Academies for Young Ladies or Gentlemen claimed that the dwellings they occupied were lofty, spacious and well ventilated. Many churches, huts of primitive construction and some purpose-built schools had no ceilings, maximising the volume and flow of air. However, in many other schoolrooms, roofs and ceilings were low and no special provision was made for ventilation. Many had fixed windows, so that the only ventilation was through the door. In a few places windows were unglazed, while in many slab buildings the walls themselves admitted a generous flow of air.<sup>50</sup> As the teacher at Nelson's Plains put it: 'being a slab building there is a sufficient [ventilation]'.<sup>51</sup>

In most purpose-built schoolrooms, in churches and other large public buildings and in the better private houses there was ample window space to provide good natural light. Some, such as the Paddington national school provided additional light by inserting skylights in the roof. Where schools were held in tents the canvas itself was held to allow sufficient light, and teachers commented sardonically that some slab buildings also allowed additional illumination through the roof and walls. A number of the huts and other makeshift rooms, however, had no windows, and some schools where there were windows were little better lit.<sup>52</sup>

The majority of schools occupied single roomed premises. Most of those which

used churches almost necessarily had a single teaching room. So, too, did many of those conducted in private dwellings and other makeshift premises. And, well over half of the purpose-built premises also contained only one teaching room. In some cases, even where more than one room was available only one was used for teaching. A substantial number of schools, however, occupied more than one room. Many of these were purpose-built including most of the central schools of the state boards and major denominations, many of the vested schools under the boards, and some of the larger private schools. Others, however, were private residences or other makeshift buildings, rented or bought and adapted for school use.<sup>53</sup>

School rooms varied widely in size. Many of the rooms in private dwellings or other makeshift premises – the 'huts', 'barns' and other 'wretched hovels' so widely condemned – were small for the number of pupils they housed. Others, in contrast, were large and lofty, especially in the larger central schools, many of the purpose-built schools in the suburbs and country towns, and some of the more imposing private residences. Many of the chapel-schools also had a large floor area; while not all this space was available for school use, thus limiting the number of pupils who might be accommodated, it did ensure ample ventilation, especially where walls were high and ceilings lofty.<sup>54</sup>

The grounds within which the schools stood also varied enormously. Most obviously, they varied in area. At one end of the scale, there were many schools which occupied large and spacious grounds. At the other end of the scale, some schools had little or no land attached to the school. In some cases, however, schools with little or no grounds formally attached to them had access to adjacent open or

public land. Where schools stood on relatively small grounds or were placed only short distances from roadways or footpaths they were often securely fenced. In some cases, the grounds were also internally fenced, dividing boys' playing areas from girls' or marking off portions of the grounds for the teachers' use. In many cases, however, the grounds were unfenced or only partly fenced, leaving the school boundaries undefined. Where the schoolrooms, or the domestic dwellings or terraces they occupied abutted the street, where the only grounds were the small backyards, and where schools had virtually no attached grounds, the notion of enclosure could have meant very little.<sup>55</sup>

Most school grounds had toilets. Some were in solidly built wooden, brick or weatherboard structures often with separate buildings or compartments for male and female pupils and for the teacher. Many of the more elaborate toilets were carefully screened from each other with partitions and either located strategically in a corner behind the schoolroom or hidden from the general view by fences, hedges or other forms of enclosure. Others were more makeshift structures like the schools themselves, with a single toilet serving teacher and pupils alike. Some were placed where they were conspicuously open to view from either school or street, or both. Many were in disrepair. Moreover, a substantial number of schools had no toilet facilities of their own and children and teachers presumably used those of neighbouring buildings or, perhaps, the adjacent bushland.<sup>56</sup>

Whatever schools may have been like in their original or ideal state, there were at any one time many which were in considerable disrepair. The tent schools proved unsatisfactory from the start as they were prone to rot and easily damaged, the roofs

often leaked and it was often difficult to prevent water flooding across the floors in wet weather. Of the more solidly constructed buildings, many of those in the most urgent need of attention were those of slab or weatherboard. However, those of brick or stone were also susceptible to decay: badly made bricks crumbled and mortar dissolved, badly set foundations shifted causing walls to crack, tin or slate roofs lifted or developed leaks and so on. Even some constructed of first class materials were poorly designed or erected, showing faults in construction even before they opened to pupils. Moreover, many buildings, including some which had been well constructed and maintained, were seriously overcrowded, especially where the population in the neighbourhood had grown since the school was established.<sup>57</sup>

School buildings and grounds, clearly, were as diverse as the educational practices they accommodated. Nevertheless, an increasing proportion of schools within the state systems occupied buildings designed, built, and available solely for school purposes. Moreover, an increasing number of such schools occupied fully enclosed grounds of at least an acre or two. While the lack of evidence of schools outside the purview of the state education systems makes it impossible to draw any firm conclusions about the balance between different types of schools, it seems likely that in the field of elementary popular education, an increasing proportion of schools was conducted by teachers who had received some form of training, adopted a standardised, formal, hierarchical curriculum, organised graded classes and taught using 'simultaneous' methods and standardised school texts, notably those of the Irish National system.

To some extent, existing accounts of the period have also noted this diversity, and dealt with it in two ways. First, they recognise some diversity as the legitimate differentiation between boys' and girls' schooling and between the more extensive education to be expected of the wealthier classes and the necessarily more limited education of the working class. Second, they lump most of the practices described here together and simply dismiss them as 'inferior' education, without ever examining their actual features. This account thus fills an empirical gap in the historiography of the period. It is worth noting that despite pursuing rather different questions and interests historians such as Gidney and Kaestle in North America, Laqueur, Frith and Gardner in England and Maynes in France and Germany have documented a similarly wide array of different forms of classroom organisation, pedagogy, teachers and curricula, even where noting the emergence of increasingly standardised practices.<sup>58</sup>

This chapter attempts to rescue the varied forms of educational practice from oblivion. Further, by attempting to describe their positive characteristics in as neutral terms as possible, it opens them to careful scrutiny, so that their significance in colonial education and in the formation and articulation of social relations can be carefully assessed rather than prejudged. One step towards such an assessment is to identify the social bases of support for different forms of schooling, and it is this task which Chapter Four addresses.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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VPRS880/27, Simpson to NCE 10 February 1868, NSA1/779; Newspapers, eg., Register 12 March 1851, 7 February 1857. Theobald also discusses the matter in relation to middle-class women teachers: "'Mere accomplishments'? Melbourne's early ladies' schools reconsidered', History of Education Review, vol. 13, no. 2, 1984, 'Women's teaching labour: the family and the state in nineteenth-century Victoria' in R.J.W.Selleck & M.L.Theobald (eds.), Family, school and state in Australian history, Sydney, 1990. Many sources attribute 'unsatisfactory' motives to teachers, notably failure at all other occupations and financial desperation, eg., Register 16 April 1850, Gawler Bunyip 19 May 1866; it seems unwise to take such claims at face value without first examining the context and political purpose of such claims.

6. For comments on individual teachers see: Education boards' minutes, eg., SCBE Minutes, 3 February 1868; Education boards' reports, eg., NBNE, Report 1862, p.8; Education boards' correspondence files, eg., McEncroe to NDSB 5 July 1849, NSA1/311, Gardiner to Secretary NCE 28 January 1867, NSA1/760, Gardiner to NCE 4 March 1867, NSA1/744, Slater to NCE 13 October 1868, NSA1/779, Johnson, Report on applicants for training 19 December 1867, NSA1/832, Allpass, Report on inspection 29 September 1869, NSA1/816, Huffer, Report of inspection, 17 July 1873, NSA1/947, Gardiner, Examiner's report on pupil-teachers 9 December 1867, NSA1/832, Reed to VBE 25 January 1868, VPRS892/88, Geary to Budd 31 January 1862, Marshall to VBE 3 April 1867, VPRS892/91; Childers, Journal, eg., p.108; Parliamentary papers, eg., Report on Provisional School at Glendon Brook, NSW V&P LA 1873-4, p.2; Newspapers, eg., Border Watch 23 November 1872, Register 1 January 1872.

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Autobiography, VLaT Ms.12073. p.86; Parliamentary papers, eg., Return of children attending Denominational Schools, NSW V&P LA 1865 (Note that the overwhelming number of schools returning only a single male teacher has to be set against the individual inspectors' reports which indicate the preponderance of schools in which wives worked as assistant teachers and in which paid or unpaid monitors were employed).

9. For general comments see: Education boards' reports, eg., NDSB, Report 1862, p.7, NCE, Report 1867, pp.9-10, SCBE, Report, SAGG 1862, pp.377-83, VBE, Report 1864, p.56; Newspapers, eg., Southern Australian, 29 September, 1838. For systematic comments on individual cases see: Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406; Childers, Journal; Parliamentary papers, eg., Statistics 1860-61 - school returns, SAPP 1861, no.89; Education boards' correspondence files, eg., Trotter to VBE 15 March 1867, VPRS892/49; Reminiscences, eg., E.Whitelaw, Reminiscences of life in Victoria written in 1900, VLaT Ms.9195, pp.74-7.

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14. Verco, 'Colonial boyhood', pp.86–93.
15. NBNE, Third Report, p.3, NDSB, Report 1862, p.11, SCBE, Report, SAGG 1871, p.632; Wyatt, Evidence before the Select Committee on the Estimates, SAPP 1856, no.158, qq.5100–3. C.Beasley, Educating Rita's grandmother: the social relations of the sexes and South Australian curriculum reform, 1875–1915, M.Ed. thesis, Flinders University, 1984; B.Curtis, Building the educational state: Canada West, 1836–1871, London, Ontario, 1988; J.Donald, "'Beacons of the future": Schooling, subjection and subjectification' in V.Beechey & J.Donald (eds.), Subjectivity and social relations, Milton Keynes, 1985; J.M.Goldstrom, 'The content of education and the socialisation of the working-class child' in P.McCann (ed.), Popular education and socialisation, London, 1977; M.Theobald, "'Mere accomplishments"?; M.Vick, 'Cultivating the softer nature': music in nineteenth century Australian education, unpublished paper, ANZHES conference, Melbourne, 1984, and 'Class, gender and administration: the 1851 Education Act in South Australia', History of Education Review, vol. 17, no. 1, 1987.
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38. For general comments see: Education boards' reports, eg., NDSB, Report 1862, p.5, SCBE, Report, SAGG 1858, p.179, VBE, Report 1869, p.22; H.C.E.Childers, 'First half-yearly report of the Inspector of Schools under the Denominational Board' in E.Sweetman, The educational activities in Victoria of the Rt.Hon.H.C.E. Childers, Melbourne, 1940, p.34. For systematic comments on individual schools see: Inspectors' reports on individual schools in Education boards' reports, eg., NBNE, Report 1865, pp.20–3, NCE, Report 1870, pp.31–4, NCE, Report on Denominational schools 1871, p.9; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406; Parliamentary papers, eg., School Commissioners, Reports, nos.1–20, Statistics, 1859 [NSW], Public schools – particulars concerning, NSW V&P LA, 1878; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1874, pp.581–8. For incidental evidence of individual cases see: Education boards' correspondence files, eg., Inspectors' reports on school buildings used as places of worship, NSA1/1016; Walker, Report on visit to schools 10 November 1855, VPRS880/3, Gunn to VDSB 21 February 1849, VPRS61/1; Newspapers, eg., Register, 15 May 1851, 13 January 1872, Southern Cross 20 March, 20 July 1868. See also L.Burchell, Victorian schools A study in colonial government architecture 1837–1900, Carlton, Vic., 1980, pp.20,26,61; J.Burnswood & J.Fletcher, Sydney and the bush, Sydney, 1980, p.60.

39. For systematic comments on individual schools see: Inspectors' reports on individual schools in Education boards' reports, eg., NDSB, Report 1863, pp. 14–17, NCE, Report 1872, pp.23ff.; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406; Parliamentary papers, eg., School Commissioners, Reports, nos.1–20, Statistics, 1859 [NSW]. For incidental evidence of individual cases see: Education boards' correspondence files, eg., Cole to SCBE 7 September 1857, GRG18/113/52; Newspapers, eg., Register 27 December 1861; Reminiscences, eg., H.Hussey, More than half a century of colonial life and Christian experience, Adelaide, 1897, p.310. Burchell, Victorian schools, p.35; Burnswood & Fletcher, Sydney and the bush, p.62.

40. For general comments see: Education boards' reports, eg., NBNE, Report 1865, pp.12–14, NCE, Report 1870, p.35, SCBE, Report, SAGG 1857, p.606. For systematic comments on individual schools see: Inspectors' reports on individual schools in Education boards' reports, eg., NDSB Report 1853, p.4; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406; Parliamentary papers, eg., School Commissioners, Reports, nos.1–20; Correspondence relating to school houses, GRG18/113. For incidental evidence of individual cases see: Education boards' minutes, eg., VDSB, Minutes 19 May 1858, VPRS63/1; Education boards' correspondence files, eg., Hastie to VDSB 21 November 1850, Sweetman to VDSB 16 March 1849, VPRS61/1; Reminiscences, eg., Miller, Forty seven years' clerical life, p.10; Newspapers, eg., Sydney Morning Herald 5,7 January 1850; Parliamentary papers, eg., Establishment of Public school at Waverley – correspondence, NSW V&P LA 1875–6; Local/private records, eg., Stratford School Minutes Book, Royal Historical Society of Victoria. Burchell, Victorian schools, pp.24,26,47,57,64–5,77–8; Burnswood & Fletcher, Sydney and the bush, pp.48,54–5,60,68.

41. In South Australia, vested schoolhouses were schools built with state subsidies and vested in local trustees in terms approved by the Central Board of Education. SCBE, Report, SAGG 1874, pp.578–88.

42. Under the National systems in both NSW and Victoria vested schools were schools erected with the financial assistance of the BNE and vested in the Commissioners of National Education. NBNE, Report 1851, pp.39–40, 1860, p.1, 1866, p.5; VBNE, Report 1854, pp.25,29–30, 1859, pp.36,50.

43. NDSB, Report 1858, p.2. Burchell, Victorian schools, pp.50–4.

44. Public Schools – Particulars, 1878 [NSW]; NCE, Report 1861, p.51, VBE, Report 1863, pp.62,66, 1869, p.xxiv, 1870, p.22; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1869, p.758. Burnswood & Fletcher, Sydney and the bush, pp.49,51.

45. Sydney Morning Herald 24 December 1849, 5 January 1850, 3 January 1867.

46. Harris to Wilkins 10 July 1867, NSA1/744, Forbes to NCE 4 March 1868, NSA1/779; McGarvie to NDSB 27 September 1848, NSA1/310; Randell to SCBE 22 July 1861, 26 August 1861, GRG18/113/43.

47. Education boards' reports, eg., NBNE, Report 1860, p.1, 1866, p.5; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1872, pp.550–59, VBE, Report 1869, p.xxiv.

48. For general comments see: School Commissioners, Final report, p.4; Education boards' reports, eg., NBNE, Report 1859, p.5, NDSB, Report 1862, p.5, NCE, Report on Denominational schools, 1871, p.9, SCBE, Report, SAGG 1859, p.200; Sweetman, Childers, p.34. For systematic comments on individual schools see: Inspectors' reports on individual schools in Education boards' reports, eg., NDSB, Report 1863, pp.18–30, NCE, Report 1870, pp.35ff.; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406; R.H.Budd to VDSB 10 May 1858, R.H.Budd papers, VPRS930; School Commissioners, Reports nos.1–20. For incidental evidence of individual cases see: Correspondence, school buildings, GRG18/113; Education boards' correspondence files, eg., Dorrough to NCE 5 July 1868, NSA1/848, Bennett to VDSB 13 January 1857, VPRS61/10. Burchell, Victorian schools, pp.70–71,88.

49. For systematic evidence of individual cases see: Statistics, 1859 [NSW]; Public Schools – Particulars, 1878 [NSW]. For incidental evidence of individual cases see: Correspondence, school buildings, GRG18/113; Education boards' correspondence files, eg., Hobbes to VBE 29 June 1868, VPRS795/167, Muller to VBE 6 December 1871, VPRS795/9, Binns to NCE 21 July 1873, NSA1/947, Green to NCE 24 July 1874, NSA1/779. See also the plans and illustrations of schools in: Burchell, Victorian schools, pp.18–26,29,30, 32,34,35,46–7,55–9,61,63,65; Burnswood & Fletcher, Sydney and the bush, pp.49–51,54–5,59,62,66–7,72,78,80–1,90–2.

50. School Commissioners, Final report, p.4; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1853, p.99; Statistics, 1859 [NSW]; Public Schools – Particulars, 1878 [NSW]; Bennett to VDSB 13 January 1857, VPRS61/10; Register 1 January 1870, 3 August 1872, Sydney Morning Herald 27 December 1849 (Davies), 31 December 1866 (Harris).

51. Statistics, 1859 [NSW], (National schools), p.144.

52. For comments on individual schools see: Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406; Parliamentary papers, eg., School Commissioners, Reports, nos.1–20; Statistics, 1859 [NSW]; Public Schools – Particulars, 1878 [NSW]; Sweetman, Childers, p.34. Burchell, Victorian schools, p.24; Burnswood & Fletcher, Sydney and the bush, p.80.

53. For systematic comments on individual schools see: Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406; Correspondence, school buildings, GRG18/113; Parliamentary papers, eg., Statistics, 1859 [NSW], Public Schools – Particulars, 1878 [NSW]. For incidental evidence of individual cases see: School Commissioners, Reports, nos.1–20; Education boards' correspondence files, eg., Orlebar, Report of inspection 8 January, 19 May 1855, Marshall to VBNE 7 January 1855, VPRS880/27; Reminiscences, eg., Verco, Colonial boyhood, p.64. Burchell, Victorian schools, p.54; Burnswood & Fletcher, Sydney and the bush, p.62.

54. For systematic comments on individual schools see: Inspectors' reports on individual schools in Education boards' reports, eg., NBNE, Third Report, p.7, NCE, Report 1871, p.30; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406; Correspondence, school buildings, GRG18/113; Parliamentary papers, eg., Statistics, 1859 [NSW], Public Schools – Particulars, 1878 [NSW]. For incidental evidence of individual cases see: School Commissioners, Reports, nos.1–20; Education boards' correspondence files, eg., Marshall to VBNE 7 January 1855, VPRS880/27; Newspapers, eg., Register 3 January

1857 (G W Moore); Sydney Morning Herald 29 December 1866; Parliamentary papers, eg., Provisional school at Mutbilly, NSW V&P LA, 1873-4, p.8. Burchell, Victorian schools, pp.45,50,51,81.

55. For general comments see: School Commissioners, Final report, p.5; Education boards' reports, eg., VBE, Report 1864, p.53. For systematic comments on individual schools see: Inspectors' reports on individual schools in Education boards' reports, eg., NBNE, Report 1865, pp.20-23, NCE, Report 1867, p.22; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406; Parliamentary papers, eg., Statistics, 1859 [NSW]; Public Schools - Particulars, 1878 [NSW]. For incidental evidence of individual cases see: School Commissioners, Reports, nos.1-20; Correspondence relating to school houses, GRG18/113; Education boards' correspondence files, eg., Orlebar, Reports of inspections 8 January, 19 May 1855, 31 March 1856, Marshall to VBNE 3 July 1855, VPRS880/27; Parliamentary papers, eg., Jenvey, Hessel, Evidence to Higinbotham Commission, pp.284,291, Establishment of school at Springside, NSW V&P LA, 1876-7, pp.30-6; Newspapers, eg., Sydney Morning Herald 30 December 1847, 5,6,8 January 1848, 26 December 1866, 7 January 1867; Reminiscences, eg., Verco, Colonial boyhood, pp.54,84-5. Burchell, Victorian schools, pp.8,39; Burnswood & Fletcher, Sydney and the bush, pp.48,60,72,81-2.

56. For general comments see: School Commissioners, Final report, p.5; Education boards' reports, eg., NDSB, Report 1862, p.6, NCE, Report 1869, p.5, VBE, Report 1866, p.59. For systematic comments on individual schools see: Inspectors' reports on individual schools in Education boards' reports, eg., NCE, Report on Denominational schools 1871, p.8; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406; Parliamentary papers, eg., School Commissioners, Reports, nos.1-20, Statistics, 1859 [NSW]. For incidental evidence of individual cases see: Education boards' correspondence files, eg., Forster to VBNE, 7 November 1857 VPRS880/23, Lang to NBNE 13 April 1863, NSA1/424.

57. For general comments see: School Commissioners, Final report, pp.4-5; Education boards' reports, eg., NBNE, Report 1865, p.12, NDSB, Report 1863, pp.14,34, VBE, Report 1869, p.56; Sweetman, Childers, p.34. For systematic comments on individual schools see: Inspectors' reports on individual schools in Education boards' reports, eg., NBNE, Report 1865, pp.20-3, NCE, Report 1870, pp.31-4; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406; Parliamentary papers, eg., School Commissioners, Reports, nos.1-20, Statistics, 1859 [NSW]. For incidental evidence of individual cases see: Correspondence relating to school houses, eg., Edwards to SCBE 12 January 1872, GRG18/113/65; Parliamentary papers, eg., Removal of Mr.Sanders, pp.29ff,22.

58. S.Frith, 'Socialisation and rational schooling: Elementary education in Leeds before 1870' in P.McCann (ed.), Popular education and socialisation; P.Gardner, The lost elementary schools of Victorian England, London, 1984; R.D.Gidney, 'Elementary education in Upper Canada: a reassessment', Ontario History, vol.65, no.3, 1973; The making of an urban school system, New York city, 1750-1850, Cambridge, Mass., 1973; T.W.Laqueur, 'The cultural origins of popular literacy in England, 1500-1850', Oxford Review of Education, vol. 2, no. 3, 1976 and 'Working-class demand and the

growth of English elementary schooling' in Stone, L., (ed.), Schooling and Society. Studies in the history of education, Baltimore & London, 1976; M.J.Maynes, Schooling for the people: comparative local studies of schooling history in France and Germany, Albany, N. Y., 1985 and Schooling in Western Europe: a social history, Albany, N. Y., 1985.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PROVISION AND DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS

Anne began to think what would be her next step, for go back to [service] she would not. 'Mother,' she said one day ... 'I am nearly fifteen, and ... I am a good mind not to wait any longer, but to set up a school,' and with a little laugh, she looked inquiringly at her mother.

'If you were two or three years older you might, but as it is ----'

'But I mean just for very little children. The little Mitchells got on well with me, and I used to help the older ones with their home lessons. Mrs. Hall said I had a knack of teaching.'

'I am afraid, dear, you are too much of a child; besides, where would you get pupils?'

'I would go round about and ask people, and I think Mrs Mitchell would send me Bob and Charlie and Dot when they come back to the Terrace. ... Do let me try, mother. There is Hugh's room not being used now. Jessie and I could have that for a bedroom, and make ours, which is larger, into a school-room. I should want two or three forms and a desk; they could be made out of those planks in the shed that have been lying there ever since we came. ... If I got a dozen pupils at ninepence of a shilling a week – that is what is charged at the little schools – I could soon pay for the forms and desks, and in time I might get twenty, that would be as many as we could squeeze in. Oh! mother do let me try.'

.....

Laurie had a carpenter acquaintance who made the forms and desks cheaply from planks which the landlord cheerfully presented to Anne, saying that they were of no use to him.

Before the week was over, they were arranged in the freshly whitewashed schoolroom, and the maps hung in position. Books, slates, pens and pencils could be bought at the store and the schoolmistress provided the ink. Then she began to canvass all the likely houses in the neighbourhood, and on the opening Monday seven pupils presented themselves.<sup>1</sup>

This narrative captures well the informality, lack of regulation and sense of local idiosyncrasy which characterised the formation of schools in Australia in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. However, while the general features of this novelistic description certainly ring true, and while it was certainly not unusual for the period, it could hardly be described as typical. What was typical of the formation of schools, as of many of their characteristics once established, was their diversity, a diversity which makes it impossible to describe any one set of procedures, type of

accommodation, group of teacher characteristics, curriculum, pedagogy or forms of organisation as typical.

This chapter explores the range of ways in which schools were provided in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria in the mid-nineteenth century. It examines the roles of parents, leaders of local communities, local institutions, ad hoc committees, teachers and the centralised offices of church and state in initiating, establishing and maintaining schools. It outlines the range of ways in which they secured the money needed to support their teachers and the buildings which housed them, noting both the importance of local efforts and the role of the state in providing the financial means to support teachers and erect buildings especially for school purposes. It examines the distribution of schools, both geographically and socially, noting that particular types of schools characteristically drew their support from particular social groups. Further, it looks at the social distribution of state financial support for schools, in particular in relation to class and gender. Finally, it explores the social and cultural relations between the schools and their local communities and the role of the school in re/producing social relations in their local communities.

I argue that the role of parents and others in the local communities was crucial in initiating large numbers of schools and that even where schools were initiated from outside the communities they were to serve they were frequently dependent on parental interest for their survival. Schools and their teachers generated a wide range of means of financial support, with a range of parental and other community contributions as basic in almost all cases. Nevertheless, in an increasing proportion of schools, the state played a crucial role in providing financial assistance towards teachers' salaries and building costs. Further, I argue that the means of providing and

supporting schools were articulated with the various forms of educational practice and school accommodation to produce characteristic social and geographical distributions of schools, with many finely differentiated schools clustering in the more populous places and only one or two, still socially as well as educationally distinctive, schools in the smaller localities. Finally, I suggest that schools played a significant part in building local communities, modifying the physical environment and the social geography of local life which went with it and either blurring or confirming and elaborating existing social divisions.

#### WHO INITIATED SCHOOLS?

The Acts and other instruments which defined the legal context within which schools were provided in mid-nineteenth century New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria allowed an enormously wide range of ways in which schools might be established. For the most part they were ambiguous or vague about the role of the state in forming schools and where they were not, they precluded or strictly and narrowly limited the scope of state agencies' initiative. Implicitly or explicitly, they allowed for schools to be established by private individuals or groups or formally incorporated institutions. They made no attempt to prohibit or regulate schools conducted outside the systems of state aid and even within those systems allowed varying degrees of local initiative.

Many schools were established on the initiative of members of the communities which they were to serve. Often, ordinary settlers, including the parents who were likely to send their children, appear to have made the first moves. At Linwood in South Australia, for example, the local community organising a school comprised small farmers who had only recently taken up their land. At Vaughan on the Victorian

goldfields the moves to open a national school came from the miners. While the evidence concerning the formation of schools is often vague and patchy, it seems highly likely that both mothers and fathers played an active part. Where women were the heads of their households this was certainly the case, but in many other cases the names of both fathers and mothers appear on the same petitions, subscription lists and other documents concerning the formation of schools.<sup>2</sup>

Often those who initiated schools were in relatively poor economic circumstances. At Rochford in Victoria the parents involved in establishing a local school described themselves as 'poor farmers'. At Pollock's Ford, on the margins of the pastoral lands west of Geelong, the settlers who had established a school for their children claimed that they were too poor to support a teacher unaided. At Bowna Creek near Albury, New South Wales, and at St. Leonards near Sydney the initiative came from within small communities who described themselves as poor. Such claims, made in support of applications for funds from state educational boards, might perhaps be treated cautiously as a carefully calculated element in the case to ensure the success of their application. Often, however, teachers, inspectors, clergy and others not directly interested supported these claims. Archdeacon Stretch, for example, commented that the settlers at Mount Pollock were generally in poor circumstances, able to provide only the most meagre funds to support a school. Francis Murphy, appealed to by the school promoters at Tarrawingee, Victoria, to lend his support to their application to the National board in 1859, observed that the settlers were too poor to provide a school without substantial assistance. The inspector's reports on the applications for schools at Kangaloon West and Kanninga in New South Wales noted that the settlers in both places were poor small selectors in the early stages of

establishing themselves. Local and economic historians have argued that where new tracts of land were opened up, especially to small selectors, poverty was widespread; in such districts any local initiative to form a school almost necessarily came from the lower ranks of society.<sup>3</sup>

More prominent settlers also played a part in establishing the means of education. In some cases, individuals acting alone took the initiative. Some provided informal instruction in their own homes, either for their own children and their peers, for their employees or their children or even for other 'unfortunates.' Often women, as mothers and mistresses of their households, played the crucial role. Maria Gawler, for example, taught several Aboriginal girls at Government House in Adelaide during her residence there. Martha Newland, the wife of the leading landowner in South Australia's Encounter Bay district held school for the children of her husband's tenants. Sarah Giles, the wife of the South Australian Company's manager in the colony's early days taught their housemaid to read and write. And where children were taught in their own homes, mothers appear to have taken the prime responsibility both to initiate and to provide or manage their formal instruction.<sup>4</sup>

Leading local landowners often employed teachers to conduct schools on their properties for their own and/or their employees' and tenants' children. While, given the legal definition of property rights within marriage, in most cases these landowners were men, in at least some cases women of substance and standing also took a leading role. An unnamed landowner at Hinton, New South Wales, for instance, was reported to have established a schools for the children of tenants on her estate in 1868. Sometimes, those who might be seen to have constituted the collective leadership of local society took the initiative. Such cases were to be found in such diverse areas as

the most notoriously poor and squalid urban areas, flourishing country centres, incipient towns, and even the smaller rural settlements. Although some of those who initiated schools were men and women of great substance and settlers of note within colonial society generally, many, while prominent in their local communities, were often of relatively humble position in the wider society, of unpretentious backgrounds and little different from many of their neighbours. They were, for example, shopkeepers, small farmers, innkeepers and tradesmen.<sup>5</sup>

Many initiatives were organised through local institutions, in particular, the churches. Often, the formation of a church and school together, was a basic part of the development of local society. As one German leader informed the South Australian government in 1853:

... in our German Lutheran–Ecclesiastical Communities ... young people ... are informed in the word of God according to the creeds of the Lutheran church in Day–school, and ... Sundays and other feast days are constituted and consecrated with us only to public worship of God, not only for old but for young people.<sup>6</sup>

The patterns of Irish Catholic settlement also produced a number of close, tight knit and culturally relatively homogeneous villages within which the opening of churches and schools were high priorities. At Wallen Wallen in Victoria, for example, the National board's Inspector Hopkins reported that the community preferred a denominational school so that they might use the same building for religious worship. At Kenny's Point in New South Wales, the small, struggling Catholic community opened a school with a Catholic teacher. Later they resisted the Council's attempt to convert their school from provisional to public as that would prohibit them from using the schoolroom as a church.<sup>7</sup>

The various dissenting sects provided a similar basis for small, close knit

settlements. In the small Methodist village of Upper Skillogillee on the edge of the Clare valley in South Australia, one observer reported that the establishment of a church and school was the principal object of the community's concern. At Balaklava, also in South Australia, a village of Bible Christian settlers established a chapel and school almost immediately they took up their land. At Kanyuga in New South Wales, a community of Primitive Methodists was established in the mid 1860s. Even before their land was cleared and their farms established the settlers had taken steps to establish a school and chapel. In such cases it is probably misleading to attempt to separate lay from clerical initiative. Indeed, in a number of instances the teacher and preacher were one. Even where there was a clearer demarcation between church and community, the laity often took the initiative in establishing church schools, co-opting, rather than being led by, the clergy. What appears to be common to most of these cases is the formation of a community strongly organised around religion and in some cases an ethnic culture.<sup>8</sup>

Often, the clergy themselves took the initiative, or else played a leading part in establishing schools initiated by either the local leadership or the settlers more generally. At Walkerville, an Adelaide suburb, the Anglican minister and a group of prominent laymen formed a committee to establish a day school in association with the St. Andrews Church. At Belfast in western Victoria, the Reverend T. Braim, the local Anglican minister was actively involved in moves to establish a school and applied to the Denominational board for assistance even before it was ready to deal with such applications. At Geelong in Victoria, the local Presbyterian minister, Andrew Love was sufficiently involved in the development of a school that he could refer to it as 'my school'. The Catholic priest, Patrick Dunne, promoted and sought state assistance for

a school in his parish at Pentridge, outside Melbourne. At Oakleigh, also near Melbourne the Wesleyan clergyman Reverend Bickford worked strenuously to open and maintain a school in association with his church. At Hinton, in New South Wales, Robert Blain, the local Presbyterian minister, was active in starting a national school and defending it against all opposition. Moreover, he made a point of informing the National board of other places in the district where schools might usefully be established. The Wesleyan minister at Camden, New South Wales, was heavily involved in the inaugural moves to establish a national school, making 'his' chapel available for public meetings to organise the project, and promising it as an interim schoolroom. The Anglican clergyman at Armidale in northern New South Wales, Henry Tingcombe, was equally zealous in the interest of denominational schooling in his parish. At Huntingdon, north of Sydney, the local Presbyterian clergyman not only supported the development of elementary schooling, initially supporting the denominational school, but later instigating moves to upgrade it to a provisional school.<sup>9</sup>

In South Australia district councils often took a major role in providing schools. While not all councils were active in educational affairs, a good number either initiated schools in their areas, or took a very active part in organising and supporting existing local interest. The Echunga council, for instance, played a key role in organising the local school, clarifying its legal powers and finding and appointing a teacher. The Onkaparinga council played a central role in mediating the rival claims within its district for support from the board and ensuring something resembling a rational distribution of schools. And the Mudla Wirra West council took an active part in the formation and placement of schools in its district.<sup>10</sup>

There was no comparable development of a local government role in education in New South Wales after the failure of councils under Gipps' 1842 Act. In any case, even those councils which were formed under that Act and which continued to undertake some of the duties devolved on them were hard pressed for funds and made little or no effort to establish schools.<sup>11</sup> Later municipal legislation in both eastern colonies gave few educational powers to local government. In New South Wales the only educational provisions of the 1858 Municipalities Act empowered councils to establish public libraries and to provide for the moral and religious instruction of destitute and orphaned children, while the 1867 Act added the power to establish free infant schools. In Victoria, a Municipal Institutions Act was introduced in 1854. The only remotely educational power it granted them was the right to establish public libraries. The Act was amended in 1869, granting councils the additional power of purchasing land for public buildings such as schools and maintaining or improving those grounds and the buildings erected on them.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the limited formal educational powers of municipalities in the eastern colonies, there were a few places where local governments undertook to establish schools. At Waverley in the district east of Sydney the local council in 1875 initiated and organised moves to establish a public school with substantial assistance from the Council of Education. At Hunters Hill, west of Sydney in 1868 the local council played a key role in initiating and organising local efforts to replace an existing denominational school with a public school.<sup>13</sup>

Teachers themselves played a very active role as initiators and organisers of the means of education. Some travelled the country gathering together small groups of children, often in small, isolated localities, for a brief spell of rudimentary instruction.

Others, in town and country, set up schools on a more or less permanent basis. The evidence for their activity is diverse. Some teachers advertised their intention of establishing schools in the major newspapers in the capital cities and, sometimes, in the regional centres. The records of the various education boards contain many applications for assistance from teachers who claimed to have established their own schools. At times, the boards' records indicate less directly the activity of teachers in forming new schools: they report the existence of schools believed to have been started by teachers, warned teachers not to open new schools in various localities or without securing sufficient local support to warrant the board's assistance or admitted that large numbers of their non-vested schools were essentially 'private' schools, the property of their teachers. The boards' records of local activity occasionally testify to the same fact, as local communities, although dissatisfied with their teachers, were reluctant to dismiss them in recognition of their efforts in establishing the schools in the first place. Occasionally, teachers' private memoirs and other papers recall their activities in establishing schools of their own.<sup>14</sup> Finally, critics of existing school provision often claimed that schools were too often and too easily opened by would-be teachers: 'An individual more eager to pocket the school fees than anxious peur litteris imbuere, may suddenly take up his quarters in one of the crowded back streets ... start a school, and collect twenty or thirty scholars'.<sup>15</sup> This field of enterprise was open to both women and men. One critic, voicing a widespread concern, claimed that 'every old woman can have the opportunity of drawing off, say, 12 boys here and 12 there for a school of her own'.<sup>16</sup>

A number of bodies which were constituted outside of and independent of any local community also initiated schools. In some cases their initiative was directed to

stimulating local settlers to establish schools. The National boards in particular appointed agents and school inspectors whose duties included promoting national schools in areas where they did not yet exist. The South Australian board had no authority to establish schools directly and appears to have accepted the general policy underlying this definition of its powers. Yet, on occasion, it wrote to leading settlers in areas where it believed licensed schools were needed encouraging them to establish schools and offering their fullest support.<sup>17</sup> The Denominational boards, initially acting principally as funding agencies for the denominations, had no need to adopt such strategies. In any case the denominations themselves already had what amounted to local agents in the parish clergy while others with a broader responsibility, such as bishops and archdeacons, acted at times as agents of their central organisations.

In other cases, central bodies' initiatives were directed towards schools to be established without reference to, or involving the communities in which they were to be formed. The state education boards and the central denominational offices, for instance, wholly initiated and established model schools in the colonial capitals. Similarly, other state bodies, such as the destitute boards and Aboriginal protectorates, initiated and established schools for those whom they saw as their special responsibility. A number of religious orders within the Catholic church opened schools in association with their convents and other establishments, entirely on their own initiative. Several public or semi-public bodies, independent of both church and state, initiated Aboriginal, orphan, and ragged schools, often in association with more general projects such as homes and missions. Bodies of laymen and clergy, working within the general framework of their respective denominations quite independently of any local community also initiated central schools, especially for the advanced education

of the colonial elite. And, finally, wealthy individuals initiated and organised schools in communities in which they had no direct personal involvement. In some of these cases, although the schools were not initiated within local communities, they were directed to what were seen as local needs: many of the ragged schools, for instance, were intended to cater for children within the communities in which they were placed as those needs were defined by those who planned them. Others were not only initiated from outside the local community in which they were placed, but the initiative had no reference to the needs of the locality: the model schools, schools in some Aboriginal missions, destitute asylums, orphans homes, and the elite colleges and grammar schools were framed to meet wider regional or colonial needs in general. In these cases, they might be seen as being directed to the needs of 'communities' defined by social criteria quite different from those which defined most 'local' communities.<sup>18</sup>

### ESTABLISHING SCHOOLS

Where teachers established schools, they merely had to find premises, fit them out in whatever way they considered necessary, and open for business. They were under no obligation to involve parents or other members of the local community in the process of establishing the school. Nevertheless, they had to attract pupils which in turn meant securing the support of parents; to survive for any length of time they had to attract new clients and maintain existing ones. Many advertised: both metropolitan and country newspapers carried substantial numbers of advertisements for schools, many of which were clearly established by teachers on their own initiative. Some outlined the special benefits they offered: a salubrious environment, healthy dormitories, careful, attentive and well qualified teachers, an appropriate curriculum

and good teaching methods. Others adopted a more localised approach, directly canvassing the parents of their prospective pupils. Some teachers organised a systematic body of local support such as a committee to promote the school or a place in an existing institution such as a church.<sup>19</sup> In these cases, teacher initiative became virtually indistinguishable from the various other forms of local activity in forming a school.

However teachers proceeded, they required some means of support until their newly established schools became viable. Some established themselves as teachers in conjunction with, or on the basis of, other occupations in the locality; in particular many preachers and ministers of religion taught in association with their clerical duties. Elsewhere, men acted as accountants and book-keepers, farmers and doctors, while women conducted shops or other domestic enterprises or used their husbands or fathers to support them until their schools became self-supporting. Some, left impoverished by illness, accident or unemployment during economic recession, or by the death of their husbands, appealed to their neighbours' sense of charity to secure immediate support. Many teachers established new schools in localities where they already had conducted schools. In some cases this involved little more than a renaming of the original school and, perhaps, a change in governance and funding as the teacher took the bulk of the pupils to the 'new' school. The likelihood of popular teachers carrying pupils from one school to another within the same locality was sufficiently strong for the rival boards and their officers to take it into account. Not all cases involved so dramatic or simple a wholesale transfer of pupils; however, even when the original school was left with most of its pupils, a sufficient number might still follow the teacher to provide a basis for the new school. In some cases, what

teachers took from their established school was not existing pupils but the local reputation on which to found a new establishment.<sup>20</sup>

Occasionally, where schools were initiated solely by the central agencies of the state or denominations, by missionaries or self-appointed central committees, there was no question of involving members of the communities in which the schools were to be located in the process of establishing them. The central state model schools, for example, were conceived, planned, funded and fully prepared for opening by the boards and their staff. Similarly, where schools were established within local communities solely by larger landowners, clergymen and other local leaders, the promoters often simply secured premises and a teacher themselves, acting either individually, through closed, self-appointed committees, or through public meetings at which they formed the majority. At Walkerville, for example, the minister at St. Andrews Anglican church, on behalf of the school committee called a public meeting. However, attendance was small, and largely confined to members of the committee and other men of some standing, who proposed and carried a series of motions agreeing to establish a church school 'for the industrial classes'. Sullivan, in his account of the career of Marmaduke Fisher, also suggests that the public meeting called to establish a boarding school at Warrnambool in western Victoria in the 1850s was not designed to include a wide public: it was, he points out, held at a time when many members of the community would have been unable to attend.<sup>21</sup>

In some instances, this means of establishing schools was made possible, in part, by church, business, social, political or family networks both within and beyond the boundaries of local society. For instance, the correspondence between members of the Macarthur family and a range of clergymen, politicians and public servants,

business associates and friends reveals an interchange of information about existing schools, teachers, and the needs and plans for new schools in the communities in which they were involved. In some of these cases, the question of securing parental support in the process of establishing the school must have been considered irrelevant. Many employers doubtless assumed that their employees would simply conform to their wishes, some clergy used their spiritual powers as leverage to ensure attendance at their own schools, while missionaries and protectors at times effectively coerced their Aboriginal charges to attend school.<sup>22</sup>

Usually, however, schools established by local community leaders, with or without the cooperation of the central boards, needed to secure the support of parents to ensure their success as much as did those established by teachers. At times, indeed, they used the same means, advertising, or employing the teachers to canvass the neighbourhood. Elsewhere, clergy canvassed their laity themselves or had their church wardens, lay readers and other officers do so, or appointed local committees and devolved on them the task of securing parental interest in the school provided for them.<sup>23</sup>

In most cases, the organisation of popular support was crucial at a much earlier stage in the process. This was most obviously – and necessarily – the case where schools were formed on the basis of grass-roots initiative. Where bishops and clergy with a responsibility for a large territory sought to establish local schools as part of their concern with the general development of the church within their jurisdiction, they used the existing parish infrastructure to ensure that local settlers would support the schools they proposed. Where teachers, parents, clergy and others sought to establish schools with the support of the state agencies, they often sought to involve the most

prominent members of the community. At Camden in New South Wales, for example, they called on the Macarthurs to play a leading role: they elected William to the chair, and both William and James to the local committee. In most cases, those involved were men. However, Amelia Macarthur played the key role in securing both central and influential local support for the school at Menangle in the Camden district following the death of her husband James.<sup>24</sup>

A common way of proceeding for parents who wished to establish a school was to call a public meeting for other parents and interested residents generally. These meetings served to elect committees, organise and open subscription lists as well as to arouse and marshal both general community support and the interest of those well placed both to provide material assistance themselves and to secure the support of the state boards. Most importantly, they also served to demonstrate or generate sufficient support to warrant an application to one of the state education boards for financial assistance and, often, the appointment of a teacher, and to ensure the greatest possible chances that such an application might be successful.<sup>25</sup>

The calling of public meetings was also a standard procedure where projects were initiated by local community leaders. The promoters of the free school in the Adelaide suburb of Norwood, for instance, held well advertised meetings which, while they may have attracted a measure of popular attendance, were dominated by men of high standing in public life. Indeed, it was sufficiently commonplace that George Rusden, one of the New South Wales National board's agents, found it noteworthy when schools were established without a public meeting.<sup>26</sup>

Where agents or inspectors from the state education boards sought to initiate schools in conjunction with local communities they, too, typically organised public

meetings as one of their basic means of proceeding. Indeed, they developed what amounted to a standard set of procedures. Rusden, for example, first visited the locality, discussed his purposes with various local men of substance, secured from them a body of patrons and arranged for them to hold a public meeting. At the meeting, he explained the system, showed settlers the standard text books endorsed by the board and showed them how to secure a national school according to his instructions. Finally, they formally elected local patrons, opened subscription lists and appointed a secretary to apply to the board for support. In both New South Wales and Victoria, subsequent agents and inspectors typically followed a very similar pattern wherever they were crucial to the organisation of local initiative to establish national schools. At Kyneton in Victoria, for instance, William Miller, the National inspector, and, after he left, Benjamin Kane, the Board's secretary and acting inspector and agent, met with those leading settlers they were able to interest in establishing a national school. Having resolved that they would proceed with the school, the settlers called a public meeting at which a series of resolutions was passed, formally endorsing the national system, proposing that a national school be established, electing the committee, establishing subscription lists and requesting financial support from the National board.<sup>27</sup>

Where such meetings were organised and dominated by community leaders, they may also have served, or been intended to serve, as means of creating the impression of broad popular support, thus legitimating the plans of an influential few. This is strongly indicated in the reports of many of the meetings organised by National board agents and inspectors. At Brookfield, near Maitland in New South Wales, for instance, the national school promoters held a public meeting to endorse their initiative.

Rusden, however, made it clear that crucial decisions about the outcome of the meeting, in particular concerning those who should be elected patrons, had been carefully planned. More generally, Kane, reporting on attempts to establish National schools at Forest Creek in Victoria, argued that it was important to secure local patrons who were linked to, yet influential over, those for whose children the school was intended; such patrons could speak in the interests of the school at public meetings thereby attracting parental support and confidence and giving the proceedings an air of spontaneity and local origins.<sup>28</sup>

This varied and widely diffused range of educational initiatives and activities ensured that schools were provided in virtually all communities in each of the colonies. The official statistics of the various colonial states recorded large numbers of schools in the capital cities, their suburbs and the larger country towns. The established goldfields and other mining towns all supported at least a couple of schools while even the smaller and more transitory rushes after the mid-1850s also had at least one. Most of the small towns and villages which dotted both the well established and the newly settled and undeveloped farming districts had one or two schools. Even in the more sparsely populated pastoral districts, most centres supported at least one school. Indeed, these statistics indicated that by the 1870s there were few of even the remotest districts without at least a handful of schools, both state-assisted and private, although more incidental records indicate that there were still significant numbers of children outside the reach of schools.<sup>29</sup>

While official statistics reveal that schools were established in large numbers and distributed very widely throughout the colonies, it is unlikely that they indicated fully the number of schools. Most importantly, they are unlikely to have caught those

schools which enjoyed only a casual, ephemeral or informal existence. Yet, it can be argued, such schools were far from uncommon, especially among the poorer sectors of the population. Working-class private schools, especially in the urban areas, constituted one of the main targets of criticism by those concerned with the extension of public education: critics claimed that they proliferated at the expense of more 'efficient' schools. State supported teachers also reported that there were large numbers of 'inferior' schools operating in competition with them, especially in poorer working class areas.<sup>30</sup>

The Adelaide working-class suburb of Hindmarsh appears to substantiate these claims. In 1856, one Hindmarsh correspondent to the Register claimed that these inferior schools were multiplying and undermining the 'legitimate' schools. Later evidence produced by Davey for the same suburb indicates that there were indeed very large numbers of private schools within a relatively small locality. Yet the official returns of schools in 1861 gave the number of private schools there as seven, a figure which had shrunk to only three by 1867. Such schools were not confined to the capital cities and their suburbs. Country newspapers carried criticisms of similarly ephemeral schools, inspectors reported numbers of schools 'not worthy of notice', and promoters of more formal 'public' schools often reported the existence of small or temporary 'dame' schools in their localities, while the official statistics for these areas failed to recognise them.<sup>31</sup> It seems highly likely, therefore, that the private schools which did figure in the official statistics were the more substantial and stable establishments such as those whose advertisements proliferated in the newspapers.

Clearly, while the central institutions of state and church played an increasingly important role in initiating and establishing schools, they were largely dependent on

parental and other local individual and institutional support and complemented, rather than dominated, local initiative in education. Moreover, schools appear to have been widely distributed; while they were not within reach of all, they were evidently within reach of most children for at least some part of their childhood. In more densely populated areas in particular, there were large numbers of schools of varying types.

### FUNDING

In order to establish and maintain schools, their promoters had to meet two principal financial needs: teachers' incomes, and the costs of accommodation and other physical equipment. They developed a number of means of securing funds. Virtually all teachers and school committees charged pupils tuition fees, ranging widely from one or two pence a week to several shillings. Where parents of children wishing to attend state supported schools could show that they were unable to pay, the boards paid the teachers an allowance in lieu of their fees. Local school promoters and providers at times also paid for the tuition of children from poorer families. The organisers of 'ragged schools' went further, making donations and raising public subscriptions to provide free places for all those who enrolled. Teachers themselves often admitted children free when they considered their parents were unable to pay. While this might appear to have undermined the financial support of the school it could also help maintain popular support, sometimes drawing pupils from neighbouring schools and, in any case, keeping up the overall attendance necessary to secure other forms of state funding. The state education boards supported those schools established by, or affiliated with them, by paying teachers salaries which often comprised the largest part of their incomes. At times, local communities subscribed money to supplement teachers' incomes.<sup>32</sup> Teachers' incomes were often also

effectively increased by procedures which reduced their costs. In some places individuals or institutions such as churches made school rooms available free. Some communities provided free accommodation for teachers, often in the residential quarters of schoolhouses, sometimes in cottages or huts elsewhere and sometimes in the homes of local settlers. In some instances teachers received food and other goods, occasionally as rations from local school supporters, often as payment in kind in lieu of school fees. In some cases part of the school grounds was made over to the teacher to grow vegetables and fruit and run a goat or cow. Some schools were run on what were described as 'industrial' principles: children were not only taught in the classroom, but worked about the school property, girls in domestic chores, boys typically in farm labour. This both reduced the costs of domestic labour and contributed materially to the school's resources, reducing its dependence on cash income. Finally, and crucially, many schools used the teaching labour of several members of the family, enabling them to increase their numbers and hence incomes, without the cost of employing assistant teachers.<sup>33</sup>

Teachers generated income from a number of sources other than tuition. Many had at least a few pupils as boarders whom they charged additional fees. As with tuition costs, these ranged widely from those places where teachers and committees deliberately sought to hold the rates to a minimum to those who asked in excess of one hundred pounds per annum. Some conducted family business ventures or derived income from other offices which, in many cases, were offered to them specifically in order to support the school.<sup>34</sup>

Local settlers subscribed money to erect school buildings, and subscriptions were supplemented by tea-meetings and bazaars. In some places, individuals or

institutions such as churches donated land, labour or materials to build new premises. Where local government bodies such as district councils existed they often contributed to the costs of erecting or maintaining school buildings from local rates. While clearly in many cases the wealthier members of local communities contributed a substantial portion of these funds, large numbers of parents contributed in one way or another to the costs of building. The central state boards also subsidised locally raised building funds, usually contributing one third or one half the overall costs. In South Australia the subsidy was limited by the Act to #200, while in Victoria and New South Wales, the National boards stipulated that the full costs of any ornamentation must be met locally and the Denominational boards stipulated that aid was only available for school premises, not churches. Under certain circumstances, however, the boards provided the whole of the building costs: the model schools, many of the early goldfields schools, including the tent schools, and from 1874 in New South Wales all new school buildings. Further, in New South Wales and Victoria, and within the limits of their budgetary capacity, the boards contributed to the cost of maintenance and repairs to schools. Finally, especially in New South Wales and Victoria, the government granted sites for schools in many places.<sup>35</sup>

While teachers and local committees could develop a range of sources of income to support their schools, these incomes varied widely. Two sources of support stand out above all others: parents, in particular through tuition fees and, in many cases, building subscriptions, and the state through salaries and building subsidies. State support was particularly important where the families interested in the school were poor or few in number. However, while in some cases the loss of state support was fatal to the school, in many others, parents and other local individuals and

institutions managed to keep them going albeit under straitened circumstances.

### SOCIAL DIFFERENCE AND EDUCATIONAL DIFFERENCE

The diverse means of establishing and supporting schools were closely articulated with the variety of forms of educational practice and school accommodation examined in Chapter Three. Together they produced several quite different types of school with their own distinctive clientele. Further, these socially, educationally and physically differentiated types of schools were established in such a way that they formed several characteristic patterns of regional distribution.

Schools were differentiated by a range of social divisions. Most obviously, perhaps, they were differentiated by religion. Denominational schools, in particular, in many cases drew most of their pupils from the denomination with which they were identified. Catholic schools were especially distinctive in this regard. Protestant denominational schools, whether identified with one particular denomination, or jointly sponsored by more than one, while drawing on children with different church affiliations were nevertheless distinctively Protestant. Licensed schools in South Australia, and national and, later, common or public schools in the eastern colonies, nominally undenominational, were often seen by Catholics at least as distinctively Protestant. Some, indeed, were closely identified with particular denominations, especially where they were formed in small, close-knit rural communities. However, even in larger, more diverse centres, they were often still effectively linked to a particular denomination: the national school at Kyneton in Victoria in the mid-1850s was effectively an Independent denominational school, and the Pulteney Street licensed school in Adelaide was a leading Anglican establishment although it also enjoyed the patronage of non-Anglican Protestants. However, even the division between Catholic

and Protestant could be blurred: some convent schools, for instance, were patronised by Protestant parents, and some Protestant schools were attended by a handful of Catholic pupils.<sup>36</sup>

Many schools were also identified with particular national or ethnic groups. A number of schools were predominantly Irish, others were distinctively German, while yet others were identified as Scottish, Welsh, or Cornish. Frequently, the ethnic identity of the schools and their clientele, was closely associated with religion: German schools were typically Lutheran schools and vice versa, Catholic schools often distinctively Irish, Scottish schools, Presbyterian and Welsh or Cornish, Methodist. Further, there is no evidence to suggest that Aboriginal children attended schools established by either local or joint local–central efforts for white children or that white children attended schools provided for Aboriginal children.<sup>37</sup>

Schools were also differentiated by social class. Many of the state supported schools were effectively dominated by the children of middle–class parents. Fort Street, Sydney, for instance, had a relatively large number of children whose parents described themselves as gentlemen, merchants, members of the learned professions and tradesmen and relatively few children of labourers. The licensed schools in Adelaide were dominated by children of tradesmen and shopkeepers. And the denominational schools in Victoria, with the blessing of the Denominational board, catered largely to the more comfortable classes. Other state–supported schools provided principally for the relatively needy. Many had a high proportion of pupils receiving free tuition while many others had large numbers on reduced rates. Some schools were established specifically for the poor, either by state agencies or private sponsors. Of the private schools established by teachers, some were clearly aimed

solely at the children of affluent families, while others almost certainly attracted only the poor. Between these extremes there was a finely differentiated array of schools which drew on clientele from different places within the class-related hierarchy of colonial society.<sup>38</sup>

Gender also constituted a major line of differentiation between schools. While the majority of state supported schools were mixed schools, where gender divisions were constructed internally, many private schools provided solely for boys or, more commonly, girls. At Kyneton in the 1850s, for instance, there were reported to be eight private girls schools, while there was only one private boys school. In larger centres, what might otherwise have been single mixed schools were divided into separate boys and girls establishments. Even in relatively small country towns, parents strove to maintain separate schools for their sons and daughters. To some extent, gender divisions were handled differently in working-class and middle-class families: working-class parents often sent their sons and daughters to the same school but sought to ensure that they had different teachers, while middle-class parents more often sent their daughters to separate schools from their sons.<sup>39</sup>

Age provided another line along which schools were socially differentiated: young children were often sent to different schools from their older brothers and sisters. Infant schools in particular, as their name indicates, were provided especially for children from as little as two or three years to five, six or seven years. To some extent age differentiation interacted with class and gender: young middle-class boys were often taught with girls, and only separated from them after about seven years of age. Many of the more exclusive schools also provided for older children, while increasingly the majority of pupils in elementary day schools were twelve years or

younger.<sup>40</sup>

These social differences between schools often paralleled differences in teachers, curricula, forms of organisation and other 'internal' practices. Many schools for working-class or small farmers' children were established and/or conducted by untrained teachers; often they were poorly educated, although many had a solid if limited knowledge of the substance of the standard elementary curriculum and some had an extensive self-education. They generally provided elementary instruction, often limited to the three Rs, especially where they conducted private venture schools. They instructed children individually, grouped them informally and unsystematically if at all, expected their pupils to memorise extensively, used whatever texts were readily available and taught whatever they knew and felt competent to offer. Even where schools attended largely by working-class and small farmers' children were conducted by formally educated, trained teachers, the pupils' irregular attendance and, in many cases, their lack of school texts undermined the teachers' attempts to establish effective class instruction.<sup>41</sup>

Middle-class private schools were also often taught by untrained teachers, although in contrast to their working-class counterparts they were often formally well educated. However, an increasing number of such schools were conducted by trained teachers, some of them former teachers under the state boards. Their curricula were diverse: they ranged from elementary subjects upwards, different schools establishing their own standards for entry, and offered a wide variety of advanced subjects, often organised into standard 'core' subjects and 'extras'. They featured a range of methods of instruction, including some text-based instruction but much oral teaching. In boys' schools, in particular, pupils were organised into classes both by class level and by

subjects selected. In girls' schools, in contrast, there was considerably more informal, close, contact between the pupils and their mistresses, and less class-based instruction. In many middle-class schools, whether for boys or for girls, there was much learning by rote. In others however, there was a sustained attempt not only to impart factual information but to cultivate skills of discussing, analysing and generalising, skills which were seen as requiring and developing 'intelligent' rather than mechanical forms of 'understanding' the subject matter. In some, especially in the case of the female 'accomplishments' curriculum, pupils learned by practising the skills they were being taught, such as singing, drawing, dancing and speaking French. Discipline centred around moral self-regulation, verbal persuasion, a sense of personal loyalty in some schools, and material incentives, backed up by the possibilities of loss of rewards, psychological or corporal punishment, or expulsion.<sup>42</sup>

Middle-class families also dominated many of the state schools, especially in the larger centres of population. In particular, they were well represented in those schools conducted by trained, formally well-educated teachers and assistants who were either already trained or engaged in a process of training. These were the schools which best exemplified the formal, standardised curriculum and class teaching, employed instructional techniques designed to cultivate understanding and an 'intelligent' appropriation of the substance of the lessons and which implemented a 'rational' disciplinary regime.<sup>43</sup>

This social differentiation of schools was mirrored in the buildings school occupied. Schools located in, or catering to, working-class and poorer farming communities often occupied private dwellings, often of the most cramped and inconvenient and uncomfortable type. Even where such schools occupied purpose-

built premises they were often cheaply and primitively built. The School Commissioners in New South Wales, for instance, commented critically on the marked similarity between the 'hovels' in which many schools were housed and those in which a large part of the rural population 'were content to live'. The parallels are also clear in photographic records: slab schools such as those at Gulgong and Frogmore in New South Wales bore a striking resemblance to many of the dwellings in their localities. Middle-class schools were more likely to occupy purpose-built, or extensively adapted, premises devoted solely to school business. In particular, they occupied many of the more substantial and expensive purpose-built premises including both Fort Street, Sydney, and the Adelaide model school. Similar schools in larger country centres, such as the Albury national school in New South Wales, served those who might otherwise consider sending their children to relatively expensive boarding schools in the colonial capitals, while the impressive buildings built with the Victorian National board's assistance in Flinders Street, Geelong, housed what was effectively an exclusive grammar school. However, many middle-class schools occupied private residences, although of a more imposing kind than those used by working-class schools. This visual class differentiation of schools is well illustrated in the contrast between two schools in the little settlement of McLaren Vale in South Australia. The Tsong Gyiaou school catering to the daughters of the middle class both in the district and from outside it was conducted in a large two-storied mansion set in spacious and park-like grounds. The village school, providing for the children of local small holders, tenants, artisans and laborers was conducted in Tsong Gyiaou's gate-keeper's cottage.<sup>44</sup>

To some extent the distinction between schools held in purpose-built premises

and those housed in private dwellings also reflected the gendered character of school provision. Schools for middle-class boys, whether state supported or private, were more likely to have purpose-built accommodation than those attended by their sisters. The Flinders Street national school at Geelong blatantly excluded middle-class girls as well as working-class children of either sex. Middle-class girls' schools concern with developing close relationships between teacher and pupils and the modelling of domestic deportment made private homes well suited to their purposes. Indeed, many of the most prominent 'ladies' schools were housed thus.

The social and educational divisions between schools were further articulated with both the means and the levels of financial support for teachers. Schools established by, or catering to, relatively affluent clients charged high fees and derived substantial incomes from even relatively small numbers of pupils, and rarely received funding from the state education boards. Many of the relatively large schools in the colonial capitals and larger country towns catering largely to respectable petty bourgeois and artisan families charged less prohibitive fees and also attracted high levels of state financial support. Large numbers of schools in rural areas, often patronised largely by families working small farms, were unable to generate sufficient income to attract trained or well educated teachers or, in some cases, even to survive from tuition fees and relied heavily on state funding. Moreover, the general preference of the education boards for male rather than female teachers, their refusal, in many cases, to pay a separate salary to female assistants and, in some cases, their policy of amalgamating separate boys and girls departments into single schools all directed state funds principally to the schooling of boys. However, the continued pressure to fund separate schools for girls in order to 'purchase respectability' for the state system

simultaneously compounded the tendency to direct assistance to the middle class while countering the drift of funds to boys' education.<sup>45</sup>

Levels of school income not only reflected the wealth of their clientele and/or their capacity to secure state funding, but further secured the characteristics in those schools which enabled them to attract their clientele and/or state support in the first place. For example, high fees allowed schools to generate sufficient income from them alone to afford well-educated assistant staff, provide the type of education attractive to the well-to-do, and effectively exclude the children of the poor.

These characteristic types of schools were distributed regionally in several distinctive ways. The larger, more densely populated areas supported several schools, often of different types; and even smaller towns and relatively small villages often supported more than one. The various forms of social division often allowed these diverse schools to coexist easily, each drawing on distinct clientele, often from within the same neighbourhood 'community'. Many children's paths in fact, must have criss-crossed each other as they made their ways to and from their different schools, perhaps passing other schools en route to their own. Where this diversity of schooling existed a variety of forms of state support can be identified. Sometimes, supporters of different schools sought to secure and, sometimes, monopolise state aid. At times, local leaders supported both a school for their own children, and one for their poorer neighbours and worked to secure state funds for both in order to maintain social differences in the schools and reduce the cost of doing so themselves. At other times, they tried to secure a state-supported school for their sons while supporting private schools for their daughters. In small communities, a single school might appear to cross those divisions, catering for sons and daughters, older children and infants, rich

and poor together. Yet this appearance was often illusory, as some wealthier parents either taught their children at home or sent them to larger regional boarding schools.<sup>46</sup>

### SCHOOLS, LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND THE STATE

The establishment of schools played a significant part in the building of local communities. The siting of schools contributed to the spatial construction of local communities. They formed social centres to which children came daily and often accommodated other activities out of school hours, strengthening their position as community centres more generally. Where schoolhouses were placed in the centre of diffused farming neighbourhoods they formed 'natural' sites for other developments such as a church, store, inn and other elements of a village. Where they were placed in close proximity to existing dwellings, shops and other institutions they strengthened the position of those sites as local centres. Where there were neighbouring incipient villages or towns the establishment of a school and, especially, a schoolhouse in one strengthened its position as a social centre and contributed materially to the character of local development.<sup>47</sup>

The organisation of support for schools involved the forming of concrete relations between the various individuals, families, and institutions comprising the local community. In some cases, it further integrated them into a united community, blurring social divisions. In others, especially where alternative or rival schools existed and drew on different social groups, they marked out increasingly clearly those divisions on which they drew or even created new ones. Further, where it drew on existing institutions it extended their range of activities; where it was independent of existing institutions it marginalised them and created new and alternative sites of social action. Schools with a regional rather than local clientele played a parallel role on a wider

scale: they helped construct regionally, as well as locally, organised and identifiable social groups.<sup>48</sup>

School buildings played an important role in symbolically articulating the relation between the schools and the broader structures of colonial society in which they were placed. Schools conducted in churches and chapels or in their outbuildings clearly declared themselves as religious institutions, symbolically identifying religion and education. Even apart from the architecture, the ownership of schools by churches, and the use of the same buildings for both worship and schooling, announced the close relationship between religion and education.<sup>49</sup>

Where schools were conducted in private dwellings, whether humble working-class or farmers' cottages or the imposing residences of the well-to-do, they constructed a continuity between the 'private' sphere of the home and the 'public' sphere of the school. This is clear in the case of those schools conducted for young ladies and gentlemen in private homes; as Theobald has argued in the case of the girls' schools, the interaction of domestic life and what might be termed 'school' life was a fundamental feature of such schools. This interpenetration of public/school and private/domestic was not confined to the overall use of the schoolrooms, but extended to the daily activity of the teachers. However, where schools were conducted in buildings which were set aside for instructional purposes only, as in the larger urban schools and many of the purpose-built country schools, they marked the separation of the public and private domains.<sup>50</sup>

The character of private residences used for schools also helped mark the social class character of the school. Those in humble workers' cottages were visually and symbolically continuous with the customary characteristics of working class life.

In much the same way, but with the opposite effect, those in larger, more imposing houses were visually identified with the middle class: they were, or had been, middle-class dwellings. However, not all schools in domestic dwellings were as clearly identifiable as this as some in areas with a mixed working- and middle-class population occupied houses not readily or exclusively identified solely with either class.<sup>51</sup>

The provision of purpose-built 'secular' schoolhouses at times produced a similar range of effects. Many had clear visual similarities with churches and chapels, displaying similar dimensions, ground plans and roof lines, arched windows and even belfries, which visually replicated the unpretentious steeples and bell towers of many country chapels. Not all specially designed school buildings resembled or identified the schools with churches. Many, especially those built of weatherboard or slab, had more in common with surrounding domestic dwellings. Some combined elements of both domestic and public secular or religious building styles; for example, the residential section of some which incorporated a teacher's quarters closely resembled a bungalow styled villa while the schoolroom to which it was attached featured a front gable and gabled entrance porch which could easily have been a plain non-conformist chapel. Some purpose-built schools were differentiated from all other types of buildings: Fort Street and Cleveland Street national schools in Sydney, the central model school in Melbourne, and the Flinders Street national school at Geelong, for instance, could not have been mistaken for even the most imposing of domestic residences. Nor, despite the central steeple-like structure of the Flinders Street school, could they have been mistaken for churches. They had nothing in common with commercial or manufacturing buildings. In their scale, they had most in common

with some of the larger secular public buildings such as the Town Halls, hospitals, destitute and other asylums, and the General Post Offices in the capital cities. In their style, they shared certain common ground with both churches and secular public architecture. However, the increasing adoption of rectangular windows and doors, whether set in church-like porches or under verandahs, marked a clear break from church architecture. Less pretentious buildings were often distinguished from domestic buildings by their scale and, in many cases, the provision of two front entrances. While there was certainly no one clear or precisely defined school architectural style, purpose-built schools displayed an array of characteristics which set them sharply apart from domestic, church and, increasingly, other forms of public architecture and began to define a distinctive range of school building styles.<sup>52</sup>

The enclosure of school grounds marked off the school property as separate from both other private properties and the general public domain. This was most marked where high solid stone walls were erected, as was the case in many urban schools. Schools shared with other 'public' buildings and ambivalent status as 'public' property. They were clearly established by public activity and often, at least partially, with locally subscribed funds. Like other 'public' buildings, however, they were not generally accessible to the public at large. The fence line marked the discontinuity between school and community and defined 'public' property as the domain of public officials and a handful of leading men. While the school was 'theirs', entry onto its grounds might be construed as trespass. The provision of special school buildings helped define a distance between the parents and community at large and 'their' school, a definition which involved the reconstruction of the meaning of 'public' schooling in particular and, perhaps, 'public' property and enterprise in general.

Choices of teachers and the development of particular educational practices within the schools established a range of relations between the cultures of the schools and those of the communities. Where men and/or women already established within particular communities became teachers in neighbourhood schools, their position within the local society helped define the social position of the school, in particular the clientele the school might attract. More broadly, it often marked the school as an integral part of community life. The appointment of trained teachers from outside the communities in which they taught, especially where they also adopted the 'professional' approach to curriculum, pedagogy, organisation and other matters also defined the relation of the schools to the culture of communities as a whole or to different groups within them. The decision to use, or not to use, German as a language of instruction in schools in areas with large German populations, for instance, defined quite different relations between the schools and their communities. Similarly, the adoption of different curricula for boys and girls and the marginalisation of the girls' curriculum, defined relations between the schools and their communities which clearly articulated the gender order of local society. Moreover, the adoption of curriculum content such as that represented by the Irish National and similar texts and methods of organisation and instruction which either depended on regular, 'punctual' attendance established different relations between the culture of the schools and that of different social classes in the local community.

The development of particular means of funding schools contributed to the construction of both the relations between schools and their local communities and of those communities more generally. Most importantly, the input of state funding provided an important contribution to the development of local infrastructure and local

economies more generally, often providing a valuable source of income to small farmers and tradesmen who supplied the materials and built the schools. The dependence of teachers on tuition fees tied the interests of the teachers to the interests, approval and goodwill of parents. The capacity of some groups to contribute more substantially than others to the funding of school buildings played an important part in demonstrating their patronage and securing their prestige, while allowing them to shape materially the location and character of schools. And the bias in the distribution of funding to middle-class boys' schools channelled the resources of the state and the advantages it conferred to those already privileged in local communities.

Finally, it is worth noting that the establishment of an extensive and often dense network of schools of different types also played a significant part in the formation of colonial society more generally. The development of a body of trained teachers, the selections of curriculum content they favoured and the techniques of organisation and pedagogy they sought to implement, organised through central education boards into systems of schools helped define schooling as public rather than private business and schools as institutions existing in the public rather than the private sphere. They helped construct a common culture by defining its elements and subjecting large numbers of children to it. Moreover, the content of this common culture was drawn largely from middle-class Anglo-Saxon male rather than popular or female or other European (or certainly non-European) traditions and values. This tended to legitimate and confirm those cultures and question the validity of other cultures and the social practices through which they were articulated. The increasing role of state funding tied its recipients more firmly to the state and the metropolitan centres in which its institutions were centred.

This complex set of procedures for establishing and supporting schools and the social context in which they were placed produced socially differentiated networks of schools distributed across most parts of the three colonies. Moreover, the social differences between schools corresponded to differences in the educational practices the schools adopted and the types of accommodation in which they were conducted. This formation and social differentiation of types of schools was important not only as a means of re/producing educational differences within colonial society, but as a part of the building of the local communities in which they were located. In doing so, they largely reflected existing social relations and played a significant role in materially reproducing and symbolically articulating them, while creating new ways in which they could be both constructed and contested.

As this discussion has shown, in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, schools were established in remarkably diverse ways. Many, if not most, were the outcome of local initiative and activity on the part of churches, community leaders, teachers and, in most cases, parents themselves. In many other cases, the agents and inspectors of the National and amalgamated boards prompted, helped organise and, subsequently, financially supported local activity, working closely with leading members of local society. The central organisations of the various denominations also played a major part, especially in securing financial and other forms of organisational support for local activity, while in some cases the local clergy acted in an analogous capacity to the agents of the state boards. The provision and support for different forms of educational practice and school accommodation were closely linked to the structure of local communities and colonial society more generally to produce a characteristic social and geographical

distribution of schools. In populous areas, schools attended by distinct social groups – rich and poor, boys and girls, Catholic and Protestant, older and younger – occupied the same neighbourhoods, often with secular (and largely Protestant) middle-class schools enjoying the benefits of state financial assistance. In smaller places, local schools, with or without state assistance, often occupied makeshift buildings and catered to the local farmers' and labourers' children while the most comfortably placed sent their children to a better school elsewhere. These patterns of schooling often meant that state funds effectively subsidised the education of those already in comfortable circumstances. Finally, the establishment of schools played a significant part in shaping the physical environment and social relations of local communities, creating landmarks and confirming old centres of activity or creating new ones, and reinforcing or blurring existing divisions or creating new ones.

The analysis and argument of this chapter has important consequences for the generally received view of school provision. In particular, it rejects the common view that parents were largely apathetic about their children's education and that if schools were to be established, the initiative had to come from the leading sectors of colonial society, the churches or, most probably, the state. However, this chapter leaves the quality of parental initiative, other factors producing both this bewildering diversity of schools and the social relations in which they were enmeshed unexplored. These issues are addressed in the following chapters.

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## CHAPTER V

### CONDITIONS, INTERESTS AND NORMS

We the undersigned ratepayers of the district of Port Elliot and Goolwa beg respectfully to call the attention of the District Council to the great want of proper School accommodation at Goolwa. It is a fact that there are numbers of children running about the streets of Goolwa in a state of gross ignorance whose parents would be only too glad to send them to a good School did such an institution exist at Goolwa.<sup>1</sup>

Sir – What class of girls would your respected correspondent Mr G.W. Cotton wish to see educated according to the programme with which he wound up his letter in your today's issue! Only think of the daughter of a tradesman, or any other man in ordinary good circumstances, learning higher algebra, rhetoric, spherical trigonometry, and logic, and spending four years of their precious lives in the study of these subjects and others of a kindred character. I fancy their time would be much more profitably spent in learning to make a good wholesome pudding, or in stitching a gussett.<sup>2</sup>

The establishment of schools in particular localities and buildings, the selection of particular teachers, the adoption of particular curriculum and other educational practices, and the decision to send children to one school rather than another did not happen arbitrarily. Rather, parents, clergymen, landowners, politicians, government officers and others made choices about what sorts of schools should be established, where, and for whom. The parents at Goolwa, for instance, clearly considered a school was needed in their town, to meet the needs of parents and in the interests of the social and disciplinary well-being of the town. These choices rested on a range of assumptions and knowledges about schools and schooling, including understandings of the forms of knowledge which might suit the needs of the daughters of tradesmen. for instance. Moreover, they were constrained by a range of conditions both in local communities and in colonial society more generally.

This chapter explores the diverse conditions, interests and norms, principles and assumptions which led different individuals, groups and institutions to seek to establish

particular types of school where they did. It argues that there was a wide range of economic constraints on both parents and other members and institutions in local communities and on the central education boards shaping their capacity to provide schools and, in the case of the boards, the criteria by which they decided how many schools were needed. These interacted with a range of both social and geographical considerations to influence where both local and central bodies sought to locate their schools.

It is important to note that this chapter is only concerned to consider the general conditions, interests and understandings which disposed those interested in education to seek to establish different types of schools where they did. In particular, it is important to recognise that this was only one of the sets of conditions determining the actual patterns and processes of school provision. Those processes involved widespread tensions, disputes and conflicts between rival local groups and between local and central bodies and the construction of means for securing the desired forms of provision or, at least, acceptable compromises. However, these processes cannot be understood without first addressing the conditions, including the divergent sets of interests and norms they constituted, on which they were based.

#### WHY SUPPORT SCHOOLS?

At the most general level there was a widespread deep seated belief in colonial society in the value of education and in schooling as a means to it. This belief was deeply grounded in a range of conditions both in the colonies and in the countries from which the colonists had come. The transformation of economic life with the extension of capitalist production and waged labour, the rise of large cities and the seeming decline of religion had undermined the traditional bases of social order and control in

Britain. The same developments had also transformed popular domestic life, reconstituting the division of labour within the working-class household and undermining parental authority. To many middle-class observers, the working-class family appeared to be collapsing, its (newly re/defined) function of inculcating discipline and morality in children unfulfilled, compounding the dangers of social disorder.<sup>3</sup> Colonial leaders were clearly aware of these developments and of the fears they engendered among the dominant social classes. They also faced the prospect of securing a social order favourable to both their interests and (closely related to them) their notions of propriety and civilisation in a new environment with few of the established institutions and traditions which served that purpose in Britain, and shared many of the same fears.<sup>4</sup>

The previous centuries had also seen the rise of an increasingly literate popular culture in Britain and elsewhere in Europe. Many of the more humble immigrants in colonial Australia, as well as their betters, were the inheritors of that culture; many, indeed, were clearly committed to notions of self-improvement grounded in that culture.<sup>5</sup> The conditions of colonial society provided a range of incentives to develop literacy: the prospects of improvements in their material conditions, the cultural value attached to reading and writing, and the use of print media for a vast array of everyday communications.

These heritages and conditions sponsored a range of views of what constituted the value of schooling. Schooling would contribute substantially to the formation of disciplined, governable workers and subjects of the state and, in so far as they focused on its value for women, good wives and mothers. It would help build a colonial culture and cultural identity: on the one hand it might build a unified national culture and

identity, transcending national or ethnic, and religious divisions; on the other it might help maintain distinctive cultural traditions and identities. It would keep potentially troublesome children off the street and under adult supervision. It would promote self improvement through the cultivation of the mind. It would prepare young men and women for their positions in society, both through the particular knowledge and skills and the general initiation into the cultural traditions of English society it imparted. It would provide the knowledge necessary for working-class men and women to assert themselves and secure both better working conditions, economic position and political representation. And it would provide an introduction to the useful and valuable skills of reading and writing, arithmetic for boys and domestic skills such as needlework for girls.<sup>6</sup>

While none of these views of the value of schooling was necessarily or in principle tied to any other, in practice they were often linked to form characteristic, if internally inconsistent and even contradictory, approaches to understanding the purposes of schooling. One, for instance, linked the creation of good subjects of the state, keeping children off the streets, and notions of improvement which were in turn often constructed in terms of morality, 'rationality' and civilisation. A second linked self improvement, seen as gaining access to literate culture, discipline and respect for parental authority, and the supervision of children while parents were otherwise occupied. A third focused on fitting children for positions of leadership in colonial social and business life, including their initiation into the traditions of English high culture along with the inculcation of particular principles of morality, propriety and behaviour. For convenience, these sets of concerns might be labelled the 'moral subjects', 'self improvement' and 'leadership' approaches respectively.

In some respects, these constellations of concerns were derived from quite distinct, even opposed origins. The 'moral subject' approach, for instance, drew on liberal patriarchal capitalist notions of social order, individualism and political economy. The 'self improvement' approach reflected a working-class patriarchalism that was both critical of capitalism to a degree and committed to upward mobility within capitalist society and was rooted in well established and complex popular traditions. And the 'leadership' approach drew on notions of class and culture derived from the dominant English classes. In other respects, these approaches were explicitly defined in opposition to each other. The 'self-improvement', and 'moral subject' concerns, for instance, were often articulated specifically as critiques of, and alternatives to, each other. Moreover, these sets of concerns were fairly readily identified with particular social groups. The 'moral subject' approach was clearly associated with middle-class parents, politicians, ministers of religion and especially with the education boards and their officers and directed at the schooling of children of working-class origin. The 'self-improvement' concerns were often associated with working-class and small farming parents. And, finally, the 'leadership' approach reflected the concerns of the dominant groups in colonial society with defining, securing and legitimating its own social position and passing it on to its children, a task which was understood to require the acquisition of the culture of the British bourgeoisie.

This concern for providing schools on the part of the dominant classes and institutions in colonial society, whether seen in positive, liberal terms, or more critically, has long been a basic feature of Australian educational historiography. To a lesser extent, the interest of leading groups for the schooling of their own children also has been noted. However, the main accounts of the period are largely premised on the

assumption of widespread popular apathy regarding education. Yet many contemporary middle-class observers recognised, at least occasionally, that working-class parents were concerned with their children's education. Further, those who could fairly claim to represent working-class interests also often stressed the importance of education for their class. And, finally, working-class parents themselves often expressed a deep and keen interest in schools as a means of improvement, as well as supervision, for their children.<sup>7</sup>

The central bodies of church and state had additional reasons for supporting schools: their charters enjoined them to do so and they clearly considered that their survival depended in general on their doing so. Consequently, each board sought to construct a comprehensive system. While this was perhaps most obviously the case with the single board in South Australia or the amalgamated boards in the 1860s in the two eastern colonies it was also true for the rival boards under the dual systems. The National boards clearly regarded their systems as superior and the natural form for the colonies to adopt and sought to establish themselves as the major providers throughout their respective territories. Both the rival Denominational boards and the leading denominations themselves similarly regarded denominational education as right in principle and socially necessary. While no denomination could regard its own schools as a comprehensive system for the colonies, some certainly maintained that they were capable of providing adequately for the children of their own denominations. Further, the Denominational boards clearly saw the denominational system as a whole as capable of providing for all, rendering National schooling either unnecessary or, at most, a means of plugging gaps in the Denominational system where numbers were too small to support separate schools.<sup>8</sup>

Local supporters of schools, in contrast, were typically not concerned with the problems of supporting schools across whole colonies but with the needs of their own localities. Alongside their general interest in education, they had more tangible and immediate interests and concerns. Most obviously, they were concerned with the local use value of the school: it would provide a means of education for their children and perhaps for themselves. Some also clearly saw schools as custodial institutions for children whom they regarded as uncontrolled and undisciplined, children who, without a school, might be a threat to local social well-being and good order. Others saw the provision of a school as both a step towards, and a symbol of, local development. Clearly, some of these considerations overlapped with the more general concerns for the role of education in securing social well-being and the progress of civilisation but, typically, they were focused more narrowly and on more tangible objects.<sup>9</sup>

#### HOW MANY SCHOOLS AND WHERE?

While these considerations evidently supported the provision of schools in communities throughout the three colonies, in themselves they provided no guide as to how many schools were needed and could or should be supported, or where they should be located. The central boards articulated a range of principles for dealing with such questions. With some variation from board to board, they outlined the principle that schools should be provided as widely as possible, but that within each locality as few schools as possible should be provided (apart from the denominationalists, ideally one). In part this reflected assumptions about good pedagogy. In part, it reflected reasons of economy: in larger schools, teachers could instruct more pupils, thus concentrating their fees and contributing more fully to the costs of maintaining the school. And, in part, it reflected definitions of need: small populations such as those

in isolated and sparsely settled rural areas could provide only limited school fees and might, therefore, be unable to support a school without assistance. The concern with assisting those in special need also informed the principle that assistance should be directed towards schools catering to the poorer sectors of colonial society. The goldfields in Victoria, in particular, were also recognised as places in great need of official support for schools, not simply because of the poverty of many mining families but because they fostered an acute sense of impending moral and social disorder in the minds of the colony's dominant groups.<sup>10</sup>

To some degree, then, the central boards articulated a general vision of where schools might be needed, enabling them to determine priorities in accordance with their knowledge of the funding available. However, these general criteria were qualified, even contradicted, in a number of ways. There was considerable ambiguity regarding the principles governing provision for the poor, especially the urban poor. On the one hand the central bodies held that their brief was to provide for children of all classes. On the other, they argued that they had a special obligation to working-class children whose parents could provide minimal support for schools, and even, at times, argued that those who could do so should provide schools for their own children. This raised the further question whether the state should provide special 'poor schools'. The concern for an economically rational distribution of schools was also qualified by concerns to provide separate schools for girls and boys and for younger and older children.<sup>11</sup>

Similar contradictions arose from rival interests claiming the right to separate schools. Rationality and good pedagogy demanded that schools be large. However, the Denominational boards almost inevitably endorsed the principle that separate

denominations should have their own schools. Such schools, where they were in close proximity, would be smaller than they might if their distribution was determined by economic rationality. By the mid 1850s, the Victorian Denominational board, unlike its New South Wales counterpart, had partly resolved this tension by deciding to press for a far more 'rational' distribution of schools involving less denominational duplication in less populous localities. The rival boards under the dual system also often aimed to provide schools where they would contest the other's potential local monopoly, leading to duplication, rivalry and smaller rather than larger schools.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, they also accepted the principle that, in general, schools should be initiated, or at least well supported, locally. But this principle, in many cases, effectively negated their attempts to generate any overall plan for the rational development of educational provision. There were many places where parents established or supported schools which the boards considered unnecessary or where the boards considered schools to be required where local communities offered no support.<sup>13</sup>

Within the general limits defined by these economic, social and strategic considerations, the boards defined a range of additional principles concerning where schools should be supported. First, they should be accessible to the largest possible populations, a corollary of the principle of promoting fewer, larger schools. Therefore they should be centrally located, whether in towns or more diffuse rural localities, and where they were approached by good, safe roads. Second, they had to be placed on sites which satisfied both moral and functional criteria: they needed to be well drained, away from potential sources of disease, noxious odours and other forms of physical contamination or danger, preferably away from the noise of traffic and the variety of

sources of moral contamination in the local community.<sup>14</sup>

Some of those active in educational affairs in their local communities, often the more prominent and powerful, with links to the dominant class in colonial social, economic and political life, supported the general concerns of the boards. This was clearly the case in the capital cities and their suburbs where many such men moved in the same social circles as the members of the boards and shared their views. The same was also true outside these centres. The Macarthurs at Camden in New South Wales, for instance, strongly endorsed Wilkins' view that it was important to reduce the number of 'little paltry schools' by consolidating them into larger ones. At Beechworth in Victoria, too, with the amalgamation of the National and Denominational systems under the Board of Education in 1862, the Local Committees of the existing state-assisted schools argued that it would be better to have one advanced school, two elementary schools (one for boys, one for girls), and an infant school than the four elementary schools already established. They did so on the basis of notions of economic rationality, on the one hand, and a model of a comprehensive system of schools, on the other. Clearly, many of the clergy strongly endorsed the model of a centrally supported and regulated denominational system of schools shared by the denominational heads and the Denominational boards in New South Wales and, initially, Victoria. Teachers, too, often supported the boards' views. For example, following the amalgamation of the rival boards in New South Wales, George Simpson, the Public, and former National school teacher at Kempsey argued that the schools in the area should be reorganised on a more rational basis which would constitute them as a local system instead of as rivals.<sup>15</sup>

More commonly, however, parents and other members of the communities in

which the schools were situated articulated quite different concerns, adopted quite different priorities, and expressed quite different interests from those of the central boards. In contrast to the central boards' concerns with general patterns of distribution and the construction of an overall system of schools, local decisions to support schools reflected a range of specific local social interests. Moreover, many of these local interests tended to support the multiplication of schools rather than the more strategically rationalised distribution the boards sought. Churches, often particularly the clergy, were concerned with securing and holding their place as key institutions in local social life and saw the formation of denominational secondary and primary schools as a means to that end. Different ethnic groups, often linked to particular churches, saw schools within their own local communities, separate from those of others, as a means to maintain both their identity and internal discipline. Leading families in some districts saw the provision of schools for their own children, separate from those of others, as a means of securing the education they wanted, marking out their own distinctiveness and superiority and preventing physical and moral contamination by dirtier and seemingly less respectable children. In the country districts, good, respectable local schools promised to save them the expense of sending their children away to boarding schools. Finally, many parents, clergy and others often placed great stress on maintaining gender divisions in the interests of sexual morality for girls and the development of manliness in boys and saw separate schools for both as a means of promoting those virtues. Teachers' concerns were also important: some sought to cultivate a limited and exclusive clientele creating both a place and a need for a second teacher willing to teach the majority. In many respects these factors shaping school provision derived from the precise patterns of settlement

in particular localities. Where communities were united in religion and national identity, only age and gender divisions were likely to be important; where they were more heterogeneous there was a far greater likelihood of other pressures for a multiplication of finely differentiated schools arising.<sup>16</sup>

The density and distribution of population in different areas, and their relative wealth or poverty placed effective limits on the number of schools which might be supported. In the more densely populated areas, such as the capitals, their suburbs and the larger country towns the numbers of pupils made it possible for large numbers of schools to survive in close proximity to each other. In the capitals, in fact, some schools occupied different rooms in the same building! Schools may not have been evenly distributed throughout these areas, however: in Adelaide, for instance, those schools which showed up in the official records and statistics were concentrated in the more prestigious localities, while the less reputable parts of the city were under-represented. On the gold and other large mining fields, the development of established, stable centres and, in some cases, strings of centres, allowed the formation of clusters of permanent schools while the more ephemeral or recently opened fields supported only one or two schools, often of a similarly transitory character. In the rural areas, the precise patterns of settlement similarly shaped the distribution of schools. Where localities were dominated by a single centre, a single school or perhaps two served the whole of the neighbourhood. However, in places where there was no such clearly identified centre, either a single school was located in a central position and accessible to various parts of the district or several smaller schools were opened, each serving their own little hamlet and its few surrounding farms.<sup>17</sup>

It is clear that in many country districts, especially during adverse seasons or market conditions, there was widespread poverty. Moreover, in farming districts where landholdings were small, such as the older, inner districts in South Australia, and in newly settled districts such as those opened up by the Selection Acts in the eastern colonies, where settlers were still in the early stages of developing their holdings, disposable incomes were generally small. In such areas schools could only be supported with considerable difficulty, restraining any tendency to multiply schools. However, where local communities contained at least some relatively affluent families it was possible to support a range of schools. Moreover, the availability of state funds made it possible for many schools to exist which might otherwise have been unable to survive.<sup>18</sup>

Within the context of these conditions making for the multiplication of schools on the one hand and the limitation on their numbers on the other, a number of additional local considerations helped determine the precise location of schools. Generally, local settlers were concerned with the same questions of safety and accessibility as were the central bodies, although they often weighed the details differently. Frequently, they placed a far greater stress on details of local geography and population distribution, arguing the need for more local schools than the central boards considered necessary. Moreover, members of local communities often had vested interests to secure or protect. Parents had a natural interest in ensuring that the local school was located in their part of the district. Individual landowners often had vested interests in the location of a school, since it stood to enhance the long-term development value of adjacent property or offer an attractive and immediate return on existing investments in land.<sup>19</sup>

Given these concerns, the physical characteristics of many localities provided added impetus to the tendency to multiply schools. Urban areas were crossed by main roads and, sometimes, railways which effectively divided districts into distinct sections, and made it dangerous to send children from one part to another. In the country districts creeks, hills, gullies or other 'natural obstacles' and lack of infrastructure such as roads and bridges, made access to a school in some locations difficult, even in quite small and otherwise compact districts. Such problems might affect some children more than others and only be a problem at certain times of the year: road and creek crossings which were open in summer were often impassable in winter, while older children in urban areas were more capable of walking further and negotiating busy streets than were younger ones. Further, in some cases school promoters were faced with very few options. In some newly established selector farming areas, for instance, most of the land was already occupied by established pastoral runs. In such cases they might be dependent on the goodwill of the landowner to make a suitable site available. In urban areas, too, there might also be little unowned land and schools might be forced to occupy whatever premises were available with little choice of locality.<sup>20</sup>

This complex of local conditions and both local and central interests and understandings of the need for schools effectively defined sets of criteria by which different possibilities for school provision were weighed. Such criteria represented the juxtaposition of often unrelated concerns such as financial capacity, questions of safety, and the significance of particular sectional interests. In practice, many situations forced both local and central bodies to balance these different criteria and establish priorities among them. In the rural areas, for instance, many clergy admitted

that while they preferred a denominational system the circumstances demanded a combined and, therefore, (in their view) necessarily secular school. In the towns, even those clergy who openly favoured National schooling felt constrained to establish a separate Denominational school if other denominations did. Central bodies, too, frequently balanced strategic criteria against their other ideals. The National board in Victoria, for instance, generally sought to establish schools at key centres, but in some cases decided that it was better to allow struggling denominational schools already in existence to fail first. At other times, it decided that it was more important to secure any available good premises, even if only to prevent them falling into rival hands, than to pursue their objectives of a rational distribution of schools. In South Australia, the board felt it was better to approve separate schools where local divisions were so intense that no single school could accommodate all factions, rather than adhere to its principles of distribution. The boards frequently also had to balance the realities of social division and local interests in the larger centres against their concerns to promote large central schools on the one hand and the needs of small schools in isolated rural areas on the other.<sup>21</sup>

### TYPES OF SCHOOLING

While material conditions and interests provided major constraints on the provision of schools, they particularly concerned questions of how many schools were needed and where they should be located. However, parents, clergy and education boards and their inspectors were also concerned with the type of school to be established. One set of such concerns and notions can be labelled popular/parental. Many working-class and small farming parents wanted schools which would teach their sons to read, write and do arithmetic calculations and their daughters to read, write

and do needlework, in the minimum amount of time. Further, they wanted their children taught good behaviour, manners, and respect for adults/parents. They articulated their preferences for particular educational practices quite explicitly, often in protest against practices they disliked. They frequently commented on teachers, judging them to be 'good', 'well liked' or 'popular'. Often, they couched their judgements simply, in terms of their children's progress or lack of it. Frequently, their actions in supporting particular teachers and schools and withdrawing support from others confirmed these direct expressions. School inspectors' reports of their concerns and teachers and other contemporary observers' comments provide a considerable body of impressions which further confirm their views.<sup>22</sup>

These concerns, and the preferences and judgements which articulated them, reflected a deep appreciation of the value of education. They were, however, constrained by the pressure of economic circumstances. They could not afford to keep their children dependent for many years, and required them to earn their own living from an early age. While their children were relatively dependent, they could only afford low school fees, and at times could not even pay these. Moreover, the circumstances of working-class and small farming families, and others engaged in small-scale, labour intensive family enterprises, meant that all members of the household had to contribute to the family economy. Often both parents had to work as fully as they were able, while the children were needed at times to engage in either paid labour or unpaid help within the household to support the income earning activities of other family members.<sup>23</sup>

Such patterns of involvement in family economies went hand in hand with a particular set of understandings of the nature of childhood. Childhood extended only

to around the age of twelve or thirteen years, but, in any case, from quite an early age was fraught with ambiguities, which increased as children grew older. Young people associated with adults at both work and play and spent their time moving between activities which placed them in positions of dependency and subordination to adult authority and those in which they acted with the same responsibility as other adults. This ambiguity meant that there was no presumption that the only proper occupation for young people was school or that their education was confined to their schooling.<sup>24</sup>

Gender was also crucial to both the practices and the ideologies of family life. Girls and boys generally moved differently into adult life: girls associated principally with adult women while boys increasingly moved in the company of men. They also generally engaged in different tasks. Girls characteristically supported their mothers with household work such as washing, minding children and looking after the domestic garden or animals while boys worked independently or with their fathers in wage-earning activities. Girls were considered more morally vulnerable than boys, and their moral transgressions more serious; consequently they were more likely to be confined to domestic activities and to be supervised in public or mixed company than boys. Moreover, boys' education and girls' education were thought of in rather different ways: boys' schooling was to provide them with an access to the literate culture which increasingly underpinned public life, while girls' education was tied to their work in the domestic sphere.<sup>25</sup>

These economic and ideological considerations shaped popular/parental understandings of what sorts of schools might be useful in several ways. First, they could not keep their children at school for a prolonged period, but were obliged to encourage or allow them to seek regular paid work from a relatively early age.

Further, while their children were of school-going age, they could send them only irregularly, partly because of the irregularity of family income which sometimes was insufficient to pay for tuition fees and partly because of the need for even young children to work. This produced gender-differentiated patterns of schooling, with many girls regularly missing school on washing day and often persisting in schools till a relatively advanced age while their male peers attended more irregularly and seasonally, and finished their schooling at a younger age. However, the flexible boundaries between childhood and adulthood meant that there was no sense that schooling should dominate childhood or that education terminated with leaving school.<sup>26</sup>

Second, they shaped the forms of schooling they considered appropriate – curricula, pedagogy, discipline and classroom organisation – as well as a range of other issues concerning the characteristics of their children's teachers. At times they articulated these understandings, values, perceptions and implicit criteria for judging schools directly and explicitly. Often, however, they remained implicit in their actions, or can be inferred or constructed only indirectly. School inspectors, for example, often commented – disapprovingly, in many cases – that parents strongly approved particular teachers and schools, while elsewhere they provided detailed descriptions of the characteristics of those teachers and their educational practices.<sup>27</sup>

Parents widely supported quite different conceptions of what might be useful for boys to learn and what might meet the needs of girls, and led to a high valuation of a substantial concentration on needlework. More generally, they imparted a sense of urgency concerning their children's education and an interest in seeing them master basic, useful skills as quickly and efficiently as possible. Moreover, their recognition

that education was not confined to schooling imparted both a sense of practicality and anti-bookishness and a willingness to pare away those subjects which appeared luxurious frills, such as singing, could be learned independently once the skills of reading were mastered, such as geography and history, or which seemed to reflect disciplinary purposes rather than providing a really useful education, such as 'industrial' subjects for boys.<sup>28</sup>

The same conditions and considerations shaped popular perceptions of what counted as good teachers and good teaching. Good teaching was teaching which enabled their children to learn quickly; good teachers were teachers who helped them learn quickly. They were forced to think of such concerns within the limits of their capacity to pay teachers: frequently the amounts they could afford would only secure teachers with relatively limited education. However, since the teachers were only required to introduced the skills of reading, writing and working with numbers this was not an enormous problem. Moral considerations related to gender were also important: they widely preferred male teachers for boys and females for girls (and for younger boys, if necessary). Male teachers were held to be more able to discipline and control bigger boys and there was a sense of 'fitness' of associating boys with adult males and of the inappropriateness of submitting them to the authority of women. Female teachers were considered necessary for girls since they could teach them needlework, which commonly occupied a very substantial part of their school time. It was also considered inappropriate if not simply dangerous to have adult males alone in close proximity to and with power over older girls. For these reasons married couples were widely favoured to conduct schools: not only could each supervise the instruction of children of their own sex, but the presence of the male teacher's wife provided some

sort of guarantee against sexually improper behaviour. As an added bonus, it was cheaper to employ a married couple than two teachers, one of either sex, separately.<sup>29</sup>

Parents articulated a range of concerns quite apart from those deriving from either their economic circumstances or an ideology of gender. In particular, they frequently indicated that they were concerned that discipline be firm but not harsh, that they accepted the use of corporal punishment but only sparingly. The crucial term was fairness: the punishment should fit the offence and all children should be treated equally. They were also concerned with more general notions of fairness, regarding reasonableness and amiability in the treatment of children generally and equality in dealing with different groups who wished to use the school. Parents often also regarded the teachers' attention to duty, diligence and fitness for duty as important. As with the more general judgements of schools, parental judgements of discipline, moral issues, fairness and diligence were couched in particularist, specific, concrete terms; any underlying general or abstract notions of propriety or other principles remained implicit.<sup>30</sup>

Within the limits these concerns imposed, they appear to have accepted a wide range of possible practices in the schools: as long as their children made progress, they were content to leave the means to the teachers. However, they did at times indicate that they had a range of notions about what good teaching might be like. Often, there is evidence that parents advocated specific methods, but the content of their views is unspecified. The annual school examinations also indicate what teachers thought parents would like to see and the reports that parents were gratified or well satisfied with the evidence of their children's work sometimes supports this.

Occasionally, they articulated more precisely the practices they endorsed or favoured. Commonly, they accepted rote learning as the basic means by which children appropriated the content of instruction; in particular, they appear to have seen the spelling of lists of words, and the repetition of slabs of text or lists of arithmetic facts as basic procedures. Similarly, they supported organisational forms in which pupils were allowed to remain together under the general supervision of the teacher(s) with individual instruction in that context. Certainly, they often explicitly preferred not separating children into classes, and widely supported schools which adopted individual teaching methods. At the same time, however, they widely sought to have the girls and older boys kept apart and taught separately. They commonly favoured the use of texts which their children could bring to school from home. Sometimes they expressed quite detailed and specific preferences, such as the use of quills rather than steel nibs for teaching writing.<sup>31</sup>

In many respects these preferences clearly derived from popular practices in the parents' places of origin. Many working-class private schools in Britain were small. All the pupils were gathered together in the same room and taught individually and by rote from a variety of texts which pupils brought from home or which the teachers provided. The teachers were often poor, sometimes ill-educated, sometimes self-educated but certainly untrained. German communities similarly drew on models of parish schools from home. The derivation of colonial preferences from these practices is perhaps indirectly acknowledged in teachers' and inspectors' comments that the teachers parents preferred were indistinguishable from Irish hedge school teachers or English village schoolmasters and their schools no different from old fashioned dame schools. The constraints under which they educated their children must also have

disposed them strongly towards individual instruction using available texts as they minimised the costs of schooling and accommodated highly irregular attendance. Family child-minding practices were also important: allowing all pupils to stay together permitted older children to keep a protective eye on their younger siblings.<sup>32</sup>

Parents commonly shared other concerns, especially regarding teachers, often extending beyond the boundaries of the school itself. In particular, they considered it important that their children's teachers should fit comfortably and congenially into the local community, that they should not be too violent, disruptive, arrogant or quarrelsome. Some teachers complained that they also wanted them not to be too materially successful! Especially in isolated communities, with relatively few well educated parents, they wanted teachers who might fulfil a number of other roles (sunday school teacher, lay preacher, letter writer) requiring a reasonable level of literacy. These concerns also often reflected economic constraints, such as the incapacity to support separate individuals to fulfil these various roles or to support a good teacher from the school alone.<sup>33</sup>

At times their peculiar circumstances or interests meant that parents and others placed a high value on particular concerns. Where small communities were bound by a common denominational allegiance, for example, or where members of the same denomination strove to support a school of their own within a larger local society, the inclusion of religion in the curriculum, or the choice of a teacher of the same religion was crucial to their purposes. Similarly, where groups with common national origins sought to maintain a school of their own, the choice of language of instruction, teachers, or curriculum content was of major importance. In German communities, for instance, the teaching of German as a subject, and the use of German as the

language of general instruction were often fundamental priorities, while in Irish Catholic schools the passing on of a knowledge of the iniquities of the English in Ireland must often have been an essential part of maintaining cultural tradition and identity.<sup>34</sup>

This array of interests, concerns, preferences and priorities allowed parents to support teachers with widely varying degrees of formal education and experience and from a variety of social class and occupational backgrounds. It also permitted parents to accept a range of characteristics in schools and teachers which they might otherwise have rejected as long as the children made good progress under them. It allowed them to tolerate a range of activities which may have, in some respects, cut across teachers' diligent attention to school duties: the intermingling of school and domestic duties, the execution of a second job and occasional absence from the schoolroom. Further, it allowed them at times to tolerate behaviour which on its own might be considered undesirable: drunkenness, quarrelsomeness, and bawdiness out of school; drunkenness, lack of concern about proprieties of appearance and even sexual offences inside school. Even where parents regarded teachers' sexual behaviour as unacceptable, the combination of their educational concerns with their gender priorities sometimes allowed them to continue to send their sons but withdraw their daughters. Often, different groups of working-class and small farming parents weighed the various issues differently, some supporting particular teachers while others regarded them as unfit for office.<sup>35</sup>

Middle-class parents' concerns and preferences in many respects contrasted sharply with this picture. Characteristically, they sought a more extended education for their children. Consequently, they favoured a more advanced and extensive curriculum, with a variety of feminine accomplishments for their daughters and subjects

relevant to work and action in the public sphere for their sons. Many favoured small schools, especially for their daughters, where all pupils were kept together and taught both collectively and individually. They favoured well educated and preferably well bred teachers and, as with working-class and small farming parents, and for much the same reasons, regarded male teachers as appropriate for their sons and female teachers for their daughters. They appear to have placed considerable stress on the separation, for moral reasons of male and female pupils. They were most concerned with the moral character of their children's teachers, as evidenced by both their behaviour inside the classroom and their conduct of their public and domestic lives more generally. Where they sent their children to mixed schools, they also preferred teachers to be respectable married couples. As the distinction between elementary and advanced schooling became increasingly sharply delineated, they came to regard good elementary schools for their children as those which were taught by trained teachers. However, it is unclear whether this was because they placed a positive value on the training per se, or because such teachers exhibited other characteristics they valued, such as a concern with moral virtues such as sobriety and industry, a systematic curriculum, organisation which stressed and rewarded regularity and punctuality, and a stress on polite behaviour, obedience and respect for adult authority.<sup>36</sup>

The central boards, professional teachers and some members of the more educated sectors of the middle class also articulated clear views of the type of elementary schooling most suitable for the children of the working class, tradesmen, small farmers and others who comprised the bulk of the population. These views often sharply contrasted with the popular parental concerns outlined above. This model of

the good school prescribed a number of characteristics. First, pupils should be organised into classes based on their attainment in reading. The number of classes depended in part on the size of the school, two or three in the case of small schools but, ideally, four or five. Boys and girls of similar attainments should be placed in the same class unless the school was very large. Each class should have its own teacher and room, except where two or more classes shared apprentice ('pupil') teachers and a fully fledged master or mistress. The classification and progress of each pupil should be carefully recorded and the number of pupils enrolled and their individual attendance noted daily, if not each morning and afternoon. Hours of instruction should be fixed and distributed to different subjects strictly and systematically according to a time-table displayed in the classroom.<sup>37</sup>

Second, the good school should adopt a particular curriculum, centred around reading, writing, arithmetic and grammar for boys, with needlework partly replacing arithmetic for girls. Not surprisingly, denominationalists and secularists differed on the content and place of religion and in some cases history; however, they shared a belief that subjects such as geography, singing, drawing, natural sciences, gymnastics, algebra and geometry and morality comprised an important part of the sound elementary curriculum. Each subject was to be arranged according to a developmental hierarchy or sequence of knowledge and tasks proceeding from simple to complex.<sup>38</sup>

Third, it should employ specific methods of teaching and learning. The use of special school texts was crucial, those of the Irish National schools being most preferred, although those of the British and Foreign School Society were also widely accepted as basic lesson books in the core subjects and those professional teachers and inspectors wedded to various denominational systems favoured similar series

geared to their own sectarian views. Good teaching involved careful and precise exposition of material, or carefully supervised reading aloud by pupils, followed by questioning to ascertain not only the grasp of basic factual information but understanding of meaning (in reading and geography, for instance) or principles (in arithmetic). While some 'mechanical' teaching to ensure the thorough memorisation of detail was important, good teaching focused on the 'intelligent' appropriation of material. Different subjects also had their specialist methods of instruction such as Curwen or Hullah's methods for vocal music and Mulhaussen's method for writing. These included general strategies for development, such as starting with the topography of the classroom and proceeding outwards in geography and for securing interest and understanding, such as using examples from daily life in arithmetic and maps in geography. While much teaching was collective or simultaneous, learning was individual: pupils were to appropriate the knowledge offered by the teachers on their own, neither asking nor offering assistance to their fellows.<sup>39</sup>

Fourth, it embodied a particular style of discipline. The organisation of curriculum and instruction on the one hand, and pupils and time on the other, demanded that pupils attend regularly and punctually. Pupils' movement was precise and quiet, carefully regulated by the teacher, as was their posture and behaviour while sitting or standing. Teachers carefully supervised pupils' activities both inside the classroom, where they ensured that they were kept productively occupied at all times, and in the playground. Teachers secured control principally by cultivating the affection and willing cooperation of the pupils in the interests of gradually establishing government by the self-restraint of pupils. There were divergent views about the desirability of using rewards and a general, but reluctant, recognition that some forms

of punishment such as detention and, in the last instance, corporal punishment might be necessary.<sup>40</sup>

Fifth, the good school was furnished with purpose-designed desks and forms, blackboards, maps and other apparatus required for good teaching. Desks and forms were of different sizes according to the sizes of the pupils, and the surface of the desks sloped at a precisely defined angle. They were arranged so that all pupils faced their teacher and so that there was sufficient space between each form and the desk behind to allow the teacher free movement between them. Certain arrangements were specifically rejected, notably the placement of desks around the walls so that pupils when seated at them faced away from the teacher.<sup>41</sup>

All these characteristics demanded that the good school should be large. Only large schools provided sufficient pupils for proper classification. Further, only the incomes and economies of scale generated by large numbers permitted separate rooms and teachers for different classes and the furniture and equipment to allow proper teaching methods.

Moreover, the good school was part of a good system of schools. The good system was characterised by uniformity because if there was one 'best method' defined in terms which gave it universal applicability, it should be implemented everywhere and because uniformity would counter the evil effects of high levels of transience by allowing children to transfer from school to school with minimum interruption to their education. In most cases, the good system included infant as well as elementary schools, while in some it also included advanced schools.<sup>42</sup>

Crucial to this model of the good school was the 'good teacher'. First, s/he exhibited a range of personal characteristics which were, in effect, the preconditions

of being a good teacher. S/he was a person of unimpeachable christian character, high principled, zealous and industrious, sober, punctual and imbued with a love of order, a sense of propriety and a concern for good habits. Although the good teacher did not necessarily come from a 'superior' social background, s/he showed, in language, manners and dress, an awareness of the 'ordinary forms and customs of decent society'. S/he was capable of exercising authority and 'acquiring influence over [his/her] pupils' and of 'moulding the mind' and, especially, the character of youth. The good teacher possessed a natural aptitude for teaching: the art of communication, especially with children, the ability to relate the subject matter to the daily life of children and to establish a degree of interaction or 'reciprocity' with them so as to engage them actively in their work. And, the good teacher was committed to teaching as a lifelong vocation, with a 'love of the profession' and a deep concern for professional self-improvement. Importantly, given the hierarchical structure of employment in the state school systems, many of the characteristics which defined good teachers were, in the context of colonial society, strongly identified with men. Where space was made for the concept of the good female teacher it was characteristically in the context of teaching young or female pupils.<sup>43</sup>

Second, the model teacher was soundly, if not thoroughly, educated, giving him/her a solid basis for establishing and developing the fundamentals of those branches of knowledge which were considered to comprise an adequate English elementary education. Such knowledge included not just a formal or reading knowledge of literature, grammar and history with, perhaps, modern European or classical languages and mathematics but, also, drawing and music, with military drill or gymnastics as further optional extras. Moreover, it included the development of

particular style in the application of such knowledge: insofar as this style was defined it was couched in normative terms or defined negatively. Teachers should, for instance, demonstrate 'correct' pronunciation and articulation of aspirates, and 'fluency' and 'grace' in reading. Equally, their speech should be 'without provincialisms' and 'free from the nasal colonial twang'.<sup>44</sup> This clearly established the forms of speech of the educated middle class of southern England as a standard against which teachers should be judged and which, by extension, should provide the model for colonial children.

Third, the good teacher possessed both a body of knowledge and an array of skills relevant to classroom practice within a large school system. Initially, and with differing emphases in different systems, among different groups and in different contexts, this involved principally a knowledge of monitorial or class instructional methods such as those of the various established school systems of Britain. As the colonial systems became more fully developed and the proportion of uncertificated teachers shrank the claims about what was required in teachers were elaborated. Increasingly from the early 1860s, for instance, the knowledge which the officers of the National system in New South Wales deemed 'essential' to a good teacher included the nature of the human mind, its faculties and its development, based in the science of psychology and the most modern and improved methods of instruction. It also included a knowledge of the principles, procedures and rules of the system under which the teacher worked. Finally, it included a knowledge of the development of education in the western world and its implications for a proper understanding of the present and probable future educational needs of the Australian colonies. As Wilkins' later account of the 'ideal teacher' made clear, teachers were not simply expected to

'possess' such knowledges or to 'exhibit' desired behaviours, but to 'embody' them, to have assimilated them as a class and gender-based habitus. Such knowledges were generally to be obtained only through specialist professional training.<sup>45</sup>

There were, of course, variations in the model of the good school and the good teacher. Denominationalists and secularists disagreed over the place and form of religion in the curriculum. Some, including the Denominational board in New South Wales and the central board in South Australia supported monitorial methods long after other boards had abandoned them in favour of the 'rational' approach. Some commentators recognised distinct national differences not only in organising school systems as a whole, but in methods of teaching and discipline. The South Australian board favoured Curwen's music teaching methods while the National boards and their successors in the eastern colonies preferred Hullah. Individual boards changed their views substantially over time: the early reports of the New South Wales National board, for instance, made no mention of trained teachers, yet that rapidly became a hallmark of its concerns, while the reports of the Denominational board in Victoria from the mid-1850s and New South Wales after about 1860 became increasingly concerned with trained teachers, particular methods of organisation and instruction and other aspects of the 'rational' model.

Despite these differences, however, they shared a 'technical-professional' orientation: they increasingly judged teachers on the basis of their possession of specified skills and knowledge of the principles underlying them, rather than on the basis of the actual outcomes in children's education. Good teaching involved the application of one method rather than another, the organisation of a specified form of timetable, the grouping of children according to their degree of progress through a

specified program rather than on any other basis. Efficiency, consequently, was assessed on the teachers' competence in applying such methods and in abiding by a series of regulations, keeping specified hours and securing punctual attendance of the children. Moreover, the bases on which good teachers and good schools were defined were represented as abstract universal principles. Historical accounts of National education in Ireland and subsequently in the colonies, saw their development as the gradual discovery of improved methods of relevance to whole types of society. Terms such as 'system', 'general' and 'principles' were invoked along with the notion that rational methods were 'scientific' rather than 'merely empirical' and were based on particular techniques grounded in general theories, citing theorists like Pestalozzi as authorities. Moreover, the 'child' whose mental development provided many of these principles was an abstract universal individual, with no particular social characteristics or positioning. Similarly, the practices of institutions such as the model schools were advanced as models of correct practice, not just in the specific context in which they were placed, but for emulation and adoption everywhere. Finally, and consequently, the various state systems looked to other state systems as sources of good ideas and models of good practice.<sup>46</sup>

These norms of the good school and definitions of the purposes of schooling implied particular normative understandings of the character of childhood. They implied a different view of the distinction between childhood and adulthood than did the views of working-class, farming and mining parents, involving less movement between child and adult activities, a more extended period dominated by child activities and a far closer surveillance of children. Child nature was defined as passive, docile, in different contexts either morally innocent or morally corrupt, but in either case

vulnerable to evil and in need of training. In this context, one of the main purposes of education was moral nurturing and one of the main institutions of moral nurturance, outside the family, was the school. Schooling, increasingly, came to be seen as a prime activity of childhood, one which should engage children for most of the time, most days for several years. The proper period of schooling and the period of childhood came to be synonymous.<sup>47</sup>

### ACCOMMODATION

The provision of buildings was shaped by a similar range of concerns as the provision of other aspects of schools. Several general factors tended to promote parental support for the use of private dwellings, churches, halls, shops and, in the rural areas, barns for schools. Among those of relatively humble origins, well established popular traditions of schooling, especially in England and Ireland provided a cultural basis for, and acceptance of, the practice. Second, the bulk of people lived under crude and uncomfortable conditions. Third, the low incomes of both waged labourers and small farming families meant that they were struggling to provide even the cheapest forms of schooling. In the country districts, this was compounded by the low levels of infrastructural development which gave the provision of roads and bridges practical priority over public buildings. Such traditions and constraints strongly disposed such groups in town and country to use whatever premises they could afford. Parallel concerns also led many middle-class parents and teachers to use private dwellings: well established traditions of middle-class education from 'home', the style of private dwellings used, and the domestic character of much of the education offered. Where the school promoters sought to provide a school not identified with any denomination, there was considerable advantage in not using church premises;

however, where schools were associated with churches, shared premises were both symbolically appropriate and economical.<sup>48</sup>

Nevertheless, a range of other factors pushed even quite small communities to erect new buildings to house their schools. In some cases, there was a general lack of public buildings and, thus, the establishment of a school, church or hall was a valuable asset to the community, providing a venue for a wide range of public activities in addition to the school. Elsewhere, especially in the larger and more established towns, community leaders suggested that a more imposing, purpose built schoolhouse would contribute to the general amenity of the town and symbolise its significance as an important and growing centre. Once the school was established, this argument could be extended constantly to suggest the need to improve the appearance of the school and its grounds. In yet other cases, where schools served a prosperous clientele and, especially where it could attract a large number of such pupils, the means and the incentive existed for providing a superior building for the school. Such a building might both secure superior amenities for middle-class children and their teachers, and signify their social superiority through their possession of such amenities. In some such cases, the schools in fact occupied a series of buildings, each larger or, in other respects, better than the previous one. In many cases, local communities took steps to provide not only a school building but a residence for the teacher to entice the existing teacher to stay or to attract a new and better teacher. Even where there were good reasons to erect a building for school purposes, there were divisions over what sort of a building was required, and what its purposes were. Some saw it as part of a larger strategy to secure particular sorts of teachers and even particular pedagogical practices, a view which frequently was taken to mean that the building should be

designed and set aside specifically and solely for school use. Others saw it merely as a means of providing relatively healthy and amenable conditions for their teachers and children to work in, a view which placed no such restrictions on the form or use of the building.<sup>49</sup>

While there were clearly many conditions and interests in local communities favouring the use of makeshift accommodation for schools, or the erection of general purpose buildings, the availability of funds from the central boards proved a powerful incentive to local communities to build schools. In the first place, central funding made it possible to develop local infrastructure at relatively low cost to the settlers, especially where the local contribution required could be defrayed in material and labour rather than in cash. Moreover, the central funds provided a valuable flow of cash into the local economy. Hirst has shown in South Australia that large numbers of small farmers were dependent on a variety of works outside their properties and that minor works for District Councils, such as road filling and bridge building, were important sources of income. The erection of a school, subsidised by the state, offered clear gains for such people, as well as for local contractors and businesses which might have hoped to provide much of the materials. Moreover, given the common problems faced by small settlements throughout the three colonies, there is no reason to assume that Hirst's analysis applies only to South Australia, once due allowance is made for the difference in detail in the forms of local government in Victoria and New South Wales. The conditions which the different central boards placed on funding constituted a final factor shaping local decisions about school buildings. In particular, where they sought aid for buildings to be used for both church and school purposes, they were limited to the Denominational boards.<sup>50</sup>

The central boards had a number of concerns with school accommodation. Some reflected their institutional interests, as it was important to have good school buildings both to ensure the secure, untroubled existence of their schools and as a demonstration and guarantee of their ongoing presence and success in both the locality and the colony more generally. Others reflected a pragmatism and accommodation to the limits of funding. Initially, for instance, both the South Australian board and the denominations and Denominational boards in the eastern colonies regarded any building which provided shelter and served both school purposes as good, even if shared with church or other activities, while the National boards accepted that makeshift premises would have to be used in many places. Significantly, however, the boards increasingly developed a range of normative criteria defining the good schoolhouse. From the outset, the National boards, especially in New South Wales, considered that school buildings should be built and devoted solely to school purposes. In later years, the Denominational board in Victoria and the South Australian board also articulated the same principle. All boards agreed that school buildings should be lofty, well lit and ventilated, and furnished with desks and forms, blackboards, maps, book closets and other special equipment.<sup>51</sup>

Underlying these concerns were further sets of criteria. Some were directly related to pedagogical considerations. Others were related to health: in South Australia, for instance, Wyatt lamented the probability that overcrowding and poor ventilation in domestic premises used as schools contributed to the spread of disease and consequent death.<sup>52</sup> Yet others were concerned with the capacity of schools, especially in the country districts, to attract and hold good teachers by securing them attractive conditions of living and working.<sup>53</sup>

Crucially, however, the concern with schools buildings related directly to the broad social and moral educative functions of the schools. Good school buildings, explicitly contrasted with the dwellings of the inferior classes, could provide invaluable adjuncts to the formal lessons of the teachers. The boards also elaborated norms governing school toilets. In part they were concerned with health, but they incorporated and elaborated this within a more general moral framework. They regarded proper toilets as teaching both children and the local communities decency and cleanliness. To do so, they should be placed in isolated and, preferably, invisible parts of the school grounds. Further, toilets for males and females should be separated from each other. These concerns clearly suggest a morality which placed high value on overtly suppressing knowledge of eliminatory 'bodily functions' which was closely related to the explicit suppression of positive sexual knowledge. At the same time, the very careful and direct regulation this 'suppression' entailed announced loudly the importance of the body and its 'hidden' or 'private' parts and functions and played its part in the schools' general articulation of gender difference. This widespread view was articulated particularly bluntly in the final report of the Commissioners who investigated state supported schools in New South Wales in the mid 1850s:

The wretched hovels in which the humbler classes are content to live in the country districts are of a nature to prevent their attaining common decency, much less comfort or neatness in their dwellings. Their habits and their education, in the widest sense of the term, would doubtless be greatly improved if they could be induced to build neater and more commodious residences. But when the school-houses present them with examples of everything to be avoided rather than imitated; when they are framed of the rudest material, and without the slightest regard for decency, comfort or convenience; when, in short, they resemble the miserable homes of the lower classes, it cannot be expected that the children will become more refined in their domestic arrangements when they grow up. ... There is nothing to remind them that better residences are attainable, or to excite a desire for neatness in and about their dwellings. ... In a new country it is absolutely necessary in order to

prevent the people from retrograding in civilisation, that these matters be borne in mind.<sup>54</sup>

Playgrounds were important for several reasons. First, fences served simple pragmatic functions such as securing children from the dangers of traffic and schools from interference from the daily business of local life. The National school at Gosforth in New South Wales, for instance, was subject to cattle being driven across its grounds. Second, they served to mark out the boundaries of the school, performing the symbolic functions indicated in Chapter Two. Finally, they extended the scope of school authority and surveillance, monitoring children's activities, and enabling teachers both to extend their teaching outside the classroom and to incorporate their knowledge of the children's play into the classroom.<sup>55</sup>

Clearly, there was a variety of social and economic conditions, conflicting interests and contrasting cultural norms underlying the diversity of educational provision in New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria in the mid-nineteenth century. This analysis suggests that it is not sufficient to dismiss the range of colonial educational practices as the product of ignorance or apathy on the part of parents or charlatanism on the part of teachers. Rather it can be understood in terms of the interplay of both material conditions and cultural values and in ways which show the positive characteristics and advantages to particular sectors of colonial society of practices which others, organised in particular through the state, judged to be useless, if not dangerous. It also provides a basis from which to analyse the conflicts which arose between different groups over a wide variety of aspects of schools.

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13. Rusden, Report on proceedings 26 July 1849, NSA1/381; Elder to VBNE 10 August 1858, VPRS880/30; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1874, p.659.
14. Site for Public school, Molong, NSW V&P LA 1878-79; Public school, Springside – correspondence, papers, &c, NSW V&P LA 1876-77; GRG18/113/20, passim; Geary, Report on proceedings 7 May 1868, VPRS795/167.
15. G.F.Macarthur to Parkes 1 August 1866, Parkes Papers, vol.25, ML A895; Wilkins to J.Macarthur 3 April 1867, Macarthur Papers, vol.30, ML A2926; Hoad to NBNE 13 October 1854, NSA1/392; Simpson to NCE 23 January 1868, NSA1/779; Turner to VBE 28 August 1862, VPRS903/1.
16. Allen to NBNE 26 December 1861, NSA1/415; Rudder to NCE 30 June 1876, NSA1/744; Miller, Report on proceedings 2 September 1853, VPRS880/3; Miller, Report on proceedings 20 October 1852, VPRS880/23; Register 15 January 1870. M.Theobald, 'Discourse of danger: gender and the history of elementary schooling in Australia, 1850-1880', Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'Histoire de l'Education, vol.1, no.1, 1989; M.Vick, 'Community, state and the provision of schools'.
17. Hoad to NBNE 13 October 1854, NSA1/392; Smeaton to SCBE 9 February 1858, GRG18/113/27; Plan of district with schools marked, in GRG18/113/89; Orlebar, Report on proceedings 2 August 1854, VPRS880/23; Orlebar, Report of inspection 6 December 1858, VPRS880/27; Williams to VBE 1 September 1862, VPRS903/1; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1856, p.758; Orlebar, Report on the goldfields, in VBNE, Second Report, pp.36-40; VBNE, Report 1854-5, pp.67-8; Gawler Bunyip 19 May 1866, 25 January 1868; Register 12 November 1855, 26 January 1856.
18. Gawler Bunyip 25 January 1868. See also chapter 2, pp.81-4.
19. Wall to NBNE 5 July 1864, NSA1/429; Davies to SCBE 14,16 November, 26 December, 1860, 18 May 1861, GRG18/113/10; GRG18/113/20, passim; Watson to SCBE 5 December 1855, GRG18/113/21; Tully & Harvey to SCBE 17 October 1855, GRG18/113/22; GRG18/113/27,30, passim; Orlebar, Reports of inspection 8 January 1855, 11,31 March 1856, 6 December 1858, VPRS880/27; Massie to VBNE 23 July, 15 August, 17 October, 1858, VPRS880/30; District Council of Crafers, Minutes 15,29 October, 12,29 November, 10,22 December 1860, SPRO MRG23/1; Correspondence re Denominational school, Petersham; Further correspondence Denominational school, Petersham; Public school, Springside; Site for Public school, Molong; Application for the establishment of a Public school at East Dapto, NSW V&P LA 1875-76.
20. Hunt to NBNE 16 April 1862, NSA1/418; Kirkpatrick to NBNE 14 September 1864, NSA1/429; Simpson to NCE 23 January 1868, King to NCE 11 May 1868, NSA1/779; Richardson to VBNE 20 November 1854, VPRS880/30; Hunt to VDSB 16 December 1856, VPRS61/10; Hobbs to VBE 31 March 1863, VPRS795/167; Geary, Report on application 7 May 1868, VPRS795/176; Register 4 July 1864.
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38. Inspectors' Reports, VPRS1406, eg., vol.1, no.2, vol.7, no.6,19; NCE, Progress Report to 31 August 1867, Appendix A, pp.2–10; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1871, pp.631–2; W.Wilkins, The principles underlying the art of teaching, Sydney, 1886, Lecture 4.

39. Davitt to VBNE 21 August 1854, VPRS880/57; Inspectors' Reports, VPRS1406, eg., vol.7, no.16,39,52; NBNE, Report 1865, pp.13,26; NCE, Report 1867, pp.5,23–24, 54–5; VBE, Report 1869, p.22; Wilkins, Principles underlying the art of teaching, Lecture 5. M.Vick, 'Cultivating the softer nature'; music in nineteenth century state schooling, unpublished paper, ANZHES Conference, Melbourne, 1984.

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41. Esau to SCBE 8 April 1857, GRG18/113/30; Inspectors' reports, eg., vol.3, no.80,81, vol.7, no.17, 29; School Commissioners, Final report, pp. 25–6, NSW V&P LA 1856.

42. NBNE, Report 1848, p.1–3, Third Report, p.2, 1851, p.2; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1853, p.710, 1855, p.131; VBNE, Report 1853, p.39; VDSB to LaTrobe 28 Aug 1848, VPRS62/1; Register 5 September 1873.

43. NBNE, Report 1853, p.4, 1859, p.10, 1865, pp.13–5,20; NCE, Report 1868, p.12; VBE, Report 1871, p.35; School Commissioners, Final report, p.22; Evidence before Higinbotham Commission, qq.243 (Archer), 644 (Hart), 1111 (Perry), 2078,2142 (Wangin); Wilkins,Principles underlying the art of teaching, Lecture 6.

44. Inspectors' Reports, VPRS1406, eg., vol.7, no.7,8,9; Report, Higinbotham Commission, p.36; NCE, Report 1868, p.11; VBE, Report 1871, p.35.

45. Inspectors' Reports, VPRS1406, eg., vol.7, no.8; NBNE, Report 1859, pp.10–13; NCE, Report 1867, pp.36–7,42,54–6; VBE, Report 1871, p.34; Budd, Evidence before Higinbotham Commission, q.1880; Wilkins, Principles underlying the art of teaching, Lecture 6.

46. Inspectors' Reports, VPRS1406, eg., vol.3, no.60; NBNE, Report 1865, p.26; NDSB, Report 1864, p.17, 1865, p.35; NCE, Report 1865, p.12, 1867, Appendix A,p.3; VBNE, Report 1852, p.3; VBE, Report 1871, pp.32,34; Venables, Evidence before the Higinbotham Commission, qq.2743–4; VDSB to NDSB 7 November 1848, VDSB to LaTrobe, 28 November 1848, VPRS62/1. As evidence of the interchange of ideas the correspondence files of the various boards reveal a widespread exchange of annual

reports throughout the English-speaking world and at least a trickle of requests for, and offers of, advice between politicians, inspectors and administrators of the various education systems in the Australian colonies.

47. The most explicit statement is Wilkins, Principles underlying the art of teaching, pp.5–6 and Lecture 2.

48. Wornum to SCBE 3 February 1865, GRG18/113/14; Icely to NCE 6 January 1874 and Huffer, Report on application [Icely], NSA1/969; Garran, Evidence before Select Committee to consider a general educational measure, [S.A, 1851]; Correspondence between Council of Education and Rev.H.M.Finnegan re Denominational schools, NSW V&P LA 1872; NBNE, Report 1859, p.22.

49. Allen to NBNE 21 December 1861 NSA1/415; McIntyre, Memo 23 February 1870 on Kenny to NCE 13 February 1870, NSA1/848; Camac et.al., unaddressed letter ['The Editor of the Observer' – deleted] 23 November 1857, GRG18/113/27; Moffat to SCBE 13 August 1856, Lorimer to SCBE 22 September 1856, GRG18/113/30; Ballarat Star 26 February 1864; Register 14 January 1867, 26 March 1870.

50. J.B.Hirst, Adelaide and the country, Melbourne, 1973, pp.144–52.

51. NBNE, Report 1859, p.6; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1855, p.641.

52. SCBE, Report, SAGG 1853, p.496. See also SCBE, Report, SAGG 1854, p.176, VDSB, Report 1852, p.3.

53. SCBE, Report, SAGG 1856, p.123.

54. School Commissioners, Final report, 1856, p.4.

55. NBNE, Report 1859, p.6; Removal of Mr. Sanders, as teacher under National Education Board, NSW V&P LA 1863.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONFLICT

'I was in hopes that we had got through the official humbug of the case,' wrote William Lucas to the Central Board of Education in Adelaide in 1856.<sup>1</sup> Lucas, a storekeeper in the South Australian town of Kapunda, was a member of the committee elected to erect a public schoolhouse. He complained that the Board's procedures for paying its subsidy were in fact hindering the completion of the building:

Either the board must have considered at first that we were not competent to erect a building which would cost 500£ or that it was to [sic] large an amount 200£ to trust the Trustees with.

Two days later, another member of the committee also wrote to the Board, dissociating himself and the committee from Lucas's letter.<sup>2</sup>

These letters and the circumstances surrounding them, while only a minute part of the history of Australian schooling, capture a number of important elements of the processes of founding, accommodating and running schools in the period prior to the passing of the 'free, compulsory and secular' Acts and the concomitant formation of the powerfully centralised ministerial departments of the last quarter of the century. First, they reveal tensions both between local and central bodies and within the local community itself. Second, they indicate the crucial role that funding played in shaping both those tensions and the development of schooling. And third, they raise questions about the composition of local committees, the powers of both those committees and the central boards, and the ways in which the provision of schools was both shaped by and, in turn, further developed the structures of power in both the state and local society.

This chapter explores these conflicts, focussing on those concerning the funding of schools, school buildings and teachers. It focuses largely on those schools which

were established within the state school systems or which were established by private efforts but subsequently sought state support. It explores both conflicts between rival groups within local communities and those which arose between local bodies and the central education boards. I argue that these conflicts, premised on the existence of widely differing interests in and views of education, reflected deep concerns over the education to be offered in local schools and thus reinforces the claims of earlier chapters that there was considerable level of popular interest in schools and schooling. Further, I suggest that such conflicts were fundamental to the processes of determining the character of colonial education. I also argue that many conflicts were more concerned with a range of material interests associated with schools as public institutions than with the education they offered. Finally, I suggest that the form in which such conflicts were constructed and managed constituted them largely as issues in the public domain to be dealt with by men and that in this context women were made marginal to the processes shaping schools. While many such conflicts can readily be seen in terms of class interests, the exclusion of women also made them a powerful site for the construction of gender relations.

#### THE NEED FOR SCHOOLS: THE RIGHT TO SUPPORT

In the process of establishing schools, tensions, disputes and conflicts often arose over various combinations of a number of inter-related issues, such as the need for a school in a particular locality or at a particular site, school accommodation, and funding from a central body. In some such situations, local communities presented a united front against the central boards. At the eastern Sydney suburb of Waverley in June 1875, the borough council applied to the Council of Education for its support for a public school. It asked the Council to purchase one of a small selection of sites it

recommended and to erect a school building. The Council declined, and the borough entered into a sustained battle in support of its claim. The Council, however, insisted, and resisted both the arguments and the attempts to enlist political support on the part of the Waverley council. By February the following year the only concession it had made was to offer assistance in building the school if the local body purchased the site and presented it free of cost to the central Council.<sup>3</sup> Here, locals' attempts to force the central body to conform to their wishes were in vain. In some instances, however, local bodies had more success.

In the hills district south-east of Gawler in South Australia residents at Uley Bury and at nearby Precolumb made separate applications for funding for teachers and school buildings in their respective villages. The central board offered to fund a single school to serve the two settlements. After some discussion and meetings of settlers from both villages, the local groups decided to campaign for separate schools. With the support of the district council they insisted that two schools were necessary and that the board recognise the merits of both claims. At Willaston on the outskirts of Gawler, a major town on the plains north of Adelaide, local settlers applied for a licence for a teacher and a subsidy for a school building. The board rejected their claim, suggesting that their proposed school was sufficiently near Gawler for the children who might use it to attend the St. George's school. The local committee, with the staunch support of their district council, maintained the pressure on the board for two years. In both these cases, local bodies eventually secured the aid they sought.<sup>4</sup>

A crucial element in some conflicts over central funding of schools concerned the precise siting of the school. At Willaston, one of the board's key objections to the local claim was that the proposed school was too close to the existing schools in

Gawler. A feature of the protracted struggle over the claim for assistance was the constant changing of the site on which the local committee proposed to erect the building; each round of negotiation saw a new site, slightly closer to the northern end of the village and further from Gawler.

Similar conflicts arose over the need for a licence or salary only. At the Sydney suburb of Petersham, for example, the Church of England had provided a school in the early 1860s with support from the National board. By the mid-1860s numbers had declined and aid had been withdrawn, although the teacher continued to conduct the school until his death when the school closed. In 1870 the school was re-established; according to H.A. Palmer, the minister of the church, a large number of parents in the vicinity found the nearest public schools inconveniently located and requested him to reopen the school. With 127 children in attendance, Palmer applied for assistance as a certified denominational school under the Council of Education. The Council refused, claiming that the area was already adequately serviced by the Petersham, Marrickville and Newtown public schools and the Petersham certified Catholic denominational school. Palmer immediately began a campaign to secure the aid he believed the school was entitled to. He vigorously argued the need for the school, carefully detailing the difficulties parents had sending their children elsewhere and attempting to demonstrate that his school served families otherwise not effectively provided for and that few of the pupils were drawn from other schools. He debated doggedly the interpretations of the Act and regulations defining the conditions under which schools were eligible for aid to show that his school met the criteria laid down. And, he enlisted the support of parents, fellow clergymen organised as the Rural Deanery of Petersham, the bishop and other individuals of public standing for his campaign. The

Council sent its inspectors to investigate the details of Palmer's claim, especially as they related to the need for an additional school and the numbers of pupils drawn from other Council schools. It argued a somewhat different interpretation of the regulations to show that while the Petersham school might have been technically eligible for assistance, the Council still had to exercise discretion in each case to determine whether the school was really needed. Finally, it claimed that Palmer had on several occasions misrepresented the facts of the case. Nevertheless, by early 1873, the Council gave ground and granted the assistance sought.<sup>5</sup>

At Buninyong in Victoria a similar case developed under the Board of Education. The board had previously maintained three schools in the area, one inherited from the National board and two from the Denominational board. Attendance at the Catholic school, however, had fallen below the required rate and aid had been withdrawn. In 1868, the school was revived and a committee of supporters applied for the renewal of the teacher's salary, pointing out that the attendance had returned to the level required to be eligible for assistance. Fearing difficulties, they also appealed to the prominent Catholic politician Michael O'Grady for his support. The Board of Education refused on the grounds that the area was already adequately served. Instead, it suggested that the Catholic school should be amalgamated with one of the others, a suggestion unpalatable to the school's supporters. In reply, they insisted that a separate school was needed. Carefully avoiding sectarian claims, they argued that there were many children in the area who did not attend because they were not effectively within reach of the existing schools and that, in any case, if they enrolled there was insufficient accommodation for them. In support of this they provided a detailed account of the distribution of the population in the district in relation to the

precise location of the three schools. In this case, the board stood firm and in 1869 O'Farrell, the teacher, admitted that he could no longer maintain the school without aid and left.<sup>6</sup> Local communities often also fought hard to maintain aid which had been granted but subsequently was threatened. In places such as Para Plains north of Adelaide, Bowna Creek near Albury in New South Wales and Mount Pollock in Victoria's Barwon district, they protested that unless aid was maintained their children would be left without the means of education because of the poverty of the parents, the smallness of the populations and their isolation from other places with schools. In some cases, as at Bowna Creek, they underscored their appeals with the argument that it was precisely such small, poor and isolated localities that state assistance was intended to support. While such appeals were not always successful, in many cases they secured a commitment to maintain the school, a stay of execution or a reduction, rather than a complete loss, of support.<sup>7</sup>

In some cases, the struggle between local and central bodies was articulated around the type of school to be provided or supported or, viewed differently, the type of support to be given. At Holdsworthy, south of Sydney, for instance, the supporters of the local Church of England school asked the Council to support it as a certified denominational school. As at Petersham, the Council's inspector claimed that this would duplicate existing public school provision in the general area. Instead, he recommended that the Council fund the school as an infant school only, a course initially opposed by the school's promoters, but eventually accepted by them as the only alternative to closing the school altogether. Similarly, in North Melbourne in the early 1850s, many small schools applied for assistance from the National board. Inspector Arthur Orlebar, reporting on several of these applications commented that

the board should not accept them as ordinary national schools catering for older children, since they could easily attend the Board's central model school in Russell Street. The teachers, with the support of local parents, however, continued to maintain the schools and to press their application for assistance as full elementary schools. The board yielded, reluctantly and temporarily, to their claims.<sup>8</sup>

Similar disputes arose over local applications for advanced schools. At Geelong and at Belfast in Victoria, for instance, the local patrons sought assistance from the National board for advanced schools. They indicated their willingness to leave the provision of elementary schooling to the churches in association with the Denominational board. In the case of the Geelong school, this led to what had originally been proposed as a national school for both sexes and all classes becoming in fact an advanced boys' school serving almost exclusively the leading families of the town and district. The board, however, opposed this development and insisted that the school revert to what it regarded as its original purposes. The patrons then claimed that the school had never been intended to provide the elementary education of the working class. The board, in turn, threatened to withdraw its support unless the patrons backed down as its brief was to provide support for schools offering at least a basic schooling open to all and, while it readily admitted the importance of grammar schools, it argued that it was not in a position to support them.<sup>9</sup>

At Portland in western Victoria, the National school committee sought increased funding to develop what they saw as a regional model school, incorporating elementary and advanced subjects and training facilities for teachers. They argued that as Portland was the effective centre of an extensive region, parents throughout the district expected them to provide advanced education for their children, while the schools

looked there for a supply of teachers. Their proposal, they claimed, would allow them to supply these needs. The board, however, regarded their claims as vastly over-ambitious, and refused. The local committee defended its proposal at length over the following months, but to no avail.<sup>10</sup>

Most local-central differences over the need for schools, or the funding of schools in particular locations involved local bodies attempting to secure or maintain central assistance for a project they regarded as important. Occasionally, however, the situation was reversed. At Rokewood, for instance, the National board made tentative moves to organise local 'initiative' for a national school, ostensibly to provide for those not already catered for by the two existing denominational schools. However, they failed as local settlers indicated that the locality was already sufficiently provided for. Similarly, the South Australian board, aware that there was no school at Warrow on the colony's isolated Eyre Peninsula pastoral district, wrote to encourage local residents to establish a school and promising support. The settlers simply ignored the letter.<sup>11</sup>

In each of these instances, the tensions existed principally between local bodies and the central boards. In many others, however, they developed between rival local groups. In some of these cases they reflected largely local factors. At Rochford in the Wangaratta area of Victoria, the local community successfully sought a teacher's salary and school building subsidy from the Board of Education. However, the local promoters of the school divided over the location and character of the building. After what one participant described as a 'stormy meeting', one group resigned from the committee and began to organise their own claim for a school elsewhere in the district, leaving the other group in possession of central funding for their proposal. At Sheoak

Log a few miles north-east of Gawler in South Australia, a meeting was held in June 1856 to organise local support for a licensed school, elect a committee and secure funds from the central board for a building. Following preliminary correspondence with the board, a further meeting was held at which residents selected a site by majority vote of all present and the secretary duly wrote informing the board. However, the supporters of a second site, defeated at the meeting, also wrote, contesting both the choice of site and the procedures by which the choice was made and appealing to the board to support their own alternative proposal.<sup>12</sup>

In some cases, quite independent local initiatives in neighbouring areas were forced into rivalry by the decisions of others. This was clearly so in the case of Uley Bury and Precolumb mentioned above; there, however, the danger (from the school promoters' perspectives) of being forced to fight each other for scarce resources was avoided by their determination and success in contesting the board's decision. More often in such situations, the schools' promoters were forced either to compete or work out a compromise which satisfied them both. In 1860 two groups of residents in the hills district immediately south-east of Adelaide applied for licences and building subsidies, one at the village of Stirling, the other at Crafers, the next village along the main road. The board decided to refer the applications to the district council for a comment on their respective merits, adding that it would seriously consider funding two schools in the area on the council's recommendation. The council replied that only one was needed. That decision forced what had been unrelated applications into rivalry and a struggle for council and board support ensued. The board refused to intervene, although various local groups appealed to it from time to time and the dispute dragged on for two years.<sup>13</sup>

More often, separate applications became rivals because of the central boards' decision to fund only one school where local settlers clearly considered two or more should exist. In the Onkaparinga district south-east of Adelaide, residents at Woodside first applied for assistance to build a school in 1854. They appear to have done nothing more until September 1856, when they sent a fresh application. That month residents at Inverbrackie, a few miles away, also applied to the board for assistance. The board decided that a single school could serve the locality and referred the matter back to the district council, its standard procedure in such cases. The council decided in favour of Woodside but the promoters of the Inverbrackie school protested to the council and to the board. The board, while adhering to its decision to support only one school, deferred granting aid until the dispute had been resolved. In 1857 a similar conflict took place over applications for schools at Oakbank and Balhannah in the same district. In both cases, the board's decision to licence a single school converted what had been quite unrelated applications into rivals. In both cases, the respective groups marshalled their forces and began campaigning in the council and with the board for preference. In both cases these disputes involved considerable delays in the process of establishing the schools: the Woodside school for over half a year, and the Balhannah school until November 1858.<sup>14</sup>

This situation arose more commonly in South Australia than elsewhere principally because the central board in that colony adopted the policy of leaving residents to resolve their disputes locally. It limited its role to sending an inspector to mediate, supported by an occasional threat to withdraw support entirely if some resolution was not reached promptly. Under the dual system in the eastern colonies the different denominations were generally able to secure funding for separate schools

through the Denominational Schools Board without such disputes. Moreover, where settlers were divided in their support for denominational and national schooling, they were able to exploit the rivalries between the two central boards to secure both. Teachers, concerned to maximise the number of pupils in their schools, and even clergy and others promoting denominational schools commented that some places, such as Goulburn and Hinton in New South Wales, were 'very sectarian'. Similarly, National school agents and inspectors, who confronted the multiplication of schools this situation allowed as a problem, commented that such places as Kyneton and Pascoevale in Victoria were also deeply divided by sectarian hostilities. When Rusden visited Geelong in 1849 as the New South Wales National board agent he organised a public meeting to disseminate information and organise support for a national school, as was his routine procedure. At the meeting, however, he faced strong opposition, and debate about the rival merits of denominationalism and secular instruction continued for some period after his departure. The outcome, however, was not a resolution of the debate, but the proliferation of schools under both boards (as well as private schools). At the much smaller centre of Hinton, there was considerable support for the national school, including that of the Presbyterian minister, Robert Blain; there was also much sectarian opposition, predictably from the Catholics but also from the Anglicans. As at Geelong, the outcome was the formation of at least three schools, each with a somewhat precarious grip on life.<sup>15</sup>

The National and later amalgamated boards adopted a far more interventionist approach to local disputes than did the South Australian and Denominational boards. Consequently, in New South Wales and Victoria, many situations which in South Australia sharpened local tensions and led to their being fought out largely at the local

level, inextricably involved both local conflicts and local–central relations. Some of these situations involved a range of issues, including the need for aid, the degree to which rival schools might cater to the needs of the population and school accommodation. For example, in the Goulburn district of New South Wales, P. Dunne, the Catholic priest from Orange, applied to the Council for a provisional school at Mutbilly on behalf of the members of his congregation there. The Council declined assistance on the grounds that the proposed accommodation was inadequate. Some months later, H.E. Taylor, the Anglican minister from Gunning applied for half–time schools at Mutbilly and neighbouring Beans. Two weeks later, Dunne applied again, informing the Council that he had appointed a teacher and that she had already taken up her duties in more commodious premises, as required by the Council, namely the Catholic church. The Council replied to both applicants that it would support only one school at Mutbilly, and that such a school would have to meet the needs of all. It recommended the formation of a committee representing both denominations to organise a school which might meet the needs of the whole community. Moreover, it added, the school should not be conducted in a church. After several months of acrimonious correspondence between the Council, Taylor and Dunne, the Council decreed that the population in the area was sufficient to require a public school.<sup>16</sup>

Other such conflicts were more narrowly focused. In 1878 the Council of Education accepted the application of the school committee at Molong in New South Wales for funds for a new school building. This proved to be the catalyst for a series of struggles over the site for the proposed building. The committee supported the existing site, arguing that it was central, had a good water supply, and that the children would have the additional benefit of using the large, well fenced recreation park

opposite. Others argued that better sites were available. At least two alternative sites were offered, and rival groups formed in support of them. A public meeting was held to resolve the issue. Far from resolving it, however, the meeting demonstrated the intensity of feeling and interest in the various proposals and at one point members almost came to blows over their conflicting views! The school committee invited the Council to send an inspector to investigate the alternatives and to mediate between the warring factions. Even after the inspector had made his recommendation, the Council approved and the work commenced, the last shots were still being fired: one advocate of the original site wrote to the Council, advising it that a new stock market and slaughter yard was being established opposite its new school.<sup>17</sup>

The same issue took a rather different form at Kyneton in Victoria in the early 1850s. There, the divisions were complex. First, the population was divided between the mainly commercial centre of Kyneton and a concentration of farming families at Kyneton East. Second, there was considerable denominational rivalry. And, third, settlers were divided on the question of the desirability of denominational and national schools. To these local divisions was added the concerns of rival central boards to establish a stronghold at Kyneton, potentially a major country centre. The National Board's first inspector, W. Miller, organised a meeting of leading local men, including the clergy and the police magistrate in 1852. The Catholic priest, on instructions from his bishop, refused to cooperate. The Anglican minister had a school of his own, but admitted it to be failing and offered some support. The men of Kyneton showed a general lack of interest in the national school – the formal public proceedings allowed no place for women – and the inspector noted greater interest at East Kyneton, but observed that to locate the school there was, in the light of the prospect of further

growth of the main township, to marginalise both it and the National board. After some discussion with local men, the inspector recommended a site midway between the two centres to the board. Local divisions continued to shape the development of the school. With a change in minister, the Anglican school took on new life and many subscribers to the national school sought to withdraw their money in favour of their denominational school. Faced with the existence of a Catholic school and a viable Church of England school, both with Denominational board funding, the Presbyterians announced that, while in favour of national education in principle, they felt obliged to follow suit. With drastically depleted support, the national school was delayed for some two years. By March 1856 it was in operation. However, local tensions continued to be important: the National board sought a school which genuinely attracted families of all religious persuasions, but by the end of 1856 the inspector claimed that the national school was in practice little more than another denominational school, serving principally the Independents, something the board was loath to support.<sup>18</sup>

There are several issues here which are, moreover, representative of the more general tensions in the processes shaping the provision of schools. First, the Board had problems balancing its concerns to promoting a rational distribution of schools, to secure a position in a growing centre, to attract a wide base of support and to place schools where they were needed. Second, there was a series of conflicts between the board and the settlers concerning what form of educational provision was needed and who was best placed to provide it. And, third, there was a series of regional and sectarian local conflicts.

At Melton, west of Melbourne, in 1868 there was a short but heated local conflict

over the school site and building. In 1858 a combined Denominational School had been established in a wooden building leased to it by the Reverend James Lambie. The school was transferred to the Board of Education and continued as a common school until 1868 when the lease on the building expired. Lambie wrote to the local committee offering to sell the property to the board, if the committee cleared its debts to him from the proceeds. While he admitted that the building needed some repairs, he estimated that these could be done relatively cheaply. Some residents rejected this idea, claiming that the building itself was beyond salvation and that in any case the site was unsuitable being prone to flooding, not sufficiently central to the population and situated across a bridge which carried heavy traffic. Lambie, however, had some supporters, as a public meeting called to discuss the matter, revealed. The meeting called on the board to send an inspector to investigate the merits of the rival proposals, but even when he reported in favour of the new site, Lambie and his supporters continued to protest. Nevertheless, with both the board and a substantial number of residents, including several men of high standing, in favour of the new site, the outcome was clear and the building on the new site opened the following year.<sup>19</sup>

#### ACCOMMODATION

As the Melton case, in particular, suggests, many disagreements and conflicts arose over the character of school accommodation, in particular, over whether existing, non-specialist buildings could be used. As I indicated in Chapter Three, schools were held in a wide variety of premises. Not surprisingly, therefore, many local school promoters sought funding for schools held in existing huts, churches, dwellings, stores and so on. The central boards refused many such applications, although they looked more favourably on proposals to purchase such premises and modify them to serve

their new functions. The National and later amalgamated boards, in fact, refused all applications to establish fully-fledged National, Public or Common schools in buildings which served as churches, whether adapted to school purposes or not. Indeed, the Victorian National board refused an application from settlers at Berwick to open a national school in a farmhouse which had been modified to adapt one room for church and another for school use. Not surprisingly, the Denominational boards, and the churches with which they worked, accepted the propriety of holding of church and school in the same premises. The Victorian Denominational board, however, stressed the value of single-purpose buildings for schools. Moreover, the school inspectors appointed within the New South Wales Denominational system also began to subject the practice to close critical scrutiny from the perspective of progressive pedagogy, rather than either denominational expediency or general social utility. In some cases the boards accepted local proposals to use existing buildings temporarily, often granting the school provisional status, with a view to erecting a proper building once the school was better established and the locality more fully developed.<sup>20</sup>

In many cases, local school supporters contested the boards' decisions. In some cases, despite their misgivings, the boards eventually yielded and approved funding for the schools. At Norwood in South Australia and Mutbilly and Grenfell in New South Wales, however, the boards were adamant, and refused funding until the local body undertook to provide what they saw as more suitable premises. In some cases, local bodies accepted the boards' decisions without demur, revitalised their local movement, established subscription lists and proceeded to build a schoolroom.<sup>21</sup>

At times, where local bodies accepted the boards' rejection of their proposed use of existing accommodation or where the board offered provisional or temporary

approval for a school to be held in what it regarded as unsuitable premises, the apparent resolution of local–central differences simply deferred conflict. At Mutbilly, for instance, the local Catholic community accepted the Council's decision not to allow a provisional school to be held in the home of one of the parents. However, when the Council refused its subsequent request to use the church, as I have indicated, the supporters of the school, through their priest, vigorously contested their decision. At German's Hill in New South Wales, the Council had approved a provisional school on the understanding that once it was well established the promoters would convert it into a public school in new premises. However, when it attempted to get the local board to take steps towards erecting the new building, the local board simply refused.<sup>22</sup>

Where local school supporters and the central boards agreed on the need to provide a building especially for school use, they frequently disagreed on the details. Occasionally, local school promoters sought aid for projects which the central bodies considered beyond their budgets, their priorities or the legitimate scope of their action, or simply not yet justified by the likely needs or the locality or state of development of the school. At Campbelltown, South Australia, the school promoters sought state aid for an ambitious project which included a schoolroom, church, library and Mechanics Institute. The board rejected the proposal, arguing that it was not empowered to assist such broadly conceived projects. The national school patrons at Portland sought funding for extensions to their original building plans to accommodate separate boys and girls schools as well as for their ill–fated teacher training facilities. The board, however, refused even the expansion of schoolrooms with the district inspector noting that even the original proposals had not yet been realised. Even the Denominational boards, which were relatively lenient regarding the use of schools as churches, at

times opposed local proposals to build and furnish schools in ways which went well beyond the needs of schools. The Victorian board, for example, rejected an application from Avoca as the school plans included a pulpit and altar.<sup>23</sup>

More characteristically, the central boards rejected, or demanded alterations to, the general character, construction and design of many locally drawn school plans. Inspector Orlebar in Victoria, for example, was critical of the general design of the proposed common school at Cranbourne, while the annotations on the plan of a proposed building for a school at Doncaster noted that the internal layout was badly conceived. The South Australian board rejected all applications for aid to erect, or modify existing buildings of wood. The New South Wales National board, and, especially, the Council of Education, acting on the advice of their architect, frequently advised local patrons that the buildings they proposed to erect were too small. Even when plans were obtained from local professional architects, the central authorities frequently rejected or criticised them. In 1874, for example, Allen Mansfield, the Council's architect, sent back the plans he had commissioned from Edward Gell, an architect at Bathurst, for the Springside school to be redrawn, providing precise directions on a range of points.<sup>24</sup>

Even where the boards accepted the general conception of the building embodied in local plans, they often insisted on altering the details. The New South Wales National board refused to sanction wooden fireplaces in school buildings it funded. And, in case after case, the various boards modified details of local proposals. In New South Wales the Council of Education advised the school committee at Penrith to add a verandah to the existing building rather than erect a separate weather-shed; in South Australia the Central Board of Education refused to allow thatched roofs or calico ceilings and instructed the trustees at Bull's Creek to redesign the roof of their

planned school; and in Victoria under the Board of National Education Inspector Orlebar objected to the placement of the windows on opposite walls of the proposed Cranbourne school and recommended that they be placed all on the same wall.<sup>25</sup>

Frequently, central authorities were critical of the state of repair in which local committees kept their schools. They complained repeatedly of leaking roofs, gaping walls, broken windows and overflowing cesspits. Moreover, they often distrusted local views about what repairs were necessary and how they should be carried out, and criticised their procedures, the extent of the modifications they made and the quality of the work done.<sup>26</sup>

Sometimes, such issues were strongly and explicitly contested. At Kangaloon West in New South Wales, for example, the school was built from slab and, as with most buildings of unseasoned timber, after a year or so the wood had warped and shrunk, leaving substantial gaps. The committee proposed to repair the building and the Council agreed to fund the work. The Council, however, referred the matter to Mansfield, its architect, who disagreed with the committee about how the repairs were to be carried out, claiming that the proposed method would simply perpetuate the problem. The committee, however, stood firm, arguing that their recommendation conformed to accepted local practice and had proved satisfactory and eventually the Council yielded.<sup>27</sup>

In many cases, while there were clearly marked differences between what the central bodies considered ideal and what local bodies proposed, the issues were resolved relatively easily. Despite their evident preference for buildings of brick or stone, the National boards and their successors frequently accepted without demur locals' proposals to build, or use existing buildings, of slab or other cheap and less durable materials. At Icely in New South Wales in 1874, for instance, they accepted

the use of the Temperance Society's 'wattle and daub' building, and at Kenny's Point in the same colony they readily agreed that the school should occupy a slab hut, once it was floored and an extra window inserted. Local committees, too, often happily accepted the boards' suggestions. At Benalla in Victoria, the local committee responded readily to the National board's suggestions for improvements. And at Woodchester in South Australia, the school trustees attended promptly to the board's request to repair the guttering, add spouting and erect a water tank. Indeed, in many places, settlers needed no prompting to provide, maintain and improve school buildings: they subscribed money and gave their labour, held bazaars and tea meetings, erected and extended buildings, lined and painted them, added and stables and planted trees as local circumstances allowed or demanded, out of their own interest in their local schools.<sup>28</sup>

Concerns over the character of school accommodation also at times divided local communities. At Campbelltown in South Australia, one group of residents opposed the grand project described above. In its place they proposed to build a cheap and unpretentious single room, a plan their opponents described as a mud hut, barely fit for a pigsty. School committees and officially appointed local patrons and managers also often complained that many members of their local communities, including the parents whose children attended the school, saw no need to make the improvements which they and the central boards considered essential and refused to subscribe the necessary funds.<sup>29</sup>

Disputes within local communities often interacted with those between local bodies and the central boards. In the north of Victoria, for example, the Board of Education pressed the local committee at Buckland to make extensive repairs and

improvements to the buildings of their non-vested school. The committee undertook some of the work suggested, but others in the community reported to the board that the building was still not in proper order and was, in any case, too small for the needs of the whole community. They proposed that instead of devoting further public funds to the existing premises, a new schoolhouse, large enough for all, well designed and solidly built, should be erected. At German's Hill in New South Wales in 1875, when the local committee resisted the Council's attempt to get them to erect a new school building, others in the community became involved. They argued that the committee's refusal reflected its intention to maintain the school's non-vested status in order to retain its essentially Catholic character. Further, they claimed, the committee's move effectively misappropriated the funds they had contributed to the school on the understanding that it would subsequently be converted to a public school. They canvassed two possible strategies, both of which placed them in opposition to the committee: either to support the Council's move and press the committee to carry out its initial promise and if necessary secure a restructuring of the committee, or else to seek some compensation or repayment of the funds they had subscribed in order to establish a separate public school which would supersede the Catholic dominated provisional school.<sup>30</sup>

While the question of the location of schools, and the character of school accommodation generated considerable conflict both within local communities and between them and the central boards, other matters, such as the detailed design of the rooms, rarely seem to have occasioned conflict at the local level, although it is possible that they did so without trace in the public record. Moreover, even between local and central bodies, they rarely seem to have escalated into full blown conflicts.

Characteristically, they appear as details on which local bodies made proposals and central boards disagreed and, as a condition of aid, altered the proposals to their own, usually without sustained local opposition. Differences also arose over other aspects of school accommodation such as the provision and maintenance of toilets, the fencing of school grounds, water supply and so on. However, unlike those discussed above, they appear to have generated conflict principally between local and central bodies, and not within the local community.

### TUITION FEES

Funding of schools proved to be a fertile source of tension and conflict. Local committees frequently fought with the central boards over almost all aspects of funding including teachers's salaries, their other occupations or business interests, levels of funding for buildings, responsibility for meeting the costs of repairs, fees for destitute children and a range of other issues. The teachers protested against both local and central decisions on these matters, as well as against local decisions concerning levies on their salaries to pay for books or building repairs, costs of teacher housing, payment of rent for non-vested school premises, and a range of other issues over which they had some control. Here, however, I focus on the conflicts and tensions which arose in one particular area, school fees.

Under each of the boards there was a clear assumption, if not explicit requirement that pupils should pay tuition fees unless they obtained exemption on the grounds that they were too poor to pay. Indeed, these fees could, and often did, generate a crucial part of the teachers' incomes. While in the larger schools this amounted to quite substantial sums, in the smaller schools in poorer areas where the income derived from fees might be quite small in absolute terms it was still often

significant in relation to teachers' other sources, notably the government salary. In many cases, especially under the boards in the eastern colonies, local committees formally controlled the level of fees charged. The central boards, however, frequently disagreed with their handling of the matter. Occasionally they criticised local boards for setting their fees too high, and pressured them to lower them. One of the Victorian National board's complaints regarding the Geelong national school was the high rates the trustees imposed. More frequently, the boards were concerned that local bodies set the rate of fees too low to secure the teacher an adequate income. For example, the National board in Victoria noted that the patrons at Taradale had set the fees at a very low level and argued that they should be increased. Teachers, too, in defence of their own interests, and often facing considerable difficulties securing what they considered a reasonable income, often complained that local committees set the scale of fees too low.<sup>31</sup>

School committees, not surprisingly, often defended their actions. The patrons, at Taradale, for instance, defended their rate on the grounds that the local settlers were too poor to pay more, but being proudly independent, preferred to pay what they were able rather than be forced to apply to have their children taught free. At Lansdowne, near Cundletown in the Manning River district of New South Wales, for example, the local school board decided to reorganise their provisional school as a half-time school, paired to one to be established at the neighbouring settlement of John's River. They dropped the fees to half, and claimed that the threepence per week this left was as much as many parents could bear as they were quite poor.<sup>32</sup>

In some cases, the boards, their officers and teachers recognised that poverty was a problem. In others, however, they considered that the real problem was not so

much poverty as a miserly, niggardly, grasping disposition on the part of parents and consequently sought to insist on what they considered a proper rate. In fact, local committees often appear to have balanced a sense of what they might get away with in relation to the central board, with what their fellow settlers could bear and what the teacher needed to survive (or perhaps, what they needed to pay the teacher to retain his or her services).<sup>33</sup>

In many cases, teachers set the level of fees to be charged. In South Australia, and in many cases in the Denominational systems this was an acceptable procedure within the regulations. Where, under the National and later amalgamated systems left the determination of fees to the teachers, the central boards were, at times, sharply critical and often insisted that the local bodies draw up and publish an official scale. Sometimes, where teachers set the fees, parents either complained that they were too high and sought to force them down or else objected to particular aspects of the fee structure. At the public school at Ilford in New South Wales, for example, the prevailing rate was sixpence per week, although no scale of fees had been formally established. The teacher, Mary McGuire, raised the fee for pupils in the third and higher classes to ninepence, leaving the lower classes at the former rate of sixpence. One mother, the wife of the local blacksmith who was also a member of the local committee, protested against the increase, arguing that she was unable to pay the increased rate, that the differentiation of fees was unjust and that, in any case, McGuire's teaching was not sufficiently good to warrant the extra payment she asked.<sup>34</sup>

In 1875, the Council in New South Wales introduced a uniform scale of fees for all public schools. It decreed that where several children from the same family

attended the same school they should be charged according to a fixed sliding scale, each successive child being charged at a lower rate than the previous one. Some teachers, however, especially in larger urban schools, protested against the scale, arguing that it threatened their incomes: parents, they claimed, had begun sending as many of their children as possible to the school, increasing numbers with a disproportionately low return to themselves.<sup>35</sup>

In some cases, conflict over fees provided the opportunity to raise other issues. In 1870, for example, District Inspector McIntyre transferred Jane Goodwin, a teacher under the Council in New South Wales to the isolated Provisional school at Kenny's Point – without actually consulting her about the move. Goodwin protested, but to no avail. However, shortly afterwards she complained to the Board that the income from fees was so low that she could not survive, and used her plight to press for a transfer to a more favourable school. Elsewhere they simply augmented existing lists of complaints which teachers used in their attempts to secure what they regarded as better situations. John Green, the teacher at Kangaloon in New South Wales for part of 1868, for example, added his complaint about the low income from fees to his rapidly growing list of complaints about the place and its people before leaving for Sydney to press the board for an appointment elsewhere.<sup>36</sup>

Other disputes arose over the collection and payment of fees. The central boards often complained that teachers and local committees allowed children to attend without paying their fees, throwing the schools into a greater dependence on central funds than they considered appropriate, and defeating their intentions of stimulating and supporting, rather than superseding, private action and responsibility. Contrary to the boards' views and interests, some teachers and local bodies clearly accepted that parents were unable to pay and preferred to allow them to attend free rather than

either refuse them instruction or force them to accept the stigma of destitution. No doubt at times this reflected a sense of justice and recognition of need or, perhaps, a tacit yielding to reality. At others, it was almost certainly a procedure designed to defeat the boards' regulations: pupils were admitted free but entered on the rolls as paying in order to produce the required number of paying pupils in the official returns to ensure that the schools received continued funding.<sup>37</sup>

Often, however, teachers complained at parents' refusal to pay. The teacher at Howlong public school in New South Wales, for example, battled a local cattle dealer for months to force him to pay the outstanding fees for his children. The National teacher at Kempsey in the 1860s, Thomas Heard, was deeply embroiled in battles with several parents over the payment of fees. Similarly, the teacher at the Long Point common school in Victoria was forced to confront several parents, some of them members of his school committee, to pay their dues. In such circumstances, some teachers refused the children entrance to the school while others pursued the parents at law. This was not always possible, however, as, in Victoria under the Common Schools Act, the committee, not the teacher, was responsible for collecting fees, precluding the teacher from taking legal action against the parents. This sometimes brought teachers into conflict with their local committees who, they argued, refused to carry out their responsibility. At Warrnambool, for instance, the common school teacher claimed that the correspondent of the local committee was refusing to collect fees from several families while forcing the teacher to allow their children to continue at the school. The teacher, with the board's approval, sued the committee. Even this, however, was of little use: the local Magistrate accepted the committee's claim that it had no legal corporate existence and thus could not be pursued at law.<sup>38</sup>

In some cases, parents found other ways of reducing the costs of schooling,

generating tensions in the process. A rather unusual example of parents finding ways to take maximum advantage of the arrangements governing school fees occurred at Moama on the River Murray in southern New South Wales in the early 1870s. Parents sent their children across the border to the State School at Echuca in Victoria, where education had already been made free, to the anger of Victorian tax payers. After the introduction of the Council's sliding scale of fees in 1875, teachers in the larger, more populous areas soon noticed that enrolment and attendance patterns had changed as parents sent as many of their children as they could to school at the same time to capitalise on the reducing rates. And, it was claimed that where there were several schools competing for pupils in a single locality, parents were adept at playing one school off against the other.<sup>39</sup>

Further conflicts developed over a variety of levies imposed by local committees on the teachers' tuition fees. In South Australia, the board decreed that the whole of the fees belonged to the teacher; where trustees attempted to make deductions for books, rent or school maintenance, the board took issue, either on its own initiative or at the request of the teacher, occasionally leading to the resignation of the trustees. In the eastern colonies, the boards allowed a range of levies against both salaries and fees. However, at times, teachers claimed that the levies were excessive and the boards often supported their claims, placing themselves in opposition to the local committees. At Taradale, for instance, the teacher reported that the patrons were withholding one third of the fees, using the money to buy firewood for the school from themselves at grossly inflated prices. Occasionally, however, local committees were confronted by teachers who refused to yield the portion of fees which had been duly established for book and maintenance purposes. In these cases the central bodies

strongly supported the rights of the committees to their share of the funds.<sup>40</sup>

A number of disputes arose between principal and assistant teachers over the distribution of fees. At Pentridge Catholic school in the mid-1860s, the established arrangement allowed the principal, Jane Trotter and her assistant, Mr. John Williams, equal shares of the fees. In 1867, however, Williams argued that he was now entitled to a larger portion of the fees since the number of boys – whom he taught – was now significantly greater than the number of girls – taught by Trotter. In short, he claimed the whole of the fees for the male pupils. Trotter, unsurprisingly, resisted, arguing that she bore the general responsibility for the state of the school and that her duties were considerably more onerous. A similar situation arose at Gisborne, where Eliza Whitelaw was the teacher, assisted by a Mr. Pye. Here, too, the assistant sought the fees from the boys, all of whom he taught, since, as in the Pentridge case, the school was organised on gender-segregated lines. In terms remarkably similar to Trotter's, Whitelaw argued the justice of the original arrangement. The local committees played a crucial role in such disputes. At Pentridge and at Gisborne, both teachers appealed to their local committees for support, but in both cases, the committees supported the male assistants.<sup>41</sup>

Even where there was no local dispute, central boards sometimes intervened in what they saw as inappropriate arrangements. The Board of Education, for instance, questioned the minister in charge of the Carlton Church of England school about the exceptionally high proportion of fees received by the principal and correspondingly low proportion left for the assistant. The clergyman defended the arrangement arguing that the principal had served the school long and well and was largely responsible for the healthy condition of the school and its income. Moreover,

he suggested, his family was large and living costs high. At other times, intervention on other matters, such as levels of staffing, precipitated conflicts over the distribution of fees. At Kent Street Catholic school in Sydney under the Council, for instance, the teacher opposed the appointment of an assistant teacher rather than a pupil teacher on the grounds that it would greatly reduce his share of the income which his good reputation had built. In South Australia, where the central board claimed no jurisdiction over either staffing or, consequently, payment of other than principal teachers, such disputes could only arise at the school level; they left no mark in the official records of the board, and few elsewhere. Where they did, as in the public criticism of Leonard Burton, master of the St. Georges School at Gawler, the focus was on levels of staffing rather than the details of payment of assistants.<sup>42</sup>

A final body of conflicts over fees concerned official exemptions from payment. Each board made funds available for providing free places for destitute children, in effect, paying the tuition fees on behalf of the children concerned. Frequently, disputes arose over eligibility for free places usually, at the local level, involving teachers, parents and committees. James Hosking, the master of a large school in Adelaide, for example, claimed that many of the parents applying for free places at his school were in fact well able to pay. Local committees at times supported teachers in applying more, rather than less, demanding criteria of eligibility. At Allendale, in the south east of South Australia, many parents complained that the teacher refused to teach their children free, even though they were unable to pay school fees. Finally, the issue of free places provided a flammable issue with which to ignite other grievances against a school, teacher or local committee.<sup>43</sup>

In many other cases, teachers clashed with local committees over the matter.

In 1870, the teacher at Warrnambool, Victoria, clashed with \* Slattery, who was both the local Catholic priest and the correspondent for the local committee, over free places. The teacher complained that Slattery recommended pupils for free places on a range of grounds unrelated to need, using his control over this as a form of patronage. At Kangaloon West in New South Wales, one teacher, John Green, argued that the local board allowed free places to children whose parents could pay; the local board claimed that the parents were, in fact, unable to afford the fees and that Green was improperly refusing entry to children who were entitled to free places. In some instance, it was the local committees who claimed that teachers were allowing children to attend free who should have been paying fees. At Tungkillo, in the Adelaide hills, the district council, in its role as local board of education, criticised the teacher for this, and struck the names of some pupils for whom he claimed destitute fees from the list.<sup>44</sup>

Local committees and teachers at times supported what the boards considered over-generous claims for free tuition. Characteristically, central bodies regarded any families which owned property as able to pay, but at times local committees argued that crop and market failures placed them on the verge of destitution. The South Australian board supported those teachers local councils which refused to classify children of farmers as destitute against the appeals of the parents. At Kelly's Plains in New South Wales, the local board argued that large numbers of parents had suffered serious losses in recent floods. The Council, however, acting on the report of Inspector Jones, decided that while some parents were unable to pay in cash they could certainly do so in kind. At Dry Creek north east of Adelaide, and at Armagh, near Clare further north, the teachers Thomas O'Brien and Walter Crosby claimed

around half their pupils as free scholars in contradiction of the board's policy to keep such claims to a minimum. The board asked the Destitute board to investigate the claims but, in any case, warned the teachers that unless they reduced their proportion of free pupils their salaries would be cut.<sup>45</sup>

In most cases, teachers, parents or patrons invoked the intervention of the central boards to help resolve the disputes which arose over fees. At Bendolba in New South Wales, the teacher and patrons joined forces to secure the board's support for their fee scale against the opposition of parents. At Sale in Victoria, the Board of Education intervened in a complex dispute involving the local committee, the teacher and the parents. One of the issues was the fees which the parents wanted lowered, while both the committee and the teacher opposed such a move. The board's inspector visited the town and, after consulting with the committee and teachers and calling a public meeting to discuss the whole affair, supported the committee. In Victoria after 1862 many teachers asked the board to force local committees to collect or pay the fees due to them. The board, however, was unable to do more than recommend that they pursue the matter at law, since they had no power to intervene in a contract of employment which existed purely between the teachers and the committees. However, as the Warrnambool case cited earlier indicates, this was sometimes little use as the local Magistrate there accepted the committee's claim that it had no legal corporate existence and thus could not be pursued at law. And, in the disputes over the distribution of fees at Pentridge and Gisborne, both the teachers and the local committees appealed to the central board to investigate and adjudicate. In both cases, the board sent an inspector and in both, on the basis of his report, supported the committees and the assistants, leading to the principal teachers'

resignation.<sup>46</sup>

In general there were frequently sets of issues, often complexly intertwined, which arose as points of contention concerning the establishment and maintenance of schools, their location and distribution, accommodation and funding. The struggles over these issues also varied. Some were fought between relatively united local bodies against a central body, often playing off rival central bodies under the dual system. Others, in contrast, were conducted largely between rival local groups while, in yet other cases, the central body was involved in local rivalries as either a partisan or an 'independent' third interest. In many respects, what matters is not the particular combination of issues or alignment of forces in individual cases but the range of possibilities and their characteristics, and the fact that the provision, maintenance and accommodation of schools was often conducted in the context of struggle for the supremacy of one claim against others, one interest against others, and the processes and outcomes of 'resolving' such struggles.

### TEACHERS

A similar body of conflicts arose between local and central bodies, and within local communities over the selection and appointment of teachers. Some concerned levels of staffing. Occasionally, communities criticised teacher-proprietors for employing too few assistants. In other instances teachers in charge of schools criticised the central boards for making appointments which undermined their own positions. In some cases, for instance, they claimed that by appointing additional staff, the board created new claimants to the income from tuition fees, threatening to reduce the income they had worked hard to establish. In others, they objected to the board's decision to withdraw a female assistant teacher or to downgrade her to a workmistress,

warning the board that such a move would result in a loss of female pupils. On other occasions, school communities joined with teachers to criticise the boards for inadequate staffing or for appointing monitors, pupil teachers or workmistresses instead of fully fledged assistants.<sup>47</sup>

Other tensions arose over the selection of teachers to staff the schools. Some disputes concerned the character or personal attributes of teachers. Parents often criticised central bodies for appointing a teacher of the wrong sex: a female teacher instead of male in a single teacher school, or a male only, especially a single male, in a mixed school. Local school communities often fought the central authorities, and rival groups of parents and others in the local community fought each other, over the suitability of existing or proposed teachers. Often the teachers' moral suitability was in question. Sometimes objections focused on specific behaviour within schools, such as sexual interference or violent temper with pupils, or criticisms of parents. At other times critics were concerned by their behaviour outside the school: indebtedness, drunkenness, irreligion, or evident contempt for members of the community. And, in yet other cases, they were dissatisfied with aspects of teachers' relations, as teachers, with the community, for example, regarding their loyalty, respect or obedience to employers or patrons, their social background, or their apparent attitudes to parents. In the latter case, teachers' critics often claimed that their general behaviour was symptomatic of flaws in their moral character which rendered them unfit to teach. Their defenders either denied the substance of the criticisms, often arguing that their critics were motivated by interest or malice, or claimed that teachers' behaviour out of school was irrelevant to their work as teachers.<sup>48</sup>

Teachers' educational qualifications or competence in teaching were also a

common source of conflict. The boards and their inspectors often claimed that persons nominated to schools were poorly educated, untrained or incompetent to conduct a school properly. At times the criticisms were reversed, as parents and other local supporters criticised the central bodies for supplying inferior instructors. Similar disputes arose within local communities, as rival groups put forward their own candidates, and criticised their opponents' nominees as being less qualified than was desirable or necessary.<sup>49</sup>

Another body of disputes centred on other aspects of teachers' work. Some arose between teachers and parents, local committees, or the boards and their inspectors over teachers' absences from the classroom, irregular times of opening, or what the critics saw as laziness while in school. Parents also complained that teachers were partial in dealing with different individuals or groups in the community, in particular, that they treated their children unfairly. Inspectors were often critical of teachers for not supervising playground activities. In many such cases, teachers had their defenders who sought to repudiate the grounds of the complaint or to demonstrate that other aspects of the teachers' performance outweighed the offence. Finally, principals and assistant teachers fought each other over the internal relations of authority and division of labour within the school. These conflicts often spilled outside the school to involve both local committees and the boards.<sup>50</sup>

Some conflicts concerned the roles of teachers in local society. In many cases members of local communities wanted teachers to hold a number of other positions apart from the school although often the central boards actively opposed such additional appointments. At Angaston in South Australia, for instance, the licensed

teacher, E.P. Nesbit, was also Clerk of the Local Court. The board insisted that he relinquish the office, but local settlers, including the influential George Fife Angas, wrote to the board, the Government and the press and organised petitions in support of Nesbit's dual role. The board, however, stood firm and Nesbit resigned his clerkship. In other cases, the local clergy and managers of denominational schools required teachers to undertake a range of duties (such as churchwarden or Sunday-school teacher) outside their classroom activities, often against their will. Teachers sometimes protested against what they saw as inappropriate and unreasonable demands made by their local committees or, especially, the clergy governing their schools, appealing to their central board for support or seeking the intervention of other men of influence. Elsewhere, members of local communities opposed teachers' involvement in a range of activities such as conducting businesses, holding offices in church or local government, or political campaigning. Finally, there were tensions where teachers initiated or organised changes to school buildings or other aspects of the schools which the local committees and/or central boards considered properly the prerogatives of the committee. In these situations, a range of struggles ensued with teachers seeking support from others in the local community and rival parties seeking the intervention of the boards in their favour.<sup>51</sup>

Many disagreements arose over aspects of school organisation or procedure. Inspectors characteristically criticised teachers who failed to organise their pupils into classes. Where teachers did organise classes, inspectors widely criticised both the placement of individual pupils and the general criteria on which they did so, especially the separation of boys and girls into parallel classes. However, where pupils were

sorted into class groups, or where teachers sought to organise them thus, many parents opposed the move in general, pressed teachers to allow siblings to stay together, or insisted that they place their children in different (usually more advanced) classes from those the teacher had determined.<sup>52</sup>

Inspectors also widely criticised teachers for the lack of timetables, or the detailed division and allotment of time or the failure to adhere strictly to them where they were provided. Parents and other members of local school communities also often criticised teachers for irregularity in hours and dates of opening, but also directed their anger at the central authorities for insisting on rigid dates and times and allowing too little flexibility for schools to adapt to local needs. And, principal and assistant teachers disputed with each other over the need for, or proper arrangement of, timetables.<sup>53</sup>

Many conflicts concerned the spatial organisation of schools and classrooms. Central inspectors criticised teachers and school trustees who provided desks affixed to the schoolroom walls, or who provided desks which they regarded as the wrong size, or which placed pupils on opposite sides, facing each other rather than the teacher. Elsewhere, they criticised the layout of rooms, the use of temporary partitions to divide class from class and the movement of pupils from one part of the school to another. At times local school supporters strongly contested the boards' judgements and the recommendations for change which followed them. More commonly, they simply maintained the established arrangements as they were or made changes which were so minor as to be little more than token gestures.<sup>54</sup>

Differences over pedagogy were also common. As I suggested in Chapter Five,

working-class, farming and other poorer parents widely preferred different methods of class instruction from those adopted by trained teachers and recommended by the central authorities. While their responses to such methods was varied, in many cases they resisted their introduction, manifesting their opposition in a range of more or less direct ways. At times they reacted to quite minute details. Some, for instance, refused to allow their daughters' teachers to set exercises which involved writing boys' names, while others insisted that pupils be taught to write using quills rather than steel nibs and yet others claimed that pupils should be taught standing rather than sitting. More generally, parental opposition to class teaching methods was manifested in a refusal to buy class texts. In contrast to the boards' preferred methods, many parents preferred individual instruction, and strongly supported teachers who taught that way. Inspectors, however were sharply critical of this approach, condemning it, and branding the teachers who used it as inefficient, unscientific and old fashioned.<sup>55</sup>

Not surprisingly, given their views of what their children needed to be taught, many parents also clashed with teachers and the central boards over the content of instruction. They frequently criticised the teachers, urged the boards to support them, sought to remove the offending teachers and appoint others who might be more amenable to their wishes or simply withdrew their children. The central authorities also objected to content of curriculum in some schools. Their criticism was also often directed at the teachers, demanding that they adhere to the curriculum they had defined.<sup>56</sup>

At other times, members of local communities fought with the boards over the content or language of instruction. Members of some German communities, especially,

battled the central boards to secure a far more central place for German language in the curriculum. Similar struggles occurred over the inclusion, or place, or character of religious instruction, both between teachers and either local settlers or central boards, and between local communities and the boards. The central boards often criticised teachers whose language teaching and use bore traces of what they considered provincialisms and incorrect articulation of aspirates.<sup>57</sup>

Both parents and Inspectors often clashed with teachers over corporal punishment, objecting either in principle or to the harshness of particular practices. Inspectors often voiced the opposite concern: teachers were too lax in their discipline, allowed too much talking or unregulated movement and allowed pupils to assume all manner of postures without correction. Occasionally, parents, too, complained that teachers paid insufficient attention to discipline and argued that they should instil manners more effectively, using corporal punishment more freely if necessary. More generally, many teachers complained that parents undermined their authority, while parents frequently complained that teachers similarly undermined theirs. Where teachers' disciplinary methods featured rewards rather than punishment, parents often complained of favouritism. At times teachers were accused of failing to inculcate moral principles and to suppress immoral, unseemly or vicious behaviour, while teachers retaliated by claiming that they could do little to counter the poor example of parents.<sup>58</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Many disputes which arose over particular incidents or issues were in fact symptomatic of a range of other related concerns. For instance, many disputes over

teachers were barely, if at all, distinguishable from concerns about other aspects of school practice: organisation, curriculum, methods, discipline and so on. Some central attacks on local choices of teachers, for instance, focused on the teachers' incorrect accent or language use, but reflected a concern with their capacity to teach reading and speaking properly. Some reflected a range of issues not directly related to the school itself but to the social context in which it was situated such as factionalism, petty desires to wield authority unfettered, or nepotism. Indeed it is highly likely that such issues were present in many disputes in which they left no discernible trace in the written records. Other disputes in the eastern colonies were shaped by the rivalry between National and Denominational boards, and within the denominational and later amalgamated systems, between the boards and the rival denominations themselves, as rival central bodies jockeyed for position and local bodies played them off against each other. However, the complexity of such disputes, and the range of concerns implicated in them, should not be allowed to obscure the extent to which they were shot through with deep rooted differences over what constituted good educational practice in the situation at hand.

Some clashes were relatively mild: inspectors made criticisms in writing, parents and others offered gentle suggestions and Trustees courteously defended local practice to the central boards. Others were heated, bitter and sustained, with local bodies mustering all the support they could against the central authorities or rival local groups organising petitions, writing letters, holding meetings, publicly abusing each other in the process of organising support for their respective preferences, or individual parents storming into classrooms to threaten or even assault teachers. One, indeed,

led to the teacher resigning after a series of burglaries of school records and, finally, a death threat from his anonymous opponents, while at least one other led to attempts to burn down the school.<sup>59</sup>

Apart from such direct confrontations, where at least some of the contentious issues were made explicit, there were clearly many situations where the tensions remained beneath the surface and where grievances were never publicly expressed in the written records of the schools, local committees or central boards, and which were resolved by the withdrawal of children from particular schools or teachers. Indeed, where schools were the property of the teacher, this was perhaps the only effective means of expressing real disapproval. Finally, there were many ambiguous situations. Many teachers kept school records incompletely or inaccurately. Others persisted in using their long established methods despite advice by inspectors on 'improvements'. Many local committees failed to enforce the central boards' regulations. Others tacitly allowed two or more schools in the same locality to secure central funding. And witnesses of actions for which teachers were reported for misbehaviour often had 'hazy memories'. It is impossible to be certain whether such cases reflected simple carelessness, incompetence or ignorance, or forms of local resistance to attempts to construct forms of school practice for which either teachers or parents had little sympathy.

As I have shown, local-central conflicts over the material conditions of schools, such as accommodation, funding, and the selection and appointment of teachers commonly arose between the central boards and members of the school community, in particular, parents and local committees. At the local level, these conflicts were

characteristically fought between rival groups within the local community itself. In many cases, teachers were involved only peripherally. Conflicts over the educational practices of the schools were constructed rather differently. Characteristically, they focused on the teacher: the boards and inspectors, on the one hand, and the parents and local committees, on the other, directed their criticisms of the conduct of the schools principally at the teachers themselves. Explicit conflicts between local settlers and the central boards took the form of local support of the teachers against central criticisms or of central support against local attacks. Local–central conflicts over such matters, however, were often implicit in, and conducted through, disputes over the selection and appointment of teachers and, to a lesser extent, issues such as school accommodation and other material provisions, funding by the boards, and less obviously, parental patronage of the schools. Local committee support for a teacher of the same religion as the majority of the community at times reflected concern for the teaching of religion in the school, or a concern to secure a day school teacher who might also conduct the Sunday school. Similarly, local committees' concerns to secure a first class teacher at times reflected their interest in ensuring that their local schools could offer an advanced education. And, parental support for teachers whom the boards and even their local supporters disapproved of often reflected their recognition that their children would only ever enjoy a brief and necessarily elementary education and that such teachers often employed methods more suited to their children's irregular attendance than those of the Board's trained teachers.

The processes of providing schools, selecting teachers and shaping the curriculum were often characterised by cooperation, consensus and general goodwill

between all concerned. Frequently, however, they were clearly riddled with tensions and conflicts reflecting both the divisions within school communities and the diverse views of what constituted a good school. Such conflicts drove the contending parties to seek to secure their own particular interests by establishing effective means of control over the school/s. Chapter Seven explores this process examining, in particular, the ways in which it led to the substantial expansion of controls by the state and the marginalisation of local communities in the shaping of their schools.

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46. Newell to NBNE 2 November 1861, NSA1/415; Carter to VBE 21 March 1867 and inspector's memo on cover, Carter to VBE 5 April 1867, Trotter to VBE 5 April, 27 April, 13 June 1867 and inspector's memo on cover of 13 June 1867, VPRS892/49; Orlebar, Report on investigation, Sale, 1858, VPRS880/57; Whitelaw, Reminiscences, pp.74-6.

47. Ryan to NCE 26 Feb 1867, NSA1/744; Fergusson to NBNE 8 February 1862, NSA1/418; Reilly to VBNE 8 March 1859, Wilton to VBNE 18 April, 13 May 1859, 18 April 1860, VPRS880/3; Gawler Bunyip 4 September 1874.

48. Baker to CS 24 January 1854, GRG24/6; Easterbrook to SCBE 12 September 1873, GRG18/113/18; Orlebar, Minute [on Begg to VBNE 18 May 1857] to VBNE, Simmonds to VBNE 9 April 1858, VPRS880/23; SCBE, Minutes 5 June 1852, 28 June 1852, 5 February 1853, 27 June 1855, 26 June 1856, 2 June 1862, 8 January 1866, 27 November 1871; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1853, pp.99,276, 1858. p.178; Border Watch 23 November 1872. See also Special Case Files, VPRS892, eg., 70,88,91,124.

49. Briggs to NBNE 6 March 1850, NSA1/832; McCann to NCE 22 July 1873, NSA1/947; Playford to SCBE 21 August 1869, GRG18/113/82; Ferry to SCBE 5 August 1869, GRG18/113/83; Meldrum to VBE 10 October 1867, VPRS903/91; Laidlaw to VBE 14 April 1869, VPRS892/151; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406, eg., vol.5, no.61,162; SCBE, Minutes 1 December 1865, 8 January, 19 March 1866; Garden and Field November 1900, p.116, cited in B.K.Hyams et.al., Learning and other things, Netley, S.A., 1988, pp.55-6.

50. Buckland to NBNE 10 January 1861, Jones to NBNE 11 July 1862, NSA1/418; Forster to NBNE 10 November, Graham to NBNE 8 December 1863, NSA1/424; Dwyer to NCE 27 February, Williams et.al. to NCE 27 February, Herbourne et.al. to NCE 28 January 1873, NSA1/969; Rawlings to VBE, 9 March 1867, VPRS892/53; Hobbs to VBE 29 June 1868, VPRS795/167; Geary, Report on dismissal of teacher 6 May 1869, VPRS892/151; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406, eg., vol.5, no.10,42; SCBE, Minutes 5 May 1852, 9 May, 7 November 1855, 23 September 1862; Dismissal of Teacher, Raymond Terrace, NSW V&P LA 1873-4; Register 28 July 1852, 30 September 1873.

51. Stubbs to NBNE 1 July 1862, NSA1/418; Brandon to NCE 30 December 1867, NSA1/765; Gardiner, Report of inspection 8 August 1868, NSA1/1016; Hopkins, Report on proceedings 29 April 1857, VPRS880/23; Dismissal of George Sanders; Register 9 September 1859.

52. Trotter to VBE 15 March, 23 June 1867, Williams to Local Committee, Pentridge Common School 4 April 1867, VPRS892/49; Brown to VBNE 26 June 1860, VPRS880/23; Cowan to VBE 11 October 1867, VPRS903/91; Downs to VBE 22 February 1869, VPRS892/151; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406, eg., vol.1, no.1,15,16, vol.5, no.62,102,139,148,167, vol.7, no.16; Whitelaw, Reminiscences, pp.73-4; Register 17 February 1874. For a discussion of the gender organisation of schools see M.Theobald, 'Women's teaching labour: the family and the state in nineteenth-century Victoria' in R.J.W.Selleck & M.Theobald (eds.), Family, school and state in Australian history, Sydney, 1990, pp.33-36, 'Discourse of danger: gender and the history of elementary schooling in Australia, 1850-1880', Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'Histoire de l'Education, vol.1, no.1, 1989.

53. MacKenzie to VBNE 2 November 1857, VPRS880/3; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406, eg., vol.1, no.1,5, vol.3, no.259, vol.5, no.42,102, vol.7, no.30; SCBE, Minutes 29 May, 17 July, 1852, 4 November 1856; Gawler Bunyip 17 June 1869, 2 March 1872, 8 March 1873; Register 20,27 July, 7 December 1852.
54. Fowles to NCE 18 August 1867, NSA1/744; Gardiner, Report on application for Certificate, Kent St Roman Catholic School 21 January 1867 NSA1/744; Inspector's report on application for assistance 8 October 1868, NSA1/947; Gardiner, Report of inspection 31 August 1872, NSA1/974; Esau to SCBE 8 April 1857, GRG18/113/30; Orlebar, Report on goldfields schools 26 September 1854, VPRS880/57; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406, eg., vol.5, no.42,64,139,148, vol.7, no.17.
55. Polson to NBNE 27 February 1855, NSA1/393; Green to NCE 7 July 1868, NSA1/848; Duffield and Sinclair to SCBE 1 October 1856, GRG18/113/30; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406, eg., vol.1, no.6,11, vol.5, no.10,61,102; SCBE, Minutes 21 April 1855, 16 November 1867, 29 April 1872; Whitelaw, Reminiscences, pp.74; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1853, p.721, 1860, p.365.
56. Wilkins to NBNE 24 July 1854, NSA1/392; Ashton to Forbes 8 August 1870, NSA1/848; Miller, Report on proceedings 17 July 1854, Orlebar, Report on proceedings 23 September 1854, VPRS880/57; VBNE to Kilgour 23 June, 27 July, 1859, VPRS878/7; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406, eg., vol.3, no.81, vol.5, no.63,155,162,215; SCBE, Minutes 1 July 1852; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1853, p.333, 1869, p.757; Register 21 January, 16 April 1850, 7 January 1851.
57. Ashton to Forbes 8 August 1870, NSA1/848; Ruwaldt & Unger to SCBE 27 July 1866, Ruwaldt to SCBE 27 October 1866, 3 September 1867, GRG18/113/75; Orlebar, Report on investigation, Sale, 1858, VPRS880/57; SCBE, Minutes 3 June 1861, 20 May 1867, 14 December 1868; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1860, p.365; Register 8 June 1867.
58. Shaw to NBNE 26 March 1853, NSA1/393; Newell to NBNE 15 October 1861, NSA1/415; Johnson, Report on Hickey 17 August 1864, NSA1/429; MacKenzie to VBNE 2 November 1857, VPRS880/3; Inspectors' reports, VPRS1406, eg., vol.5, no.42,102,139,152; SCBE, Minutes 14 October 1867; Gawler Bunyip 27 April 1872.
59. Webb to VBE 4 April, 4 June 1868, VPRS892/147; Lowry to Local Committee, Kirkstall Common School 24 April 1869, VPRS892/151; Register 24 August 1860.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONTROL

Previous chapters have mapped the diversity of education in mid-nineteenth century New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria. They have examined the varied conditions, conflicting interests and competing understandings of what constituted good education which underlay that provision, and the tensions they gave rise to. Those with an interest in colonial schools sought to assert control over both the establishment and character of the schools in order that they might meet their own particular needs. However, they were not equally well placed to do so: differences in financial resources, cultural capital and access to legally established forms of power offered mothers and fathers, local landowners and magistrates, clergymen and the education boards and their officers quite different means of control. However, both the establishment of the means of governance of schools, and the forms of governance were themselves problematic; as one contemporary commentator observed:

The teacher's position in relation to these inspectors and committees is an anomalous one. An inspector told a teacher he must teach his pupils sitting, the committee would have reading, spelling, mental arithmetic, &c., taught standing: the teacher obeyed the inspector, the committee dismissed the teacher.<sup>1</sup>

Many accounts of education in the period have suggested that the construction of administrative machinery, especially by the secular education boards, was simply the search for the most rational and efficient arrangements for diffusing good schools. This chapter argues a different view: what was at stake was control over what sorts of education would be provided and, consequently, whose needs would be met. Not surprisingly, it was a process characterised by conflict and struggle. The analysis here focuses on the struggle for control of the state supported schools, in particular between local and central bodies. Struggles between conflicting local groups are also important,

not only because they were crucial elements in the process of determining who, at the local level, played the major role in shaping schools but also because they provided numerous occasions for the intervention of the state boards. The chapter also notes the continued existence of large numbers of private schools, since the attempts of the central boards to assert control over the character of colonial education in general and their own schools in particular were frequently limited and undermined by the fact that rival schools existed outside their control and that many of their own schools could also dissociate themselves from the state system.

I argue that all schools were subject to a range of market forces, but that the formation of state education boards created a legal framework which guaranteed the formal autonomy of most private schools while constructing a range of possibilities for control over the state supported schools. These gave the central boards significant, although uneven and contradictory, powers over most aspects of schools. In each case, however, they left two critical gaps: they secured them minimal controls over attendance, and allowed many possibilities for the formation of private schools which could compete with and undermine the state schools and for state schools to escape regulation by converting to private schools. In the end, the crucial power in the boards' hands was financial. The boards developed their powers through a range of policies and regulations, the inspectorate, and the elaboration of a vast array of procedures for both constructing knowledge and regulating local educational activity. In the process, local communities were made increasingly marginal in the governance of schools. Those local controls which remained were largely monopolised by the leading individuals and groups in the local communities.

## PRIVATE SCHOOLS

There were no general, institutionalised controls over either the existence or the character of schools in any of the three colonies. Most importantly, there was no legislation or other means to regulate the establishment, numbers or location of private schools, the qualifications of their teachers, or the content or means of instruction: individual men and women were able to open schools wherever they chose and to teach whatever they chose. Where they opened schools as private ventures, as teacher-proprietors they enjoyed unchallenged formal control over their establishments.

However, such teacher-proprietors were constrained in several ways. In particular, they needed to secure a clientele from which to draw the financial support they needed. At the most pervasive, yet least visible, level, they were compelled to fashion their schools in relation to the range of views circulating in colonial society concerning what schools should be like, and what sorts of education different social groups favoured. The fees they charged, the accommodation they used, the curriculum they offered and their organisational, instructional and disciplinary methods all needed to be tailored to attract at least some families. Private venture schools were also subject to public discussion and criticism, not only locally and informally, but through the press and other more formal media. In this sense, teacher-proprietors were limited by market forces – forces which were themselves complexly structured by the social relations and conditions discussed earlier.<sup>2</sup>

Market forces not only constrained individual teachers but shaped the overall pattern of school provision: the numbers of schools in different localities, their location and social distribution. However, these factors often imposed only minimal limitations

in many cases. The fine differentiation and fragmentation of the school-going population meant that a school which failed to secure support from one part of the community might well succeed with another, while many teachers conducted schools with only a handful of pupils, enabling them to exist side by side with other schools.<sup>3</sup>

Where groups of parents established schools for their own children, they exercised direct control over the location and accommodation of the schools, the fees to be charged and the selection of teachers. Moreover, the choice of teachers effectively shaped the curriculum, methods of instruction, organisation and discipline. However, as I argued earlier, many parents were not especially interested in such matters as long as their children showed that they were learning, leaving teachers considerable independence in their conduct of the school once appointed. In providing such schools, parents were constrained by their capacity to provide financial support. In part this was determined by their economic circumstances: wealthier parents were able to secure commodious and comfortable rooms and to attract a wide range of teachers including those with extensive formal education and superior social backgrounds. Their poorer neighbours had a far more limited choice, although this was offset, to some extent, in more densely populated areas where the pooling of meagre resources sometimes enabled parents to provide teachers a substantial income.

Where parents were poor or few in number and sought the help of their wealthier neighbours to maintain a school they effectively gave them a degree of control over whether the schools should continue to exist and where they should be placed. But wealthy individuals were often involved in supporting other schools, whether for other groups of poorer neighbours or for their own sons and daughters.

This gave them a degree of control over the number and distribution of schools within the locality as a whole which only institutions such as the churches could possibly match. Further, it gave them some control over the sorts of curricula offered. However, this control could only be maintained insofar as parents and teachers could not possibly support a school without their support. And, I argued earlier, many parents and teachers did establish and maintain schools on very limited incomes.<sup>4</sup>

Where schools were established by private benefactors, ad hoc, single purpose bodies, or by larger institutions such as churches, the founders clearly exercised considerable control over the location and accommodation of the school, any fees which might be charged, choice of teacher(s) and curriculum. Moreover, they were able to decide who might be allowed to attend and on what conditions. However, they lacked any power to ensure that those whom they considered in need of their school actually attended. The formal means of governance were generally defined in the terms of foundation and almost necessarily lay outside the hands of the principal teacher. However closely such matters as curriculum and discipline were defined, the head teachers almost necessarily constituted a further centre of control: even if formally under other authority, they characteristically exercised a range of powers over both their staff and the daily conduct of the schools themselves.<sup>5</sup>

Insofar as there existed any formal controls over the formation and distribution of schools outside the systems under the state education boards they applied principally to individual schools rather than the overall patterns of provision. The same was true of governance of those schools once established. Consequently, it was also true for curriculum, methods of instruction, organisation and discipline. Overall, then, the provision of these schools and their social and educational differentiation was

subject to those divisive tendencies discussed in previous chapters, prevailing norms and forms of schooling, the financial capacities of different social groups to support their own schools and the need to compete with state supported schools.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS: THE CENTRAL BOARDS

The Acts and official instructions which established the various central education boards determined, or established a basis for, their controls over the formation and funding of schools. The South Australian board established in 1847, and remodelled by the 1852 Education Act was given the power to license and inspect schools provided they secured an average attendance of twenty pupils. However, the Act specifically prohibited the board from establishing or initiating schools apart from a normal school for training teachers. The instructions establishing the Denominational boards in the eastern colonies said nothing about their role in forming schools. The National boards were given the power to support and regulate schools to be established on the Irish National model. Each board was empowered to develop sets of official regulations, to be approved by the government and published in the Government Gazettes in their respective colonies.<sup>6</sup>

The boards introduced regulations designed to shape the overall distribution of schools. They imposed minimum numbers of pupils to be enrolled or in regular attendance. To allow for the greater capacity of densely populated localities to support large schools, and to offset the tendency for small schools to proliferate, they established higher limits for urban schools than for smaller towns and rural districts. In later, revised regulations, the National boards stipulated minimum distances to exist between their schools.<sup>7</sup>

The boards also introduced regulations designed to shape the social distribution of schools, in particular to ensure that they provided for the poorer sectors of colonial society. Characteristically, they simply decreed that their schools should be open to all classes in the community. The principal formal exception to this was that the denominational schools, not surprisingly, were not required to accept pupils of all religious persuasions. Further, each board introduced regulations governing the provision of free places for children whose parents were unable to pay for their schooling.

Beyond that, the different boards established their own distinctive regulations to ensure that their schools were effectively open to all. In 1861, the South Australian board placed an upper limit of one shilling per week on school fees in licensed schools to prevent them excluding poorer children on financial grounds. The National boards established the category of non-vested schools partly to enable them to support schools where circumstances would not permit local settlers to raise the money for the schoolhouses required by National schools. And, in Victoria, the National board created special exceptions to its rules governing the formation and funding of schools to meet the peculiar conditions of the goldfields.<sup>8</sup>

These regulations were translated into a body of more detailed, unpublished, working policies and criteria for judging the merits of individual cases. The South Australian board, for instance, decided from the early 1850s to limit its aid to urban schools and from about 1860 began reducing the number of licensed city schools, favouring larger schools at the expense of small ones. Further, it determined that it would fund only one school in any locality unless the existing school could not accommodate sufficient children. The corollary of this was a policy of increasing the

funds available to support schools in more isolated and less densely populated rural districts. To ensure that its schools were open to working-class as well as middle-class children, it refused to fund high schools or schools which only provided for boarding pupils on the grounds that they were necessarily exclusive. Significantly, however, it did not exclude the teaching of 'higher' subjects from its schools. In the later 1860s it reaffirmed its policy that its schools should provide for working class children, and decided that new licences in urban areas would be reserved for schools catering particularly for them. The National boards developed a range of policies which, while different in detail, were designed to secure rather similar goals. The Denominational boards, in contrast, articulated no such policies, although occasionally the churches with which they worked did: the Anglican Bishop of Melbourne, for instance, declared that the churches should aim to use the aid available through the board for schools for the working class.<sup>9</sup>

These policies could exist in practice only with the development of a range of administrative procedures, many of them thoroughly routine in character. As the South Australian board demonstrated in 1867, when it addressed the problem of reaching the urban poor with renewed urgency, there was a difference between deciding to do something, deciding what to do and establishing the technical means to do it.<sup>10</sup>

First, the central boards sought information about proposed schools from members of the local communities in which they were to be established, or about existing schools which sought aid. In South Australia, the board established in 1847 required teachers or school supporters to send a memorial from parents showing that there were at least twenty children in regular attendance. The reformed central board from 1852 inherited this procedure, although it subsequently increased the minimum

attendance requirements in the country towns and in Adelaide. It established the procedural principle that schools, once approved, could not shift to a different location without fresh application to the board. Where schools were to be held in vested schoolhouses, the board applied much stricter conditions to their location than where they were held in private premises. It characteristically sought detailed information about the proposed site from the school promoters, often in relation to the distribution of population in the district, and often referred the matter to the local district council for information and advice. The Denominational boards, especially in their early years, sought little information on their own account, leaving the decisions about where schools were required to the denominations themselves. Initially they simply sought the location of schools and the number of pupils attending them from the denominational offices, or occasionally from local clergy or teachers.<sup>11</sup>

The National boards, in contrast, required local applicants to provide such details as the location of the school, the number of children of school ages living in the locality attending or likely to attend. They also sought information regarding the occupations and denominational affiliations of the parents, what other schools, either private or state-assisted, were nearby and what accommodation was provided. Given the boards' declared concern that their schools should be open to all classes, it is significant that the only systematic routines they established for checking or ensuring that their schools catered to all social groups concerned religion. Indeed, while the question of social class arose frequently in general terms, inspectors commenting on the character of the populations in the vicinity of the different schools, it only presented itself as a critical issue relatively rarely, usually in response to local complaints or, as with the Geelong National Grammar school, as special, blatant, cases.<sup>12</sup>

Apart from information supplied by local school supporters, all except the New South Wales Denominational board also obtained a report from one of their inspectors either on the basis of his knowledge of the proposal stemming from his involvement in local efforts to establish the school, or on the basis of a special visit to the locality during which he made personal observations and local enquiries. In many cases, especially involving the early national schools in the country districts, the inspectors were heavily involved in the early stages of school formation. They often worked closely with leading members of local society, jointly discussing and determining such things as how many schools were needed in the district and where they should be placed. Characteristically the inspectors' reports provided information on a similar range of matters as local school promoters. From the early 1850s, the National boards, in particular, developed standard forms in question/answer form for securing precisely the information they wished to know from both the inspectors and the school promoters.<sup>13</sup>

The South Australian board did little to develop similar procedures: the division of labour it established early between the board and its inspector, William Wyatt, left Wyatt securely in control of the inspection of schools. Rather than provide detailed information, Wyatt simply reported his recommendations to the board. Moreover, Wyatt's own sketchy description of his procedures suggests that he paid little attention to the sorts of details prized by the National boards. The Denominational boards, constrained by the considerable controls the denominations exercised over the formation of schools, had little opportunity to use such information and consequently also developed these procedures less fully than their National counterparts. The New South Wales Denominational board was further limited in this respect by its lack of a developed inspectorate independent of the denominations.<sup>14</sup>

The development of these bodies of records allowed the boards to establish and use precedents in dealing with many applications. The systematic collection and ordering of these records allowed the boards and their staff ready access to the correspondence and decisions concerning any case already dealt with. This can not only be seen in those particular cases where boards called for relevant earlier correspondence in order to deal with new issues but in their references to matters being dealt with in the same way as previous similar cases and in the invocation of the notion of 'precedent' itself.<sup>15</sup>

Under the National systems, the boards formally decided whether proposed schools should be established, while under the Denominational systems this right lay with the heads of denominations. Under all the systems, however, the boards reserved the right to grant or deny aid to established schools which applied for support. While these powers formally lay with the boards, in practice many of their decisions simply gave their imprimatur to decisions already effectively made by their staff. Such decisions, wherever made, characteristically depended on the body of information available, established rules and precedents and, crucially, the inspectors' recommendations, especially concerning the need for schools and their location and accommodation. Again, the details differed between systems. In South Australia, the board decided on the general financial priorities and limits but within those limits, the inspector and, to a lesser extent, the secretary decided which schools should receive aid. In New South Wales under the National system from the mid 1850s, while the board set the limits and financial priorities, William Wilkins was the key figure deciding how those policies applied to individual proposals, whether as chief inspector or as secretary. In the Victorian systems the secretaries generally played the key role,

although challenged to some extent by the Inspectors Budd, in the denominational system and Orlebar in the national.<sup>16</sup>

At times, the boards judged the need for schools in particular localities on the basis of their own general knowledge. The South Australia board, for instance, was well aware in 1853 that Port Adelaide was an important centre of working-class population and yet had no licensed school. More commonly, however, the boards used their inspectors to provide much of the detailed information – free from 'distortion' by local interests – on which they based their procedures for ensuring a rational distribution of schools and, consequently, funds. They drew on the inspectors' observations of how well different localities were provided in relation to the numbers of children to determine whether to prompt the formation of new schools. They used the more detailed information they were able to generate to decide whether new applications warranted support or, in many cases, whether local promoters should be asked to proceed with their proposed schools but in a somewhat different place. And, they used their inspectors to negotiate with the settlers in order to secure the outcomes they favoured.<sup>17</sup>

The boards also generated a range of means of ensuring that schools, once established, continued to conform to their criteria for defining eligibility for assistance. In particular, they were concerned to ensure that minimum sizes were maintained. To this end they developed a range of school records, usually enshrining these in printed forms. School enrolment registers and attendance registers provided a list of the numbers of pupils, the length of time they stayed on the rolls, and their frequency of attendance. Indeed, in some cases, they established precise procedures for marking rolls and calculating attendances, decreeing that rolls should be marked twice a day,

indicating the best time for marking and the basis for determining average attendances. Further, they tied payment of teachers to the submission of regular returns, again on prescribed printed forms, where the dates for compilation and submission of returns were defined precisely. These returns, compiled by the teachers, were to be verified by local magistrates in South Australia, local ministers in the denominational systems, and by local committees in the national and combined systems.<sup>18</sup>

The boards' own staff also checked the returns for accuracy and completeness and also, at least at times, for general plausibility. Returns which differed from the inspectors' impressions, or which consistently barely satisfied the attendance criteria, or where local correspondents had alleged that school records were falsified, were often queried. Local committees or, in South Australia, men whom the board judged reliable, were asked to investigate and/or explain the apparent problem. Where the board suspected that the records were falsified or otherwise unreliable, inspectors were sent to investigate in detail. They checked the school records carefully, noting such details as the apparent drawing of morning and afternoon attendance marks with a single stroke instead of separate strokes. Further, they often visited parents, in particular the mothers, of children whose attendance was in question to establish as far as possible the reliability of the school records of their attendance. These records provided a further means of judging the merits of applications for assistance for new schools in the general vicinity of established ones. The established patterns of attendance, the geographical range from which pupils were drawn, the estimates of school-aged populations both in attendance and for whom provision was (or was not) made, all largely established in the routine school records, provided the boards with the means of judging, within their own criteria, whether a further school was needed

in an area.<sup>19</sup>

There were significant differences between these records and their attendant procedures from system to system. The South Australian board demanded relatively minimal records, and appears to have produced few printed forms for documentation, in keeping with its firm policy of maximum reliance on, and scope for, local initiative. The New South Wales Denominational board, similarly, not only generated minimal regulations and procedures, but required minimal systematic documentation and developed few forms and other close controls over school records, in line with its policy of leaving maximum control in the hands of the denominations. The National boards and the Victorian Denominational board, in contrast, defined their criteria and requirements in far greater detail, developed a far more extensive inspectorate with more intensive inspection and detailed, systematic reporting and a greater array of routine forms regulating the correspondence between schools, their communities and the boards.

While these bodies of state regulations and procedures provided some control over the provision and distribution of schools, they could only affect schools which affiliated with the state board. Yet even here, there was no control over the provision of schools by others which might effectively negate the plans of the central bodies. In a general sense, then, the patterns of school provision were shaped by 'market forces' which were themselves shaped, on the one hand, by the social divisions discussed earlier and, on the other, by the regulatory presence of the various central bodies, in particular the state education boards.

Even within the systems of state regulation, there were minimal controls over the provision of rival denominational and national schools. Under the 'dual systems' in the eastern colonies each system sought to outflank the other, sometimes by

establishing rival schools, and at other times seeking to pre-empt the other by establishing their own schools first. Even under the amalgamated boards, supporters of church schools contested the attempts by the secular administrators to control the distribution of schools by marginalising denominational education. Such tactical concerns did not necessarily conform to the more general plans for a 'rational' distribution of schools and the resources they represented.<sup>20</sup>

Many of the regulations and procedures developed under the amalgamated systems were inherited by the new boards established in Victoria and New South Wales in the 1860s. The 1862 Act in Victoria gave the Board of Education the powers to fund and regulate schools but made no mention of powers or means of establishing them and, while the 1866 Act in New South Wales gave the Council general powers to establish schools its main concern was with their regulation and it left open the possibility of schools being formed by others. Importantly, these Acts set the limits on the distribution and size of schools which the new boards might approve.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, the amalgamated boards, in the light of the problems encountered by their predecessors and on the basis of their new powers, revised the minimum attendance requirements and framed new regulations which established a set of size and distance criteria governing the number and locations of schools in any given area and tying the forms and levels of funding to a series of distinctions between what they defined as different categories of schools. To reduce the likelihood of religious exclusion the Council required all denominational schools with substantial proportions of children from other denominations to become public schools. The amalgamated boards paid particular attention to the location of other state-supported schools, whether public or denominational, and demanded precise, detailed information about

their location and attendance.<sup>22</sup> Even without the problems entailed by rival administrations, they were, to some extent, at the mercy of rival local groups who sought to take advantage of the possibilities allowed by the Acts and regulations to establish schools the boards considered unnecessary.

The basis of control over colonial schools, whether by the centralised Denominational offices or state boards, or through the more diffuse interplay of 'market forces', was the capacity to fund. Parental capacity to support, or withhold support from schools and, thus, to secure or undermine their funding, gave them a measure of control over whether and where, schools existed. The capacity of institutions and wealthier individuals in local communities to provide, or refuse, both large donations and other forms of material support such as land or buildings gave them, too, a degree of control over the existence and location of schools. And, the capacity of the central boards to provide funding gave them the power to back their regulations with sanctions which gave them a powerful role in determining where schools were established. Equally, the capacity of teachers, especially teacher-proprietors, to secure a sufficient income from one source rendered them independent of other forms of control, allowing schools to be established in opposition to the interests or preferences of others.

#### CONTROLS OVER SCHOOLS: CENTRAL MACHINERY

The Acts defined a range of powers over schools once they were established and affiliated. The board in South Australia from 1847 was given powers to frame general regulations governing them. The reconstituted board from 1852 had additional powers to subsidise the erection of district schoolhouses, pay tuition fees for destitute children and establish a book depot and a normal school for training teachers. Moreover its general regulatory powers were redefined to include, specifically, control

over the 'kind, quality and extent' of the education offered.

In the eastern colonies, the Denominational boards were granted general powers over the temporal aspects of denominational schools, while the religious aspects remained under the control of the heads of the respective denominations. The National boards were given the general power to regulate those schools they supported. The subsequent Acts incorporating the National boards confirmed these powers and established the right to hold property.

The 1862 Act in Victoria and the 1866 Act in New South Wales secured the rights of the new boards to hold property and (with the exceptions of some denominational school properties) transferred the existing schools to them. They empowered them to regulate the curriculum, the examination and classification of teachers and the inspection of schools and the basis on which individual schools should be funded.<sup>23</sup>

These formal definitions of powers provided a basis from which the boards themselves defined more fully both their authority over affiliated schools generally, and the balance between local and central bodies in school governance in particular. They did so in the light of the broad principles, values, norms, criteria and interests discussed in Chapter Five. In each case the regulations defined, more or less loosely, the curriculum (or, in the case of the denominational schools, the secular curriculum), the conditions and general procedures for appointing and paying teachers, teachers' responsibilities and the funding of school buildings. All boards' regulations defined both expectations of, and limitations on, teacher behaviour and activities inside and outside school. And, all but the Denominational boards' regulations provided some definition of local committees, their duties and their powers of control.

Most of the formal regulations were framed in terms which made them binding. National, and later common and public schools in New South Wales and Victoria were obliged to devote a specified time to secular instruction, and the regulations either defined the hours of secular instruction themselves or required the schools to define them. Teachers in all but the Denominational schools were required to set some time aside for religious instruction, but were also prohibited from discussing matters of doctrine with their pupils. Some regulations merely indicated the minimum requirements to be met without limiting additional possibilities. For instance, the general definitions of examinable subjects under the Board of Education in Victoria, and of required subjects under the National Board and Council in New South Wales did not formally preclude the teaching of other subjects. Others defined the limits of possibility much more closely; the tables of standards for various subjects under the Council and the Board of Education stated precisely both minimum and maximum expectations for all classes in those subjects. Some regulations, however, were permissive, or only applied under certain circumstances. Those covering the allocation of time to clergy for Denominational instruction in national schools were necessarily permissive: they could clearly only be implemented where clergy were willing or able to be involved. Similarly, those dealing with religious instruction under the Council merely indicated a range of possibilities, the Council arguing that there was too much local variation for a single central regulation to be possible. Finally, some regulations were merely indicative of what the boards desired: the South Australian board's definition of the curriculum, the National boards' indication of the desirable personal characteristics and behaviour of teachers clearly fell into this category, or the model timetables several boards published in their annual reports. In addition to the formal

regulations, the boards also developed more informal policies, principles and criteria defining the sorts of schools they wished to promote.<sup>24</sup>

Each board also sought to establish the means by which these formal powers, detailed regulations and underlying principles could be realised in practice. In part, they sought to generate many of the material conditions which might make it possible to secure good schools. Importantly, they decided to stock a range of modern school texts, in particular, those of the Irish National schools but also, in South Australia and under the Denominational systems, a range of other books and materials. Further, they defined the principles of access to those resources. The South Australian board decided not to enforce, but merely to recommend the use of its recommended texts, but also to support teachers who wished to use them by allowing them to buy them on credit, at discount, to sell at a profit to their pupils. The National boards, in contrast, decided to stock and allow only the Irish National books as basic texts in their schools unless local patrons applied for special permission to use others. Instead of selling the books to teachers, they provided each National school with an initial set of texts free. There were parallel differences on matters of funding, such as the payment of teachers. The South Australian board decided to license and pay only the principal teacher of each school, incorporating an additional allowance where assistants were employed. The National boards assumed that the [male] teacher's wife would assist in instructing the girls and paid him a small allowance for the purpose; however, they took responsibility for the appointment and payment of other assistants. Both, however, set salary scales graduated by both gender, efficiency and the number of pupils. And the boards established a range of other conditions which teachers must meet to be eligible for appointment and, hence, payment. The differences between the

boards' policies in these matters, while in some respects minor, in fact established quite different ranges of control and subsequently established different issues as points of contention with teachers and local communities.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, the boards generated a wide range of routine procedures for implementing their regulations and policies. These ranged from divisions of labour between the boards and their staff, and between clerical and professional staff, to means of transmitting decisions and handling challenges to those decisions. Most importantly, they developed routines of inspection. Initially members of the Denominational, National and South Australian boards inspected schools personally to deal with problems concerning individual schools and as part of a more systematic investigation of the schools under their authority. However, as the number of schools grew and the boards appointed a body of officers, the task of inspecting schools increasingly fell to the inspectors. Inspectors dealt with a wide range of issues, from applications for new schools, attendance records and returns, and school building plans, to checking on school maintenance and equipment, teachers' behaviour out of school and instruction, organisation and discipline in the classroom, parental complaints and local committee affairs.<sup>26</sup>

All boards, but particularly the National boards and their successors, also generated an extensive body of correspondence with inspectors, teachers, local committees and parents concerning all aspects of their schools. They developed series of circulars, transmitting instructions, policies and recommendations to teachers and local committees, and a range of standard printed forms for securing particular types of information about schools. They further structured the correspondence between them and others involved in the governance of schools through the development of printed forms for particular types of correspondence. This both

categorised various types of issues and delimited and standardised the content of the letters dealing with them. As I argued in discussing the boards' attempt to control the number and distribution, the generation of large bodies of records allowed the establishment and use of precedents in dealing with cases which existing regulations and policies did not appear to deal with clearly.<sup>27</sup>

These regulations, policies and procedures effectively constructed the framework within which school governance was conducted, fashioning within the limitations set by the Acts a range of precise and articulated strategies for shaping the character of schooling. While they set limits, however, the necessary imprecision of the Acts and instructions establishing them also gave the boards considerable flexibility and room to move in dealing with the wide range of issues which arose, quite routinely, almost as a matter of course. Necessarily, then, the administration of the Acts involved a constant, piecemeal re/construction, decision by decision, of the details of the means of control made possible by the boards' constitutions, albeit within boundaries increasingly defined by earlier decisions.

It is worth noting in this context that the later Acts, amalgamating the rival boards in Victoria and New South Wales in 1862 and 1866 respectively, inherited many of the regulations, principles, administrative policies and even procedures, and defined the terms of governance in far greater detail than the earlier Acts. Nevertheless, as the Victorian Board of Education, in particular, found, the process of converting the Act into a working administration involved considerable elaboration and interpretation, intense political negotiation concerning the legitimate readings of the Act and the further construction of a detailed code of regulations, principles and policies before the task of constructing routine procedures could be begun.<sup>28</sup>

Alongside their policies and procedures for exercising direct and indirect control over the work of teachers, the central authorities all sought to generate a supply of trained teachers. Such teachers would be so armed with the knowledge and skills – the techniques – of good teaching and imbued with the pride and spirit of professionalism that they would implement the practices the boards sought to establish of their own initiative. Indeed, one of the foundational strategies of intervention in each colony and system was to secure such favourable conditions to good teachers that they would be attracted to, and held by, the profession in sufficient numbers to staff all the schools. This strategy in fact preceded the development of policies by the boards themselves, and was enshrined in principle of state funding for teacher salaries. Each of the boards offered rates of payment they believed might attract good teachers and keep them from leaving teaching for other occupations once in the colony, and linked their salary scale to this end, as well as to the disciplining of existing teachers. The National and later amalgamated Boards and the larger Denominations attempted to develop this strategy by directly importing some teachers from Britain. Moreover, the secular boards and the larger Denominations set up means of training teachers, either through Training or Model schools in their respective systems, and through apprenticeship systems. And, importantly, the boards kept open the possibility of employing 'superior' teachers by granting only temporary status to untrained appointees.<sup>29</sup>

The boards also attempted to improve the character of teachers already appointed, by encouraging them to study privately, in some cases backing up general exhortation with a regular system of examinations linked to promotion and salary increases, or by requiring them to attend the Model Schools. These strategies clearly

merged with the procedures for exercising discipline over teachers in their classroom work: showing teachers how to organise their timetables or classify their pupils, for example, both intervened directly in their classroom work and imparted the proper professional knowledge of how these things should be done.<sup>30</sup>

Most of these regulations, policies and procedures were tied to sanctions and incentives. The ultimate sanction against teachers was dismissal, either from a particular school or from the service of the particular board altogether. While dismissal from one board did not always preclude employment under another, increasingly the colonial education boards checked with each other concerning the credentials and histories of teachers who had been employed by other boards, not only between Denominational and National boards within the same colony, but across colonial borders. Teachers could also be formally reprimanded, fined, refused promotion or even demoted, and their salaries kept at the same level, reduced or withheld. Quite apart from sanctions and incentives directed at the teachers, the boards could withdraw assistance from schools which did not conform to their regulations. Further, they were able to withhold assistance for special purposes, such as an additional teacher or a new building. The corollary of such financial sanctions was that closer conformity with the boards' regulations and, more importantly, the goals and norms (the 'spirit') behind them was often rewarded with more positive, favourable treatment. The central boards also employed more indirect sanctions. Most importantly, they published often quite detailed reports of individual schools. Where such reports were critical, they constituted a form of public disciplining of both teachers and others locally involved in the schools, and an incentive to conform more closely to the boards' requirements in the future.<sup>31</sup>

The crucial point in this discussion of the Acts and the regulations, policies and

administrative procedures the boards developed is that they established a range of powers for the boards. They elaborated the details and precise forms of those powers, including implicitly defining the gaps and ambiguities in those powers. These definitions of powers played a crucial part in establishing the context and limits within which the boards could address any problems which might arise.

### LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Where schools were established solely by the central boards a single centre of control might be established. The central model schools in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, for example, were established solely by the respective boards, and formal control lay solely with the boards. Where schools were established by the joint activity of both central boards and local settlers, however, there were two bodies with some claim to control over the schools, one at the local level and one at the central. The Acts, regulations and procedures also defined the place of local communities in school governance.<sup>32</sup>

In South Australia the Education Act of 1852 formally created local boards with the powers to inspect schools and report their findings to the central board. Where schools were housed in vested schoolhouses, the board secured the trustees the right to nominate the teacher, although it retained the power of veto over their choice. The National boards, following the Irish model, created the office of local patron. Patrons were allowed to visit and inspect the schools, but not to interfere, and their role was limited largely to questions of school property, the supervision of school records and returns, and the general social and moral surveillance of the teachers. The Denominational boards left the relation between heads of denominations and local managers undefined; however, they granted them control over religious instruction, the

appointment of teachers, and school property. Under the 1862 Act in Victoria local committees enjoyed a relatively wide range of powers, similar in some respects to those under the Denominational board. Under the New South Wales Council, in contrast, they were placed under the same general limitations as under the National boards. Further, under all systems they were made responsible for school buildings and the provision, proper arrangement and maintenance of equipment such as desks, blackboards and texts. And, in addition to those formally ceded to them by the boards, they frequently enjoyed a range of *de facto* powers. Under the National boards, for example, patrons of schools in rural districts often had the right to nominate the teacher, subject to the boards' veto. Crucially, however, under each of the systems local boards and other visitors to the schools were forbidden to interfere with the teachers and the conduct of the classroom, or to advise the teacher on any matters of pedagogy, organisation or discipline.<sup>33</sup>

Where local bodies sought to exercise their powers of visiting and inspection, they often appear to have done so in a relatively unsystematic manner, acting 'spontaneously' rather than according to any established or recognised formal procedure. However, in some cases, local bodies systematically inspected schools; in some instances, individual members rotating responsibility to visit weekly or monthly, while in others one or two 'enthusiastic' members visited more or less regularly. Where local patrons or others did visit and inspect schools within the terms allowed by the Acts and regulations, they were required to enter the details of their visits in the school Visitors' Books in the case of the National schools and their successors, or, in South Australia, invited to report their observations to the central board. The denominational systems, consistent with their state policy of leaving maximum control

in local hands, established no central procedures for regulating such visits or using them as a means of enforcing the regulations. This non-regulation was an effective means of providing maximum scope for local control over the schools: the conduct of visits and the use to which they were put lay firmly in local hands. In New South Wales, there was no attempt until the 1860s to relay Denominational inspectors' reports to the teachers so that they could remedy the faults the inspectors identified.<sup>34</sup>

The central boards, with the possible exception of the Denominational board in New South Wales were sharply critical of the work of the local boards and gradually undermined both their roles and their relative autonomy in executing them. The South Australian board, for example, increasingly sought to transfer local control of vested schools from ad hoc trustees to district councils, while their increasing regulation of teachers and their work hedged local, and teacher, control over these matters within increasingly comprehensively and narrowly defined limits. The National boards, especially in New South Wales, mounted strong attacks on local control. Moreover, they increasingly marginalised local patrons in the governance of their schools, supplying routine suggestions and recommendations on a range of issues which were formally within the patrons' control such as school furniture, and even advising them how to carry out their general supervision of the schools.<sup>35</sup>

With the development of their inspectorates the Denominational boards, especially in Victoria, also established independent means of securing information about teachers' work. This gave them an ever-increasing body of knowledge from which to establish norms and comparisons between schools, allowing them to direct teachers with a new authority at the same time as it provided them with officers through whom to convey their wishes. This gave them a crucial means of countering

both central Denominational and local clerical controls, and tipped the balance of power in the denominational systems significantly in their favour. The amalgamated boards inherited not only the Denominational systems in their developed forms complete with inspectorates, but the National administrations with their even stronger machineries of central regulation and direction. Even under the Victorian Board of Education, local committees, which enjoyed the undisputed right to appoint teachers, could only select from those the central board approved, and were subject to a range of central regulations in the performance of this task as they were in all other aspects of the work.<sup>36</sup>

Alongside their 'independent' powers in school governance, local committees played an important role in the implementation of central controls, especially in the eastern colonies. Under the National boards, for example, they were responsible for checking that teachers attended their duties diligently, for the proper supply and maintenance of school records, for checking and submitting the routine returns the boards required and for transmitting much correspondence from the boards to the teachers. Further, they were to report on a range of issues the boards were interested in: the material conditions of the schools, the involvement of the clergy in national schools, children's attendance patterns and progress and so on. Increasingly, too, the boards used local committees as the key means for resolving, or at least, containing local disputes and dissatisfactions concerning schools. In this case, they articulated the notion that some representation on local committees would give parents a sense of participating in, and responsibility for, school governance as well as a channel for formal expression of grievances to act as a safety valve to prevent disputes seriously disrupting the schools.<sup>37</sup>

It is important to note, however, that while this discussion focuses on controls constructed by the central state boards over teachers, committees and parents involved in schools at the local level, controls were important within the central structures themselves. Within the Denominational systems, for example, there were crucial struggles between the boards and the denominations, in particular the English and Roman churches. Within each system, too, the construction of relations between the boards and their own staffs, and within different branches of their staff of officers, in particular the secretariats and inspectorates, was important in the development of the machineries of control over schools.<sup>38</sup>

It is also important to note the role of local activities in forcing the development of central controls. Local disputes at times brought the process of establishing new schools to a halt, or seriously undermined the smooth workings of those already in operation, encouraging the boards to intervene, not only to resolve the particular issue but to establish procedures for dealing with similar matters in the future. At other times, local bodies found the boards' procedures obstructive, slow, inequitable or confusing and complained, pressing the boards to make changes. Finally, in many cases, local committees approached their duties in ways the central boards found unacceptable. As the discussion of local initiatives and interests, and conflicts with the boards in previous chapters suggests, such judgements should not be taken at face value, but as evidence that the local committees were establishing practices the central boards wished to discourage. In these cases, the boards eventually moved to regulate the committees' activities more closely, or narrow their scope by excising those duties they considered them to perform unsatisfactorily.<sup>39</sup>

While in some cases the central construction of a role for local communities in

school governance reflected liberal beliefs in minimal state intervention, or the recognition of legitimate or 'natural' local interests to be secured, the fact that the development of that role was regulated by the central boards almost inevitably meant that the role of local govern-ance was shaped in the light of the boards' own imperatives. Nevertheless, parents and local committees had a number of ways of using the structures and procedures established under the different central systems to manifest their opposition to the boards' decisions. At times, they refused to process the official returns. In other cases, they simply transgressed the board's rules. Occasionally, they asked the board to provide them with the information on which their decisions had been made, or detail the procedures by which judgements had been reached. Where disputes involved rival local factions, the secretaries or correspondents of the committees were well placed: they often refused to pass on information they received from the boards, or to call meetings, and wrote to the boards giving them their own selective information or accounts of the issues in dispute, or their own decisions, in the name of the committee as a whole.<sup>40</sup>

Quite apart from the formal controls, parents and other interested members of local communities developed a range of ways of securing some say in the forms of education provided in their local schools. Often they simply refused to provide the schools with the conditions necessary to the practices the boards promoted, such as regular attendance, class sets of texts, and types and arrangement of furniture. In many cases, where the regulations and formal procedures allowed, they used their control over the selection of teachers to secure the appointment of teachers whose practices they approved. At times they confronted teachers directly concerning discipline, methods, curriculum and other matters. At other times they sought to use

the formal channels, complaining to local committees or central boards. And at other times they sought to secure control over the formal local committees. Frequently, however, they simply withdrew their children from those schools whose practices they were unhappy with and sent them to other schools they found more satisfactory.<sup>41</sup>

The National boards and their successors, in particular, engaged in systematic campaigns to demonstrate the necessity of strong central control. They argued that parents were too ignorant, apathetic or uninterested to allow them to control the content of schooling; they were unable to judge the merits of rival teachers, were prone to be swayed by cheapness rather than quality, and had little appreciation of the true objects of proper education. Even well-educated lay observers of teachers' work, lacking an understanding of the underlying principles of proper pedagogy, were unable to see below the surface of what teachers did to the significance and 'real' effects of their methods. In contrast, the professional observer was able to interpret every detail of teachers' activity as symptomatic of something deeper. To a lesser extent the Victorian Denominational board and the South Australian central board mounted similar campaigns.<sup>42</sup>

Even where there were no such explicit attacks on local or parental control, the constant articulation and publication of the professional norms of good school practice by all boards built and maintained a general ideological context for understanding the nature and purposes of good education, for discrediting popular preferences and practices. In this context, the abstract, universal form in which the boards' preferences were articulated as general, scientifically ratified norms or principles was crucial. The construction of such norms in many respects defined parents and other lay people as necessarily ignorant and incompetent. In many respects this sense that only

professional educators were competent to judge good teaching was reinforced by the fact that in many cases the boards' reports dealt principally with funding, statistical and, in some cases, political matters, while their chief professional officers' reports dealt with school organisation, pedagogy, teacher competence and other 'professional' matters. In this context, the only functions local bodies could safely be allowed were those concerned with providing material support and with ensuring that the teachers applied themselves diligently and conducted themselves properly.<sup>43</sup>

The development of large networks of schools, increasingly seen as systems, also made central regulation and inspection and the concomitant production of systematic centralised bodies of knowledge essential. Consistency and uniformity of content were seen as desirable if not necessary goals and the construction of general norms of attainment for comparative purposes were necessary means to measure the efficiency of individual pupils, teachers and schools and the system as a whole. Local individuals and groups were concerned with a single local school or, at most, with a group of rival schools. The question of control revolved around either struggles between rival individuals or groups within the community for control of local school affairs, or struggles against the central bodies and their control over (aspects of) the school. The central bodies, in contrast, were concerned with more general questions of control over large numbers of schools and, consequently, in dealing with particular local schools, with the implications and significance of that local situation for the overall system of provision. In this context, local settlers inevitably and necessarily lacked the breadth of concern and vision necessary to exercise proper control over schools. The only really appropriate role for them was in the production of some of the information, such as attendance statistics, which the arrays of centrally produced forms were

designed to generate.<sup>44</sup>

Many leaders of colonial society as well as of local communities were generally sympathetic to the boards' concerns to establish a professional model of education and the controls needed to secure it. However, they often differed with the boards and their officers over details, expressed misgivings over aspects of the methods adopted, or simply articulated variations on the same general theme. Politicians and others influential at the centre of colonial life, for example, were often cautious about the creation of too powerful central state machineries. Clergy and other local leaders, together with the heads of the various denominations frequently stressed the need for flexibility to adapt to local circumstances and needs. Occasionally, local leaders expressed deep misgivings about what they saw as the strengthening tendency to centralism. Often, however, these criticisms were more concerned with their own particular claims for funds and a general suspicion that the bulk of colonial revenues were spent on metropolitan centres or that other (often rival) districts received better treatment than they did. Occasionally, such people argued that the common folk might be competent to control their children's education; however, this faith in parental judgement was invoked only rhetorically, against clerical or denominational control, or in the context of proposing some space for local initiative within a generally centralist strategy.<sup>45</sup>

Many parents and other working-class supporters of schools, however, argued strongly against these central models of control. First, they argued against central control generally, claiming that central bodies simply lacked the relevant detailed knowledge of those local conditions which defined the educational needs of the community. Second, they often argued in favour of control of schools by parents

themselves rather than by others in the community, since parents had the most direct interest in the character of the teachers and the education they offered. Third, as the earlier discussion of conflict over schools suggests, they contested specific central decisions on a wide range of issues: the accommodation and equipment required, the selection, appointment or dismissal of teachers, their involvement in various activities outside the school and the content and methods of instruction, organisation and discipline within the classroom. Many of these disputes over more specific issues carried undertones of local criticism of the boards' competence and authority to decide and vice versa.<sup>46</sup>

#### THE COMPOSITION OF LOCAL COMMITTEES

The central boards not only defined the place of local committees in the overall structure of school governance: in many cases they determined the means by which they were constituted. The South Australian Education Act of 1852 formally constituted district councils as local boards of education. However, the board paid no attention to the question of local bodies in its regulations. In practice, it welcomed applications for assistance from any one: teachers, individual settlers, and ad hoc committees as well as councils. It only developed anything approaching a consistent policy regarding local governance in relation to vested schoolhouses. It insisted on the establishment of formal bodies of trustees and, while it initially accepted any body of settlers who signed the board's trust deed, it increasingly announced its preference for councils and dealt with applications for building subsidies through them. In contrast, the instructions establishing the Denominational boards nominated the heads of denominations as co-controllers of denominational schools but made no reference to local governance. The boards' regulations, however, defined a place for local managers in the governance of

schools, recognised that their appointment should be the province of the Denominations themselves but effectively constituted the clergy as the key local figures. The instructions establishing the National boards specified that they should follow the Irish model. While the instructions, and the Acts which followed them, did not explicitly provide for local governance, the Irish system itself established a significant role for local patrons, and the National boards followed this model: local patrons were to be nominated by the board for appointment by the governor. The boards further determined that they should be as widely representative of the different denominations as possible and should not be dominated by any one. In any case, the boards reserved the right to nominate additional patrons, or to refuse appointment to any who they deemed unsuitable. Both the Common Schools Act in Victoria and the Public Schools Act in New South Wales explicitly empowered the central boards to appoint local committees.<sup>47</sup>

In keeping with its understanding of its limited role in local school affairs, the South Australian board made no attempt to define procedures for selection of local committees or trustees. However, insofar as it deliberately sought the active involvement of members of local communities it enunciated a preference for working with 'men of influence' and wrote to magistrates, leading landowners and clergy and other professional men. The Denominational boards similarly left the establishment of local management unregulated. However, in practice they generally corresponded with schools either through the heads of the relevant denomination or through the local minister or priest, clearly accepting that local control of denominational schools was the prerogative of the clergy. Even the National boards, despite their closer definition of the criteria and means of appointment of local patrons initially left the procedures for

their selection relatively undefined. In many cases, especially in the boards' initial years, when the agents and inspectors played a key role in establishing many national schools, the agents and inspectors themselves tended to select patrons carefully themselves. However, where local parents applied for assistance for schools they were already in the process of establishing, the board recognised the claims of the chief promoters to be appointed as patrons. Frequently, whether they were selected by the agents or inspectors, or locally selected from the school promoters, patrons were formally elected at public meetings of parents and subscribers. However, consistent with the agents' role in 'managing' early public meetings, in the former case those elected were frequently those whom the agent had already 'selected'. In New South Wales, after 1866, the Council largely adopted and continued to refine these same policies and procedures.<sup>48</sup>

The situation in Victoria after 1862 was somewhat different. There, the board decreed that, in general, committees should be elected. It established increasingly comprehensive and clear principles governing their formation. Concerned with the number of committee members who were either absent from the districts or lived too far from the schools to take an active interest, as well as with the role of the Catholic education office in dominating local committees of state supported Catholic schools, the board established the principle that committee members should live within three miles of their schools. Further, concerned at local disputes over schools in which the election of committees played a crucial role and, especially, at the disputes over elections themselves, the board decreed that only parents of children enrolled for one month and subscribers of ten shillings or more might vote at committee elections. Finally, the board also established the crucial distinction between trustees, with

jurisdiction over property, and committees, with responsibilities for the working of the schools, in particular, to minimise the independent powers of the churches over the schools where schools were conducted on church properties.<sup>49</sup>

Despite the differences between them, each of the boards clearly assumed that a representative selection of the leaders of communities (religious leaders in particular, under the Denominational systems) offered the best local means to manage school affairs since they had the means, general interest, literacy and moral probity to act effectively and reliably as the boards' agents. To some extent, however, they recognised that some parental representation on local committees would allow other parents to identify with the school and enjoy a sense of having a voice in its affairs. Increasingly, a combination of parental insistence on being represented on local committees, the difficulties the boards faced in securing men of high standing living close to the schools to fill the committees and their recognition of the practical advantages in having at least some parental involvement led to the increasingly widespread election of committees by parents and subscribers.<sup>50</sup>

These diverse procedures for securing the appointment of local committees interacted with local social structures to shape the social character of the committees. Ely has attempted a quantitative analysis of local patrons under the New South Wales National board, demonstrating that they were mainly farmers, shopkeepers, and tradesmen.<sup>51</sup> This analysis, however, offers little towards an understanding of the social constitution of local committees and their significance in local society. It is clear, for instance, that 'farmers' is an extremely diverse category, ranging from poor, small-scale tenant farmers through to wealthy owners of large estates. A committee dominated by large landowners was markedly different from one comprising poor

tenant farmers. Further, the significance of different compositions of local committees depended on the precise social and economic structure of the particular locality. Clearly, while a careful quantification of membership would be useful in a close analysis of the social significance of local committees, it would need to pay attention to the social context in which those committees were formed.

Most obviously, the committees were almost exclusively male.<sup>52</sup> Under the Denominational boards the clergy were, predictably, the most widely represented group. Under the amalgamated boards, as well, the clergy dominated the local committees of the denominational schools which continued or were newly formed. Under the Board of Education in Victoria, in particular, the local committees of Catholic schools were dominated by the bishop and his nominees; the church's rules governing Catholic schools appointed the bishop or his nominee, the secretary of the Catholic education office and the parish priest as *ex officio* members of all local committees, with the priest in the key office of correspondent. In many cases, the additional members were parents, often, it seems, of relatively lowly standing. Such an arrangement secured effective local control over the school to the church.<sup>53</sup>

The committees of the national schools, the 'secular' schools under the amalgamated boards and the licensed schools in South Australia, were often dominated by men of some substance and standing in the local community: men of property, government officers (especially on the goldfields), and local professional men, characteristically excluding the clergy. Rusden's reports, for instance, repeatedly refer to his having secured the appointment of the local squatters as patrons. Similarly, the national inspectors in Victoria frequently reported having consulted with the leaders of local communities and secured their election at public meetings. In South Australia,

the central board required teachers' returns, and many steps in the process of erecting vested schoolhouses to be checked by magistrates, or, in their absence, clergymen, doctors, landowners, local businessmen and government officers. While they allowed school trustees to be secured locally, the local processes frequently ensured similar outcomes. Local men of standing and substance were clearly those best placed to fund schools and to represent the local community to the board and many poorer parents and other settlers not only accepted (for whatever reasons and with whatever reservations) their claims to leadership but actively invited them to take such a role. And, insofar as the board worked through district councils, it secured local control in the hands of local property holders.<sup>54</sup>

There were important exceptions to this tendency, however. Many small, isolated rural communities comprised almost solely small farmers and others of similarly unpretentious social standing and relatively poor economic circumstances. School promoters in these communities were frequently the parents themselves and, therefore, the local school committees in such places comprised men who were both parents and in poor circumstances. Indeed, in many such cases, at least some were illiterate, signing their names with crosses or thumbprints, while often the correspondents and secretaries wrote with poor spelling and syntax.<sup>55</sup>

The appointment and constitution of local committees often generated conflicts both at the local level, and between the local community and the boards. In particular, where local committees were appointed at the initiative of the boards, some members of local communities argued that they should be chosen locally, preferably by public election. Where local elections were held, however, some local residents contested the basis of the elections themselves, arguing variously that all local residents, parents

only, or parents and subscribers should be entitled to vote, while further disputes concerned the definition of parents' and subscribers' bona fides. The central boards, too, contested some local elections of committees, occasionally even declaring them invalid and demanding fresh elections conducted along lines it approved. Some conflicts over local governance even arose between rival central bodies: the Victorian Board of Education in particular crossed swords with the Catholic bishop and his education office over the constitution of local committees. The state boards argued that schools should be controlled by local parents and other community members, while the church argued that it had the prerogative of determining the precise forms of local government of its schools and further, that this control must, by the constitution of the church, lie with the bishop and priests.<sup>56</sup>

There were also disputes over the precise composition of local committees. At times, either members of the local community or the boards disputed the moral, social and educational qualifications of some members although often, predictably, their standing was defended by others in the community. At other times, some committee members simply declared their unwillingness to work with others proposed, elected or appointed to the committees. More commonly, parents in particular, complained that their interests were unrepresented on school committees. Both local residents and the central boards also complained at times that committee members lived so far from the school as to be totally uninterested. Finally, in some places there were ongoing local struggles between laity and clergy for control of schools. These conflicts over the formation and constitution of local committees as well as the boards' perceived need to insist on local residence, often resulted in the appointment of members of local committees – sometimes, indeed, whole committees – whom the boards considered

relatively unsuitable.<sup>57</sup>

## TEACHERS

Teachers occupied a crucial, if vulnerable, position within these structures of school governance. They were subject to both local and central authority and often caught between the rival claims of both. Apart from their position within the array of local and central concerns, they had interests of their own which could place them in conflict with local or central bodies, or both. When conflicts arose with one, they frequently appealed to the other for protection. For many teachers, especially those committed to a career within the state education systems, the boards stood as the more important master. Moreover, their rules and procedures were relatively clear and their controls more impersonal and often less onerous; certainly they had undisputed superiority over the teachers.<sup>58</sup>

Local controls, in contrast, were often direct and sometimes arbitrary. Many teachers found them demeaning, especially when they entailed additional duties in the church. Further, teachers often saw themselves as superior to the parents whose children they taught and submission to them was clearly galling to many. Even where the local committees comprised men whom the teachers might recognise as their social equals or superiors, professional teachers might resent their 'lay' authority over their own technical expertise. However, where teachers stood closer to parents and their concerns, they often formed a tacit alliance with them against the central boards, maintaining school practices which the committees favoured but the boards sought to change.<sup>59</sup>

The teachers were also allocated a key role in many administrative procedures, notably those concerned with keeping routine records. In South Australia, teachers

characteristically played a major role in many administrative tasks: they often organised free places for destitute children, ordered books, determined curricula, set and collected fees, and acted as organisers and secretaries for local school building committees. Further, much of the board's correspondence concerning schools was conducted with the teachers directly. In contrast, in the National and later amalgamated systems in New South Wales and Victoria, teachers were deliberately excluded from many such procedures. Similarly under the Denominational systems, they were not only formally subordinated to clerical control, but given a minimal administrative role beyond keeping school records. In all systems they were necessarily central to the implementation of those regulations concerned with the daily conduct of the classroom such as curriculum, teaching methods, organisation of the pupils and so on. Most of the procedures relating to the regulation of classroom practice involved direct interaction between the teachers and the inspectors, although under the National and amalgamated boards many formal written instructions to teachers following inspection were transmitted through local committees.<sup>60</sup>

In many respects, those teachers who saw their positions under the state education boards as offering security, stability and the prospects of a developing career, in particular those who saw themselves as the core of an emergent profession, constituted an important body of allies for the boards in their attempts to change the educational practices adopted in schools. Many of them organised teacher associations, most of which sought to forge some sort of alliance with the relevant central board. Some strongly supported the strategies of offering high salaries to attract good teachers, often linking this with means by which they and the state could regulate entry to the profession. All placed professional self-education and

improvement high on their list of priorities. Some held lectures and discussions of the principles of good pedagogy and the problems of implementing them in practice. In several cases they sought the boards' cooperation and participation and, in some, their assistance in establishing professional libraries. All contributed to the boards' attempts to ensure that an increasing number of teachers had at least some familiarity with the technical-professional knowledge the boards valued. For at least some professional teachers these general strategies for ensuring that all teachers endorsed by the state were trained and competent in the most modern 'rational' practices was tied to a model of school governance which ensured their own professional autonomy. However, even the most professionally proud teachers recognised the need for government regulation of teachers' work until an adequate supply of good teachers had been secured and their unprofessional rivals had been driven from the field, while others clearly accepted an alternative vision of a salaried state profession with a hierarchy through which they could expect to be promoted.<sup>61</sup>

This body of regulations, policies and procedures, local and central institutions of control and the interests, whether organised or not, of an important section of the salaried teachers shaped all aspects of school provision: school accommodation, the teachers, and the curriculum, organisation, methods of instruction and discipline. Moreover, it helped construct a situation in which control over schools was constantly contested and helped to maintain an unstable, shifting complex of compromises.

#### THE LIMITS OF CONTROL

The boards encountered a range of problems in their attempts to shape their schools. Some derived from the detailed provisions of legislation, the machinery of state and the boards position within the state. The South Australian board, for

instance, was unable to secure the appointment of an organising master or even sufficient inspectors to undertake thorough inspection and, in any case, was denied the power to dictate to teachers how they should conduct their schools. It was unable to secure its model school, let alone a normal school. Its limited powers over the internal economy of schools precluded it from instituting procedures to regulate or extend pupil-teaching or even monitorial training. More generally, all boards regularly had insufficient funds to implement the plans they envisaged, including such basic ingredients in their strategies as attractive salary scales for teachers. And, under the dual systems, there were many cases where local communities were able to exploit the rivalry between the boards to secure approval for their schools and educational practices they favoured despite the relevant board's attempts to enforce its will.<sup>62</sup>

The Denominational boards, compelled to work with the denominations, were unable to establish their own training schools. However, the denominations themselves lacked the funds, concentration of professional resources and numbers of potential trainees to make effective provision for large scale training programmes. Further, the New South Wales Denominational board failed even to secure inspectors under its direct control until the late 1850s. Within each of the systems involving denominational schools there were ongoing jurisdictional disputes, such as those which surfaced over the inspection and control of teachers who were members of religious orders.<sup>63</sup>

These problems were compounded by further difficulties within the boards' own administrations. The restricted funding for appointing new staff, for instance, meant that inspectors frequently complained that they were overloaded while their superiors observed that their work was often late and shoddy. Within the secretariats, shortage

of clerical staff produced delays in administration as correspondence was processed slowly or mislaid and meant that inspectors spent considerable time in clerical rather than professional duties.<sup>64</sup>

These problems were at times compounded by internal organisational and jurisdictional disputes. Most notably, under the Victorian Board of Education, there were ongoing struggles between the Inspector-General, Richard Budd and the Secretary Benjamin Kane over their division of labour and their respective powers within the system, struggles which disrupted the handling of many particular cases and doubtless produced a range of tensions which almost inevitably undermined morale and efficiency. Further, there were problems in developing strategies of control themselves. The Victorian board, for instance, faced a constant problem in defining an appropriate balance between literary and practical aspects of teachers' qualifications.<sup>65</sup>

The South Australian board's procedures established tensions between its concerns to ensure that its schools catered for working-class children and its concerns to improve the standards of schools. While it set the general social priorities, determining where new schools were most needed, it left the decision about which schools to license to William Wyatt, its senior inspector. Wyatt, however, was principally concerned with standards; his judgements, therefore, systematically preferred the more efficient schools. Yet it was generally only the middle-class schools which could provide the conditions for what Wyatt considered efficient teaching. More generally, even those boards with the most extensive powers and procedures for regulating schools were forced to rely on a very limited range of financial sanctions to enforce their priorities. Such sanctions were often too

imprecisely focused and directed to produce the desired effects.<sup>66</sup>

The boards were also constrained by more general social conditions. Following the discovery of gold in Victoria, for example, the boards in all colonies recognised that teachers' incomes would have to rise sharply, as had those of civil servants generally, in order to compete at all with the attractions of possible earnings elsewhere. This placed pressure on the boards' budgets and limited their capacity to increase the numbers of schools or to fund school buildings. Depressions in colonial economies lowered the revenues of the state and led to restrictions on annual education budgets. They also limited the capacity of parents to support education, resulting in reductions in teacher incomes, the cessation of building programmes and other developments inimical to the boards' plans. Similarly, the constant opening of new areas of farming development generated new settlements where the demand to create basic infrastructure drained local resources while placing pressure on the boards to fund new schools. Many teachers, too, especially those of the calibre the boards hoped to encourage, refused to take up appointments in the smaller rural settlements because of the social conditions and the limited financial rewards they offered.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, the boards both misunderstood parental interests in education and based some strategies on assumptions derived from those misunderstandings. For instance, the strategy of securing good teachers through intervention in the supply depended in part on the assumption that most parents would recognise the superiority of such teachers over their competitors and that, given the choice, they would support them rather than their rivals. However, as the earlier discussion of the diversity of teachers whom parents supported indicates, such an assumption was clearly unwarranted, and the boards continued to meet considerable resistance to their efforts

from large numbers of parents and local communities. Such opposition undermined the boards' programmes and forced them to modify their strategies and the regulations, policies and procedures which embodied them.

### CONCLUSION

The Acts, and the regulations, working policies and procedures of the central boards largely defined, and frequently redefined, the means by which schools were governed. They gave the boards considerable flexibility in shaping the forms of schooling. In particular, they enjoyed considerable discretion in the application of policies and procedures in particular circumstances, often departing from their own established rules. Within these centralised structures of control, however, there was space for local action and initiative. The formal means of local governance widely secured local controls in the hands of the leading social groups, although others in local communities often contested their monopoly of local powers. Local school supporters also contested both central decisions and criteria and the general balance of power between local and central bodies and sought to increase local influence. Further, they often contested the boards' decisions and controls in ways which went beyond the limits the boards defined as appropriate, contesting their legitimacy. Finally, the central regulatory structures defined in important ways the measure of teachers' control over the schools they conducted. Generally, they secured them considerable freedom from local control in the actual conduct of the classroom, while in most systems they increasingly subjected them to central control.

Local resistance, the character of colonial social and economic development, and problems stemming from their own internal structures and locations within the colonial state disrupted the boards' programs of educational development, undermining

both the provision of schools and the establishment of the classroom practices they considered normative. Consequently, they were instrumental in forcing the boards to develop increasingly comprehensive, centralised means of control including both the formal regulations and policies and the procedures of decision making, inspection and record keeping. Further, they forced them to recognise the contradictions in their strategies of intervention and development and the real limits to the possible extension of their powers within the legal framework which constituted them.

The common features which all the boards shared should not be allowed to obscure the differences between them and their respective approaches. On the one hand, the National and combined boards in New South Wales and Victoria and, to some extent, the Denominational board in Victoria sought to develop relatively comprehensive and tight regulations and procedures tending towards strong, professional, central control and focusing on the production of teachers with a strong personal commitment to the approved methods of teaching. On the other, the Denominational board in New South Wales and the central board in South Australia produced relatively low levels of regulation and central control, with much less developed notions of the professional teacher and less professionally-oriented control.

The provision and conduct of schools in mid-nineteenth century New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria was thus deeply infused with tensions, some relatively covert, others quite open. This complex set of processes produced several types of results. First, the diverse forms of education continued, both in the state regulated schools and in those which continued outside the state systems, although there was a general tendency to increasing conformity with aspects of the boards' ideals. Second, the range of central controls grew substantially, as did the means of

generating the knowledge which was crucial to those controls. However, as they expanded, the forms of opposition changed and the limits to which those controls could be expanded became increasingly clear. Third, the norms of professional teaching and the cognate definition of the locus of legitimate control were elaborated more extensively and intensively and established a hegemonic position within both the public discussion and the practices of schooling.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Anonymous, The defects of the Common School system and proposed new system, Melbourne, 1871, p.6.
2. For contemporary recognition of the 'market forces' involved see, eg., Orlebar, Report of inspection, 2 December 1854, VPRS880/30; Register 19 January 1856. For the more general dynamics which constituted these 'market forces', see chapters 2 and 5 above.
3. See chapter 4 above.
4. Correspondence re establishment of National school at Camden, Macarthur Papers, vol.86, ML A2982; Rusden, Report of proceedings 28 March 1850, NSA1/382; Wall to NBNE 5 July 1864, NSA1/429; GRG18/113/20, and compare names of sponsors with those involved in St.Georges school, Gawler, Gawler Bunyip 28 December 1867; Crafers District Council, Minutes 15, 29 October, 12, 29 November, 10, 22 December 1860, SPRO MRG23. T.Gill, history and topography of Glen Osmond, Adelaide, 1905, facsimile, S.A. Libraries Board, Adelaide, 1974, p.29. See also ch.4 above.
5. Rudder to NBNE 24 July 1848, NSA/381; Kenny to NCE 28 March 1867, NSA1/744; Hastie to VDSB 21 November 1850, VPRS61/1; NBNE, Minutes 5 May 1851, NSA1/331; Register 29 April 1867, 1 May 1869, 5 March, 8 June 1870, 10 April 1871; H.Hussey, More than half a century of colonial life and Christian experience, Adelaide, 1897, pp.310-11; South Australian Government Gazette and Colonial Register 3 March 1838. J.Ramsland, Children of the back lanes, Kensington, N.S.W., 1986, pp.71-9.
6. An Act to incorporate the Board of Commissioners for National Education, 11 Victoria no.48 [N.S.W., 1848]; New South Wales Government Gazette 11 February 1848; For the encouragement of Public Education, Ordinance no.11 1847 [S.A.]; An Act to promote Education in South Australia, by aid towards the erection of schools and the payment of stipends to teachers, 15 Victoria no.20 [S.A., 1852]; An Act to incorporate the Board of Commissioners for National Education, 15 Victoria no.7 [Vic., 1852]. See also chapter 2, pp.101-2 above.
7. NBNE, Regulations, New South Wales Government Gazette 1848, pp.606-10; SCBE, Regulations, SAGG 1852, p.509, 1860, p.378; VBNE, Regulations, Report 1851, pp.9-13; VDSB, Regulations, Report 1849, pp.3-5; VDSB, Minutes 19 March 1852, VPRS63/1. Note the NDSB's Regulations appear not to have been published in the New South Wales Government Gazette, and the relevant record series (eg., correspondence, minutes) are missing for the crucial early years. Consequently, no accurate statement regarding the initial regulations of the Denominational board is possible; any notion of what they involved must be gleaned from their annual reports and their later records.

8. NBNE, Report 1858, pp.16–8; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1864, p.221; VBNE, Report 1852, p.12, 1854–5, p.11; Letter from National Education Board on the subject of non-vested schools, NSW V&P LA 1858.
9. SCBE to CS 23 April 1853, SPRO GRG24/6; Perry to VDSB, (copy), VPRS62/1, p.9; SCBE, Minutes 28 April, 15 July, 7 August, 18 September, 23 October 1852; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1852, pp.507,682–3, 1853, p.99, 1872, p.539; VDSB, Report 1852, p.10.
10. SCBE to CS 30 July 1867, GRG24/6.
11. Sheil to VDSB 3 June 1853, Bickford to VDSB 18 November 1856, Hagan to VDSB 19 December 1856, VPRS61/10; VDSB to Russell 15 November 1855, VPRS62/6; SCBE, Minutes 24,28 April, 15,17 July, 1852, 25 April, 23 May, 1855; SAGG 1848, p.232; VDSB, Report 1848, p.1. It is unclear precisely what information the offices of the separate denominations sought, or how formally they sought it: studies of denominational education in the period have paid little attention to such questions and, moreover, have tended to use principally the records of the state education offices which provide virtually no evidence of the denominations' own procedures, and this study, too, has left denominational records unexplored.
12. Rudder to NBNE 24 July 1848, NSA1/381; VBNE to Kilgour 12 April, 23 June 1859, VPRS878/7; VBNE to Cook 27 August 1856, VPRS878/17; NBNE, Minutes 1 October 1849, NSA1/331; NBNE, Report 1849, pp.14–5; VBNE, Second Report, pp.17, 35, Third Report, pp.35,40–1.
13. Rusden to NBNE 26 July 1848, NSA1/381; Miller to VBNE 18 August, 2 September 1854, VPRS880/35; NBNE, Report 1849, p.14; VBNE Report 1853, p.35. Note that I include the Agents under the heading 'inspector' here.
14. Wyatt, Evidence before Select Committee of the Legislative Council of South Australia appointed to take into consideration the Colonial Estimates, SAPP 1855–1856, no. 158, p.224. See also J.Ely, 'The Denominational Board in New South Wales 1848–1866: A study in centralisation' in S.Murray-Smith (ed.), Melbourne studies in education 1978, Melbourne, 1978, pp.221–5; D.Grundy, 'The political economy of the Denominational system of schools in Victoria' in R.J.W.Selleck (ed.), Melbourne Studies in Education 1981, Melbourne, 1981; M.Vick, 'Class, gender and administration: 1852 Education Act in South Australia', History of Education Review, vol.17, no.1, 1988, pp.28–30.
15. SCBE, Minutes 27 March 1856; VDSB, Minutes 16 October 1851, 9 February 1852, VPRS63/1.
16. J.Ely, 'Politics, education and administrative centralisation: National education in New South Wales, 1856–1866' in S.Murray-Smith (ed.), Melbourne Studies in Education 1975, Melbourne, 1975; D.Grundy, 'The schools inspectorate in Victoria 1856–1899: problems of power and authority' in J.J.Eddy & J.R.Northcote (eds.), From colony to coloniser: studies in Australian administrative history, Sydney, 1987, 'The formation of a disordered teaching service in Victoria, 1851–1871', History of

Education Review, vol.18, no.2, 1989; Vick, 'Class gender and administration'. See also chapter 2, pp.106–7 above.

17. Dwyer, Report on application for aid 6 July 1865, NSA1/362; Orlebar, Report on application 6 December 1858, VPRS880/27; Miller to VBNE 2 September 1854, VPRS880/35; SCBE, Minutes 17 September 1853, 28 November 1855; VBNE, Minutes 10 May 1852, VPRS876/1.

18. SCBE to CS, GRG24/6/1867/1084; Perry to VDSB 8 October 1850, VPRS61/1; VDSB to Douglas 17 May 1849, VPRS62/1; VDSB, Minutes 10 May 1849, VPRS63/1; VBE, Minutes 13 November, 11 December 1862, VPRSW894/1. I use terms such as 'local committees', 'local bodies', 'local patrons' and so on throughout the chapter as generic terms for all forms of local governing bodies (managers, trustees, patrons and boards as well as those bodies actually named 'committees') except where the differences between the precise forms are significant to the discussion.

19. SCBE to CS, GRG24/6/1867/1084; VDSB, Minutes 15 April 1851, VPRS63/1. For an example of the carefully detailed process of investigation, see that conducted by Inspector Tapp on Donovan's school under the Victorian Board of Education in 1870: Tapp, Report on reference 766 11 April 1870, VPRS892/254.

20. Budd to VDSB 3 June 1853, VPRS61/1; Inspector's report, VPRS1406, vol.1, no.16; Kane to VBNE 6 May 1853, VPRS877; Application for certificate for Church of England school, Petersham, correspondence thereon, NSW V&P LA 1872–73; Further correspondence re certificate for Church of England Denominational school at Petersham, NSW V&P LA 1873–74. Note that the Denominational board in Victoria sought to develop a means of rationalising the distribution of denominational schools but was thwarted by the government; Grundy, 'The political economy of the Denominational system of schools in Victoria'.

21. An Act to make better provision for Public Education, 30 Victoria no. 22 [N.S.W., 1866]; An Act for the better maintenance and establishment of Common Schools in Victoria, 26 Victoria no. 149 [1862].

22. VBE, Minutes 22 January, 25 March 1867, VPRS894. See also Regulations of VBE and NCE.

23. 26 Victoria no.149 [Vic., 1862]; 30 Victoria no.22 [N.S.W., 1866].

24. For the Regulations of the NBNE, SCBE, VBNE & VDSB see note 7 above. For the NCE and VBE: Public schools Act of 1866, Regulations adopted by the Council of Education, NSW V&P LC 1867; VBE, Regulations, in Report 1863, pp.12–16. For the general criteria and principles, see chapter 5 above.

25. NBNE, Minutes 30 April, 21 May, 30 July 1849, 29 May 1852, NSA1/331; SCBE, Minutes 18 December 1852, 10 September 1853, 27 June 1855; VBNE, Minutes 10, 29 May 1852, 22 March 1853, VPRS876/1; VDSB, Minutes 6 November 1848, 16 March 1849, VPRS63/1; NBNE, Report 1848, p.1, 1849, p.2, Third Report pp.3, 33–4; NDSB,

Report 1849, p.2; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1852, pp.171, 507, 1855, p.842; VBNE, Report 1852, pp.5,7, 1853, p.7; VDSB, Report 1848, pp.1-2, 1849, p.1.

26. NBNE, Minutes 26 November 1853, NSA1/331; SCBE, Minutes 5,22 May, 21 August 1852; VBNE, Minutes 15 March 1852, 10 January 1853, VPRS876/1; VDSB, Minutes 12 October 1849, VPRS63/1; VBE, Minutes 5,13 November, 4 December 1862, VPRS894/1; NDSB, Report 1848, p.2, 1851, p.1; VBNE, Report 1852, p.6, 1853, p.35; VDSB, Report 1849, p.21, 1852, pp.4,14; Duties of Inspectors of Schools, SAPP 1872, no. 123.

27. NBNE, Minutes 28 May 1859, NSA1/331; VBNE, Minutes 1,8 February 1853, VPRS876/1; VDSB, Minutes 10 May 1849, 16 October 1851, 9 February 1852, VPRS63/1; NBNE, Report 1849, p.14, 1854, p.2, Third Report, pp.33-7; NDSB, Report 1849, p.2; VBNE, Report 1853, p.16, 1854-5, p.3; VDSB, Report 1849, p.1. There is some evidence that the SCBE also developed a range of forms and circulars: they are referred to in the minutes. However, virtually none of the correspondence files relating to the board appear to exist. The exceptions are the correspondence with the government which survive in the Colonial/Chief Secretary's Office files, and the Education Department files, Correspondence relating to schoolhouses ... GRG18/113. The most systematic evidence of this use of records is in the collection of correspondence histories represented in the Special Case Files of the Victorian Education Department, VPRS892; see also Removal of Mr. Sanders, as teacher under National Education Board, NSW V&P LA 1863.

28. VBE, First Report, pp.6-9.

29. NBNE, Minutes 10 September 1849, 5 May 1852, NSA1/331; VBNE, Minutes 10,15 March 1852, VPRS876/1; NBNE, Report 1851, p.3, 1853, p.4; NDSB, Report 1848, p.2; VBNE, Report 1852, p.6, 1854-5, p.7; VDSB, Report 1848, p.1, 1849, p.2, 1853, p.15; VBE, Report 1868, p.52; School Commissioners, Final Report, p.27; Wyatt, Evidence before the Select Committee on the Estimates, p.227; Budd, Evidence before the Royal Commission appointed ... to inquire into and report upon the operation of the system of Public Education [Higinbotham Commission], VPP 1867, q.1880.

30. NBNE, Minutes 5 May 1852, NSA1/331; VBE, Minutes 23 December 1862, VPRS894/1; NBNE, Report 1851, p.3; VBNE, Report 1853, p.15, 1854-5, p.7; VDSB, Report 1852, p.8; Wyatt, Evidence before the Select Committee on the Estimates, p.227.

31. NBNE, Minutes 5 July 1852, NSA1/331, 12 July, 11 October 1858, NSA1/328, 23 August 1861, NSA1/329; SCBE, Minutes 22 May, 17 June 1852, 11 November 1856; VBNE, Minutes 10 May 1852, VPRS876/1; VDSB, Minutes 20 May 1852, VPRS63/1; NBNE, Report 1854, p.3, 1855, p.3; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1852, p.509, 1855, p.376; VDSB, Report 1849, pp.2-3.

32. Kane to VBE 15 September 1862, VPRS903/1; NBNE, Minutes 6 May 1850, 28 January, 5 May 1851, NSA1/331; SCBE, Minutes 20 April 1874; VBNE, Minutes 29 May 1855, VPRS876/1; VBE, Minutes 11 May 1855, VPRS894/1; NBNE, Report 1851,

p.3.

33. NBNE, Minutes 9, 16 April, 28 May, 30 July 1849, NSA1/331; NCE, Minutes 15 April 1878, NSA1/454; SCBE, Minutes 14,28 June, 5 July 1855; VBNE, Minutes 17 May 1852, 1,28 February 1853, VPRS876/1; VDSB, Minutes 10 May 1849, VPRS63/1; NBNE, Report 1848, p.2, 1854, p.6; NDSB, Report 1848, p.1-2; VDSB, Report 1848, p.2. See also the Regulations of each board.

34. Kennett to Macarthur 14 November 1866, Macarthur Papers, vol.84, ML A2980; Dick to NBNE 27 November 1854, NSA1/392; MacKenzie to VBNE 28 February, 2 November 1857, VPRS880/3; SCBE, Minutes 9 January 1856.

35. Annotations on Dunn to VBE 22 March 1869, VPRS892/151; Annotations on Driscoll to VBE 6 August 1869, VPRS892/228; NBNE, Minutes 23 June, 1 October 1849, 6 May 1850, NSA1/331; VBNE, Minutes 8 February 1853, VPRS876/1; VDSB, Minutes 6 November 1848, 15 October 1849, VPRS63/1; NBNE, Report 1849, pp.14-6,33-38, 1858, pp.17,24; VBNE, Report 1852, p.18-19, 1853, p.20,35; VDSB, Report 1852, p.4. For central dissatisfaction with local bodies, see below, pp.328-30.

36. VDSB, Minutes 30 December 1850, VPRS63/1; NDSB, Report 1851, p.1.

37. Orlebar, Report of proceedings at Sale, 1858, VPRS880/57; VDSB, Circular to clergy 10 January 1849, VPRS62/1 and replies in VPRS61/1 & VPRS62/1; Heine to VBE 7 October 1867, VPRS903/91; NBNE, Minutes 7 July 1849, 5 July 1852, NSA1/331, 13 February 1863, NSA1/329; SCBE, Minutes 21 February 1856, 28 October 1867, 22 April 1861; VBNE, Minutes 26 January, 3 March 1852, VPRS876/1; VDSB, Minutes 30 November 1849, 15 April 1851, VPRS63/1; VBE, Minutes 1 April 1863, VPRS894/1; NBNE, Report 1848, p.2, 1853, p.2; VBNE, Report 1853, p.34. Note: I revert here to the generic use of 'local committees' to include Patrons, despite the important differences between the two.

38. McEncroe to NDSB 30 June 1848, NSA1/310; Tyrrell to NDSB 6 March 1849, NSA1/311; Bleasdale to VBE 15 October 1870, VPRS892/256; VBE, Minutes 13 October, 13 November 1862, 22 January, 19 February, 26 March, 11 May 1863, VPRS894/1. See Grundy, 'The schools inspectorate in Victoria' and 'Formation of a disordered teaching service'.

39. Whitehorn to CS 31 March 1856, GRG24/6; Cheriton to SCBE 21 November 1861, GRG18/113/5; Godlee to SCBE 2 August 1869, GRG18/113/92; Pasco to VBE 30 September 1863, Drummond to VBE 2 October 1863, VPRS903/15; Randle to VBE 26 February 1865, VPRS903/43; Wallis to VBE 4 May 1866, VPRS903/63; Cole to VBE 23 February 1871, VPRS903/179; SCBE, Minutes 27 March, 19 August 1856, 8 February 1858; VBNE, Minutes 2 February 1852, VPRS876/1.

40. Thompson to NBNE 28 March 1849, NSA1/381; Mason to VBE 14 February 1865, VPRS892/15; Trotter to VBE 26 March 1867, VPRS892/49; Rawlings to VBE 9,28 March 1867, VPRS892/53; McQuade to VBE 26 October 1869, VPRS892/228; Hurley to VBE 13 December 1870, VPRS892/288; VBE, Minutes 9 December 1868; VDSB, Report 1848, p.2, 1852, p.7.

41. Barton to SCBE 7 May 1860, GRG18/113/35; Parsons to SCBE 27 July 1863, GRG18/113/38; Cooke to SCBE 13 May 1856, GRG18/113/50; SCBE, Minutes 27 June 1855, 26 June 1856, 2 June 1862; Inspector's report, 1406, vol.1, no.5, vol.5, no.61; Relative to application for certificate to Roman Catholic Denominational school, Grenfell, NSW V&P LA 1872; Site for Public school at German's Hill, NSW V&P LA 1875; Register 20 April 1859.
42. Annotations on Dunn to VBE 22 March 1869, VPRS892/151; VBNE, Report 1858, p.24; NCE, Report 1870, p.9; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1856, p.134, 1860, p.365; VDSB, Report 1852, p.7; School Commissioners, Final Report, pp.18–22. See also Vick, "Their paramount duty" parents and schooling in the mid–nineteenth century' in R.J.W.Selleck & M. Theobald (eds.), Family, school and state in Australian history, Sydney, 1990, pp.185–90.
43. NBNE, Report 1851, p.2, 1854, p.3. Smith, 'William Wilkins' saddle-bags', pp.79–84; Vick, Trained, qualified, or incompetent?, unpublished paper, ANZHES conference, Canberra, 1988, and "Their paramount duty", pp.190–1.
44. NDSB, Report 1861; VBE, Report 1866, p.11, 1867–8, pp.12–13; Register 23 September 1873, 16 April 1874.
45. Register 22 February 1853, 10 January 1859, 5 July 1869, 10 November 1873, 5,14 September 1874. Anon., Defects of the Common School system; Anon., Recent education schemes, (United Association of Teachers of New South Wales Occasional Papers no. 2), Sydney, 1857; Anon., The 'result' system: copy of resolutions adopted at a public meeting of teachers and transmitted to the Board of Education, Melbourne 1863; W.Cox, A view of the difficulties of public education with suggestions for their removal, Melbourne, 1860; W.E.Hearn, Some observations of primary schools, Melbourne, 1856, Payment by results in primary education, Melbourne, 1872; J.K.Heydon, Civil and religious liberty in education advocated in a series of letters to the Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney, 1877; J.B.A., Young Victoria: a contribution in aid of National education, Melbourne, 1871; J.Miramis, Education. Our present system reviewed, with suggestions for its alteration and improvement, Fitzroy, 1872. See also ch.6 above.
46. Cooke to SCBE 13 May 1856, GRG18/113/50; Carnell to VBNE 30 Msay 1857, Russell to VBNE 12 December 1861, VPRS880/23; SCBE, Minutes 12 June 1852, 23 May 1855; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1852, p.508, 1853, p.100, 1854, p.177; Wyatt, Evidence before Select Committee on the Estimates, p.224; Register 14 September 1874.
47. VDSB, Minutes 16 October 1851, VPRS63/1; NBNE, Second Report, p.14. See also the relevant Acts, Letters of instruction to members of the Denomination boards, and Regulations of the boards.
48. Mayland to SCBE 12 August 1861, GRG18/113/38; Andrews to SCBE 7 November 1854, Moffatt to SCBE 15 September 1856, GRG18/113/30; Kapunda Public School Trustees, Minutes 23 September 1853, SPRO MRG33/29; Gunn to VDSB 21 February 1849, Tanner to VDSB 10 August 1852, Dunne to VDSB 30

August 1852, VPRS61/1; NBNE, Minutes 5 May 1852, NSA1/331; SCBE, Minutes 9 January 1856; VBNE, Minutes 15,28 February 1853, VPRS876/1; VDSB, Minutes 7 December 1848, VPRS63/1; NBNE, Report 1849, p.14; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1853, p.100, 1854, pp.176–7; VBNE, Report 1853, p.39. Note that the absence of any attempt to regulate the formation of local boards by the VDSB is sharpened by its positive involvement in the reformation of the local patrons at Warrnambool National school during its trusteeship of the National system in 1851, VDSB, Minutes 16 October 1851, VPRS63/1.

49. Circular, VBE to Inspector-General and Inspectors 30 June 1866, VPRS892/30. The procedure for electing local committees was not finally and formally enunciated as an official requirement until virtually the end of the board's life; Letter no.24975, 1872, VPRS1528. See also VBE Regulations.

50. Rusden, Report on proceedings 18 July 1849, NSA1/381; Orlebar, Report on investigation, Sale, 1858, VPRS880/57; Sircom, Report on local committee 19 February 1864, VPRS892/176; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1856, p.124.

51. J.Ely, Reality and Rhetoric. An alternative history of Australian education, Sydney, 1978, pp.13–4.

52. In an admittedly selective search, I have traced only two exceptions: under the National Board, the widow of Justice Windeyer was the sole Patron of the Raymond Terrace school, while a return of School Board members in New South Wales in 1868, for instance, included one woman. Some schools – state supported or philanthropic – were reported as being 'run' by committees of 'ladies', but the context suggests that these were concerned with daily organisation rather than general management or decision-making; eg., Register 8 June 1870. And, at Port Macquarie, the Local Patrons organised a Ladies Inspecting Committee to visit the National school regularly, Dick to NBNE 27 November 1854, NSA1/392.

53. Bleasdale to VBE 31 January 1867, Minute of VBE 4 February 1867, Bleasdale to VBE 1 March 1867, VPRS892/110; Perry to VBE 25 June 1868 and Kane, Minute 5 August 1868, VPRS892/107; VBE, Minutes 26 March, 11 May 1863, VPRS894/1; cf. Banner of Belfast 12 August 1862. For VBE moves which undermined Denominational control of Denominational schools, see Perry to VBE 4 September 1867, VPRS892/155.

54. Correspondence re establishment of National school at Camden, Macarthur Papers, vol.86; Rusden, Reports on proceedings 31 July 1849, 3 August 1849, 23 March 1850, 8 April 1850, Briggs to NBNE 6 June 1850, NSA1/381; Kane, Report on proceedings 2 February 1853, VPRS877; NBNE, Third Report, p.40. The basis for this assessment of the social composition of local committees in Victoria – and for a far more thorough, systematic analysis – is the series VPRS901, VPRS902, VPRS1528. Vick, 'School community, the state and the provision of schools in mid-nineteenth century South Australia'.

55. Cooke to SCBE 13 May 1856, GRG18/113/50; Mason to VBE 14 February 1865, VPRS892/15; D.H[?]. to VBE 7 May 1866, VPRS903/63. For systematic evidence under VBE, see again VPRS901,902,1528. See also Austin, Australian education, 1788–1900, Carlton, Vic., 1972, pp.56–7.

56. McQuade to VBE 1 November 1869, VPRS892/228; Lavender to VBNE 28 February 1857, VPRS880/23.

57. Corduroy to NCE 7 April 1874, Moore to NCE 6 May, 27 August 1874, NSA1/969; Wills to NDSB 16 January 1852, NSA1/313; VBNE, Minutes 21 February 1853, VPRS876/1; Bodkin to VBNE 7 July 1862, VPRS880/23; Allen to VBE 19 September 1863, VPRS903/15.

58. Mason to VBE 3 May 1865, VPRS892/15; Budd, Report of investigation 27 August 1866, VPRS892/32; Rawlings to VBE 28 March 1867, VPRS892/53; Petition from certain teachers re appointment and dismissal of teachers by Central School Board only, NSW V&P LC 1859–60; Petition concerning the appointment and removal of teachers, NSW V&P LA 1859. Appointment and dismissal of teachers – petition, NSW V&P LC 1859.

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60. NBNE, Minutes 23 April 1849, NSA1/331; VBNE, Minutes 1 February 1853, VPRS876/1. See also the Regulations of the various boards.

61. Down to VBE 7 October 1867, VPRS903/91; VBNE, Report 1853, p.15; Teachers' Association and Primary Education Journal – correspondence respecting, NSW V&P LA 1873–74; Australian Journal of Education 1860, pp.110–2,141–3; Register 11 August, 21 December 1858, 10 January, 7 February, 7 March 1859, 3 June 1861.

62. Wills to NDSB 16 January 1852, NSA1/313; NBNE, Report 1851, p.2; NDSB, Report 1848, p.3; VBNE, Report 1853, p.6, 1854–5, p.4; VDSB, Report 1848, p.2, 1852, p.6; VBE, Report 1863, pp.3–4, 1864, p.45, 1866, p.23; Correspondence respecting funds for National and Denominational education, NSW V&P LA 1859–60; Correspondence re additional funds for Boards, NSW V&P LA 1859–60; Further correspondence relative to application for additional aid for National education, NSW V&P LA 1865; Return relative to funds for educational purposes, NSW V&P LA 1865–66; Register 10 January 1859.

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64. SCBE, Minutes 25 April, 23 May 1855; VBNE, Minutes 6 March 1853, VPRS876/1; VDSB, Minutes 21 November 1853, VPRS63/1; SCBE, Report, SAGG 1854, p.815; VBE, Report 1863, p.52, 1864, p.53; Duties of Inspectors, [S.A., 1872].

65. VBE, Minutes 13 October, 13 November 1862, 22 January 1863, VPRS894; VBE, Report 1864, pp.17,39-41. Note that disputes involving Budd had also arisen under the Denominational board, eg., VDSB, Minutes 14 April 1856, VPRS63/1. See also Grundy, 'The schools inspectorate in Victoria 1856-1899' and 'The formation of a disordered teaching service'.

66. SCBE, Report, SAGG 1853, pp.100,721, 1854, pp.176-7,374, 1855, pp.127,641.

67. NBNE, Report 1853, p.1, 1854, p.1; VBNE, Report 1853, p.6; NBNE, Third Report, pp.3-4; Register 21 December 1858. Vick, 'Class, gender and administration', pp.36-7.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has critically analysed the existing literature on mid-nineteenth century Australian education, noting especially the ways in which educational practices, the state and popular involvement are represented. It has sketched aspects of colonial society and outlined the legislation and state administrative arrangements which provided the conditions under which colonial schools were provided and governed. It has explored the character of school provision – in particular, teachers, the curriculum and methods of instruction, classroom organisation and discipline, and school accommodation. It has examined the involvement of parents, clergy and other members and institutions of local school communities, philanthropic organisations, the central denominational offices and the state education boards in establishing and supporting schools. Further, it has analysed the varied norms, interests and conditions which shaped where those interested in schools thought they were needed and led them to favour quite different educational practices in them. Finally it has examined the conflicts which arose out of these differing interests and views of education within local communities, and between them and the central boards, and the means by which local and central bodies attempted to resolve such conflicts in their own favour and thus secure control over the general distribution and character of schools. In doing so it has drawn attention to aspects of mid-nineteenth century Australian schooling largely ignored in existing accounts.

Through this analysis of these issues, I have argued that colonial schools were extraordinarily diverse institutions, varying widely in their staffing, curricula, organisation, instruction, disciplinary techniques and accommodation, although one form of school – characterised by trained teachers, an elementary curriculum, class organisation and instruction and specialised school buildings – became increasingly

common. They drew on a wide range of financial supports within the communities in which they were placed, although for many, state funding was also crucial. Further, they were widely distributed through the colonies, with many places supporting several socially and educationally differentiated schools in close proximity.

These patterns of school provision rested on diverse geographical, social and economic conditions, conflicting interests and alternative views of what sorts of education were desirable on the part of various groups within local communities and the central educational authorities. Many of the concerns shaping local views of what schooling was needed reflected rival economic and institutional interests and sectional divisions, while the education boards' concerns were shaped by their tactical concerns to outmanoeuvre each other (in the case of the dual systems) and more generally to secure an economically rational distribution of resources. Educationally, the state boards articulated their interests in terms of universal, technical norms of educational practice, while parents stressed practical outcomes in their children's evident educational progress. The divergence of interests and understandings of what education was needed led to conflicts within local communities and between local communities and the central bodies. While some conflicts took the form of open hostilities and disputes, others were more subtle, involving, for instance, withdrawing children from existing schools and opening alternative schools. In response to these disputes, the central bodies in particular elaborated the powers they were granted in the Acts establishing them, systematically expanding their regulations and procedures and building bodies of staff to implement them, generating increasingly comprehensive regulatory powers over the schools. In the process, while the central boards allowed a place for local communities in school governance, they increasingly marginalised

them. Moreover, they characteristically favoured the leaders of local communities over parents, and under the secular boards, leadership exercised independently of the churches.

This account of colonial education not only plugs some gaps in matters of detail in existing accounts: it challenges and seeks to supplant established interpretations of a number of issues in the field, modifies others and confirms or rejects some which, previously, had been only tentatively argued.

First, it has a bearing on established views of the different forms of education provided in the period. Parallelling the already-secured feminist reinterpretation of the significance of 'older' forms of middle-class female education, it contests the judgement of liberal historians and the norms they articulated. It suggests that 'older' forms of elementary schooling which liberal accounts dismiss as inferior and unsatisfactory can be seen as more appropriate to the conditions under which many children were able to attend than were the 'superior' schools. The corollary of this is that the forms of schooling the liberal historians endorse were not necessarily superior from the point of view of a large part of the population, and challenges the idealist conception of education on which the liberal view rests. This largely follows arguments which marxist revisionists have put forward, but supplies some of the detailed analysis which their case required. My analysis also suggests that the revisionist tendency to see this form of schooling purely as a reflex of capitalist and patriarchal imperatives is insufficient. Instead, it suggests that while the curricula, forms of organisation and discipline certainly did reflect both capitalist and patriarchal values and forms of social organisation premised on bourgeois patriarchal family life, they also reflected a growing scientific technical rationality, a concern for means of governance related to the needs

of the state beyond those of capital or patriarchy. This line of argument draws on post-structuralist concerns and offers a challenge to at least some revisionist interpretations. However, my analysis also suggests that it is important to note carefully the articulation of education forms and class and gender inflections of colonial culture, in contrast to the tendency to view educational form as a social regulatory technology divorced from any particular class or gender interests evident in some post-structuralist work. It also indicates that the relation between 'elementary' and 'advanced' forms of education needs to be seen not as a simple descriptive distinction established prior to the social distinctions which accompanied it (as in liberal historiography), nor as a reflection of class and gender differences in financial means compounded by cultural difference (as in many revisionist accounts), but as a discursively constructed set of categories for constituting class and gender distinctions and identities as suggested in at least one post-structuralist account.

Second, my analysis suggests some significant changes to prevailing understandings of the role of parents, churches and others outside the formal apparatus of the state in shaping colonial schooling. Parents, in particular, in my account, are more central than liberal and some post-structuralist accounts constitute them in principle and than many revisionists make them in practice. They played a greater role in establishing schools, were crucial in supporting them, allowed the provision of an enormously diverse network of educational forms, finely tuning these educational differences to the marking of social distinctions. In doing so, they played a more 'causal' role than previous accounts from any perspective have recognised. My analysis also suggests a more complex relation between parents and the different forms of education than previous accounts have suggested, challenging both the

'apathy and ignorance' approach of many liberals and the value of the 'organic/provided' dichotomy which runs through much revisionist historiography. This account also recognises a more important role for local institutions, notably the churches, than revisionist have usually admitted. Moreover, this role is different from that which the churches play in most liberal accounts where they are largely reduced to their central organisations or, at the local level, the clergy.

Third, the thesis suggests ways of understanding the character of the state as a key institution in colonial society, the role of the state in education and the role of school provision in the process of developing the state. Certainly, it suggests strongly that the state cannot be seen simply as the embodiment of the common interest. Nor can the development of its institutional forms and administrative procedures be seen as means to greater efficiency in some socially neutral way. Rather, it is deeply implicated in the struggles over class and gender relations, although its concerns are not reducible to those of any of the interests constituted by such relations. Administrative efficiency, in this context, is to be understood in terms of the effectivity of particular arrangements in securing the means of social regulation. The thesis argues, in fact, that the forms of administration were crucial to the penetration of social life by the state through schooling. They generated an extensive documentation of social life through which such categories as class might be transformed into, or correlated with, an array of both detailed descriptions and generalised norms (and, necessarily, deviations). They contributed significantly to the physical and symbolic re/construction of local landscapes and the construction of both a common culture and the differential positioning of different social groups in relation to it. At the same time, this analysis suggests that the constitution of the state itself was

problematic. While clearly the formal institutions such as the boards of education were fundamental to it, the state included, in an ambivalent and tentative fashion, churches, district councils, formally constituted local committees and ad hoc groups of parents and others concerned to establish a school in their locality.

Finally, it throws some light on the relations between the general form of state intervention in education in the third quarter of the nineteenth century and that which succeeded it. It suggests that (like other institutional arrangements in a complexly structured, contradiction-ridden society) these strategies, and each redefinition of powers and procedures within them, generated new 'problems', none of which could ever, finally, be resolved. It also indicates that the state education systems in each of the colonies were highly complex, with considerable internal flexibility and capacity for redefining the elaborating their powers in the struggle to shape the character of popular schooling. And, finally, it suggests that it was not the 'incapacity' of the systems to solve their difficulties in any simple, unproblematic way that proved their undoing. Rather, it was crucial shifts outside the systems in the constitution of society generally, in the internal structural relations making the state and in the construction of new discourses of education, the state and society which established the conditions for change. In that context, the detailed shifts in the balances of political power determined the precise timing of the changes. However, most importantly, by examining the period in terms of its own internal dynamics, and without reference to its supersession, it suggests that it is possible to detach the writing of its history from those narratives of progress which impart significance to a complex of social relations only by what came next.

Clearly, the study makes no claims to be either comprehensive or definitive. It

makes only limited use of the wealth of available sources. Public collections of diaries and other private sources warrant further attention, newspapers, especially where rival presses existed in the same town or district, should repay closer, more systematic investigation, while even such standard published sources as parliamentary debates, not used here, could be re-examined in the light of this analysis.

There are many issues, closely related to the central topic addressed in this thesis, which are only lightly touched on here, if at all. Many of the issues raised directly have been addressed only selectively, notably conflicts within local communities over various forms of funding of schools, the detailed controls over the distribution and quality of schools, the role of teachers as an 'independent force' in colonial education and control over the use of school buildings. Other issues have been excluded almost entirely, in particular adult and Aboriginal education. And, while it recognises and draws upon a range of theoretical considerations, it does not attempt to explore directly or develop the theoretical ground, or resolve the theoretical problems it raises. Consequently, the thesis raises (at least) as many questions as it answers and opens up the ground for further analysis.

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