

EDUCATION AND MULTI CULTURAL COHESION  
IN BELIZE, 1931 - 1981

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the British neglect of education in Belize and the emergence of increased tensions between church and state, from the twin catalysts for social change of the 1931 hurricane and economic depression until independence in 1981. This conflict has revealed a contradictory web of power structures and their influence, through the medium of schools, on multi-cultural development. The fundamental argument is that despite a rhetoric- of-difference, a cohesive society was created in Belize rooted in the cultural values propagated through an often-contradictory church-state education system, and that Jesuit supremacy of Belizean education came too late to unsettle or exploit the grass-root forces of cultural synthesis. Racial conflict in Belize is more a matter of habitual rhetoric and superficial.

The historiography of Belize falls broadly into two categories: Diplomatic and labour, nevertheless cultural and educational studies have developed most notably from Social Anthropology. An extensive literature review revealed that notwithstanding the emergence of a substantial historiography of education on the British Caribbean similar research has been neglected on Belize. Therefore, my own thesis fills a significant gap in the historiography of British Caribbean education.

The PhD discusses the relationship between conflicting hierarchies within education and multi-cultural cohesion, not yet been fully attempted in any of the secondary literature. This is a proposition argued through substantial and original primary research, employing a mix of comparative empirical research and theoretical insights influenced by historical sociologist Nigel Bolland to analyse the interactions of people at community level, the ubiquitous presence of the denominations, and political and hierarchical activities. The empirical data was initially collected from HMSO, and Colonial Office files at the Public Record Office.

The principal methodological area of research for the PhD resulted from a visit to Belize to procure a quantity of oral testimony providing a 'history from below' as an extra dimension to the British Colonial perspective. The methodology for Part 3 (1964-1981) reveals shifts in the balance of power relying solely on oral evidence and archival/ecclesiastical records from Belize. Church historians have confined previous research into the latter to narratives. An important contribution to my area of study lies in the use of Belize as a central focus and the historical peculiarity of denominationalisation, where, unlike the English system the church rather than the secular lobby won the contest for control in schools.

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P.R.H. 27 March 2002

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. ANARCHISM. Anarchism is a political theory based on two proposals: that people do not need government, and that no government is justifiable unless truly and in detail, consented to by the individuals governed. Theoretically, freedom is an absolute value and no one should ever be obliged to obey authority without ever having consented to do so. Karl Marx' doctrine that the state will 'wither away' under Communism has clear affinities with anarchist goals.<sup>1</sup>

2. CHICLE: Exports of chicle, a gum taken from the sapodilla tree and used to make chewing gum, propped up the economy from the 1880s. Mayan *chicleros* harvest the sapodilla tree through a series of slashes on the tree to drain the sap. The widespread acceptance in the US of chewing gum provided Belizean foresters with a new opportunity of employment, but this ended with the substitution of natural chicle for synthetic vinyl gum. Its significance here is more for the intensification of trade with the United States and the increasing economic and political power of Creole merchants.

3. CREOLE: The term Creole has been defined differently throughout the Americas. It indicates both black and white born and raised in the Caribbean region. However, throughout the Americas the term has been broadly defined as the miscegenation of Africans and Europeans because of slavery. This may be African-French as in Louisiana, or African-Spanish in Cuba. In Belize as in other parts of the British Caribbean Creoles are of African-British descent.

4. CREOLISATION/BELIZEANISATION: Creolisation and Belizeanisation are terms used largely by social scientists such as Bolland and Robinson to explain the long process of selective cultural assimilation to the numerically superior Creole group, and a later widening of that process from the mid-twentieth century to accommodate the resultant Hispanic/Creole culture in Belize.

5. COLOUREDS: Often termed 'free coloureds', their elevated status derived from a familial relationship with the white slave masters. They swelled the ranks of the professional classes in Belizean society and were perceived as a useful controlling element between the ruling whites and the Black, Indian or Mestizo workers. In turn, they had inherited the position of the white colonialists by the point of home rule in 1964.

6. DIALECTIC: The notion, developed by Marx and advanced by Engels, expresses the view that development depends on the clash of contradictions, and the creation of a new, more advanced synthesis out of these clashes. The dialectical process involves the three moments: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Less abstract, the key to the dialectic, as I understand it, is the 'relational' character of reality, or as Engels put it in *Dialectics of Nature*, dialectic is the "science of universal inter-connection." Human reality cannot be validly examined without an examination of its relations to its environment and the process of change.

7. ELITE: This refers to a minority group, which has the power or influence over others, and is recognised as in some way superior. Unlike class, elite power may not rest on economic position and power, but on that section of the dominant class with political power.

8. **FORESTOCRACY:** As for Latifundia below but in Belize sociologists have referred to the patrons as, the 'forestocracy', absenteeism having developed fully before the 1930s.

9. **GARIFUNA:** The Garifuna or Black Caribs first appeared in the Caribbean area over 300 years ago, when runaway and shipwrecked African slaves mixed with the native Carib Indians on St. Vincent Island. The Garifuna adopted the Carib language but kept their African musical and religious traditions, against the demands of the British. In 1795, the Garifuna people rebelled against the British invoking their exile to the island of Roatán, off Honduras. The Garifuna slowly established villages on islands and along the coasts of southern Belize, Guatemala, and northern Honduras.

10. **HEGEMONY:** A term used by Antonio Gramsci concerning the domination of one class over others by a combination of political and ideological means. Hegemonies attempt to maintain a balance between coercion and consent, varying from society to society but with the emphasis on consent.

11. **INCULTURATION:** A term used by the Jesuit Father General Pedro Arupes in his address 'On Inculturation', to the whole Society of Jesus, and signifying the 'incarnation of the Christian life and message in a particularly cultural context -- transforming and remaking it so as to bring about a new creation'. [1978, Roman Curia].

12. **LATIFUNDIA:** large agrarian estate in which the labourer is subject to the authoritative control, normally though not exclusively, of an absent patron.

13. **MAYA:** The Maya are possibly the most celebrated of the classical civilizations of Mesoamerica. Originating in the Yucatan approximately 2600 B.C., they rose to prominence about A.D. 250 in contemporary southern Mexico, Guatemala, western Honduras, El Salvador, and Belize. Although Belize is at the centre of the former Mayan Empire, the current Mayan descendents predominantly came from Mexico and Guatemala. Most of the initial Mayans fell victim to plagues or armed conflict. Presently, three groups are represented, the Yucatec Maya from Yucatan Mexico, the Mopan from the Peten, Guatemala, and the Kekchi who migrated from the Verapaz region of Guatemala. In the southern Toledo district of Belize, where the Kekchi and Mopan dwell, they together comprise the largest percentage of Mayan descendents in Belize today and have remained the most traditional and culturally distinct.

14. **MESTIZO:** This term has a similar meaning to Creole though here the miscegenation is a consequence of the Spanish conquest of Native Americans. In Belize Mestizos are defined as a Spanish-Mayan Indian mixture.

15. **OLIGARCHY:** One of Aristotle's basic forms of government, the rule of a few, in their own interests.

16. **PATERNALISM:** The use of a term describing the relationship between a Father and a

child to characterise that between superiors and subordinates, a system of dependency with ideological dimensions, emphasising the caring role and dealing with the whole person. It does not separate work and non-work life, and assumes an inequality of power.

17. PLANTATION: As for 'Latifundia' but the estate is usually given over to mono crop production.

18. PLANTERS: Owners or operators of the above, in the New World, the dominant economic and political group before Emancipation.

Insert *MAP OF BELIZE* here

## INTRODUCTION

### Historiography

This thesis argues that despite a rhetoric of difference a cohesive society was created in Belize rooted in the cultural values propagated through three main areas: an often contradictory church-state education system; that Jesuit supremacy of Belizean education came too late to unsettle or exploit the grass-root forces of cultural synthesis; racial conflict in Belize is more a matter of habitual rhetoric and superficial.

The contradictory church state system originates in the British neglect of education in Belize and the emergence of increased tensions between church and state, from the twin catalysts for social change of the 1931 hurricane and economic depression until independence in 1981. This reveals a conflictive labyrinth of power structures and their influence through the medium of schools on multi-cultural development. Given the neglect of twentieth century Belizean education by historians the subject itself provides a degree of originality. However, a specific point of concern is the issue of Roman Catholic and Protestant rivalry previously surveyed by sociologists but with few conclusions drawn regarding multi-cultural cohesion. In Belize, the conflict between the Irish American Jesuits (wealthy but lacking political power) and the British Protestants (politically powerful but lacking funds) created a power balance that reduced the effectiveness of either denomination to dominate in Belize and neutralised the Colonial government's ability to divide groups along ethnic or religious lines. Hanson and Grant both affirm that the ensuing climate of cooperation prevented a polarization of political power around ethnicity, class or religion. A key point here is that religious affiliation cut across and through ethnic divisions. This was not the case in other British territories such as

Jamaica where the denominations were British based and more readily controlled by the Colonial government. Humphrey's research shows that in Belize the authorities attempted 'divide and rule' tactics along ethnic lines, but failed overall partly due to the peculiarities of the Belizean education system.<sup>2</sup>

Belize has been viewed as a cultural anomaly,<sup>3</sup> not Latin enough for the Central Americanists, and dismissed from a non-sugar perspective by Caribbean historians such as William A. Green.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, Latin American historians because of its essentially British Caribbean culture have ignored Belize. However, Caribbeanists have centred their works primarily on the islands. This anomaly has tended to limit twentieth century Belizean historiography to two narrow categories: Firstly, diplomatic histories covered by Humphries, Gregg, and Caiger concerning long standing Guatemalan and Mexican territorial claims.<sup>5</sup> These possess a supportive value here in providing some of the political context. Secondly, Ashdown, Bolland, Grant and Hamill reveal labour history and the subsequent rise of political independence movements. This group, provide a social context to events in Belize during the period under review, particularly the labour unrest of the 1930s.<sup>6</sup> However, with the exception of Bolland they do not contribute to the overall hypothesis. Bolland pays attention to education within the context of organised demands for social justice. He comments briefly on the need for research into the relationship between inter-ethnic harmony and schooling in Belize, given that Belize contains seven major ethnic groups and many other minor groups. Yet, he leaves this field to other scholars as a suggestion for further research.<sup>7</sup>

Bolland's contribution to this dissertation is largely concerned with the second point of the hypothesis, 'that Jesuit supremacy of Belizean education came too late to unsettle or exploit the grass-root forces of cultural synthesis', and is established in his discussion of the three

modes of nationalism.<sup>8</sup> The notion that plural societies are not always held together by the overarching control of the colonial system or the monopoly of power by one cultural section challenges M. G. Smith's model, itself based upon economist J. S. Furnivall's theory that, 'sees a plural society as a unit of disparate parts which owes its existence to external factors and lacks a common will'.<sup>9</sup> In relation to this Bolland refers to a cultural and racial plurality when discussing the three modes:<sup>10</sup>

1. The hegemonic mode - dominant ethnic groups.
2. The synthetic mode - the melting pot
3. The pluralistic mode - an all-embracing hyphenated form i.e. Belize-Creole, Belize-Maya, Belize-Mestizo.

The hegemonic mode was evident in the newly created United States of the eighteenth century, as the white Anglo-Saxon Protestants established supremacy. Bolland claims that a hegemonic mode where, 'one dominant section claims control, seeks to promote its own group and exclude other groups' was never an option in Belize. Neither could Belize support the melting pot ideal, where civil society is an, 'aggregate of individuals' described by Bolland as, 'A synthetic mode of nationalism'. Pertaining to this I shall gradually reveal throughout the thesis that attempts to implement a synthetic 'Belizeanisation' of society were largely futile, given the degree of 'Creolisation' that had been selectively evolving since the post emancipation period. This thesis supports Bolland's pluralist mode of nationalism - 'which legitimises the co-existence and persistence of several racial and ethnic groups, and of hyphenated identities'- revealing the relative failure of the synthetic mode of Belizeanisation and the success of plurality as best-suited to Belize.<sup>11</sup> The postscript at the end of this work shows contemporary Belizean society of the 1990s accepting this view.

Bolland provides a valuable insight into the nature of Belizean society, but offers little in relation to education. A substantial historiography of education is lacking apart from

historians such as Buhler, Hunter, and Johnson,<sup>12</sup> whose works though useful, contain a clear denominational bias. Nevertheless, a body of work has developed from the social sciences, notably Social Anthropology, Brockman; Foster; Gregory; Rutheiser; Sandford; Strumpel; Sullivan; Wilk. From Sociology, Ashcraft; Beals; Lundgren.<sup>13</sup> A contemporary study, Rutheiser's PhD dissertation,<sup>14</sup> connected education with multi culture, stressing the importance of the educative process not only at the institutional level of Belizeanization and nationalism but at the micro level of inter-ethnic relationships within towns and villages. Rutheiser's work provided an introductory outline for the relationship between schooling and multi-culture rather than a theoretical insight, apart from his assessment of Americanisation as discussed below. It is the purpose of this dissertation to examine these processes historically, and to scrutinize the complexity of the powerful institutional groups in Belize and their inability to exploit inter-ethnic relationships through the medium of the church based education system, thus filling a significant gap in the historiography of Caribbean education from 1931 until independence in 1981.

Rutheiser also suggested that schooling was a meaningful area in which to consider the change from British to American (US) cultural supremacy.<sup>15</sup> This is correct, however, I disagree that a cultural supremacy of America is evidenced by education in Belize and I shall reveal American influence whilst appraising its limits. It is most developed in Jesuit schools but they focus their influence on religious life and limit the inroad of secular America. My thesis does not therefore deny American influence but expresses the nature of its limitations. Education herein is concerned with the use of American influence in schools by the Jesuits and the political independence parties as a propaganda tool against the British colonial authorities. In this, a comparative approach is essential to reveal the different outcomes of

colonial rule in education in the British Caribbean.<sup>16</sup>

The third point of my hypothesis, that racial conflict in Belize is more a matter of habitual rhetoric and superficial is tested through researchers such as Bolland, Lundgren, Beals, and Rutheiser<sup>17</sup> who have tended to focus on various elements of Belizean society to give an inordinate impression of conflict and instability. For example, Lundgren stresses a reality of inequality and a rhetoric of one nation,<sup>18</sup> however her arguments are based simply on equality and inequality and her thesis focuses predominantly on economic and class relationships. My own understanding, and analysis, of the character of Belizean social formation is rooted in the aspects of harmony and social cohesion evidenced through the education system from where I contend that the nature of Belizean society has developed. It became clear that a renewed analysis of Belizean society was necessary to reconfigure the view of Belize as a conflictive society. Here it would be necessary to talk of a rhetoric of difference and a reality of cohesion. Belize in the late twentieth century is a nation made essentially from its roots. A series of contradictory elements have nullified each other, within the church, within politics, and between government and church, allowing the society to be defined by the social and cultural needs of its participant groups. Of course, Belize is not an anarchic society and government does exist, but it has served largely to 'rubber-stamp' forces and activities relative to inter-ethnic fusion that were already underway in Belize. Thus, the title of this thesis is not, 'Education in Nation Building', *because* the latter term of nation building has connotations of action instigated from the top down in order to define a nation. Top down action has taken place but only as a contributory, not a dominant factor, on an equal level with other factors. It is arguably difficult for such action to be successful and Grant suggests that in Guyana, even at the national level the 'broker institution' cannot muster a national culture universally

acceptable.<sup>19</sup> However, the documentary evidence provided concerns the ineffectiveness of power factions to dominate and the ability of ordinary Belizeans to control their own cultural development. Thus supporting elements of anarchic principles, which profess that ordinary people can function peaceably and consensually albeit with some limited government.

#### **Education as a theme.**

Education in Belize was set against a rapidly changing imperial scenario. The British did not believe that decline was irreversible.

The necessity to transform the Empire into a multi-racial Commonwealth became an article of faith. In the post war period, the history of the empire may be read as the attempt to convert formal rule into an informal basis of equal partnership and influence by means of the Commonwealth. The purpose was the perpetuation of Britain as a great world power.<sup>20</sup>

Education in British Honduras is shown throughout as subjected to pressures and changes over time. State intervention in education had begun in England with the tentative steps of the 1870 Education Act. However, this was much slower to develop in the colonies due to extreme financial constraints and the power of vested interests.<sup>21</sup> The system of education in 1931 was one of subsidised denominational church schools. Nearly all parts of the Colony possessed enforced compulsory education. Seventy-eight schools employed one hundred and fifty-two teachers and sixty-three pupil teachers.

Education here has been chosen as a focal point of social reform for both its intrinsic value and usefulness in illuminating the extent of multicultural cohesion. The missionary nature of schooling transported ideas and attitudes between formerly isolated groups such as the Mopan and Kekchi Mayan Indians in the south and west, or the eastern seaboard Garifuna (Black Caribs). Hispanics and Mestizos (Spanish Indians) were well scattered throughout the Colony, whereas the Creolised East Indian migrants lived around the sugar plantations in the North.

Whilst the main community of Creoles lived along the central eastern seaboard of British Honduras, their predominance among official posts, such as the police, judiciary and civil service had led them to permeate most communities.

Conflict between church and state began during the 1931-1939 period once the state perceived a requirement to extend the economic base of the country to include agriculture, and to placate workers agitation fostered by economic depression and natural disasters. The British Government's reluctance to invest heavily in education for the general populace, and the financial independence and cultural separatism of the Roman Catholic Church, allowed the churches to retain their hold on the system to a greater extent than in the rest of the British Caribbean. This had the effect of placing a check on the extent of British cultural influence as disseminated through the educative process. Reluctantly the British and colonial governments were compelled to maintain the church-state partnership and would have dissolved it as soon as was practicable. This was to prove an insurmountable task.

### **Thesis structure**

The organization of the study is designed to solve the conflict between providing a linear chronology of events and a thematic analysis. To adopt a purely chronological approach would have meant an immoderate repetition of subject examination, whilst a singularly thematic treatment would have created confusion by shifting the reader's focus back and forward over time. Therefore, Parts One-to-Three of this thesis provides the chronology whereas the chapters within deal with the issues thematically.

The actual periods utilised here are, as E. H. Carr postulates, 'not a fact, but a necessary hypothesis or tool of thought, valid in so far as it is illuminating'.<sup>22</sup> Initially, at the thesis proposal stage a lengthier time span of 1838 to 1981 was envisaged. Clearly, this was too

cumbersome and would have resulted in a superficial undertaking. However, it was felt that even with a narrowing of the period to 1931 - 1981 it was not possible to create the necessary understanding of issues seminal to the establishment of a modern education system without a substantial reference to the period 1838 - 1931, particularly the roles of state and church.

Therefore, the second part of this overall introduction is dedicated to these issues. Part 1 periodises as 1931 to 1949, with the opening date described as a catalytic point, whereby a devastating hurricane arrived during the global economic depression, and afforded an impetus to government action in all areas of reform including education. The period closes at a point where complacency in reform might have taken hold but for a serious economic crisis concerning devaluation. This apex designates the closing of one period and the opening of another and defines Part 2.

The devaluation crisis, similar to the hurricane as a catalyst, brought about the independence movement and a fresh impetus for social change with a shift in emphasis to a Belizean centred education. However, during this period the British government remained the major, if waning power in Belize rendering calls for change as largely grandiloquent. Thus, this discussion is concluded with the turning point of 1964 and the arrival of self-rule. The final part is concerned with new power structures and shifts in this balance from a British/Protestant alliance towards the Roman Catholic/PUP matrix. The closing date of any historical account is of course arbitrary, and the linear flow of the past continues beyond the bounds of this chronicle. However, 1981 was chosen because this was the year of independence, and little could be gained from evaluating the establishment of multi-cultural cohesion beyond that point, although, future research may focus on outcomes rather than formulation.

## **Education and the roots of multi-cultural cohesion, 1838-1931**

In 1931, British Honduras suffered a major hurricane that exacerbated an economy already experiencing the asperities of the Great Depression, providing a catalyst, which shook the working class out of a stuporous acceptance of a colonial fate into influencing government to adopt a more active response to social reform demands. In the words of a former Governor, Alan Burns,<sup>23</sup> 'People speak of "before the hurricane" and "after the hurricane" as widely different epochs'. Thus, in the process of researching the post 1931 period it clearly became necessary to establish a historiographical statement of origin for events leading up to that point, revealing issues seminal to the foundation of a modern education system. During the period in focus, the country was officially called British Honduras although many people styled themselves as Belizeans, thus the terms used throughout the remainder of this introduction will reflect these differences.<sup>24</sup>

The section will begin by providing an overview of the economic condition of British Honduras in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to illustrate the attitudes of local elites to the provision of expenditure on education. Given the British Government's confidence in the church and an equal desire to abdicate any potential financial responsibility, it then becomes necessary to determine the role of the church denominations in British Honduran education. The foundation of a schism in cultural attitudes between the American Jesuits and the British Protestants will be examined, to reveal the degree to which education was used to develop other agendas such as social control, anti-imperialism, Americanisation, religious dogma, and partisanship. This provides a useful introduction to the establishment of power relationships in British Honduras and their use in developing multi-cultural harmony. The cultural and geographical relationship between Belize Town (Belize City from 1943) and

the remainder of the country provides a connection between the role of the denominations and the subsequent debate on Creolisation.

### **The economic environment,**

British Honduras was a business venture, which the settlers were not going to sacrifice once a large and free population emerged between 1834 and 1838. The colony has been described as a plantation/ latifundia society sharing characteristics with other societies in the West Indies: namely, land monopoly, resulting in dispossessed, uneducated labourers becoming dependent upon the landowners for work, and large areas of productive land lying idle, waiting for labour to be spared from the main work production.<sup>25</sup> However, colonial societies are not 'autonomous social realities' but are subject to changes in demand from the metropolis.<sup>26</sup>

British Honduras, with a population in 1838 of fewer than 3,000, and rising to 51,000 by 1931, was from its earliest settlement in the seventeenth century a single product dominated society.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, with the development of synthetic dyes, coastal logwood extraction shifted to the more expensive and labour intensive mahogany cutting which both controlled the British Honduran economy from the 1770s to the 1950s and opened up the forest interior to new community development.

By the mid-nineteenth century, most of the land became concentrated in the hands of London-based companies such as the Belize Estate and Produce Company. This was due to the increased cost of going further inland for mahogany, and a fall in demand: prices fell from 5d per square foot in 1847 to 2d in 1868, and never made a consistent recovery before the situation worsened during the Great Depression of the 1930s.<sup>28</sup>

Meeting the metropolitan market's demands meant that agriculture was neglected and much fresh produce had to be imported, resulting in the chronic under use of land. As Green says,

succinctly: 'There was no agricultural tradition in Belize, no staple product of the soil, no peasantry. The land was held by a few settlers who controlled all the domestic trade or otherwise, and ran the political and administrative machinery of the settlement'.<sup>29</sup>

Whereas the British Honduran economy during the nineteenth century was similar to that of Caribbean sugar islands such as Jamaica, the effects of change in British demands were delayed in British Honduras due to the surge in the mahogany trade which saw a peak of 14 million feet in 1846. From then a slump in demand, brought on by a glut in British mahogany stocks, and a change in ship manufacture from wood to iron, created a situation of chronic unemployment still visible today.<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, mahogany remained the dominant product until the mid-twentieth century even though fluctuations in orders had a pervasive effect upon the completely white Colony.

The following reveals,

When London and Liverpool prices current [sic] showed an advance there were cheerful smiling faces in the counting houses and bustle and activity around the wharves; when prices fell there was a dullness everywhere; lounging woodcutters on the bridge instead of being away in the woods axe in hand.<sup>31</sup>

The mahogany trade was the principal determinant for labour in British Honduras. The 1846 surge in mahogany exports explains the master's desire to retain strict control over a work force they had always considered numerically inadequate, and why in British Honduras as in other areas of the Caribbean the masters were reluctant to allow for an educated work force; one that they feared would reject manual labour. Therefore, the British authorities refused to pay for education that might contract the labour supply. This allowed the churches to fill the gap and eventually developed the dual system of church and state education existing in British Honduras down to the present. The following section examines the establishment of church

involvement in British Honduras, illustrating both the beginnings of a distinction between Belize Town and the remainder of the country and the primacy of church over state.

### **The role of the denominations**

During the period of slavery, education was minimal in British Honduras. No educators were listed in a breakdown of occupations for 1768.<sup>32</sup> Most white settlers sent their children back to England for their schooling. The first evidence of a school in British Honduras dates from June 30 1807, and in 1816, 'a free school be opened with the Superintendent and magistrates as governors, that education to twelve children of poor people be given, and that a collection be made from the people'.<sup>33</sup> It was only with the emancipation of slaves throughout the British Empire that an education for the masses was given serious consideration by the Colonial authorities. Wallace Johnson in his *History of Christianity in Belize* states that the English government had been so impressed with church accomplishment that educating the freed slave was conveniently delegated to the church mission schools of the West Indies. Although any educating of the British Honduran work force brought disapproval, initially the forestocracy was pleased to be relieved of the burden.<sup>34</sup> During 1816, Pope Pius VII reinstated the Propaganda Fide, a department of the Roman Catholic Curia accountable for the church's missionary activity, as a response to the zealous Protestant missionary activity throughout the European empires. In 1818, the Society of Jesus was reconstituted. However, the Protestants made the first moves into British Honduras; the Anglicans tended to serve the white and coloured communities, while the Methodists concentrated on the 'lower orders', although Grant emphasises that this point should not be overstated, and that each 'satisfied a socialising role'. He describes them as an 'integrative' force by 'disseminating English values and making them more acceptable to the lower orders'.<sup>35</sup> Whilst modern values might judge this as forced acculturation, English education and church teachers were all that was available in nineteenth

century British Honduras.

Where Bolland suggests that schools were used by the authorities, 'to internalise the virtues of humble work, social order and decorum, and obedience to authority',<sup>36</sup> Johnson focuses upon Bolland's use of a quotation from Secretary of State Lord Glenelg which stresses the importance of education for, 'the best security of good order, and the right discharge of every social duty'. He criticises Bolland's use of this quotation to imply that education was used as a method of social control and racial oppression. Johnson appears to justify Glenelg because he was an abolitionist and an evangelical Christian and his father was a member of the Clapham Sect.<sup>37</sup> Either Johnson simply ignores or misses the point that as with many of the later white American abolitionists of the United States their charity did not extend far beyond emancipation, and not into suffrage or equality with whites. Sherry Keith highlights similar circumstances in post emancipation Jamaica where the Colonial authorities supported education for the former slaves, which she describes as, 'a means of teaching the freed slave population to submit to the conditions of wage labour'. Moreover, in parallel to the local British Honduran elites the Jamaican planters did not require an educated work force, rather a 'cheap, docile labour'.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, as in British Honduras, Jamaican education sprang from a combination of Colonial backing and denominational management.

On the evidence, it is difficult to challenge Johnson's assertion that Bolland is mistaken when he accuses the British of racist oppression in schools.<sup>39</sup> Johnson says that, 'the quality and objectives of education in Belize were the same as they were for the poor people in England. If they were inadequate or oppressive, it was not for racial reasons'.<sup>40</sup> However, whilst he does ascribe racial bias, Bolland is more properly concerned with the Colonial government. Bolland stands accused by Johnson of, 'applying modern educational standards to

schools in (British Honduras)'.<sup>41</sup> This may be true to a degree that Bolland assigns a little too much 'conspiracy' thus value judgement to the authorities, rather than accepting these as the prevailing elite attitudes of the time, Colonial or Metropolitan. Neither was race a salient issue. Nevertheless, regardless of emphasis the words of Lord Glenelg still stand as supportive of Bolland's point that education finds its origins in social control rather than social betterment, as does his quote from the Reverend John Sterling's Report regarding the emancipated Negroes:

Their performance of the functions of a labouring class in a civilised community will depend entirely on the power over their minds of the same prudential and moral motives that which governs more or less the mass of the people here. If they are not so disposed to fulfil these functions, property will perish in the colonies for lack of human impulsion--There has been--a great increase of the desire for knowledge--its certain result will be a consciousness of their own independent value as rational human beings without reference to the purposes for which they may be profitable to others.<sup>42</sup>

Additionally, for Johnson to offer that the poor in England were just as oppressed is to overlook the level of internal Colonialism and social control that existed in England throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From Johnson's critique, it would appear that expressions such as 'profitable to others' possess a meaning of 'community spirit'<sup>43</sup> whereas Bolland sees Sterling's remarks as supportive of the status quo.<sup>44</sup> The Protestant church, whilst chiefly concerned with its Christian mission supported the Colonial establishment in British Honduras, and with the maintenance of the existing social structure. Johnson admits to the failure of the church to 'admonish the rich as well as the poor' but appears to accept this as a mistake rather than intentional.<sup>45</sup> The early arrival of the Jesuits in 1851 had only a limited effect upon this purpose. Just as the Methodists had to find adherents among the lower orders, the upper and middle levels of an urban British Honduras being bound up with the Anglicans, the Catholics began to take their particular message to not only the lower orders in Belize Town, but out into the rural areas, which eventually made them

more ethnically diverse than the Protestants.<sup>46</sup>

One of the principal debates on the nineteenth century origin of denominational education in British Honduras centres not on the differences between Catholic and Protestant aims but rather on the degree of Americanisation brought in through the Jesuit movement, and it is the partial intention here to examine its effects upon multi-culturalism. Charles T. Hunter a modern Belizean scholar and leading Jesuit talks of a 'mono cultural myopia' existing during the early stages of the Jesuit mission.<sup>47</sup> Hunter's article is worthy of discussion by itself for he tends to say one thing and then to unwittingly offer contrary evidence in dispute of his own claims. Throughout his article, which covers the history of the Jesuit mission in Belize until 1991, Hunter discusses the transition from a narrow American/religious anti-Colonial perspective to what he currently describes as a 'multi-cultural vision'. However, in doing so he provides evidence that this was a long slow process and one that has only reached fruition since independence in 1981. Unintentionally Hunter reveals that Jesuits were de-facto pro-American and both anti-British and anti-Colonial, although there was no clear indication of this opposition being directed against the activities of the Protestant church.

Certainly, the early Jesuits possessed the inherent bias towards racial stereotyping of the Anglicans. Hunter cites one Father William Stanton's remarks after first glimpsing his multiracial class: 'chalk-eyed grinning Negroes', 'pure' whites, 'untameable Mayan Indians', the 'refined features of two Black Hispanics'.<sup>48</sup> Are the latter 'refined' because they have European features? All seem to fit neatly into preconceived racial images rather than for any racist motive. Hunter admits that nineteenth century inculturation was synonymous with Christianity. 'Inculturation is not one thing and conversion another; they are one'.<sup>49</sup> Rutheiser notes the consistency of 'mission' throughout the Jesuit involvement in Belizean education.<sup>50</sup>

Evidently education for the Catholics was less a matter of subservience to the economic life of the community, but in common with the Protestants, education was not seen as a method of individual improvement except as part of a, spiritual betterment. Both saw education as subservient to their own ends. In 1935 JC Dixon, Georgia State Supervisor of Negro Education wrote a report on the history of expatriate control in British Honduras stating: 'a tragic policy, the importation of teachers has resulted less from a desire to educate the children of British Honduras than from a desire to promote interests other than those of the children'.<sup>51</sup> Thus there existed the similar battle for hearts and minds that existed in England as well as the Caribbean islands: 'Many groups wished to seize the school for their own purposes--In Jamaica this often constitutes well-known ministers with a desire for arbitrary power'.<sup>52</sup> However, in British Honduras the battle was different because it went beyond the confines of denomination within a British system and involved the external and independent influences of an American based Jesuit movement.

Yet how much of Jesuit Catholicism was American culture. Rutheiser lends great emphasis to the extent and depth of US influence on the British Honduran psyche but overlooks the amount of Anglophilia contained within Creole culture.<sup>53</sup> J. A. Bennett accepts Rutheiser's overall argument but challenges the degree of emphasis. He claims that during this period, the Jesuits had to adapt to British Colonial education patterns and that Rutheiser gives no attention to primary schools, beyond which most British Hondurans did not attend.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, for the first eight or nine years, British Hondurans taught them,<sup>55</sup> and most rural teachers were Garifuna.<sup>56</sup> However, when Catholic, the teachers were under the direct control of a Jesuit priest (or later of Nuns) in schools that had no lay involvement in their governance.

Bennett's institutionally focussed critique does not take account of the permeating

influence of the Jesuits' American origins. Hunter reveals Father William Kane, before the First World War, 'foolishly trying to replace English cricket by American baseball'. Hunter does not make clear whether he thinks Kane was foolish to replace cricket at all or just that his timing was wrong.<sup>57</sup> While schools such as the Wesley High School for Boys (1882) promoted 'loyalty to the British Empire', others such as St. Catherine's Academy for Girls, founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1883, began to teach American History.<sup>58</sup> The intent to Americanise existed between Jesuits and provided an unintended balance against British Colonialism.

Further to this, many of the Jesuits in British Honduras were Americans of Irish or German extraction thus historically antagonistic to the British. Governor Burns (a Roman Catholic) was later to call the Catholic Bishop, Murphy, 'A true Fenian at heart'.<sup>59</sup> The first Pallotine sisters arrived on 19 March 1913 sent by a foundation in the United States; all of them were native German. Between 1917 and 1931, with the Jesuit headquarters now at its Loyola Park site, all the staff of St. John's College were American Jesuits.

Certainly, a clearly defined dichotomy of denominational interest emerged in the years preceding the 1931 hurricane; not simply between Catholic and Protestant but between one based on American anti-imperialist feeling and another British and placed firmly within the Colonial establishment. According to Grant, the former was aware that their wealth and numerical superiority were greater than their influence, whilst the Protestants were equally aware of their political ascendancy through their Colonial attachments.<sup>60</sup> Although the denominations were keen to gain adherents in the rural areas and small towns of British Honduras, both saw the necessity of developing, in the case of the Catholics, or maintaining, for the Protestants, an ascendancy within Belize Town as a power base for their activities. The

following section will examine the nature of the growth of Belize Town's domination in education.

### **The ascendancy of Belize Town**

The sources of urban hegemony in Belizean education owed as much to simple geography as to Colonial patronage. British Honduras had grown steadily as a logging settlement centred on what became Belize Town. The various rural communities sprang from the logging camps and smaller agricultural ventures, with population in-filling provided by migration from neighbouring Latin America and the Caribbean. Most up country, travel was achieved by rough trail or chiefly by river. During dry spells, the river journey from British Honduras to Cayo could take from two to seven days. It can be seen how slow this was since the building of the Western Highway in the 1930s had made feasible a pedal cycle journey of two hours. Occasionally similar difficulties were experienced within individual villages. Rochford describes the mid-nineteenth century period as a time of 'rugged individualism in the church'. The priest traversed around his parish on foot: '[He] raised money, drew plans, supervised work, managed the churches and schools, and met pastoral needs'.<sup>61</sup> Cleopatra White tells of the children of Gales Point Village being unable to get to their own school because of the water.<sup>62</sup> School and community life in general were insular, with only irregular contact with Belize Town for the priest, and even less for the parishioners and pupils. Little changed throughout this period. James Gregory relates the transformation of the predominant Mopan Indian village of San Antonio in the South and its education system, simply by opening a twenty-one-mile road to the district capital of Punta Gorda. Suggesting that the economic opportunities brought, 'A significant rise in the value placed on formal education'.<sup>63</sup> Previously therefore, small rural communities were neither inspired nor able to provide education beyond primary level, and it was left to Belize Town to provide a secondary education for British

Hondurans.

Belize Town maintained its hegemony in education for reasons other than spatial. Primary education diversified ethnically throughout the country but secondary schooling concentrated on the Town. Bolland points out that religious requirements dictated the choice in education.<sup>64</sup> But religion was usually ethnically rooted in the nineteenth century, therefore Belize Town being 76 per cent Creole, was largely Protestant.<sup>65</sup> Given that the Protestant churches supported the Colonial authority, this combined to further strengthen Belize Town's primacy.

Johnson describes the Protestants as 'well ensconced' by the mid-nineteenth century with the intention of, 'teaching all the children in the settlement to read their bible'. He stresses that Protestantism was a 'book religion' and therefore suited to schooling. The Baptists and Methodists had established Sunday Schools by the late 1820s as well as a free school for the poor.<sup>66</sup> The Methodists had gone out into the poorer rural communities such as Stann Creek quite early in the century but attendance remained at low levels.

Further to this education was evidently used for moral improvement in Belize Town. Johnson quotes an early Methodist, James Bourne, describing a purpose of the Sunday school, 'For rescuing the lower order of females from that wretched state of ignorance and vice so degrading to their sex.' Johnson regards this as an important school as prostitution was 'rife'.<sup>67</sup> Belize Town was seen as the major target for social development, adding to its claim to priority in education. Whilst Johnson records his facts accurately, he understands the process of education in British Honduras as developmental and improving, unlike Bolland, who focuses on a philosophy of Colonialism in education which allows for Belize Town to retain its supremacy over the districts in a hierarchical system. Belize Town was the seat of

government and British Colonial rule. Grant emphasises that social and occupational mobility in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was guided by 'reliability to the existing social and political system.' In a British Colony, this meant the British and British section of the coloured community.<sup>68</sup> Protestant, particularly Anglican, education was Colonial, it taught its adherents how to be good British subjects by providing knowledge of Britain and Europe, not about British Honduras, the Caribbean, the Americas, or Africa.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, Belize Town as the local equivalent of the metropolis became the centre of the educational system.

Even the advent of Roman Catholic education did not challenge Belize Town's hegemony; instead, it was strengthened. Such schools as St. John's College for Boys and St. Catherine's Academy for Girls developed a potent regional reputation and both were well funded through the Jesuits in America. At the end of the First World War St. John's had developed a pupil mix of Hispanic boarders and Anglo-Creole day scholars. By 1930, St. John's College was being described by Anderson as the 'School o' the Spanish Main'.<sup>70</sup> However, much of the attraction was due to the Colony being a British enclave, free from the anti clericalism prevalent in Latin America. As this waned St. John has had to rely almost entirely upon British Honduran students.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, the school remained the leading secondary establishment in the country.

Control of British Honduran education rested in the capital. Firstly because Colonial authority also emanated from the capital; secondly a Creole population meant a Protestant-based education, which in turn was associated with a Colonial agenda; thirdly because of a determined Catholic effort to make Belize Town a regional centre for education, underwritten from the United States. Lastly and equally as important, the spatial difficulties of passage through the rural terrain encouraged the development of isolated community pockets

dependent on denominational primary schooling. There was a clear link between the hegemony of Belize Town and the Creolisation process. The spread of Creole culture throughout British Honduras further strengthened the primacy of the capital just as that same primacy gave weight and lustre to the superiority of Creole culture. The following section examines the contextual aspects of Belizeanisation related to the argument that the development of a harmonious intermingling of the ethnic parties in British Honduras was in progress long before nationalists developed the idea.

### **Creolisation into Belizeanisation**

Belizeanisation was a process which came to the fore from self-rule in 1964, in an attempt to blend all ethnic groups into a single identity and decolonise the education system through a Belize centred history and social studies programme. It is argued that a system of Creolisation had already existed since the nineteenth century that had made a substantial headway in creating a single Belizean identity.

During this period under discussion, each region of British Honduras had developed its own ethnic groups, relatively excluded from interaction. Only the Colonial government through the district commissioners and the police and a few foreign owned 'extractive' companies bridged the spatial gap.<sup>72</sup> Although, evidence suggests that the various denomination missions, particularly the Jesuits and Methodists provided some community interaction. Brockmann claims that due to its association with British Colonialism the Creole community had come to regard itself as the true Belizeans and all others as intruders.<sup>73</sup> This association, coupled with the Creoles being a majority, assisted the spread of Creole, or African-Caribbean culture among other ethnic categories, especially those established closer to Creole communities. English being the official language of all schools, to which all Creoles

had access, further aided this.<sup>74</sup> Creoles also attained high status because English was the 'linguistic code' of government activity, in legal matters, government business, and workplace meetings.<sup>75</sup>

Although British Honduras was predominantly an Anglo-Creole culture, unlike communities in the British Caribbean such as Jamaica and the other sugar islands it had uniquely a highly visible Amerindian community. But, he argues, the very fact of the existence of the common preference for labelling groups in the Colony with terms such as 'Creole' and 'Mestizo' suggests that processes have been at work for some time toward breaking down and absorbing ethnic groups.<sup>76</sup> Robinson strongly disagrees with Bolland's claim that, 'the various racial/ethnic groups (of Belize) do not subscribe to a common culture, ideology, or value system'.<sup>77</sup> He adds that modern nationalist movements and the Belizeanisation process have given the 'stamp of approval to already prevalent forces', and the Creole/Mestizo matrix has long since absorbed the Europeans and Asians.<sup>78</sup> He then goes on to examine five different ethnic groups he claims have been Creolised, French, German, East Indian, Lebanese, and Chinese, apart from a few of their cultural aspects of dialect and food.<sup>79</sup>

Gregory reveals that primary education was well established by the time the Mopan Maya migrated from Guatemala and established the village of San Antonio in 1889.<sup>80</sup> They entered a system that had been Creolised already by the Methodist missionaries of Belize Town. Here the Garifuna had, 'long been influential in the education system, providing the bulk of British Honduran rural teachers. A group long concerned to win social acceptance from the Creole elite'.<sup>81</sup> However, for the Mopan community, although schooling was nominally compulsory, as with most rural economies where child labour was essential to the economy, truancy was high, attendance erratic, and formal study beyond the primary level held little value.<sup>82</sup>

Attitudes towards education changed dramatically with the coming of greater accessibility to the outside world through the building of a road in 1940.

Humphreys' article clearly shows that the Colonial government did attempt to create friction between ethnic groups in British Honduras.<sup>83</sup> It is interesting to note that where we would expect to find the most friction that is amongst groups with the greatest degree of diversity such as the Maya/Hispanic and Creole, allegiance to the American Catholic and British Protestant churches rendered them more difficult to divide than in similar denominational splits in other parts of the British Caribbean, where they, 'shared the concerns of the Colonial authorities'.<sup>84</sup>

The authorities found some success with two Protestant groups more closely related. The Black Caribs or Garifuna and the Creoles were both of the West African origin, and indistinguishable in a phenotype, the former with Carib Indian ancestors and the latter European.<sup>85</sup> Humphreys shows that the Garifuna had been distrusted by the forestocracy due to their rebellious and defiant past in St. Vincent and were afraid this might influence the Creoles.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, the authorities condemned Garifuna culture inciting the Creole labouring class to do the same. Methodist missionaries criticised indigenous rituals as 'devil-dancing'.<sup>87</sup> By the time the Roman Catholic mission had spread to the Garifuna, the Catholic monthly The Angelus was referring to them as 'savage' and 'pagan', calling for the Garifuna to be punished for performing the ritual dance of 'dugu'.<sup>88</sup>

The Garifuna desire for assimilation encouraged their attachment to Creole culture.

Humphreys suggests,

The local politics and economics of the Colony were made and manipulated in the capital and the capital was Creole and elitist. The values and attitudes of the Creole

aristocratic families with whom the Colonial government shared power were forces that dictated the Colony's economic progress [adding] that the Creoles adopted a slavish mentality in imitating British culture.<sup>89</sup>

Similarly, the Garifuna also developed a slavish mentality, but towards Creole culture in a bid for vicarious assimilation. Margaret Sandford cites many instances of acculturation processes involved in assimilating the Garifuna into Creole practices. The Methodist and Catholic missionaries instigated most of these.<sup>90</sup> Her evidence is such that she can state that:

I believe it can be said with little room for argument that the Carib in British Honduras have adopted British West Indian Creole culture, as it exists there and that their pattern of acculturation is complete if one speaks of common value and common cultural institutions.<sup>91</sup>

This process of Creolisation was not limited to the Garifuna community but as revealed above expanded throughout the Mestizo/Maya complex.

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the imperial power developed an increasing interest in Colonial affairs. This provoked a 'formalisation of the educational system', and an introduction of English methods such as financial controls through 'payment by results' and the certification of teachers to a common standard.<sup>92</sup> The Education Ordinance of 1892 established the church-state partnership in a Board of Education that became dominated by the denominations due to unwillingness on the part of the authorities to raise the necessary expenditure.<sup>93</sup> Although the Colonial authorities were unable to influence the religious proclivities of the community, this new formalised education emanated from a Creole dominated capital, and assisted the spread of Creole culture, particularly dialect, throughout the country. This was further intensified by, 'High-Brown' Creoles attending the prestigious St. John's College in Belize Town and the conversion of many Creoles to Catholicism.<sup>94</sup>

Rutheiser suggests that Creolisation was a two-way process, producing a new 'synthetic

culture'.<sup>95</sup> Many aspects of culture proved impossible to resist, and the work of linguists Parham and Hagerty has dealt with the presence of African folklore in British Honduras and its crossover into Hispanic culture, something that was not usually the case in other areas of the American continent where Black culture had flourished.<sup>96</sup> Although the article focuses chiefly on the Anansi 'trickster' tales the writers suggest that their findings reveal the uniqueness of Belizean culture, 'its multi-cultural nature, and the frequency and ease with which often sacrosanct linguistic, social, and racial barriers have been broken'.<sup>97</sup> The actual tales are written in Spanish, revealing not only that Hispanics had absorbed West African Ashanti culture through the Creolisation process but also that this was a two-way activity providing a Spanish language return. Although the Catholic Mestizo/Maya complex became heavily influenced by native Creole culture, it did not swerve from its American orientation that included its use of American texts and progression of students to American universities. The lack of formal British qualifications barred many, otherwise influential and wealthy Catholics, from entering the Civil Service or the Judiciary. This laid the foundation for a group rapidly becoming assimilated into Creole culture but negatively disposed to direct British influence.

This evidence supports Robinson's view that Belizeanisation was not some new phenomenon but a new cloak for an older process of Creolisation with an accommodation for a Hispanic/Mayan culture already heavily Creolised,<sup>98</sup> and also lends support to the argument that Creolisation aided a process of gradual American influence, via the Jesuits, that was neutralising Colonial power within education and the broader Belizean society.

### **Conclusion**

This part of the introduction has established the historical antecedents of various issues influential in the years after 1931. It reveals the antipathy of the merchants and landlords in

British Honduras towards education, and of their counterparts, the plantocracy, throughout the British Caribbean. Nevertheless, education developed due to the impetus of the British Government and various churches, although with different means and for different ends. The former envisaged a process of imparting a secular doctrine for social control, Anglicising, and as a means of converting the former slaves to wage labour. The churches were concerned with conveying religious doctrine. Most people responded positively to church activity rather than Colonial influence in education.

The formation of denominational education was assessed, revealing the potential for the Roman Catholic hierarchy to retain a greater degree of independence from the Colonial authority than might be found in other British Caribbean Colonies, including former French possessions annexed by the British such as St. Lucia, where French Catholic schools were coerced into the Anglicising process.<sup>99</sup> Perhaps the Colonial Office in London did not, initially, believe that an Anglo-Saxon orientated culture such as that of the United States was a sufficient threat to British cultural hegemony?

An examination of the ascendancy of Belize Town showed how denominational rivalries were formed and how the difficult terrain of rural British Honduras encouraged the missionary efforts of the Catholic and Methodist churches. This hegemony in education provides some evidence for the spread of Creole culture throughout the Colony, by the early twentieth century; thus linking with the final section, which revealed that the later nationalist efforts of Belizeanisation were facilitated by Creolisation, disseminated largely through church activity in education.

British Honduras changed little regarding its social services until 1931 when a devastating

hurricane destroyed nine-tenths of the building stock of Belize Town. Through the depression and the resultant attitudes of the Colonial authorities towards British Honduras' internal finances a labour movement was born which prompted a more favourable attitude towards welfare provision, central to which was the development of a modern education system.

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**PART ONE**  
**The Beginnings of a Modern Education System, 1931 - 1949**

**INTRODUCTION**

Part One of this thesis will deal with issues of Roman Catholic and Protestant rivalry as well as the State-Church dichotomy, both previously surveyed by sociologists but with few conclusions drawn regarding education as a constituent in multi-cultural cohesion. It is suggested overall that in British Honduras<sup>1</sup> the conflict between the wealthy but politically weak Irish American Jesuits and the politically powerful but largely penurious British Protestants, reduced the effect of the Colonial government's capacity to segregate groups along racial or religious lines. This power balance reduced the efficacy of either denomination to control, and forced a condition of cooperation, whereby political influence has never polarised around ethnicity, class or religion.

The purpose here is to take the issues, revealed in the 'Overall Introduction' for the period 1838-1931, and utilise them to ferment an understanding of developments in education during the years' 1931-1949. This time span has been selected largely for its political and economic activity. British Honduras changed little regarding its social services until 1931 when a devastating hurricane destroyed nine-tenths of the building stock of Belize City. Out of and linked with the depression and the resultant attitudes of the Colonial authorities towards the colony's internal finances a labour movement was born which prompted a more favourable attitude towards welfare provision. The 1940s saw many of the reforms of the 30s come to fruition, but the political momentum for change had begun to wane. The year 1949 provided a convenient opening to a new era of development in education with the devaluation crisis presenting a fresh impetus for political and social change.

### **The focus on education:**

Education was a major part of social reform during the 1930s, but such reform was merely a sop to placate the workers. Reports such as those led by B.H.Easter and J.C.Dixon are dealt with in detail below. They point to education as a force for economic improvement - 'educating for manpower', a shift in attitudes that was prevalent throughout the British Caribbean, as a means of harnessing the labour force to the government's view of economic needs rather than those of local elites such as the planters or foresters. However the church was concerned with 'educating for manhood' albeit a Christian manhood. Eventually, 'educate for manhood or manpower', became a representative cry of the secular factions within education during the 1950s but during the 1930s this split was represented by the church and state.

The mid to late 1930s coincided with the arrival in British Honduras of the 'energetic' Governor, Alan Burns, whom a Colonial Office official described as 'tackling his problems with great energy and humanity'. Burns tenure of office coincided with the advent of the equally energetic labour leader, Antonio Soberanis. The significance of this for education was that their now existed powerful 'push-pull' variables for some genuine reform of the system through Soberanis' agitation of the general populace and Burns' skill as an experienced and deft civil servant, with a good understanding of what was required to maintain public order in the Colony. Yet, reform was not to be simply a matter of pacifying ordinary people or placating labour leaders, Burns would have to deal with the church, and as has already been observed, any threat to their hegemony would bring conflict. Consequently much of this period is concerned with a jostling for position between Church and State.

The crucial element here is the increase of Colonial and Whitehall activity within the education system, and the resultant conflict between state and church. However, it is necessary initially to reveal the causes of both local enmity towards Britain and the government's felt need to be more fully drawn into social reforms.

The opening Chapter is concerned with the hurricane and its social ramifications, pointing to the growth of a movement for social change, and how this grew from a combination of circumstances and events. As with the whole of the West Indies, British Honduras was in the throes of a serious, and well-documented, universal economic depression, into which were thrown the catastrophes of fire and hurricane. Collectively these highlighted the inability of the Whitehall bureaucracy to act with a necessary speed and compassion, thus hampering any willingness on the part of Colonial government to act efficiently. Even under these circumstances it will be shown that the authorities (Colonial or Whitehall) were reluctant to provide any more reforms than were considered necessary to dampen the effects of social unrest. Therefore the structure of this Chapter will reflect these events beginning with an outline of the hurricane of 1931, followed by an analysis of how this catastrophe exacerbated the British Honduran economy in the Great Depression, including class structure and conflict. Finally the nature of both the British and Colonial Government's response to this situation will be examined to see if this was, philanthropy or caution, a genuine desire for reform, or a simple concern for public order.

Chapter Two - Education, Consolidation and Conflict - reveals that by the early 1930s the British Government had to respond to a new political maturity among British Hondurans, the

latter having become aware of their relative backwardness. Using the education system to provide a primary focus on the evidence for social reform, reveals that, although the government was prepared to make a show of recognising and defining the need for reforms their efforts were not supported by cash, and thus were easily frustrated by the long established church institution. Nevertheless, some reluctance to do more than was necessary to maintain good public order is evident in the government's activities. This conflict between desire and pragmatism began to produce a manifest conflict between church and state, though one that resulted in guarded neutrality and mutual dependency, rather than open warfare, with each party attempting to appear cooperative. It is within this Chapter that elements of the later church/state conflict take shape. However, as the early 1930s was a period containing more rhetoric and planning than action, a replete analysis of this phenomenon is retained for the succeeding Chapter.

Chapter Three - State and Church: Reform and Resistance - shows, the official documents as betraying a certain amount of conflict between church and state over these reforms, and just how the church was able to render many of them ineffectual. Comparative analysis will show that this was not the case in other British territories such as Jamaica where all denominations were culturally British based and more readily controlled by the Colonial government. A Caribbean wide report known as the 'Moyne Report' brought changes to the education system in the Colonial Caribbean, particularly in the furtherance of state control. However, Rutheiser considered that British Honduras developed differently: 'The marginality of Belize within the imperial scheme along with the considerable power of the denominations prevented execution of these and other recommendations'.

The final chapter of this part of the theses - Cohesion in the Communities - examines the way British Honduran society was beginning to synthesise from isolated groups into a whole nation with a single identity without subsuming regional identities. Whilst retaining an essential focus on education, the discussion will broaden into other areas that provide an insight into this synthesis, such as economic development, social and occupational distance, cultural assimilation, access to modernity, linguistics, and political affiliations.

**INSERT *JOHN BULL'S FINEST HOUR* HERE**

**PART ONE**  
**The Beginnings of a Modern Education System, 1931 - 1949**

**CHAPTER ONE**

**THE HURRICANE AND ITS SOCIAL RAMIFICATIONS:**

The catalyst that shook the British Honduran working class out of its apathy arrived in the shape of a devastating hurricane on September 10th, 1931. However, the intensity of the disaster was increased by the state of British Honduran society up to this point. Research suggests that the Colonial authorities were ill-prepared. A strong belief was held at all levels of society that British Honduras was adequately protected from hurricanes by the barrier reef and Cayes and that they would break up before reaching the mainland.<sup>1</sup> However it is not clear how far the authorities conveniently supported this popular belief simply to deny the necessary expenditure, but this attitude encouraged inadequate insurance, poor quality buildings, poor land drainage, no metalled roads, and the capital city surrounded by an insect and crab infested swamp.

Perhaps symbolically, the hurricane devastated this centre of Colonialism in Belize City on the day its leading dignitaries were celebrating their annual homage to the white Colonial elite, who on 10 September 1798, with their slaves in tow had formed a small force of 300 and defeated a Spanish flotilla of 31 vessels carrying 2,000 troops and 30 seamen. The event became known as the Battle of St. George's Caye, and has been celebrated annually and with great pomp and circumstance down to the present day. Even though British Honduras was dominated by religious denominations, it appears doubtful that the British attached any portent of Colonial doom to this event. But as Governor Burdon expressed, 'at a quarter to three the fury of the hurricane was upon us. Disaster in close wake of joyful celebrations. Glory and tragedy'.<sup>2</sup>

### **An economic overview of British Honduran society in 1931**

In an effort to comprehend the long term effects of the 1931 hurricane on British Honduras the words of a former Governor provide an appropriate starting point, 'People speak of "before the hurricane" and "after the hurricane" as of widely differing epochs.<sup>3</sup> To understand how this small, under populated, Colonial back-water extricated itself from a stuporous acceptance of a Colonial fate to influence government into adopting an active response to social service demands we must first consider the hurricane as a catalyst, arriving at a point when its effects could be borne the least.

Reports had been coming in from Washington, prior to the celebrations, of a hurricane approaching the coast but these were largely discredited due to the Colony not having suffered a serious hurricane within living memory. This apathy was reflected in the quality of the building stock. [Belize City was a house of cards waiting to collapse.] Burdon described their parlous state:

Houses of wood, raised on flimsy piles not sunk deep enough for safety. Roofs often projecting over wide verandahs, with no safeguard against the wind getting under them. Corrugated iron roof plates only lightly nailed to rafters, floor beams most insecurely fastened to supporting piles.<sup>4</sup>

The day after the hurricane struck:

Not an undamaged house to be seen. Every roof gone and nearly every house either collapsed, or lying on its side or tilted drunkenly on one corner. A horizon of one-story houses converted to a horizon of mangroves that had lain half-a-mile behind them.<sup>5</sup>

Even the rural areas nearer the coasts were not spared, floods added to the suffering and plantations were destroyed throughout a twenty-five-mile radius. Throughout Belize City broken houses and bodies could be seen floating through the streets.

Eyewitness accounts and contemporary reports form the most effective method of conveying the devastation. Alice Sempill (aged 13) recounted the scene that confronted her on the 'Tenth' after returning from a traditional bonfire:

When we were walking to Biddle's we had to be careful of the fish on the road. All the big barges and boats of different kinds and sizes were in all parts of the town. There was hardly a house in tact--A bit of our roof had gone and the telephone. The shutters were broken and also the glass but that was practically all. The ground was covered with mud and the smell was terrible. <sup>6</sup>

Disaster struck many of the schools in Belize City including the city's largest secondary school, St. John's College,

This was the most impressive and spectacular work of the storm. I looked for it through glasses from the harbour a few days later. It was flat, as flat as a heap of boards could be, with some thirty bodies buried beneath. All that marked its site was a pair of rainwater tanks. <sup>7</sup>

*The Belize Independent* reported the difficulties involved in effecting rescue operations during the lull,

During the lull Mr Burns one of the scholastics at St. John's College shouted to me, "--the college fell on the boys help help". When we reached the Vaults someone in the crowd said, "A tidal wave is coming let's go bail" The water was now high and those who reached Kemp's house succeeded only by the help of the waves. Others were carried in other directions'-- A 12-year old George Price saw St. John's collapse just after he left and then witnessed Wesley Church succumb. He swam up Albert Street. <sup>8</sup>

However, the spirit of those involved is revealed in the following passage concerning the destruction of St. Catherine's Academy and the Convent of Mercy. 'The work of the Great God must be resumed. We hope that soon a host of generous friends will come forward to help the Sisters of Mercy, to rebuild a new and greater St. Catherine's for Belize.' <sup>9</sup> This piece is important in that it signifies the inextricable link between, 'the work of the Great God' and schooling; a major part of the discussion on state and church in Chapter Three.

Most of Belize City was destroyed; out of a population of 15,000, 1,000 perished and several thousand became homeless. Some estimates have put the death toll as high as 2,000, although this may have involved double counting caused by families reporting missing relatives and the official counting of unidentifiable corpses.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, historians are in general agreement over the activities of the 20s and 30s in British Honduras and their ramifications. Grant adds that British Hondurans had not experienced a hurricane, 'within living memory,' and were 'ill-prepared.'<sup>11</sup> British Honduras was not only ill-prepared logistically but was financially incapable of sustaining such a catastrophe. Mahogany and chicle production dominated the economy during the 1920s, but with the collapse of United States finances in 1929 this ended, and the resulting 'Great Depression'. Labour contracts for foresting halved, from 1,103 to 629 between 1927 and 1931, producing massive unemployment in the woodcutting and chicle industries. Yet by June relief work had been found for a mere 150 workers.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile the campaign to repeal the Volstead Act (Prohibition) seriously affected tax revenues from the entrepot trade in whisky bound for the USA. As government income was almost all from customs and excise the authorities were forced to operate at subsistence level with, 'little available for social programming'.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, any disaster would render the government of British Honduras bankrupt.

The Colony during the late 1920s and early 30s was essentially a single-product dominated society. Mahogany exports had fallen drastically, \$2,637,633 in 1928 to \$297,972 by 1931.

However other products were exported and by 1932 these were:

Agriculture; bananas, plantains, citrus fruits, coconuts, copra and corn, vegetables, pulse and grain.

Live Stock; swine, cattle and poultry.

Timber; mahogany, cedar, logwood, rosewood, pine, other secondary woods, and chicle.

Marine; sponge, lobsters, turtle, and numerous varieties of fish .<sup>14</sup>

By 1932 the cutting of mahogany had ceased entirely due to large stocks held in the United States and unfavourable exchange rates in Britain: 'The trade of the colony, as in the previous year, was at a very low ebb throughout 1932. Contracts for the purchase of mahogany and chicle, practically ceased altogether, thereby throwing a larger number of the woodcutters and chicle gatherers out of work'.<sup>15</sup> Whilst there had been some marked improvements in agricultural production, this was minuscule compared to the effects of the forestry crisis. Overall the total trade for British Honduras in 1933 had fallen from \$9,446,293 in 1930 to \$2,729,200 by 1933.<sup>16</sup> Clearly the Colony was in the midst of a serious financial crisis.

Amos Ford recounted his days of unemployment in Belize City and provided an insight into the daily life of individual labourers:

We used to tramp the Belize City streets looking for work at the saw mill by the riverside, at the wharves where coconut and other merchandising were being unloaded from barges, at the boat repair yards, at the Public Works Department at Gaol Lane and indeed wherever we thought it likely that workers might be hired. But it was usually of little avail. -- Even if we had got a job, it would only have been for the day. Labour was paid for by the hour and at ten cents an hour. The job might last for half a day only.<sup>17</sup>

Conditions were poor, state relief was slow and dissension was dealt with swiftly. Ford continues:

The poor in Belize City, in particular, had no hopes. There were no state institutions to which they could have recourse for relief, and political activity or demonstrations were not tolerated by the state. The police moved in quickly to suppress any signs of disaffection or discontent by the masses.<sup>18</sup>

Major Orde-Browne headed an official British Government report on conditions in the West Indies, as late as 1938 that confirms the ongoing existence of these conditions. Either in an

attempt to define the workers' agitation or to suggest improvements, Orde-Browne claimed that there was, 'Much agitation for pay increases', but this was, 'not the real problem-- Intermittent employment rather than rate of pay is the real trouble'.<sup>19</sup>

A further cause of resentment was the Belize Estate and Produce Company's (BEC) insistence upon \$210,000 for a new sawmill. Unless this was forthcoming, they threatened withdrawal from logging operations in the Colony.<sup>20</sup> It was only when the British Government realised that favourable exchange margins meant that it could provide the BEC without affecting the original value of the loan that the Loan Act went through, subject to the necessary changes to the British Honduran constitution.

#### **Labour agitation**

Nothing could alleviate the post hurricane discontent felt in an economically depressed British Honduras. The Colonial authorities organised a soup kitchen with weekly rations, as well as the emergency construction of single room barracks. But the food was badly cooked and the rent, at 75 cents per week was equal to a day and a half's pay for those lucky enough to have a job. At first many organised into the Unemployed Brigade but this group was not thought militant enough for one Antonio Soberanis Gomez (1897-1975), labelled by one historian as a 'Belizean patriot'.<sup>21</sup>

According to broad historiography Soberanis, or 'Tony' as friend and foe alike knew him, became the leading light in the labour movement of the 1930s and to a lesser degree of the 1940s.<sup>22</sup> People were still living in poverty, housing was deplorable and government relief measures were totally inadequate. *The Clarion*, usually a government supporter, called the

situation 'degrading and humiliating'.<sup>23</sup> Soberanis denounced the Unemployed Brigade for its lack of militancy, and its leaders as 'cowards',<sup>24</sup> and made himself popular with the labouring masses for his direct attacks upon the government, the merchants, and particularly the BEC, to such an extent that his followers began to term him as the 'Moses of British Honduras'.<sup>25</sup>

However this brought out the vitriol of *The clarion*, which was dismayed at, Soberanis attacks upon government officials.<sup>26</sup>

The authorities derided the demand for \$1:50 cents per day, with the Governor claiming that 50-70 cents were sufficient.<sup>27</sup> But Soberanis ridiculed this, comparing it to the salaries of rich officials. On Governor Alan Burns's arrival in the Colony he was 'shocked', and attempted to combat conditions, although Hamill suggests that this response was more illusory than real.<sup>28</sup>

Official opinion has attempted to minimise the extent of unrest in British Honduras. Burns, is both disparaging and patronising regarding the various speakers of the labour movement,

Not only were the agitators irresponsible, but they were also very ignorant and stupid. -- Their nightly vapourings on the 'Battlefield' contained very little except abuse. They used long words and catch-phrases of which they seldom understood the meaning, and reports of some of their speeches used to give me much amusement.<sup>29</sup>

Doubtless the speakers were uneducated and not as gifted in the use of language as might be expected of a senior civil servant such as Burns. Nevertheless, the innate intelligence of men such as Antonio Soberanis is evident in his accurate perception of events. At one meeting as late as 1938 Soberanis revealed his awareness of the imbalance in wages between native born and white workers:

I cannot say that Governor Burns is a liar but he is not telling the truth -- a white man was taken on at \$2.00 a day just to examine tools after the blacksmith had finished sharpening them, just to see if they were sharp. Now Governor Burns is getting about \$30.00 a day and he is paying his servants \$1.25 a week, how do you expect that he is going to raise

your pay - he will have to go.<sup>30</sup>

Soberanis, and the Labour and Unemployed Association (LUA) operated under the guise of a 'friendly society' due to the illegality of Trade Unions and political associations under the Masters and Servants Act of 1846.<sup>31</sup> This act also rendered breach of employment contracts an offence under the criminal code, punishable by 28 days imprisonment. Although Soberanis espoused such slogans as, 'British Honduras for British Hondurans', the movement he led was chiefly concerned with particular issues, such as the minimum wage and obtaining grants from England; which he stated were only what had been taken from Belize for so long.<sup>32</sup>

Burns attempted to dismiss the success of Soberanis amongst the labouring classes. During 1935 he claimed that the people of Belize City no longer responded to Soberanis's appeals, but that the people of Corozal and the surrounding Indian villages had, 'not yet found him out',<sup>33</sup> adding that these poverty-stricken Indians had provided \$200 in just a few days. Although he alleges they had been terrorised Burns laments that, 'The law-abiding inhabitants are themselves beginning to believe that government is powerless to restrain Soberanis'.<sup>34</sup> It is, however, unlikely that the hardy rural Indians or the Mestizo of Corozal Town would be intimidated by Creoles from Belize City to raise \$200.00 when many existed on incomes of 75 cents a day.

'Tony' Soberanis held his meetings fortnightly in Battlefield Park or alongside Brodies' department store where he had the benefit of electric lighting. Acting Governor F.W. Brunton described him as a 'half crazy creature', whilst Governor Burns (1934-1940) regarded him as a 'professional agitator'. Soberanis was arrested for supposedly threatening the Superintendent of Police on April 13th, 1934, but had the good fortune to appear before F.C.P. Bowen, the only

British Honduran magistrate in the Colony. He was let off with a caution, but the Executive was displeased, later removing Bowen from the bench and replacing him with the 'case-hard' Denbigh-Phillips, who went on to develop a reputation as a harsh sentencer and government supporter, and a target for removal by the LUA.<sup>35</sup>

Burns unwittingly illustrated the contradictions in his own assessment of the seriousness of unrest. During 1935 Soberanis was arrested for using insulting language in a public speech towards various officials and the King. For which latter offence he was remanded for trial to the Supreme Court in Corozal Town on 3 December 1935. Burns describes the situation at the first trial on 2 October 1935. 'During the trial the situation became very tense, that witnesses were being threatened and that there was every chance of a riot if Soberanis were sent to prison. The police force at Corozal was strengthened-<sup>36</sup>. Burns summed up his apprehension regarding the December trial, 'there is evidence that the Indian inhabitants have arranged to assemble in Corozal outside the Court House. The presence of several hundred of these people on such an occasion might easily have led to disorder and bloodshed'.<sup>37</sup>

In spite of having to deny the seriousness of these conditions, Burns issued 'Regulations' under the Public Safety Ordinance 1935 to prohibit meetings and to increase the penalty for interim and disorderly conduct. It is indicative of the labour movement's continuing popularity that three years later in 1938 Burns still found it necessary to instigate an official report on the activities of Antonio Soberanis in Belize City even though considering his influence to be trivial.<sup>38</sup>

Clearly there was a popular labour movement in British Honduras revolving around valid

grievances that British policy did not wish to publicly acknowledge. Nevertheless the appointment of Alan Burns to succeed Sir Harold Kittermaster might have been seen as acknowledging privately that concessions would have to be made. For under Kittermaster's governance little had been undertaken to reform social conditions. This was not due to the differing attitudes of either Governor rather; under Kittermaster labour unrest during the early 30s had not gathered momentum. The British authorities, as they often had in the past, and throughout the empire, saw their role as simply maintaining public order with the minimum of adjustment to the status quo. Had the government possessed the foresight to lead the way rather than be led by a series of crises the movement for political change that developed in the late 1940s and early 1950s might have been less acerbic.

The LUA impressed upon the authorities their growing popularity at the September 10th celebrations of the Battle of St. George's Caye, when 3,000 people gathered to listen and cheer the speeches of the leaders. Although this was a non-political event, its significance was decidedly political and described as 'Soberanis' finest hour', 'Tony' was now encouraged to make more extreme claims for fair wages and employment as well as demanding the removal from the bench of Denbigh-Phillips, and that C.S.Brown, the manager of the BEC, should not be allowed to live in Government House.<sup>39</sup> It was not helpful that the LUA demands were accompanied by a riot in which one Absolom Pollard was shot. *The clarion* applauded the subsequent harsh sentences meted out by Denbigh-Phillips.<sup>40</sup>

Further to this, the riots, whilst representing a peak of labour resistance in British Honduras also signified a time of government reaction and the relative demise of Soberanis and the LUA.

*The clarion* stated it was, 'happy that the constables beat sense into the heads of the lawless.' Soberanis had missed the main rioting but was arrested for allegedly threatening violence to Denbigh-Phillips. Torrential rain eventually dispersed an angry crowd of several hundred, protesting outside the gaol.<sup>41</sup>

Both Brunton and Governor designate Burns, blamed the Treasury for failing to provide the money for public works and relief measures.<sup>42</sup> Burns attempted to combat the poor condition of the people with a road-building programme. However, Ashdown comments that this was merely to placate the working classes.<sup>43</sup> Bolland supports this by revealing the extent of stronger laws designed to regain order such as, prohibition of processions without police approval, new emergency powers for the Governor to maintain order, and a seditious conspiracy bill.<sup>44</sup>

In this Burns is critical of the level of ignorance in British Honduras, 'the ordinary semi-literate reader enjoys nothing so much as abuse of his betters, which flatters his inferiority complex -- they are easily misled by irresponsible agitators. They have not the gift of perseverance'.<sup>45</sup> Burns talks of the chief means of escape from ignorance being education and called for a 'complete education, not merely the teaching of the illiterate to read and write'. Whilst applauding the, 'valuable educational work done by the missions', he adds that now education, 'must be based on the economy of the country',<sup>46</sup> signalling future educational policy and attitudes towards the role of the denominations. In discussing the sins and virtues of British Imperialism, Burns commented on a particular 'virtue', 'one of which is British education in the democratic tradition'.<sup>47</sup> His comments reveal the shape and form that education was set to follow in the ensuing years. Nevertheless there was an incremental interest in the development of

education after the hurricane, which increased in relation to levels of unrest in the Colony.

However many of the problems that had been inherited from the pre hurricane period continued to inhibit progress not least that of finance.

Whilst Soberanis languished in gaol, the LUA was becoming riven by internal strife and misappropriation of funds. Two of Soberanis' lieutenants, Lahoodie and Reneau left to form the British Honduras Unemployed Association (BHUA) a tamer, less vociferous organisation. 'Tony' was again gaoled after the rail men's strike in Stann Creek, which turned into a fight with the police, although once again, he was not actually present.

The labour movement of the 1930s was solidly working class. While this support was at its height, the intellectuals of the Unemployed Brigade withdrew, claiming they could not achieve what the masses desired. However, it has been suggested that the intellectuals shrank from open defiance and denunciation of the Colonial Government, not simply out of traditional loyalty, but from an anger vented towards the mercantile elite, the same social class to which they belonged, thus maintaining a temporarily close alliance between the native British Honduran bourgeoisie and the Colonial Government.<sup>48</sup>

Additionally, the moneyed classes neglected to support Soberanis' LUA, which was fortunate if it could muster \$4.00 in collections at its Battlefield Park meetings. The bitterly anti-British chicle millionaire R. S. Turton was not known to have aided the LUA but did fund the later activities of the middle-class People's United Party (PUP) of the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>49</sup> It is not clear why Turton did this, however he had long been rejected by British Colonial society, largely because of his bastardy (something that was not a disgrace to Belizeans)<sup>50</sup> and may have wished

to find a new inroad into middle-class society. Equally, Turton's business connections were with the United States and not Britain, which may be indicative of his anti-British sentiment. Turton might have aided the LUA indirectly through his considerable financial influence and Ashdown cites Governor Burns's belief that Turton used his money to spout 'anti-government propaganda' in the Belize Independent.<sup>51</sup>

The 1930s labour movement had been accused of fissiparity and selfishness amongst its army of members, but in the forestry industry individual workers had to negotiate the best contract available, and could not risk being identified consistently with a movement antagonistic to the forestocracy, for fear of victimisation. However the true level of unity was identified by the constancy of the woodcutter's wives present at Soberanis's rallies, reflecting the true thinking of British Honduran working people.<sup>52</sup> Both Ashdown and Bolland note that British Honduras possessed the most insignificant of the 1930s West Indian disturbances, but they were certainly the precursors for events throughout the British Caribbean. In this they are both critical of Hoyos's placing of the outbreak of troubles to St.Kitts in January 1935, rather than the October 1934 riots in British Honduras.<sup>53</sup>

#### **The hurricane's force: social, and physical**

The Colonial authorities worked hard at relieving the crisis, providing emergency services such as medical and food distribution, and generally restoring order. However, most writers agree that the greatest cause of friction was generated by a tardy response from the British Government at Whitehall to the welfare of its British Honduran subjects.

Overall it appears that the Colonial government responded rapidly to the situation, although

some looting did occur. The Governor's communique via HMS Danae provides a summary of the authority's view of the situation:

Food supplies are ample. Sanitary gangs are cleaning drains, ditches and removing refuse. No immediate fear of epidemic. Arrangements being made to house large numbers of women and children at Pan-American airfields. Generous offers of provisions, money and food have been received from American firms and neighbouring Colonies - No disturbances.<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, in spite of the Governor's assurances it appears that the first thoughts of the Colonial Government were towards coercion and control, for it had been deemed necessary to introduce a bill granting the Governor emergency powers, resulting in the imposition of a curfew.<sup>55</sup> The Governor's emphasis on peaceful cooperation may have been correct, but there was a strong police presence on the streets of British Honduras. Finally American marines from the USS Sacramento provided assistance to the special constables. Sir John Burdon minimises the potential for disruption when he describes the news of the arrival of the USS Sacramento and Swan and HMS Danae: 'The news put heart into the workers and the fear of God into the few wrong un's'.<sup>56</sup> However from this remark we may infer that as well as those 'wrong-un's prepared to disrupt, possibly even revolt, many of the more law-abiding subjects, who needed new 'heart' were becoming dispirited and might have crossed the legal line. It is a maxim that the general public do not see uniformed men as doctors, clerks, cooks or labourers but as members of the armed forces, and the men of three warships docked in a small colonial city would provide a powerful coercive presence, by suggestion if not by overt activity. Perhaps the Governor overlooked this point when he praised the British Hondurans as loyal Crown subjects.

In this, the first outside aid had come from the United States. The US vessel, 'Sacramento' had been attending to an earthquake disaster in Managua, although HMS Danae returning from

hurricane relief in San Domingo closely followed her. The Americans provided much needed medical help, Doctors, nurses and drugs, as did the Governments of Guatemala and Honduras.

The British Colonial authorities were not seen as lacking in energy, as can be witnessed by two different contemporary reports:

The Governor was ill, resigned his office, and the Colonial Secretary had to assume complete control. His was a fearfully hard task and the city needs demanded all his attention and care'.

In the wake of distributing food and clothing to the helpless victims of the storm the Sisters [of Mercy] had also the happiness of sharing -- the courtesy shown them by the officials speaks very highly of the latter, especially their principal officer, Mr. Brunton from whom they received the most gentlemanly kindness and consideration.<sup>57</sup>

Yet, the British Government's response to this human catastrophe appears to indicate less of an imperial power of great wealth, able to spring to the aid of an impoverished Colony, and one that had long been a source of revenue through the mahogany trade: Arthur Lewis made the following comment,

What claim have West Indians to demand such sacrifices from the British people? It is the British who by their action in the past centuries are responsible for the presence in these islands of the majority of their inhabitants, whose ancestors as slaves have contributed millions to the wealth of Great Britain, a debt which the British have yet to repay.<sup>58</sup>

However, the British are seen as administrators of the generosity of others. This perhaps reflects Britain's ambiguous position during the inter-war years as a leading imperial power drained of its financial resources after the debilitating experience of the First World War.

A Colonial Office minute recommends that action be taken quickly, 'while the disaster is fresh in the public's mind'.<sup>59</sup> But this was not an enthusiastic affirmation of intent to supply immediate aid to the Colony. Instead it is concerned with the elongated process of public appeals.

The Colonial Office agreed to a Lord Mayor's Appeal, but the records reveal that a great deal of internal, as well as interdepartmental consultation was involved. Initially it was deemed necessary to consult the Lord Chancellor, but he was, 'currently unavailable'. Further delays were caused by a dispute among all parties, Colonial Office, Treasury, and Captain Massey of the Lord Mayor's appeal, over the Red Cross involvement, that it was, 'considered inappropriate that there should be a separate -- appeal as well as a Lord Mayor's appeal'.<sup>60</sup> Other, laudable but ponderous offerings arrived such as the following: 'The enclosed £1,0s 9d for the British Honduras Relief Fund was raised by the girls of the Macclesfield Central School Junior Branch of the League of Nations Union. To raise it they made and sold book covers. The subscription brings with it the best wishes of the girls'.<sup>61</sup> Additionally Captain Massey, had come to an agreement with the Colonial Office that, 'arrangements for expenditure be left to the Governor'.<sup>62</sup> Albeit we may wonder just when any funds were likely to reach the Governor.

By now it was 28 October 1931, almost seven weeks since the hurricane, and arrangements had been made for the former Governor Sir John Burdon to broadcast on the BBC, at 10.30pm, in a 15 minute eyewitness account to appeal for funds. The excuse for this vacillation was the General Election coverage; something modern news-watchers might find difficult to understand when present day news programming would probably, if temporarily, set the election coverage aside. Unfortunately the Colonial Office was unable to report a satisfactory response, assigning this to the general depression. Although the delay must have dampened immediate concerns, after all if the Hondurans were surviving seven weeks after the event the problem might appear less severe to the public. To add to the delays, the British Honduras' Government was required to negotiate, not for aid, but for a loan from the British Government. Sir John Burdon claimed that

an urgent grant was needed if only to alleviate feelings of despair.<sup>63</sup>

According to Grant the hurricane cost had to be seen as, 'relevant to the slender resources of British Honduras.' The damage was equal to one year's revenue.<sup>64</sup> Three months after the disaster the acting Governor was still trying to negotiate a loan from England of \$1,100,000. Not only could the British Government not act quickly its only offer of relief came in the shape of a loan to its cash starved Colony. The events of 1931 were the opportunity the British Treasury had been waiting for to seize control of British Honduran finances.<sup>65</sup> They insisted revenue powers be returned to the Governor in exchange for the loan, which eventually took eight months to receive (May 1932). The delay and political machinations caused great resentment towards British officials.

For some time it had been felt by the Governor and the Colonial Office that 'unofficials' in the Legislative Council, which in terms of British Honduras meant vested interests, had absolute control over finance and were therefore steering funds away from social services. It was agreed that when HMG came to underwrite the Colony, 'the control of finance would have to pass from the Legislative Council to the Treasury'.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, it is probably incorrect to attribute benevolent motives to the British who were more concerned with dispelling potential social unrest. Further to this, transferring fiscal power to the Governor from the legislative council brought both benefits and problems. For example, education gained from a more equitable distribution of cash. Governor Hunter comments, '[Previously] not a measure that was proposed had any chance of being accepted, unless they served the interests of the gentlemen in the counting houses of British Honduras.

This kind of eventuality had a less high profile and required a longer term to be effective, whereas new problems were created by the involvement of the 'dead hand' of Whitehall, 'Procedures often took several months and reduced the effectiveness of government action at a time when, 'the provision of public works was the main palliative to the unemployment situation'.<sup>67</sup> Yet, as Humphreys argues, social services in British Honduras may never have improved at all without Treasury control for, 'the oligarchy would never loosen control otherwise.'<sup>68</sup> A case of better late than never? However Bolland's inference that the British had inserted this Treasury clause into the Loan Act specifically for the British Honduras case is erroneous, and is repudiated by a later Governor, Sir Alan Burns, who states that this had long been a part of Government policy,

solventions [sic] are granted to impoverished colonies on two conditions, which on the face of them, are not unreasonable -- [if an unofficial majority exists in the legislature] the Governor shall have special powers of control in all financial matters, and annual and supplementary estimates of expenditure must receive the approval in advance of the British Treasury officials.<sup>69</sup>

This denoted, in reality, a system of negotiation between the Governor and the Treasury through the Colonial Office, and a negation of unofficial fiscal power within the Colony. As already established, during the 100 years following slavery the British and Colonial government's main concern had been for the development of a large wage labour force and not for improving social services. This furthers the argument that the new benevolence sprang from a fear of any serious disruption that may have occurred as a consequence of the combined tribulations of hurricane and economic depression, rather than any genuine desire to improve the living conditions of British Hondurans. It is indicative that public service reform activity does not gather pace until the development of a mass worker's organisation and agitation under Antonio Soberanis. These

conditions were prevalent throughout the British West Indies. Arthur Lewis reported, 'There is practically no legislation concerning housing or working conditions, and no unemployment or health insurance. West Indian governments have been wholly identified with planter interests, and have hitherto not been concerned about these matters'.<sup>70</sup>

Lewis quotes Professor Macmillan who succinctly describes conditions throughout the British West Indies,

the masses are poor or very poor, with a standard of living reminding one of native and coloured communities of the Union of South Africa even more than the peasants of West Africa -- A social and economic study of the West Indies is therefore necessarily a study of poverty.<sup>71</sup>

The damage to schools and other buildings would keep the British and Colonial governments occupied for the next 20 years, not simply in repairing the physical damage but in pacifying the openly discontented public.

Eventually the damage and filth left behind on the streets by the muddy seawater increased the death toll. The Colonial Report of 1931 cites an increase in the number of cases of malarial fever and dysentery, as being a consequence of the number of mosquitoes and houseflies.<sup>72</sup> The problem was exacerbated by contaminated drinking water:

Large numbers of vats for water were destroyed by the hurricane. Improvised barrels and containers for gathering rainwater have increased the presence of mosquito larvae, especially those leaving Yellow Fever. Regular inspections are essential and sanitary inspections are keeping uncovered tanks stocked with larvivorous fish.<sup>73</sup>

Additionally their hardships were compounded by the loss of property and the hurricane loan that allowed for mortgages to property owners who could barely afford to repay them. The hurricane damage caused a rapid and unplanned replacement of building stock with borrowed funds. Thus

a downward spiral began to take place, 'Owners are often too poor to maintain their properties so accept a dwindling sum as rent as dilapidation advances'.<sup>74</sup> Most owners had inadequate insurance and the government's insistence on mortgage loans rather than grants, worsened the property situation.

This pernicious loan was even used to effectively make the Colony pay for its own compensation. During the post hurricane recovery effort many unsound structures had to be burned to the ground due to the impossibility of extracting the rapidly rotting corpses from beneath the debris. The Hurricane Loan Board was established in 1932 with a budget of £325,000, and a Commission of Enquiry was authorised to hear complaints for damages to property destroyed in this fashion.<sup>75</sup> An official of the Colonial Office spoke in high minded terms regarding these claims, 'if the amount of damage is small (and this it appears to be) we should admit the moral responsibility of government for paying compensation and should take up the question with the Treasury.'<sup>76</sup> It appears that the British Government official is saying that if the amount of damage was 'big' then the UK would feel no moral responsibility. This does seem to reveal the actuarial mind-set. Claims had valued \$77,879 but only \$38,502 was admitted.<sup>77</sup> However, this compensation would actually be debited to the loan fund 'for the repayment of which the Colony will ultimately be responsible'.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the Colonists would actually be responsible for reimbursing their own compensation through interest repayments and taxation.

During this period of catastrophe, economic depression and penny-pinching British responses, Belize City suffered, ironically, a major fire. One English newspaper reported, 'The fire caused damage totalling \$250,000. There were no deaths, as most of the property was not

residential and the guests in the hotels were warned in time to make their escape'.<sup>79</sup> However, records show that the fire rendered 400 people homeless, therefore not only adding to the general discontent but increasing mortgage debt from the many who were under insured. Much low quality housing was then developed by infilling the courtyards and other spare land hidden behind smart housing, causing overcrowding.<sup>80</sup> S. H. Campbell of the Colonial Office wrote, 'It is a cruel stroke of fate that this additional calamity should have struck the Colony at such a time, [but] funds cannot be met under the Hurricane Loan Act'.<sup>81</sup>

These help to prove, not the overt cruelty of Colonialism, but its bureaucratic inadequacy to adapt rapidly to new situations which then exacerbated a state of cruelty. Governor Burns later remarked, 'The impression that the Colonial Office is a cold-blooded institution and that the staff take no interest in the people of the Colony or in members of the Colonial service is entirely wrong'.<sup>82</sup> However, he provides evidence of bureaucratic difficulties which tended to negate the value of the personnel, when he cites four obstacles suffered by the Colonial Office.

- i. Scattered about London with no centralised office.
- ii. Secretary of State changed too frequently.
- iii. Office organisation poor.
- iv. Colonial Office officials have no experience of the Colonies.

Additionally Burns claims that when he first joined the Colonial Office 'it struck me that the views of that office were treated with scant respect at inter-departmental conferences and in official correspondence'.<sup>83</sup> This was particularly true in relation to the Foreign Office. This degree of concern is an important consideration in understanding the nature of imperial governance and its effect on British Honduran society.

### **Conclusion**

It has been the purpose of this chapter to point out the influences of various phenomena in

British Honduras on the introduction of a modern education system. The economic depression clearly influenced the desire of the people for social improvement. But it was the catastrophe of the hurricane that revealed starkly the inadequacies of bureaucratic imperialism, too inflexible to provide an adequate response to urgent matters. Evidence from pre and post hurricane periods reveals similar justifications for doing nothing, usually financial. And the same wordage expended on the problems of teacher training, secular and denominational education, education for employment, all followed by minimal action.<sup>84</sup> Possibly the use of reports and speeches was seen as a useful sop to those requiring reform in British Honduras, thus providing the illusion of progress.

During 1933 Arthur Mayhew, education officer at the Colonial Office bemoaned that the previous advice had largely been ignored due to 'no expert report ever having been conducted in British Honduras'.<sup>85</sup> Even the later *Easter Report* was prompted not by a straightforward desire to improve education but by the cut in grants of \$20,000 for the financial year 1933-34 and expert advice as to where to make cuts. However Mayhew remarked, 'I have no doubt that if a competent educationalist and a layman of ordinary commonsense were to overhaul the system now they would recommend an increase in expenditure'.<sup>86</sup> Real activities toward reform only gather a pace after the *Easter Report* and coincide with the activities of Soberanis and the LUA. Much of this will be assessed in the following chapter concerning educational consolidation.

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## **Part One**

### **The Beginnings of a Modern Education System, 1931 - 1949**

#### **Chapter Two**

##### **EDUCATION: CONSOLIDATION AND CONFLICT**

The reorganisation of British Honduran schooling was born out of the chaos of the Great Depression and not a concern for social improvement. This chapter will examine the effect of hurricane destruction on education, establishing the period from 1931 until the mid 1930s as one where government attempted to placate a mild public disquiet with rather more rhetoric than action. This chapter provides a contrast with the following chapter where actual educational reform is eventually implemented due to an increase in labour agitation and general unrest in the colony.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, reorganisation originated in the sheer destruction of the hurricane. The denominations, particularly the Catholics, were quick to re-establish themselves. The hurricane took the lives of eleven Jesuits as it destroyed the Loyola Park campus of St. John's. One report evoked the emotion felt, 'Our dead priests are a terrible loss to the mission - so too are our Scholastics to the field of education'.<sup>2</sup> Also totally consumed were the Catholic church of St. Ignatius and the convent school of St. Catherine's Academy. The latter are described with particular emphasis on the efforts at reconstruction: 'Under Fr. Tank's energetic directions within 10 days new roofing was put in hall, chapel residences and Cathedral.--The work on two schools is still going on, and we hope to have them ready for classes early in October'.<sup>3</sup>

One month after the destruction of the Loyola Park Campus, the St. John's group began occupying temporary premises in the Catholic presbytery at the Holy Redeemer Cathedral, where they stayed for the next twenty years. Although described as the period of 'greater flow towards Belizeanization', much of this was forced upon the church by disaster expenditure and the end of

regionalism in pupil recruitment. The refusal to reinstate boarders was a pragmatic decision taken in the light of a shortage of facilities, and the end of political instability in the Central American republics; so the need to come to British Honduras to receive an education had diminished. This domestic development facilitated a heightened Catholic involvement in the political arena. <sup>4</sup>

It was within the great movement for change described in the previous chapter that a modern education system began to emerge in British Honduras, one that played a crucial part in the social cohesion of this multi-racial society. During the early 1930s education suffered from many of the encumbrances of the pre hurricane period, not the least of which were financial. In 1928

Governor Burdon reported to the Secretary of State for the Colonies expressing his,

Increasing doubt as to whether the benefits derived from the current system is commensurate with the expenditure which falls on the taxpayer in the shape of financial assistance given by the Government to the various religious bodies for educational purpose (presently \$79,217).<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps Burdon should have been grateful that the churches were providing some system of education for the children. However, therein exists one of the chief problems to beset late education reforms, that of the church-state symbiosis. The Governor may have been aware that in a largely oligarchic society centred around only a few industries the mass view need not be overtly considered. Certainly most of the money was dedicated to an elementary form of primary education, as was the case throughout the British West Indies. Arthur Lewis, in his report on labour conditions cited an earlier report that stated:

Primary education in the West Indies was the least progressive of any of which he had encountered in the British Empire, - he had taken specially into account the money which was being spent, - the training of teachers, and contact with modern educational thought. He noted also that the school buildings were the worst which he had ever seen. <sup>6</sup>

Governor Kittermaster expressed his concern that the commission had not extended its report to

the Colony. But there is little doubt that many of these Anglo-Caribbean problems proliferated in British Honduras. Additionally this was a period where the administration felt content to soothe mass discontent with a form of words rather than with direct action. Kittermaster commented that, '[the matter] has not been found practical to take any action with a view to improving the present system, due to the impossibility of providing increased appropriations for education'.<sup>7</sup>

Shortly afterwards during a Colonial Office visit, S.V. Luke was to apportion blame to local officers, commenting, 'the system of education in the Colony is in a chaotic state in the absence of anyone in the Colonial Government qualified to administer educational expenditure.'<sup>8</sup> Hunter does not admit to an anti-British stance in church/school activities and cites the adoption of the Cambridge Overseas exam in Catholic schools, although given that this was the main qualification to the most senior posts in the Colonial Civil Service and Judiciary, then its adoption appears to be politically motivated. Nevertheless, Hunter provides evidence for anti-British feeling when he recounts the case of Brother Jacoby, removed as leader of the Boy Scouts' movement for being seen as 'forming young Belizeans loyal to the Crown' at a time when Belize was moving towards independence.<sup>9</sup> He talks of a healthy tension 'between church and the diminishing power of the Governor,' adding the words of the Catholic Governor Burns which plainly reveal the Irish-American Bishop Murphy as anti-British: 'The Bishop--did not mind the children singing the National Anthem - he would never soil his lips with it- I resented very strongly his---assumption that because I was British I was, therefore a "heretic" at heart'.<sup>10</sup> The extent of Murphy's stance was shown by this dislike of Burns, whose Catholicism could not redeem his nationality.

At this stage help came from the USA through funding and the provision of assistance in building hurricane proof structures. <sup>11</sup> America supplied prompt and valuable succour where it was needed without any apparent stipulations attached, in direct contrast to the British reaction. As if in recognition of this minor triumph the USS Swan held a grand parade to mark the occasion, thereby further enhancing US popularity in British Honduras.

The British Government's reluctance to invest heavily in education for the general populace allowed the churches to retain their hold on the system to a greater extent than in other British Caribbean islands. This had the effect of placing a check on the extent of British cultural influence as disseminated through the educative process. A local education report of 1932 makes the following statement:

Educational reform in this Colony must not be understood to imply the abandonment of denominational education. The annual contribution from public funds for educational purposes falls far short of the total expenditure incurred on education. It is to the religious bodies that the community is principally indebted not only for tending, but also for providing the existing educational machinery. With its very limited resources the government cannot attempt to take the place at present occupied by the denominational authorities and assume responsibility for the administration of education. For financial reasons alone the dissolution of the present partnership between the church and the state cannot be contemplated. <sup>12</sup>

For financial reasons the Government was compelled to maintain the church state partnership and would have dissolved it as soon as was practicable, as evidence in the following chapter will reveal. This was to prove an insurmountable task. This attitude did not merely secure the power of the church to shape the minds of British Hondurans. The Colony, unlike other parts of the British West Indies, possessed not a British-based Catholic church but an independent, mid-Western American Jesuit organisation culturally and financially autonomous in its relationship to Great Britain. This simultaneously placed a check on Protestant political

domination of church activity, and increased the power of the church generally in comparison to the Government. For prior to 1940 the St. John's Alumni were successful merchants but none were in the civil service, judiciary, or elected office. <sup>13</sup> By the 1930s to 40s St. John's produced men who were to sidestep these traditional colonial routes to power, and dominate British Honduran politics through elected office. The Jesuits were concerned with 'raising their student's political consciousness', whereas the Anglicans and Methodists concentrated on an unequivocal loyalty to the government. <sup>14</sup> The former was investing in the future whilst the latter invested in the past.

#### **Hurricane damage: The church response**

Hurricane devastation had brought financial difficulties causing many Protestant church schools to consolidate their activities. In addition to low levels of funding the Protestants were further subdivided into denominational groups. Many Wesleyan and Diocesan high schools were obliged to merge after 1931. Their boys' programme was concentrated into a single school St. George's College: an institution that went on to produce a generation of judges, civil servants and clergymen. Nevertheless Protestant weakness was highlighted when separate programmes were reinstated due to conflict between the Anglicans and Methodists. <sup>15</sup>

Foreign-born teachers, whilst admittedly spreading their own culture would be just as likely to extend hitherto confined elements of internal culture across district boundaries as they may have been unaware of the finer points of regional differences. Thus, a Jesuit priest working among the Maya might find himself transferred to a Mestizo village in the North. This is true of Creole culture as it was carried in the wake of English. One education report observed the

following:

In many districts the pupils are Spanish speakers. English is essentially a 'school language' only, unheard and unspoken out of school hours -- as a striking instance of linguistic complication a government officer visiting a school in the North of the Colony found a class of exclusively Spanish speaking pupils being taught an English version of the mass by a German Nun.<sup>16</sup>

Although this may have meant a short-term complication in the language learning process, it may have possessed a gradual benefit for the pupil in appreciating cultural difference, of greater long-term importance to the later process of nation building.

The churches sought to recover rapidly from the hurricane damage, in some cases by rebuilding and in others by consolidating their reserves. Unfortunately the Government was not in a position to help beyond the framework of the hurricane reconstruction loan. The Colonial Report for 1933 shows that the Colonial Government had already cut the grants-in-aid from \$11.41 per head to \$9.40 per head because of the considerable decrease in Government revenue.<sup>17</sup> S.V. Luke commented: 'Probably so long as the Government has to depend on the religious bodies for supplying the education, the system is as satisfactory as can be expected'.<sup>18</sup> This evidence points to both a desire on the part of the Government for nondenominational schools and yet reluctantly recognising a situation that would undoubtedly maintain the denominational system.

However Luke does allude to some practical reasons, other than financial, for avoiding Government schools at this juncture:

The present expenditure is regulated to some extent automatically on the number of children in a given area. The benefit of that is that practically all children in the Colony get the benefit of some sort of education. An alternative system would be for the Government to specialise in quality in certain large schools while disregarding the needs

of the small rural schools.<sup>19</sup>

But this approach would have impeded Government policy, which was to encourage the populace out of the towns and into agriculture. In maintaining the rural spread of education the country was able to uphold family ties within individual localities rather than the alternative of seeing elementary school children separated from their families for long periods as was the case with secondary school pupils. Thus, the roots of a community loyalty were implanted at an early age alongside an appreciation of the difference between other ethnic groups in British Honduras.

By 1933 there were seventy-five grant-aided schools with 8,038 pupils enrolled. The Treasury in London was actually concerned with an overall rise in education expenditure that had taken place since 1913/14, rather than with more recent cuts. In 1933 this had risen sharply from 3.3% of the overall revenue of the Colony to 8.5%. A finance committee report for that year stated that the Government had undertaken the payments of family grants and teachers' salaries, 'far beyond what teachers were being paid by the managers of schools'.<sup>20</sup>

#### **Early indications of church-state conflict**

Clearly, statements such as these show the Colonial Government involved in conflict with the school management over funding during the prevailing economic climate. Revenue had fallen to \$794,000, whilst Government expenditure stood at \$950,124, a deficit of more than \$156,000. The report betrays evidence of disagreement when it reveals quiet threats concerning the withdrawal of funding; 'It has been urged that the Government could not reduce the salaries of teachers because they are not employees of the Government'.<sup>21</sup> Although the administration had agreed to fund teachers' salaries this had never been undertaken directly but by a grant to the

education authority matching the required amount. Therefore the perception was that they would not actually be reducing teachers' salaries if they reduced the grant. 'The argument is indeed logical but it is quite clear that the grant for salaries can be reduced -- it will be for the managers to find the difference'.<sup>22</sup> These threats were never carried out which may be testimony to the generosity of the Government, or with the necessity of sustaining the church system of schooling. However, the fall in national revenue allowed a pro-rata cut in the overall grant from Whitehall. The Governor found it necessary to dispatch what amounted to a begging letter to the Secretary of State in London: 'Since departmental heads have already budgeted at a starvation figure this arbitrary cut will cause serious inconvenience. [Govt. asks for] a grant or loan-in-aid of \$170,000 which will obviate the unpleasant necessity of cutting education'.<sup>23</sup>

Such drastic cuts in education expenditure were bringing pressure to bear on the governor from the local population. Residents of Corozal presented a threatening petition to the Governor later that same year: with reasons why the education grant should not be cut,

[The] peace and progress of this Colony depend to a large extent upon the efficiency of the schools and their increase so as to be within reach of as many children as possible.-- the diminishing of the number of schools or the lessening of their efficiency will have lasting injurious effects upon the welfare of the Colony.<sup>24</sup>

The petition suggests that education expenditure was a greater priority than other forms of spending:

Reductions in appropriations for other departments will not have similar lasting ill-effects upon the welfare of the Colony'; therefore, Be it resolved, that we are strongly opposed to having the education grant reduced to \$50, 000.00 and, Be it further resolved, that the educational grant should not be reduced proportionally more but rather less than the grants to other departments of the Government.<sup>25</sup>

However, the Colonial Secretary was not to be intimidated by the residents adopting a firm stance:

It must be realised that unless there is an improvement in the Colony's finances in the not too distant future, it may be necessary that there should be radical reductions in all departments of government expenditure, in which education will have to bear its share, - it is even possible that it will be beyond the means of Government to provide even \$50,000 per annum in aid of education.<sup>26</sup>

This dichotomy between the abstract recommendations of government reports and the consequential practicalities of Governor's requests continued with the long-standing issue of amalgamation. The finance report suggested that the denominations were putting schools in out of the way localities to secure more government revenues for teachers' salaries, and goes on to suggest that, 'schools in out of the way places should be amalgamated and run entirely by the Government'.<sup>27</sup> The report goes on to suggest that the legislature was abdicating its responsibilities in favour of the Board of Education. However, in his communiqué to the Secretary of State, Kittermaster undermines these aspects of the report by insisting, 'Missions to establish schools wherever there is a minimum of children'.<sup>28</sup> One wonders if Kittermaster's contradictory remarks towards his own Government's report resulted from a desire to maintain the church as the chief financial contributor or simply to use this and other reports as evidence of activity without actually doing anything. Whichever may have been the case such sterile policies revealed the inability of the Colonial government to make any significant dent in denominational authority in the schools.

Two requests for government assistance in providing new schools reveal the different financial positions of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches. Alfred G. Burnham of the Methodist Mission wrote to H.G. Pilling the Colonial Secretary on February 2nd, 1933, concerning the new Wesley school, designed to accommodate 700 children on two floors, with

Assembly rooms on each floor, both were to be fitted with folding partitions so that after assembly they could be divided into separate classrooms, therefore economically making use of the space.<sup>29</sup> The Protestants required a substantial loan and interest free, whereas the Catholics merely looked to a free land grant, as Bishop Murphy's request shows:

I beg leave, on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church in British Honduras, to present a petition for a ten-acre land grant for a school at 19-mile station, Stann Creek District. I am informed that there are more than forty children of school age to be cared for. We ask simply for the free grant of land for a school and equip it at our own expense, and after we shall have conducted the school we will present our children and the school for the approval of the Board of education so as to deserve a Government grant-in-aid for the school.<sup>30</sup>

The grant-in-aid was to maintain teachers' salaries and not for the building of the school.

Although the Catholic Church possessed the funds to build its own school, it is possible that a Protestant body was more likely to attract government funding.

Additionally Government ineffectiveness was evidenced by a debate concerning the introduction of a charge of five cents per week, which was strongly resisted by parents and school management as beyond the means of ordinary folk. Although not all impoverished, Amos Ford comments on the school days of himself and his siblings: 'On returning from the market Mother would ensure that those who were going to school were dressed properly. Books, lunch, and a few cents would be given to each one'.<sup>31</sup>

In support of charges S.V. Luke writes, with some assertiveness:

It is for the churches and the schools to teach that the responsibilities of parenthood rest in the first instance with the parents, not with the state -- and if the parents in the Colony desire education for their children as ardently as I am asked to believe, there will be ample funds available to give it, not on a restricted but on an extended tended scale.<sup>32</sup>

Luke's comments appear to have been somewhat divorced from the economic realities of the

lives of ordinary Hondurans. One year later Arthur Mayhew, education officer at the Colonial Office was saying something different on the subject: 'it is very doubtful whether the amount raised would justify the local resentment. It would be better first to turn the schools into institutions that will convince the community of their usefulness and then call for contributions in rates or fees'.<sup>33</sup> Whereas here, Mayhew offers a more realistic and pragmatic approach than Luke, he goes on to insist that any expenditure retrenchment should be temporary. On the subject of fees no policy was formulated nor implemented.

A similar conflict was highlighted between the literary and practical methods of schooling. Mr. Dillon, the Inspector of schools for the Colony showed his concern for an inappropriate emphasis on literary education. Some four and a half hours each day were being devoted to literary instruction, in classes containing some twenty to thirty Spanish-speaking children giving joint recitations: 'in a low monotone and in an English which was as unintelligible to me -Such mechanical exercises of memory might be more usefully employed in training the pupils to take an intelligent interest in the details of their daily life and surroundings.'<sup>34</sup> Although Dillon suggests combining practical with literary training as mutually beneficial, he also reveals something of the Anglophile nature of education at this stage. He does not suggest that the literary elements be adapted to suit the particular community, for instance Spanish literature or Mayan history, rather the existing literary studies are simply reduced to make way for practical lessons.

Even in schools with a predominant Creole culture Anglophilia was dominant. Amos Ford recalls his school days:

There was never included in our lessons any history of how we, the Black people came to be in the Caribbean. Of course, we had brief discussions or sketches of Columbus' discovery of the Americas etc. But our education was geared towards teaching us about England, the Kings and Queens and the glory that was England.<sup>35</sup>

Ford also comments on the relevance of this type of education to the workplace:

As a Colonial boy whose education was intended more to teach him of English history and those questionable exploits of the Englishman in other people's lands, my education such as it was, hardly fitted me for any kind of work, save perhaps the kind I had done as an office boy when I was still living with my Godparents.<sup>36</sup>

The rules of the British Honduran Board of Education confirm, as late as 1936, these curriculum methods. The syllabus for obtaining a teacher's certificate in geography was as follows:

1. The world including physical Geography;
2. Geography, Physical, Political and Commercial of the British Empire.
3. Geography of British Honduras.

Whilst the relevance of this approach can be understood for that period (the list forms a clear progression from world to empire to a locality) the history syllabus reveals a clear bias towards all things' English:

1. General questions in English History.
2. Special questions on a selected period of English History.
3. Simple questions on the growth and development of the British Empire.

Whereas Geography stresses British Honduras within its world position, pupil teachers were required to maintain and teach a European/Anglo-Saxon focussed history:

- 1st Year-Julius Caesar to the Norman Conquest.
- 2nd Year-Norman Conquest to the Accession of the Stuarts
- 3rd Year- Accession of the Stuarts to the present.<sup>37</sup>

We may look to Ford's comments to provide one possible result of this type of education.

Although this was not unique to Belizean or colonial education:

Indeed the most unbelievable patriotism of most West Indians towards the United Kingdom has stemmed from this carefully guided system of education, which we all had

to go through in those days. This fact probably had to do with my early thirst for knowledge something more about myself and about my people.<sup>38</sup>

The existence of British Honduran studies in the Geography curriculum clearly shows an awareness of the importance of national studies. Similarly, its absence from the History syllabus suggests a fear of developing nationalist tendencies and disloyalty to the Crown. The title of the main text book at Amos Ford's school, 'Royal Crown Reader' is equally indicative of the style of education received by British Honduran children during the 1930s. This was, not surprisingly, enforced by a strict code of discipline. Ford tells of working hard at the Baptist school in Belize City: 'because the cane or sash cord was never far from our backs or the palms of our hands if we failed to meet Mr. Anglin's standards of literacy and numeracy'.<sup>39</sup>

Mr. Dillon, though Anglophile, was no advocate of this type of coercive rote learning. During a visit to the government run Stann Creek Industrial School he claims to have found boys keen on their work and alert, 'This I am of the opinion is due to the industrial training they receive'. Of course it is possible that Dillon's motives here were to single out a government run school for praise. However, his words unfortunately do betray a different kind of conflict when he declared the necessity of providing more education from a social rather than a religious basis, and teaching, 'the relation of man to animals and to nature generally - honesty in trade, money, property, advocating of thrift etc'.<sup>40</sup> Clearly the values of a secular English education system. Here Dillon attempts to step into an area jealously guarded by the denominations as their own. Rather than remaining within the Literary-Industrial training debate he broadens this into the Secular-Religious schooling dichotomy in a colony dependent on denominational school management; thus, encouraging a surreptitious resistance to his ideas.

In stressing the importance of industrial training, which in this economy meant agriculture, Mayhew was to point out the usual inhibiting element of finance: 'What is usually forgotten is that education really suited to a primitive community is more expensive than the literary training now being given. Practical education is not cheap'.<sup>41</sup> Once again suggestions for reform were stifled by either a lack of cash or an unwillingness to provide greater funding when no pressure to do so existed.

Similarly, the British and Colonial Governments revealed apathy towards secondary education. Local legislators saw no reason to educate poor people beyond the '3-r's' to fit them for the labouring jobs that awaited them after primary school. By 1933 there were some 75 grant-aided elementary schools in British Honduras, with 8,038 pupils enrolled; 4,242 boys and 3796 girls out of a total population of 49,000, whereas secondary education remained private and completely within the management control of the denominations and situated in Belize City and took no students from rural primary schools.

Each of the main denominations ran their own school. The Anglicans operated the Diocesan High School for Girls, and with the Methodists ran St. George's College for Boys. Correspondingly the Roman Catholics managed both a boys' and a girls' high school. However the Jesuit Fathers dominated St. John's College for Boys and St. Catherine's Academy for Girls relied upon the Sisters of Mercy, and neither of these two allowed lay involvement in their management. The average roll for these schools was 402 with an average attendance of 307, a fact that constantly brought calls for amalgamation. The only secondary school not within the purview of the denominations was the Government Industrial School at Stann Creek, providing

agricultural training.<sup>42</sup>

Every effort had been made to keep St. John's going in spite of its temporary quarters; whereas the Catholic girls' St. Catherine's Academy was reduced in scale after 1931; similarly with the Anglican girls' school of St. Hilda's. Research shows that not only were these the only girls' secondary institutions in the country but that most of their graduates opted for marriage.<sup>43</sup> Employment for young women was limited to primary teaching, nursing and the secretarial/ clerical professions.<sup>44</sup> Clearly the priority for the Catholic Church was the development of young men who might influence the future of British Honduras, even as the Protestant school management concerned itself with maintaining a hold on the professions. Evidently there was a sharp contrast between the perceived function of the elementary and secondary institutions. Whereas the former had a standard educative function, the latter can be seen, not for a linear academic role, but as instruments for maintaining either old or creating new power bases from which to develop a minority of fortunate students.

Throughout the British West Indies (B.W.I.) the state encouraged the use of female teachers as a means of undermining church control in secondary schools. The old minister-manager or teacher-catechist relations were seen as a stumbling block to state control and the state wished to create divisions in loyalty.<sup>45</sup> However, in British Honduras, the Catholic Church used nuns to teach and so maintained the church-school-state symbiosis. It was very much an American tradition to separate church and state; unlike the British system, perceived as providing education for the elite.<sup>46</sup> Yet for the denominations this did not mean leaving their schools in the hands of the state; particularly the Catholics and Methodists who were determined to provide an education

for the rural poor as well as for the population of Belize City.

There may have been a fear of developing secondary education. They received no grants only bonuses for those pupils successful in the Cambridge Certificate, thus focussing the people on the values of an English education system. A memorandum on education produced within the Colony generated the following comment, 'If education effort were derived solely towards Cambridge Local Exam Certificates British Honduras might soon be added to the list of territories suffering from a parasitic pseudo intelligentsia'.<sup>47</sup> Given the potential for unrest looming in British Honduras along with the remainder of the British West Indies, the authorities were more likely fearful of a genuine intelligentsia arising to lead the labouring classes. Which is exactly what did happen throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s and will be examined in a subsequent chapter.

The system was private and expensive, beyond the means of poor rural people: 'Secondary education is regarded as a separate and less urgent problem. It is concentrated in Belize. The secondary schools draw no pupils from the country schools and the present economic condition of Honduras suggests that it is not desirable'.<sup>48</sup> Even the introduction of scholarships were perceived as self-defeating, as the best-equipped and staffed elementary schools were in Belize City and catered for the 'better-off' families. Thus, ironically those that could afford to pay were winning all the scholarships. As the report concludes on this point, 'for all country school pupils and for most town school pupils it is a course which has no sequel'.<sup>49</sup> Secondary education also implied the separation from parents and the local community along with the resultant expense. Travel around Belize remained difficult and costly with no public transport to encourage parents

to send their children to secondary school.

Whether the Colonial Government genuinely desired reform of the education system is not clear, however they were certainly concerned with writing about their intentions. Two years prior to the hurricane Governor Burdon was searching for methods of improvement without incurring further costs: 'no reform is possible unless it be effected without an increase in expenditure. In the meantime I can only ask for help "In forme pauperis" and by that if possible the committee would send someone of experience to help and advise'.<sup>50</sup>

The help and advice that were required could not involve further expenditure. Rather, it was to be a method of overcoming the cuts in expenditure by improved measures of efficiency. Mayhew writing in 1933 unwittingly discloses one of the concerns of the British Government regarding education: 'it is, I think extremely probable that the number of schools could be reduced. The idea of amalgamating groups of rival denominational schools into single government institutions is sound'.<sup>51</sup> Yet, even bringing an educational expert to British Honduras involved dispute between that triumvirate of conflicting elements, the Colonial Government, the Colonial Office, and the British Treasury. Lengthy negotiations took place over the £250 required to bring Mr. B. H. Easter from Jamaica. The Colonial Office had wanted Mr. Rutledge, the Education Officer from Trinidad, but Easter was already being sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of America to tour the Southern States of America to gain valuable insights into agricultural and vocational education. This meant a lower cost to reach British Honduras from New Orleans rather than for bringing Rutledge from Trinidad. London also insisted on the Colony funding the visit.<sup>52</sup>

### Conclusion

This early stage of the post hurricane period revealed a new desire for social reform that sprang from a fledgling political maturity among British Hondurans. However, in order for the Government to retain its legitimacy it had to provide such reforms as were necessary for public order and dissipate any mood for agitation. In education the evidence suggests a wish to make progress but with the codicil of financial constraint. Such progress, therefore, would have to be made by streamlining existing practices within the current budget. However, such impetus for government reform derived from a desire to advance secular education without relieving the denominations of any of their financial burdens. These phenomena are clearly found throughout the British Caribbean, but British Honduras exposes its uniqueness through the Government's almost total dependency upon the denominations for the provision of education and as the following chapter will illustrate, the financial independence of the Roman Catholic Church.

The problems and potential solutions identified by Easter and the later *Dixon Report* shall be examined in the following chapter, as they are put into practice by Governor Burns. Burns was both vigorous and firm, and did not shy away from supporting the forces of law and order in the colony during the period of labour agitation. However, Burns was concerned to provide a modicum of reform in order to undermine these activities. They will be shown not only as a Caribbean wide set of solutions and observations, but as possibly inappropriate to the peculiar system of denominational education existing in the Colony. It is here that the Colonial Office documents betray a certain amount of conflict between church and state over these reforms, and just how the church was able to render many of them ineffectual.

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**Part One**  
**The Beginnings of a Modern Education System, 1931 - 1949**

**Chapter Three**

**STATE AND CHURCH: REFORM AND RESISTANCE**

This is a detailed historical analysis of church and state influences on the early development of education in British Honduras (now Belize). The chapter draws attention to the British neglect of education in the colony and the emergence of increased tensions between church and state as government interest increased. This chapter will deal with issues of Roman Catholic and Protestant rivalry as well as the State-Church dichotomy, both previously surveyed by sociologists but with few conclusions drawn regarding multi-cultural cohesion. It develops the argument raised in the introduction to this Part that the conflict between the Irish American Jesuits and the British Protestants reduced the effect of the Colonial government's capacity to split groups along ethnic or religious lines, as in British Guyana and other parts of the British Caribbean.<sup>1</sup> This equilibrium of power abridged the effectiveness of either denomination to dictate, and compelled a condition of mutual aid, so that political power has never revolved around ethnicity, class or creed. Relative examination will show that this was not the case in other British territories such as Jamaica. Here, all denominations were culturally British centred and more freely controlled by the Colonial government. This is important for an understanding of the contemporary relationship between church and state - and for an understanding of contemporary Belizean society and relatively robust social cohesion. In education, the official documents betray a certain amount of conflict between church and state over these reforms, and just how the church was able to render many of them ineffectual.

Using the education system as a primary focus of social reform, evidence reveals that the

government was prepared to make a show of recognising and defining the need for reforms, unfortunately their efforts were not supported by cash and thus were easily frustrated by a long established church institution. This struggle between desire and pragmatism produced a conflict between church and state, though one that resulted in guarded neutrality and mutual dependency, rather than open warfare, with each party attempting to appear cooperative.

In 1938 a Caribbean wide report known as the 'Moyne Report' encapsulated long term demands from nondenominational parties regarding an increase of state control in the education systems of the Colonial Caribbean. However, it is considered that British Honduras developed differently: 'The marginality of Belize within the imperial scheme along with the considerable power of the denominations prevented execution of these and other recommendations'.<sup>2</sup> *The Daily Clarion* of Friday 30 July 1937 commented, 'The smallness of the Colony was the reason that the Colony at times did not get all the assistance that we think it is entitled to get'.<sup>3</sup> Yet, a similar, though extended view, might be that British Honduras was fortunate to be outside the mainstream of metropolitan interference in its affairs, thus allowing the development of its own agenda. It might be suggested that this was controlled by the church, but given the existence of a stability in interdenominational rivalry during the 1930s and 40s a system of national development may have taken place that was largely a people's agenda. Therefore, in addition to maintaining a relative freedom from government interference, neither side of the church dichotomy gained ascendancy and lay people, by way of social interaction, developed a strong ethical code that flourished separately from dogma and ritual. When added to the growth of cross-ethnic religious and cultural development in British Honduras this inhibited the furtherance of the power factions that tend to cause social and political strife, as has been witnessed in such

as Jamaica and Guyana.<sup>4</sup> These remarks reveal something about the Honduran's attitude towards education as an integral part of family and community life, and the important role education would play in bringing communities together. Denominational education in British Honduras was seen as a divisive force.<sup>5</sup> However, this perspective tends to focus on examples at the individual level rather than examining the overall benefits. Divisive elements may have existed, but the accumulative results within the long process of educational development have had a unifying effect in the Colony.

It is intended to examine a substantial cache of evidence illustrating the growth of conflict between church and state and how this contributed to the early development of a national identity for British Hondurans. The church-state conflict benefits from an analysis of two major education reports instigated by the British and Colonial governments, the *Easter Report* of 1934 and the *Dixon Report* of 1936, both of which find their roots in Southern United States Negro education. Easter's critique focussed on the dual system of education and inadequate teacher training. Although the report itself did not arouse conflict, Governor Burns's use of these recommendations within his overall scheme for social and economic reform created a source of acrimony between church and state. The *Dixon Report* of 1936 carried the recommendations of Easter a stage further and promoted ideas of education related to the work force and national identity. J.C. Dixon, the report's author also openly attacked the proselytising mission of denominational schooling. However, evidence reveals the church's ability to be selective with reforms, modifying those appearing to threaten church authority but not impeding those of financial benefit to their schools, so that by the end of Burns's tenure in 1939 changes, though instigated by the government, were only those given de facto approval by the church.

The conclusion will summarise and assess the arguments and relate church state conflict to an overall hypothesis regarding the neutralisation of power factions in British Honduras and the establishment of a national identity developed from the roots of society rather than be imposed by government or church edict.

#### *The Easter Report 1934*

The dual system of education throughout the Caribbean was criticised during these years in a series of reports, some specific to each country, others general to the region. The first of such for British Honduras was the *Easter Report* of December 1934. B.H. Easter, the Director of Education for Jamaica was brought in to recommend reforms at the instigation of the government and his findings led to what Sanchez has described as, 'the beginnings of modern schooling in Belize'.<sup>6</sup>

It was probably significant that the Colonial Office chose Easter to investigate education in British Honduras rather than Mr. Rutledge of Trinidad. Easter had just completed a tour of the Southern United States where he had witnessed Negro schooling. Only a month after Easter's visit to British Honduras Afro-American teacher William J. Burroughs wrote an article in *The Unemployed Teacher* concerning the propagation of imperialism in both the United States and the various Colonial empires:

Teacher's College is one centre of education for imperialists. Some Colonial teacher or administrator can always be found there. -- Later they confer with Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, another expert in Negro education -- He pilots them around the country showing them Hampton, Tuskegee, and other Negro units. The visitor views graphs, tests, and statistics which prove the Negro to be inferior. He is convinced that America has the proper method by which to keep the Negro in his place.<sup>7</sup>

Although Burroughs does not cite Easter or any other Colonial educationalist directly it is

difficult to imagine that Easter would not have followed a similar itinerary on what may have been a standard tour of the South, thus bringing with him many of these ideas, grounded in Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee which was noted for its adjustment to white power in the American South. Africans and European missionaries, and white colonists regularly visited Tuskegee. Negro education in the South had been criticised on numerous occasions. Langston Hughes is quoted in *The Crisis* as saying, 'Many of our institutions apparently are not trying to make men and women of their students at all, they are doing their best to produce spineless Uncle Toms, uninformed and full of mental and moral evasions'.<sup>8</sup>

Carter Woodson makes similar remarks regarding the undermining of non-Anglo-Saxon cultures,

Negroes are taught to admire the Hebrew, the Greek, the Latin, and the Teuton and to despise the African. The thought of the inferiority of the Negro is drilled into him in almost every class he enters. To handicap a student for life by teaching him that his Black face is a curse is the worst kind of lynching. It kills one's aspirations and dooms him to vagabondage and crime.<sup>9</sup>

Although touring the South is not conclusive proof of any deliberate intent on the part of the British Government to inculcate this kind of racist education, in British Honduras or the Caribbean, the question must be asked why Easter did not tour schools in the North or West to gain a wider perspective on the various American systems? We may at least gather that a narrow viewpoint of a segregated and less well-funded organisation was acquired, regardless of intent. A communist party candidate for the U.S. Vice-Presidency James W. Ford, compared expenditure in 1930s South Carolina where White schools were allocated \$US60.25 per pupil while Negro schools were allowed a mere \$US7.65 per pupil.<sup>10</sup> This compares with a 1936 figure of \$US5.50 (approximately \$BH11.52) for British Honduran elementary education (secondary education still

being a private affair) one year after Easter.<sup>11</sup> At least Southern educators were able to provide profitable insights into parsimonious funding.

Since the assumption of Treasury control financial support for schools in British Honduras had witnessed severe cuts in teachers' salaries, but Easter recommended the retention of the denominational system in order to maintain some levels of funding. This, along with the supervision of schools, teacher training and curriculum reform were all featured in the report. Yet, 'practice was slow, uneven and incomplete owing largely to financial constraints and the resistance of the religious denominations'.<sup>12</sup> An opening sentence from the 1935 Colonial Report on education is revealing; 'In consequence of a report made by Mr. B.H. Easter MBE, Director of Education, Jamaica, the education system of the Colony is being altered'.<sup>13</sup> It is not clear whether this statement originated in naïveté or arrogance, but 'is being altered' might be considered presumptuous given the nature of British Honduran society in 1935.

Burns utilisation of the *Easter Report* was part of an overall reform of the Colony's social and economic infrastructure; part of which concerned a substantial road building programme to connect disparate communities, and cut drastically the huge amounts of time expended on travelling around the Colony by river. In this Burns also sought to create new settlements along the highways: 'I expressed the belief that the construction of roads would be immediately followed by agricultural development'.<sup>14</sup> However through this predominantly economic project, the Governor became an unwitting participant in the spread of multi-culturalism especially Creole, to the out districts:

I have been anxious that these settlements should be something more than mere 'camps' in which the men could live while working, leaving their families in Belize. On more than one

occasion I have been told by a settler that he would have his family to live with him if there was a school to which he could send his children.<sup>15</sup>

The settlers of the Salt Creek area have recently asked me to provide, 'them with a school, promising to bring their families from Belize to live with them in the Settlement if their children could secure education there'.<sup>16</sup> These remarks not only reveal Burns's intentions, but say something about the Honduran's attitude towards education as an integral part of family and community life, although how much of this was prompted by church leaders to attract more funding for church construction and enhance their control in the community is unclear.

Easter's recommendations were an important part of Burns's strategy. Yet a Colonial Office memorandum illustrates a major problem largely concerning the church hierarchies; 'I see that the Governor admits that interdenominational rivalry is rife in British Honduras'. During 1935 tensions existed between the denominational managers to a greater extent than between church and state.<sup>17</sup> A visit by Arthur Mayhew to the Colony in 1935 brought the following comment on the degree of entrenched disagreement between the denominations:

The Education Boards we saw were more like conferences of representatives of hostile powers [instead of] looking at things from the education point of view. Moreover their were endless disputes regarding distribution of schools -- It seems to me very wrong in principle that public education funds should be spent by an executive body consisting almost entirely of nonofficial and non elected authorities.<sup>18</sup>

Given the first part of Mayhew's remarks regarding interdenominational rivalry, and Burn's equally clear observation, it is curious that the latter should make the following plans regarding the Education Board, which he wished to,

[retain] the shadow of power while the substance would rest with the government, and, although this may not altogether satisfy the religious bodies it will save their face and avoid a disagreement which might have an unfortunate effect on the reorganisation scheme generally.<sup>19</sup>

Burns made some unfortunate assumptions, believing that simply because they squabbled among them, the churches would gladly have surrendered any control of the Education Board to the secular authority and be grateful that their 'face' had been saved. He assumed that the Government had the ability to, and should gain, control of the education system, and that reorganisation was axiomatic. Burns may have mistakenly believed that both the de-jure and de-facto regulation of education rested with his Government, as long as the political will existed.

<sup>20</sup> In this he seriously underestimated the de-facto authority of all the denominations, and these closing remarks to the above<sup>[19]</sup> comments indicate a degree of self-deception, 'I am at present working well with the school managers in most friendly cooperation --'. This is probably correct because no real reforms had as yet been implemented, '-- and I am anxious not to antagonise them needlessly at this juncture'.<sup>21</sup> This would appear unavoidable once reforms were mooted. However Burns did make one initial change, preventing the education board from dismissing education officers without the Governor's prior approval.<sup>22</sup> This met with little opposition from the school managers or the denominations as such dismissing was usually undertaken by influential secular members due to disagreements over expenditure; thus any curbing of their power was likely to be welcomed by the church.

From the outset the issue of teacher training increased tensions between church and state. Burns was to remark in his observations on the *Easter Report*, 'In the meantime it is necessary that the Superintendent of Education should devote his time to the instruction of teachers'.<sup>23</sup> British Honduras clearly differed from the remainder of the British Caribbean. The role of the Jesuit community was crucial. Although Roman Catholic schooling in islands such as Jamaica

and Trinidad was predominantly in the hands of the Jesuits, these were New England based and culturally sympathetic to the British system. Those in British Honduras, however were Midwesterners, mainly from Missouri. Of Irish and German extraction they were culturally antipathetic towards the British.

The Jesuits were not the only section of the community with an agenda. The Colonial Government proved itself to be similarly predisposed. After appointing Mr. B.E. Carmen, a Methodist, as the Superintendent of Education Governor Burns addressed the following to the Colonial Office: 'As Carmen is a Methodist I hope that you will be able to obtain an Anglican as his assistant. It seems absurd that I should have to pay so much attention to the religion of educational officers, but the amount of interdenominational jealousy in the Colony is amazing'.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps there was more to Burns attention to religion than is apparent. It is unfortunate that he should have to choose the best Anglican for the assistant's post rather than the best educationalist, but significantly Burns does not contemplate a Roman Catholic. One Protestant and one Roman Catholic would appear a more equitable arrangement, but this emphasises the extent and maintenance of Protestant political power in British Honduras, and the exclusion of the Roman Catholics.

As early as 1933 the British Government had established two schools in London for the training of Roman Catholics for educational work in the colonies. It was known as the Catholic Missionaries Training Course and the syllabus required the approval of the British Government. Most of the Roman Catholic Missions availed themselves of this facility and some self-congratulation is evident in the records:

The fact that the Roman Catholic authorities are giving attention to improving their training, is in no small manner due to the Education Committee and the favourable relations, which it has created with the masses. It is one of the cases where solid work is being done for the improvement of education in the Colonies--.<sup>25</sup>

A similar institution existed for the Protestants at Selly Oak College,<sup>26</sup> that had been utilised by teachers going on to British Honduras. Their Jesuit counterparts, however continued to be trained in the United States. Local school managers expressed concern that student teachers would return dissatisfied if they trained abroad,<sup>27</sup> although they do not make it clear whether this meant dissatisfaction with religion or Colonial life in general.

Easter also called for 'grants-in-aid' for secondary establishments, but these were rejected, taking some twenty years to be implemented. However, a small government scholarship was introduced which resulted in an opposite effect to that intended. The scholarships were awarded based upon academic achievement with no reference to financial need. Thus with the best private primary schools of Belize City providing the highest academic standards, they received the bulk of the awards.<sup>28</sup> The same initiative also caused some interdenominational tension, in that Catholic boys were consistently winning more than the five places allotted to them. Faced with attending a Protestant school or not taking up the award, most Catholics took the latter course of action. After requests from the Governor to increase the number of awards for Catholics, the Colonial Office refused.<sup>29</sup>

#### *The Dixon Report, 1936*

The Colonial Office saw Negro education in the Southern United States as the model for education in British Honduras. Two years after the *Easter Report*, J.C. Dixon, the Supervisor of Negro Education in Georgia (US) was invited to recommend plans for the implementation of the 'Jeannes' supervisory system, recommended by Easter after his observation of practices in the

South, and later to be known as the Education Inspectors. In 1904, the philanthropist and Quaker from Philadelphia Anna T. Jeannes, had donated \$10,000 both to Hampton and Tuskegee to help to introduce industrial education to southern rural black schools, and by 1907, she had provided \$1.2 million to found a programme of training black teachers in the technique of industrial schooling. The Jeannes supervisory was eventually used overseas, in Asia, Africa, the Virgin Islands, and Latin America.

Essentially, J.C. Dixon reiterated the bulk of Easter's report. It is his direct criticism and methods for implementing change that created the greatest conflict. Dixon was critical of the dual church-state system in education. Education throughout the west had seen a shift in emphasis to human resources and denominalisation, and was being viewed as contradictory to nationalism.<sup>30</sup> Education was to be concerned with socialisation to the wider society. Whereas *Easter* had been of a more conciliatory nature making purely educational recommendations, the *Dixon Report* was concerned with the role of the church and the nature of the curriculum in relation to society's needs, primarily agricultural and economic. Once again the government had brought in another 'expert' in Negro education and attempted to apply these methods to British Honduras.

*Dixon* began the process of education for nationalism and, in this, he is openly critical of the church. Easter had recommended the introduction of 'Jeannes' supervisors; well-qualified teachers responsible directly to the Superintendent of Education and through him to the Board of Education, whose only remit would be to travel around the country instructing local teachers on how to improve their classroom skills. However Dixon was not content to miss such an opportunity, stating that all 'Jeannes' should be,

fully cognizant and in sympathy with the Government desire to make permanent and expressive the best elements of the culture of each group and yet must, either discern in the already existing elements or strive continuously to develop certain commonalities in all groups who may serve as media or channels for contact and for social and economic intercourse -- it is far more than a question of school policy. It is a question of government philosophy.<sup>31</sup>

Dixon was aware of past problems between the government and the denominations, and had concluded in favour of greater government involvement. The idea of developing 'group commonalities' as a 'government philosophy' was part of an early attempt to establish a Belizeanization process. The report pointed to a lack of cohesion among Belizeans, although this was largely due to a scarcity of adequate roads in the Colony, which confined groups within their own communities, rather than any substantial inter-ethnic animosity. However, Dixon accurately perceived the value of education for multi-cultural cohesion. He discussed the six language groups and the difficulties of teaching in this environment but states: 'Government and laws may do something to achieve this but the school is undoubtedly the outstanding medium through which it can be achieved, through compulsion and propaganda, but a permanent one can be built through education'.<sup>32</sup> Dixon would have preferred to ignore the church but is forced to admit to the well-established truism, 'One might reasonably say, in fact that education is an appendage of the church'. But he goes on to question church objectives, suggesting that too many of the members of the Board of Education, 'have conflicting roles and greater priorities'.<sup>33</sup>

In the matter of education the Colonial Government could not ignore the church, particularly with regard to the implementation of teacher training. Burns and the Superintendent of Education, Mr. B.E. Carmen, negotiated a sum of \$4,500 a year for three years from the Carnegie Corporation of America to cover the cost of Jeannes supervisors in British Honduras; *The Daily*

*Clarion* comment on the arrival of Jeannes, 'The forces of education were strengthened yesterday by the arrival from Jamaica of Messrs-A.S.Franklin, S.E.Daley, and E.A.Nicholson'.<sup>34</sup> Sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ankle, 'they had a wide field in which to [work] and that much was expected of them. But he was confident of their abilities.'<sup>35</sup>

Typically, the Colonial Office response was to authorise the venture as long as, 'no financial commitment fell to Her Majesties' Government'.<sup>36</sup> Yet that shrewd manipulator Burns knew how to split requests to Whitehall so as to make them more palatable to the Treasury. He waited until the three-year period was complete and made a successful case for funding the thriving Jeannes system from British Government sources.<sup>37</sup> Fortunately the British 'old boy' network had stood the Colony in good stead as Burns was an old friend of the President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York; securing not only funding for 'Jeannes' but for supplies of text books, and a new library and museum.<sup>38</sup> This, while complimentary to Burns, serves to illustrate the importance of American largess in the Colony.

The British Honduran Education Board, with full government and church support, had developed courses for the training of teachers. In 1937 the Queen Street Baptist School in Belize City had been adapted as Queen Street Demonstration School, a facility for the practical instruction of teachers in a simulated school environment. In this the value of living in the capital was elaborated on by the 1937 *British Honduras Education Report* in that only Belize City teachers were attending the demonstration school and evening classes.<sup>39</sup> However, the Colonial Office Education Subcommittees report of that year stated, 'At present the training of teachers was unsatisfactory. Mr. Mayhew pointed out that up to two years ago there had been no control at

all of the denominational schools. The situation was still difficult and delicate'.<sup>40</sup>

During the same year the British Honduras Education Report revealed a similar comment from B.E. Carmen regarding prior control of schools, however he made some complaint regarding the use of the demonstration school in Belize City, and the newly initiated scheme of evening classes, which purportedly had the full support of the church. Carmen was concerned that the denominations were being obstructive and not selecting the right priorities:

The attitude of denominational managers so far was not making cooperation with them easy -- and some department managers had not yet appreciated the value of steps that had been taken to increase their efficiency. In particular they were inclined to grudge the time spent by the pupil teachers in the demonstration school and by pupil teachers and teachers in evening classes, because it reduced the time available for church work and other matters connected with the school.<sup>41</sup>

This indicates the uncompromising clash of two very different approaches to education: one perceived education as embraced by and subordinated to religion, whilst the other viewed religion as something quite separate in regard to the learning process. Carmen complained to the Colonial Secretary about the lack of support for evening classes, noting that 'Attendance was irregular and unpunctual', and that 'Many did not purchase essential text books' and that 'Work was often neglected'.<sup>42</sup> Although understanding the immediate problems and his view of the remedies, Carmen reveals a secular mind-set in not empathising with the fundamental drive of church members to educate body and soul. He acknowledges that most teachers were connected with church duties but adds: 'besides being their duty it was to show their own interest to place preparation for their life's work first for a year or more, allowing the course to take precedence over their other interests during this period'.<sup>43</sup> Here Carmen is not defining 'life's work' in church terms, and he dismisses their wider view of education as 'other interests', as though they were

merely trivial pastimes to be suspended for greater needs. This was probably his viewpoint but culturally inappropriate for British Honduras.

Carmen guardedly attaches blame to the denominational school managers for this outcome: 'It is feared they were advised by those who, formerly the strongest advocates of starting evening classes, and from whom the utmost cooperation should have been forthcoming, adopted an obstructive attitude as soon as the classes were an actuality'.<sup>44</sup> Although Carmen acknowledges that the pupil teacher's circumstances were mitigated by having to work all day he claims that greater cooperation could have been forthcoming 'had the desire been present'.<sup>45</sup> In a confidential letter to the Colonial Office Burns was more scathing in his attitude towards the standards of teacher training, 'The denominations do not care whether a teacher is competent to teach, they are more concerned with his ability to proselytise'.<sup>46</sup> Although as a diplomat he is careful to retain this confidentiality, and in a later report he stresses that he has not yet propounded his policy towards the denominations; 'he realised the value of denominational education [and did not wish to] diminish its influence'.<sup>47</sup> Quite a contrast between private and public utterances but indicative of his general ambivalence.

It gradually became clear through the evidence of British views that Whitehall had been guilty of a long period of 'salutary neglect' in the British Honduran education system. It had been convenient previously, to allow the denominations to control schools from an economic perspective but by the 1930s the government imperative was to harness education to national exigencies such as the work force. In this the government had to gain greater control of the system, but by this time the denominations had developed a greater maturity in their organisation

and infrastructure whereby they would only accept those reforms that suited their own purposes. In particular, the Jesuits were less dependent on Government patronage.<sup>48</sup>

This conflict over teacher training is linked to other important observations in Dixon's report, in that the duplication method of schooling was wasteful of resources. His plans for increasing the amount of local teachers were met with opposition from the foreign principals who had no desire to surrender to local control. He believed importing expatriate teachers came from '—a desire to promote interests other than education (centring) on sectarian religious beliefs.<sup>49</sup> And his main concern was that there was not much of an attempt to relate the curriculum to the country's occupational needs.<sup>50</sup>

During 1936 the denominations had 77 elementary schools in the Colony and were asking for the recognition of 22 more, 18 Roman Catholic and four Anglicans. This would have meant a government salary grant increase of \$6,240 annually in addition to the \$65,280 already provided.<sup>51</sup> Additionally finances may have been the real reason for refusing funding for tertiary education. The Governor ( W. Johnston Officer, Administering Government) commented:

I also notice in the address a desire for greater educational advantage and for university scholarships. I can only surmise that the strides made by education in the Colony during the past two years have encouraged you to ask for more. The enthusiasm is commendable but -- you probably do not realise that presently there is not a sufficient number of youths annually obtaining School certificates to justify the Government in raising the required standard for the Civil Service. When you realise that, I think you will agree that University scholarships must necessarily be some distance off.<sup>52</sup>

The chief concern was that there were not nearly enough competent teachers to supply the existing schools. According to Burns this was exacerbated by problems of duplication:

Only one of these schools is in an area of new settlement -- the others are in settlements of long standing and only four have more than thirty pupils, the highest number in any one

school being thirty-eight. Government should only recognise those areas designated as new settlement. Not more than one school should be recognised in each. All new settlement schools should be government schools under the direct control and management of the Superintendent of Education with proper arrangements for religious teaching.<sup>53</sup>

Duality was largely concerned with the wider rivalry between the Roman Catholic Church and the Methodists in the rural areas. Burns goes on to reiterate the common complaint about the role of teachers: 'The schools will be models because the teachers will be models, because the teachers will be selected on account of their educational qualifications and their ability to teach rather than on account of their qualifications as preachers and catechists'.<sup>54</sup> *The Daily Clarion* reported enthusiastically concerning a Parent-Teachers gathering at the Queen Street Government Demonstration School on Saturday 28 August 1937. In attendance were, B. E. Carmen Superintendent of Education and Jeannes Supervisor Mr. E. A. Nicholson. 'It was intended to be the best school in the Colony'.<sup>55</sup>

In this J.C. Dixon was critical of the competitive nature of the denominations and the duplication of effort in small villages when there were barely enough pupils for one school. Whilst Dixon took the promotion of church interests to be the paramount motive, the churches took such behaviour as axiomatic.<sup>56</sup> As might be expected, the government supporter *The Daily Clarion* echoed Dixon. E.A. Laing, in his column attacked the denominations: 'I certainly do not think there is anything to justify the altogether too strong denominational emphasis that is placed on our respective schools'. He carried this attack to the Teacher's Association:

There is seeming goodwill among all members of this body but it is only on the surface. The average member of the association religiously remembers his denomination and lives in fear that his "brother" of another denomination may rise to heights too exalted-- The members must bury denom---<sup>57</sup>

This kind of comment resembles Governor Burns's earlier observations regarding the Board of

Education. [see note <sup>15</sup> above] However, Dixon's criticisms were based on the prevalent notion of education for economic progress and advantage, rather than for peaceful or integrative coexistence, so the report does not necessarily give weight to a system that prioritises a permeating sense of morality throughout the curriculum, rather than the single lesson marginalising of moral instruction found in secular-state education. Duplication in education is a short-term waste of material resources, but given the human necessity for different forms of religious expression may have been the only long-term method for a concerted multi-cultural development. It is not a question of apportioning blame here, rather of establishing the conflictive nature of the state-church relationship.

#### **Acceptable Reforms**

Burns's policies met with a number of successes, but these point less to any triumph over the churches and more to their power to decide which of his reforms were unlikely to threaten a secular takeover of their schools. It can be seen that most of these were beneficial to the existing system. Between 1936 and 1938 Burns and his Superintendent of Education wished to establish a 'school store'. However sales of books and equipment would be on a gross profit basis only, with both school managers and pupils allowed to purchase. This was required due to the low levels of private competition in the Colony and the Governor claimed he had 'no qualms about Government competing with private enterprise because of profiteering'.<sup>58</sup> The Treasury approved the capital expenditure of \$1,500. Two years later Burns was able to report that the store had been a success; prices were lower than in the shops or, if not, the goods were of better quality. This also had the added value of introducing new types of equipment previously unknown in the Colony, thus providing an indirect form of modernisation in schools.<sup>59</sup> Such improvements were

clearly in the interests of the denominational managers to accept without foregoing any authority to the Government. Perhaps such selective attitudes should have awakened Burns to the de-facto power of the churches, rather than to believe he had achieved some measure of success.

In this area there was little discord between church and state, although the underlying power struggles are evident. The struggle to establish teachers' pensions reveals further conflicts even though the outcome appeared satisfactory to all parties. Educationalists had long considered that the lack of pensions for teachers kept them in post for too long beyond a conventional retirement age. However the British Government's antipathy towards the denominational schools is clearly visible from the following remarks in a letter from the Treasury to A. H. Poynton at the Colonial Office, which the latter also fully endorsed:

But the fact that the British Honduras schools are wholly denominational means that the government's responsibility for the teaching service is not a direct one and is an argument against the government assuming an entirely new liability for pensions. After all if the denominations run all the schools it is up to them to make some provision for their old teachers.<sup>60</sup>

Thus the British argument ran, that although they provided grants for the payment of teachers' salaries these were given directly to the school managers to distribute. Accordingly teachers were not the employees of the government but of the schools thus the responsibility for pensions rested with the schools. However it might be considered that the denominations were running the schools because the government had shirked its responsibilities for a century, thus saving considerable sums on buildings and running costs, as well as teacher's pensions.

Despite all the dissent from the Treasury however, Burns was able to instigate a system of pensions for teachers, although in a letter to the Secretary of State his assessment of the attitudes

of each denomination illuminates the relative state of church finances and power in the Colony:

Anglicans and Methodists would, I think, welcome it. The Baptists may be unable to find the money for their contribution to the scheme. The Roman Catholics may make difficulties owing to the number of Nuns who teach in the school. The teacher, I am confident, would willingly accept the scheme for lack of anything better.<sup>61</sup>

Nonetheless the only difficulty the churches expressed was for those teachers who were already nearing retirement age who would be unlikely to benefit from the Provident Fund due to a lack of contributions. In 1939 Burns rectified this with a successful proposal to the Treasury for Land Grants for those teachers retiring within the following five years providing they had given twenty years' service. They would initially be leased twenty acres (eight in Stann Creek Valley) and be required to build a home and cultivate the land. This would become a free grant at the end of five years.<sup>62</sup> Burns was enthusiastic because it served his purpose of spreading agricultural development throughout the Colony. Land grants and the pension scheme met with no opposition from the churches not only for the benefits received but for the absence of any threat to church hegemony in education.

Evidence suggests that the Jesuits were antagonistic to any non-Catholic influences. During the 1940s they were against British Honduran participation in the University College of the West Indies. Visiting Professor, Robert Rees of Nottingham University had advocated birth control throughout the Caribbean. The Jesuits, not surprisingly, were outspoken in their opposition, although Fr. John Knopp, in his publicised sermon, widened the accusation by claiming that 'a new order - secularisation has set foot on the shores of the colony.'<sup>63</sup> In fact secularisation was not exclusively a Roman Catholic fear. During the late 1930s Governor Burns was concerned with his land settlement scheme and the establishment of new government schools in these

communities, commenting, 'The scheme will however certainly be attacked by all the denominations acting together for the first time) who will think that they see in it the thin end of the wedge designed for the destruction of denominational education'.<sup>64</sup>

Fr. Knopp's comments expanded this concern revealing that the rejection of state control and fears of secularisation in any matters deemed to be the province of the church were the actual issue, and continued to be so throughout the 1940s. In relation to these concerns the 'Moyne Report' called for state control of schools throughout the British Caribbean colonies to rid areas of unnecessary duplication for proselytising purposes.<sup>65</sup> Duality was a thorny issue that continued into the 1940s and throughout the Caribbean area. Typically the British and Colonial Governments used another disaster to impose their will, although to a much lesser degree than in 1931. On November 8th, 1942 the edge of a hurricane passed over Corozal Town, killing twenty people and seriously damaging the primary schools. Governor Hunter wrote,

I cannot speak [for the] Roman Catholic church but certainly the other denominations as represented in British Honduras, are poverty stricken and it is only too probable that if appreciable assistance is not forthcoming our rural schools, the facilities in which are now in the most rudimentary order, will be even less impressive. Nevertheless this Government is in no position to be generous and I could not recommend that any greater liability should be accepted than is represented in the Board of Education rules, namely for one quarter of the cost.<sup>66</sup>

These remarks emphasise the ability of the Roman Catholic Church to withstand financial difficulties but reveal the plight of the Protestant churches who relied more heavily on local contributions. Once again we also witness the actuarial mind-set in action, in that the Government was only liable for one-quarter of the cost and so an opportunity was missed for a show of largess in the community. It is also indicative of the inherent inertia in ruling an empire by committee that the damage took place during November 1942 and yet was still being

considered in November 1943.

The Comptroller of Development and Welfare for the West Indies, based in Barbados saw this as a chance to close some schools; stating that funds should not be used for the, 'perpetration of redundant schools'.<sup>67</sup> A later information services report claimed this was seen 'as an opportunity to rebuild to approved designs'. Funds were allocated by the CD&W at £6680 (S26720) and £9,000 (36,000) for 'equipment, books etc'.<sup>68</sup> Unfortunately for the future balance within denominational schooling the relative poverty of some Protestant schools meant that closure and consolidation took place with the Protestant division, and not between Roman Catholic and Protestant. The following notes by the Comptroller testify to this point,

It has not been decided whether the Anglican and Methodist schools at Corozal should be rebuilt. Methodists have twice the enrolment so it stays. Withdrawal of government assistance amounts to the abolition of the Anglican school. Also Anglican school at Orange Walk to go.<sup>69</sup>

Duality and secularism are linked and while the churches appreciated the economic arguments they understood the attack on their right to multiple church schooling in the communities as the deliberate encroachment of secularism.

By 1945 the Protestant denominations were unable to compete with the well-funded Jesuits.<sup>70</sup> This was beginning to become clear in the evidence on duplication above, and during the 1940s financial stragglers such as the Baptists found difficulty in maintaining their schools. In 1946 the State took over the Baptist school at Crooked-Tree Village after a dispute between parents and the management. A 1948 report described that church as; 'a moribund body with no funds to maintain (the school) in good condition',<sup>71</sup> and Governor Garvey described the building as, 'the worst in the Colony', advising that work began as soon as possible. The report also recommended that this and other schools similarly placed should be under government management, suggesting that there would be considerable local opposition to such plans. Garvey was concerned not to alienate those who had no 'strong views either way in the dual control controversy'. He was also attempting to avoid any criticism that government schools were in worse condition than church schools, 'an argument that would be difficult to refute', given that a total of \$48,000 had been spent on church schools from a combination of Colonial Development and Welfare funds and local contributions.<sup>72</sup> Such neglect would have undermined the case against duplication.

During the first half of the twentieth century there was a massive increase of schooling but the quality favoured Belize City, and secondary schools prior to the 1950s remained the monopoly of the urban masses, predominantly of the capital.<sup>73</sup> By 1943 the country had 112 primary schools, of which <sup>78</sup> were Government-aided denominational schools, and 34 unaided. There were 11,798 on the roll, with an average attendance of 81%. Compulsory attendance was in force and truancy was dealt with by the Constables or in Indian villages, the 1st Alcaldes (village headman). Special grants existed for rural subjects in country

schools along with free tools.<sup>74</sup> The Education Report for 1942 had recommended greater standardisation between urban and rural schools, citing the quality of furnishings and equipment in Belize City schools as one area for concern.<sup>75</sup>

The government did not provide direct funding but, secondary education did receive 65 scholarships of three to four-year's duration. This gave the government some overall interest, hence the unaccustomed prominence of secondary schools in the 1942 Education Report, and the establishment of a tentative interest in secondary schooling throughout the 1940s that was to be more fully developed in the succeeding decade. There were five such schools in the country, two girls and three boys, four of which were in Belize City. The report extended the duplication controversy by expressing dissatisfaction at the existence of five schools for only six-hundred pupils. This meagre total also provides an insight into the unavailability of secondary places, and the amount of pupils leaving school with only an elementary education.

Regarding this apparent lack of interest in secondary education, (a dearth of funding may have been more accurate) the Colonial Government attempted to establish a scholarship for higher education in Britain. The proposal was initially sponsored by the Belize Town Board, and received 'much popular support'.<sup>76</sup> In fact a senior Colonial Office Civil Servant itemised the motives for the scholarship's desirability:

That British Honduras should not lack the facilities similar to those which are already available in Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guiana, Grenada, St. Vincent, Leeward Isles, Barbados and Bermuda. The first consideration is the very large contribution which the men of British Honduras have made to the war effort. A third reason is that [it] would help to stimulate interest in education, which is at present rather lacking beyond the junior certificate.<sup>77</sup>

Clearly British Honduras was well behind the remainder of the British Caribbean in relation

to tertiary and secondary education. Parental attitudes too had often been observed as uninterested beyond the elementary stages, and the possibility of a son or daughter going on to higher education was designed to stimulate interest at all levels.

One envisaged difficulty seemed to be the employment of such a graduate and their retention within the Colony. Evidently the authorities did not wish their investment to migrate to North America at the first opportunity after graduation:

The course of study should be laid down by the Governor so that there would be no difficulty in absorbing the student into government or other employment on his return. There would I consider, be a corresponding obligation upon your government to do its best to assure suitable employment to the successful student.<sup>78</sup>

However there existed some objection to these plans from senior officials:

I confess that if I had a sordid Treasury mind I should be disposed to boggle at the proposal -- it seems going too far to lay on the government our "obligation to provide for the scholar", You can't invent new posts just to place a scholar.<sup>79</sup>

The Ordinance for this had been issued in October of 1944. The course would be open to either sex from 17-21 years of age and they, 'must practice [their] profession in the Colony for at least seven years. They must not marry'.<sup>80</sup> The Secretary of State added that there would be no absolute guarantee of employment but a 'definite prospect'.<sup>81</sup> Although the attempt to adjust the course curriculum to employment may have been borne out of a genuine desire to aid the student, it can be seen that this would undoubtedly reinforce British cultural attitudes, by being taught in a British institution and to administer some form of government activity.

New issues were also illustrated that would become prominent in the 1950s; one such was that education at this level was becoming 'certificate driven'.<sup>82</sup> Another was the shift to training for the economy that had been recommended by J.C. Dixon; 'Practical subjects are coming in slowly due to the scarcity of appropriately trained teachers'.<sup>83</sup> A Colonial Office

authority stated, 'The continuing lack of vocational schools is unfortunate. Looking for proposals for a manual training and Domestic Science College'.<sup>84</sup> A further issue was the prevalence of foreigners within the education system. Rutledge of Trinidad comments: 'Two-thirds are Roman Catholic through the American Mission. In Belize and Stann Creek they are taught by the Americans. Elsewhere teachers are German nuns [with] imperfect English. Foreigners must be dispensed with'.<sup>85</sup> The existence of foreigners in education was nothing new but British official interest was, and this linked with a fresh desire to create a common cultural frame of mind with a British vision. Unfortunately, these plans were largely frustrated during the 1950s, not only with the continuance of denominational foreigners, but with the arrival of many more voluntary aid workers, particularly from the United States. The Jesuits provided a quality of education at least the equal of the Protestants in Belize City, but their lack of political power pre-1950 denied them ascendancy. However their dominance in the rural areas ensured the Jesuits a superior position in a national church-state partnership, which was to be of greater use in the nationalist/ independence movement of the 1950s and 60s. The Jesuits having to adapt to an overarching British system of schooling facilitated any redress in this power equation. This they did quite successfully; however the Jesuits would not be put off from their course of action, and their drive towards an American system of education was to come to a fuller fruition throughout the 1950s.

### **Conclusion**

The Roman Catholic Church, because of its financial and cultural independence from Britain, was able to maintain a powerful hold on its broad ethnic base throughout the rural community. Yet, however much this gave the Catholics influence in the country they were kept from direct political leverage, unlike the poorly funded and diverse Protestant

denominations. The Catholics had unity, and financial and numerical strength, unlike the Protestant church, which lacked most of these qualities but possessed stronger links with the state. Therefore, collectively the church was powerful enough to withstand sporadic reforms from the government, but wanted the unity to command total allegiance from the community at large. Due to cross ethnic support church leaders were unable to exploit an ethno-political following. Similarly the Colonial Government was unable to wrest public loyalty from the church. Therefore powerful factions existed in British Honduras that could influence single issues, with no single group being dominant. This provided a climate of cultural self-development among the populace. The processes of educational reform examined here assist in revealing the limitations of the various controlling elements in British Honduran life.

This chapter has revealed British Honduran education as a primitive affair up to 1931, with only limited state involvement, resulting in a lesser cohesive system. Often villages operated with two distinctive denominational schools where one would have been economically appropriate. This duplicate system was shown as a significant point of conflict between church and state. Whilst the state, aided by the *Easter* and *Dixon Reports*, was highly critical of church dogma, it is revealed that the state authorities wished to replace one dogma with their own, honing the curriculum to the workplace. The churches saw this as a direct threat to their hegemony in education and to a stricter moral schooling. Certainly they saw secular education as limited in its benefits, bereft of moral guidance. It is suspicion of motive on either side that appears to be the principal source of conflict.

By 1939 education in British Honduras was becoming more efficient and taking shape as a modern system. Teacher training and classroom supervision were established and pensions

were being offered to older teachers to encourage them to retire rather than remain in post indefinitely. The idea, if not the fact, of industrial education had become acceptable.

However, the church had not surrendered any control of its schools to the government. It was not simply the century long period of the government's 'salutary neglect' that had strengthened the church control of schools. The British Government, itself beleaguered by economic depression, lacked the will to provide a large cash injection to build modern state schools, and supply well qualified teachers from overseas. Instead His Majesty's Government attempted to meddle with the system and provide piecemeal funding. In this the church was not only able to maintain managerial control in schools and the education board but to dictate the level of reform to suit its own objectives. The war effort and post-war austerity in Britain ruled out any change to this policy, and by the 1950s a powerful independence movement grew from the St. John's College Alumni that kept in check British Government authority in the colony's home affairs.

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Note: Some confusion may arise from the terms 'duality' and 'duplication'. The former refers to the dual church-state system that has continually operated within the Belizean education system. The latter relate to the often-felt wasted effort whereby more than one denomination would open a school where neither pupils nor resources existed to support one school.
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16. Burns to Secretary of State, 2nd letter of 20/3/35. CO 123/352/12.
17. Memorandum on file, Education Reorganisation. CO 123/352/12.
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43. Ibid. CO 123/373/4.
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47. Report of the Sub-Committee on Non-African Education, 1937. CO 123/363/17.
48. Here exists, an interesting parallel with standard British policy in North America. A similar period of 'salutary neglect' allowed, in the absence of close government control, the development of a political maturity that caused the British to lose their American colonies in the eighteenth century. In both cases, it suited the British to follow a laissez-faire policy, but when they wished to impose greater control, they found the local authorities difficult to dislodge.
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Development and Welfare Fund were active in the Colony for some years. In 1940 the first C.D.& W Act enabling financial assistance from Britain to all the Colonies wrote off debts of S1, 113,000 from British Honduras. From 1945 and the second Act, £120,000,000 (S480, 000,000) was allocated over the next ten years, with £600,000 (S2, 400,000) available for British Honduras. B. H: British Information Services. October 1947. Archives of Belize. MC 3536.

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## Part One

### The Beginnings of a Modern Education System, 1931 - 1949

#### Chapter Four

##### COHESION IN THE COMMUNITIES:

Regarding the relationship of education to community James W. Ford commented,

The idea that education is confined to educational institutions, that it is merely a study of books is, at best an unreal and poverty-stricken conception. It does not grasp the real relationship of education to social life. If ideas are to become a force, they must seize hold of the masses.

Ford is of course discussing political ideologies; he continues, 'In this respect, the basic struggle is between the ideas of capitalism and the ideas of communism'.<sup>1</sup> However the principle of this argument has never been lost to the church missions throughout the world. In British Honduras the church and state both saw education as something broader than the boundaries of the school. To the state it meant economic development in line with the secular needs of the community; to the church this had a spiritual basis, concerned foremost with morality and dogma. Both required a high degree of social control to achieve their ends. In British Honduras it was possible to identify two large communities, Creole and Mestizo; although, if used too freely they become too fixed and crude; cross-cultural religious affinities defy this. Such simplification is a hindrance to understanding 'Belizean' culture, which is a 'dynamic process'.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the uniqueness of 'Belizean' culture lies in its position as a meeting place of the white-Creole-Carib and Spanish-Mestizo-Indian, providing a '--racial, linguistic, and cultural heterogeneity unusual in either the West Indies or Central America'.<sup>3</sup>

British Honduras was free from racial tensions predominantly because ethnic groups were well separated by 'social and occupational distance', causing the absence of coercive tactics.<sup>4</sup> However, this 'distance' did not survive long after the 1930s. But the freedom from coercion

and friction experienced by these isolated and unique communities has meant there being no history of ill will between the various ethnic groups, so that by the time community convergence was underway, education was able to foster the already established cultural empathy.

As the objective here is to examine the link between education and British Honduran community life the chapter begins with personal accounts of travel throughout the colony and the development of new settlements through road building and the subsequent reduction in river traffic. In turn these developments required new schools for these new communities, which are examined in the light of their cultural impact upon the curriculum and on attitudes towards attendance. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the consequences of events from this period and the way forward into the 1950s - and Part Two of this thesis

#### **Passage around British Honduras**

Until Governor Burns's extensive road building project of the mid-1930s, movement around British Honduras was confined chiefly to trails and river systems. The recollections of various inhabitants of the Colony conjure up a pace and time much slower than became true after the 200 miles of roads initiated by Burns. Amos Ford remembers his move from Corozal in the north to Belize Town, on a boat named the *Africola*:

So we packed our huge trunks, furniture and cooking utensils, and prepared to move by sea to the port of Corozal. Even though I was only five years old, I can still recall, vividly, the big white, one masted passenger motor vessel that traded between Belize City and the North. To us as children, it was all very exciting. We had never been on a boat that size before! It carried about 100 passengers -- Many people were seasick during the twelve-hour journey, for the sea was rough and the vessel could not have been doing much more than eight knots per hour.<sup>5</sup>

Charles Edmonds recalls his memories of this vessel arriving in Orange Walk from Corozal.

The words he chooses evoke the tranquillity of life in the Colony and the type of trade

moving between Belize Town and the other urban centres:

What a moving sight as she steams up the placid river between the green river banks, her white paint gleaming in the sunlight and her rails crowded with passengers -- then the deckhands and labourers begin the task of unloading the bags of rice, boxes of condensed milk, drums of oil, kegs of butter, candles, flour, salt, barrels of pork, pigtail --. The goods are loaded onto the mule-carts of Joe Cain and Inez Castillo for delivery to the various shops and homes.<sup>6</sup>

The population were evidently isolated from each other yet excited by the prospect of seeing other parts of the Colony and other people. The various writers speak with enthusiasm for their journeys. There was clearly a thriving internal and external trade being undertaken along the Northern coastline, comprising of,

Chicle in blocks, corn in sacks from the mill of J. W. Price, coconuts from Santa Cruz, pigs from Caledonia, alligator skins, tobacco leaves bound into bundles, cackling chicken, eggs, and from the Gonzalez distillery, fifteen and twenty-five gallon casks of 'Taste Tells' rum.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, wealthy landowner Emilio Awe related his travels by river where, during the dry season it could take two weeks to transport cargo on his boat, the El Colosso, the sixty miles from Cayo to Belize Town. For much of the time the rivers were dry and strong ropes had to be tied to trees further up the river to winch up the boat over the rocks.<sup>8</sup> When the smaller sizes of cargo did not justify such an expedition, they used to go to Belize on horseback, which then took about four days, still a considerable time for such a short distance. However there were no roads, only a rough trail and Haulover Creek, just south of the capital, so named because of the hand-winch used to convey travellers onwards. Movement around British Honduras was restrictive but none of the evidence suggests that different groups felt as though travelling to the regions was foreign or held any fear. There is a definite sense of belonging to a single society.

Moreover, difficulty in traversing the countryside was not limited to long distance journeys. A government memorandum of 1935 recommended, 'Government should provide bridal paths along rivers to allow children to get to school during high tides and rain'.<sup>9</sup> Two years later the annual Education Report attempted to apportion blame for this kind of absence:

Irregular attendance, impassable roads, flooded rivers. Often used as an excuse for keeping children from school or for not opening the school. Teachers have not insisted on punctual and regular attendance or individual parent's interest. Attendance has correlated whenever this has been done.<sup>10</sup>

Here the roads and rivers are singled out as an excuse. The real blame is apportioned primarily to the teachers and the indifference of parents. Perhaps this offering had more to do with avoiding the expense of providing the necessary funding to upgrade the roads?

#### **The creation of new communities**

The introduction of a road system had the clear economic motive of aiding existing trade, but it was also part of Governor Burns's plan to encourage a shift in population from Belize Town to the rural areas for agricultural development. The Public-works department stated, 'This Colony is so very much undeveloped in the hinterland and fertile regions that it seems impossible to conceive of any expansion taking place until all weather roadways are built'.<sup>11</sup>

An earlier report also made some comment on cultural isolation, 'lack of urban centres, undeveloped conditions of the Colony, lack of communication, preserve a conservation spirit and attachment to traditional pursuits'.<sup>12</sup>

A study of the Southern village of San Antonio in Toledo district and its 'receptiveness to a modernisation process, revealed an example of villages opening up to the wider society for

a perceived social and economic advantage after the building of a link road to the district capital of Punta Gorda.<sup>13</sup> This was achieved with some regret from the older generation (through loss of authority). With the opening of the road in 1940 'institutionalisation' to the Creole/Hispanic society caused a 'de-institutionalisation' from the old Mayan ways but with the Mopan Indian community in general content to allow in a dominant Creole/Hispanic culture.<sup>14</sup>

Burns's intention however, was largely to create new communities and disperse the excess population of Belize in to agricultural work. Burns ascribes much of the success of settlement both public and private to road building; 'I expressed the belief that the construction of roads would be immediately followed by agricultural development -- the construction of new roads has been scarcely fast enough to meet the demands'.<sup>15</sup> Another report infers that road building had a secondary usage to bring about certain other reforms; tacit agreement is implied by the anonymous margin admonishment, 'Quite the wrong thing to say'.<sup>16</sup> Burns certainly had a long term vision of roads developing agriculture through new settlements; whilst evidence has shown that he wished to introduce more government schools and thus indirectly break the power of the churches within education.

Burns nevertheless, would have to struggle against opposition from more than one area. The labour movement led by Antonio Soberanis saw road building as simply a 'sop' to diffuse rebellion in the Colony, and there were many complaints concerning the value of labour. Burns was to admit later, in his account of that period that he, 'was largely influenced by the grave need for any development which might provide employment in the crisis then existing'.<sup>17</sup> Soberanis was reported as saying: 'On the road labourers are getting \$1.00 a day,

they have to buy clothes, food, and have pay truck fare. In Hill Bant instead of labourers getting there 4lbs of Pork, they are getting 2lbs of Salt Beef and 2lbs of lard'. And Thomas Sabat, a Carib from Stann Creek stated, 'whites need labour so they must pay for it'. However, whilst Burns's scheme may not have dissipated interest in labour relationships, work had the effect of diminishing the likelihood of riots. Sgt Building reports Soberanis' frustration when many leave after he calls for a collection. He berates them, saying that the people 'wanted every damn thing free, that's why they can't get ahead.'<sup>18</sup>

In his own account of these years Burns discusses the construction of roads. He denies any 'Machiavellian idea' that the mahogany contractors hampered their construction in order to retain a 'large floating population' as a casual labour pool. He then undermines his own argument by adding, 'there was no doubt that many of the leading people in the Colony were against the construction of roads'.<sup>19</sup> Yet much of this must have come through the Legislative Council; although here this would have been largely verbal with only influence to support their opposition. Not only had the Whitehall Treasury direct control over the Colony's finances, but most of the funding was drawn from the Hurricane Reconstruction Loan. Whilst this may have required a Legislative Council debate and vote, during Burns tenure of office the Governor possessed 'overriding' powers regarding the passing of bills.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to note that vested interests opposed any attempts at providing continuous employment for British Hondurans. However, development of an efficient transportation infrastructure remained a high government priority long after the cessation of Burns's tenure of office. The Colonial Development and Welfare allocation for road building during 1948 amounted to \$227,670.<sup>21</sup>

Burns's strategy was to encourage wider land settlement throughout the colony, particularly away from Belize Town, although the Orde-Browne report was disparaging of Creole reticence to shift into agriculture: 'The drudgery of agricultural work is distasteful to them and at the first opportunity for work in the forests they seem likely to abandon agriculture'.<sup>22</sup> Burns held prejudicial views regarding Creole adaptability; 'They have not the gift of perseverance. -- Blame others for their lack of success. -- Good workers at what they understand i.e. forestry'.<sup>23</sup> Evidently expectations were not high. Some credibility is warranted regarding the long-standing tradition of forestry work, particularly among the Creoles. This originated in the former large profits from the forestry industry, thus high earnings, provided self-esteem when compared to agriculture. Therefore Burns long-term strategies for encouraging a gradual interest in agriculture may well have been justified.

Regarding land settlement the British Government had mooted several ideas usually emanating from a wider Caribbean policy. The Colonial Office felt that British Honduras, with its spatial capacity should absorb much of the surplus West Indian population;<sup>24</sup> but there was little enthusiasm for this plan, particularly as most West Indians had no experience of forestry, and possessed an abhorrence for field work as a reminder of slavery. There was also some discussion concerning the settlement of Jewish refugees from Europe but these came to naught. Burns was naturally more concerned with internal migration; nevertheless, past attempts had not been fruitful. Between 1932 and 1933 sixty-one persons had been settled on Crown lands in the Stann Creek Valley. The Colonial government had paid for the clearing of land and house building, supplied rations for two months and loans for seed and plants. The scheme failed and by 1938 only sixteen continued.<sup>25</sup>

The government attempted a new approach, this time providing fifty settlers with loans to be repaid within one year. Some measure of success was achieved in that although only thirty-two of the *original* fifty remained, the total had risen to one-hundred and twelve. Unfortunately the owners had difficulty in collecting the rents with \$600 still outstanding. Burns, blamed the cash advances for causing indebtedness, and so he embarked on a new plan.<sup>26</sup>

The Governor felt strongly that indebtedness prevented the settlers from making economic progress. 'I have come to the conclusion that better results would be obtained by assistance given in the form of feeder roads and demonstration plots'. Therefore with the Rockstone Pond scheme no advances were given but guaranteed work was provided on public roads until the settlers could support themselves on the proceeds of their plots. By 1938 some 637 families had been encouraged to settle between Belize and Maskalls, conservative estimates put this at 2,500 persons. A few of these were Jamaicans and many were Hispanics from the rural districts, but the majority had moved out of Belize where they formerly swelled the ranks of the unemployed. The relative successes of this venture Burns points out, was due to avoiding leaseholds, 'nothing would encourage the people to take up agricultural life so much as the grant of freeholds'. Purchase was allowed in instalments and it appears from Burns's testimony that the settlers preferred to pay the 70c per acre instalment than the 30c per acre rental equivalent.<sup>27</sup> Communities were now converging, with the larger and more influential Creole group moving into and mixing with the Mestizo and Maya, consequently providing a new blend of culture with Creole salience.

### **New schools for new communities**

Prior to 1950 the Creoles often acted as though 'Belize City was Belize' (British Honduras).

The Latin peasantry was 'in, not of' the colonial society. Frequently Maya and Hispanic villages would still contain Creole officials, such as magistrates or policemen. Ebenezer Ford had been appointed as the community policemen for the Mayan village of Pachacan, ten to fifteen miles northwest of Corozal Town. His son Amos recollects their life among these 'rather shy people'. Although he claims they mixed well, his description of them as 'the locals' defines his family as outsiders. This is not surprising when the policemen were also the arbiters of summary justice, 'My father was also responsible for nearby smaller villages, -- and he was obliged daily to visit one, two, or even three of the smaller villages to dispense instant justice in the minor domestic disputes that arose between any two neighbours in a particular village'.<sup>28</sup> Similarly Creolisation was prevalent within education practice, and teaching contributed actively to the interaction between Spanish and Creole.<sup>29</sup>

Eventually new schools were initiated within these new settlements. Burns requested that the Anglican mission establish a school at Salt Creek, whilst a government school was launched at the Rockstone Pond Settlement. The Catholic mission also founded a new school, at the Santana Reserve, although Burns's comments show that it was not possible to provide government assistance for the latter at that time. Funding schools in connection with his land settlement scheme was a problem, as was the availability of only a small number of 'reasonably efficient' teachers, and the inability to get the various denominations to accept single schools in each community. Here Burns reiterates the need to establish 'urgently needed' new schools under government control and management.<sup>30</sup> But this erstwhile controversy gained little ground and was still being echoed by Governor Garvey in 1948, 'The

report also recommended that the new schools should be under government management', followed by the familiar codicil, 'There will be considerable local opposition to this suggestion'.<sup>31</sup> However the Governor later revealed the long term value he placed upon education, 'I am confident that these schools will have a good effect on the permanence of the settlements'.<sup>32</sup> Presumably he had economic considerations in mind, yet the cohesive value of these new schools cannot be underestimated.

However, unlike the government schools it appeared that private schools could compete with the church and provide a secular attack on church hegemony. But the churches fully understood the regulations governing such activities and were quick to exploit any irregularities. Fr. Kammerer wrote to the District Commissioner at Corozal concerning one such school,

It is now more than three months that a certain Mr. Gibson has carried on and is carrying on, I am told, a private school at or near Carolina within the two-mile compulsory area of Xaibe. He has during this time drawn children away from our Government-aided schools.<sup>33</sup>

Fortunately for Fr. Kammerer, though less for the operator Mr Gibson, the irregularities transpired as serious. The District Commissioner contacted the Inspector of Schools Belize, informing him that:

This school was opened by the "Seventh day Adventists" up at Carolina on the San Francisco Road and a man by the name of RODWAY GIBSON alias RODDIE was placed in charge as Teacher, and has apparently been getting results in spite of his own history. Gibson is an Ex-convict, and at the Supreme Court in Belize was sentenced to several years for "RAPE" in either 1927 or 1928, --Some pupils were taken away from his School as on May 11th he was beastly drunk in Town, lost his trousers and was naked on the ground, this was the Baron Bliss Regatta day. -- Cannot say whether this School has been sanctioned by the Government as have seen no notice in the Government Gazette.<sup>34</sup>

How Gibson was able to establish his school in the face of government scrutiny is unclear.

But the case says much for the lack of effective controls, and the relative freedom for

Hondurans to conduct their own affairs, as well as the jealousies of other churches. The matter eventually found its way to the Colonial Secretary from the District Commissioner. Pastor C. B. Sutton of the Seventh Day Adventists, disclaimed any connection with the school and informed the DC that Gibson was a convict, 'but that the Adventist church has no followers at Carolina'.<sup>35</sup> It appears that the DC was not convinced of this disclaimer as he promptly sent a memo to Police Sergeant Wellington on 1/5/33, instructing him to tell Mr Gibson to close his school, and that he, 'must apply for permission from the Board of Education, stating his qualifications, certificates he holds'.<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately no record appears to exist regarding the outcome. Nor was there any further indication either way regarding motives. How far was this inspired by interdenominational rivalry between the Roman Catholics and the Seventh Day Adventists? It must be considered odd that as strict a denomination as the Seventh Day Adventists should choose a man with the alleged background of Gibson.

Rivalries of this kind were common and continued into the 1940s. The language of instruction among the Mayan Indians was changed for just such a purpose. The House History Log Book of the San Luis Rey Parish church of 16.1.47 states, 'This day was marked by the inception of the formal teaching of the Maya language in the school--The children responded with great interest'. Evidently this came under some criticism as the local church felt a need to provide a defence: 'I am aware that some may consider this step to be senseless and retrograde'.<sup>37</sup> The log book records some glib foundations for introducing the Maya language, cited as prayer and cultural value, or as an 'Opportunity to introduce the people to their own history and to strengthen them in their virtues'.<sup>38</sup> However, further statements tend

to portray a rather different justification for shifting from the English language:

In the near future San Antonio will be subjected to many and varied outside influences. Not all will be good. -- Protestant wolves will some day attack the flock here. By making the Maya language the medium of worship so far as possible it is hoped to make the people more resistant to errors that will be introduced through the medium of the English language.<sup>39</sup>

This example from 1947 shows the fear of other denominations, and the amount of disruption one village church was prepared to bring to the lives of its occupants as in other respects they were attempting to adapt to a wider national community.

Taking the Mayan village of San Antonio as an example, the new accessibility facilitated by road building brought the first Roman Catholic priest, as well as the first policeman and government medical inspector. The process of assimilation was enhanced by a rise in primary attainment, although secondary schooling did not arrive until the 1950s.<sup>40</sup> By then the Creolisation process was well underway requiring only a slight compromise to accommodate the wider remit of Belizeanisation/Nationalism.

#### **Culture and the curriculum**

Nevertheless Creolisation had its problems within schools, primarily in the field of language. There had been some discussion on the usefulness of promoting a single language as the medium of teaching in schools throughout the British West Indies.<sup>41</sup> Much stemmed from the Colonial period when the use of the 'best English' was promoted as superior and a stepping stone to enhanced status. This tied in with attitudes in British Honduras towards a practical education. Orde-Browne was to comment, 'manual instruction is liable to arouse strong opposition from the parents -- subjects such as biology, hygiene, economics, dietetics etc are largely ignored'. The report observed that instructions appeared to be almost entirely 'Latin

grammar and pianoforte'. On agricultural education he observed, 'The maintenance of a depressing patch of garden is unlikely to inspire much enthusiasm [and] School masters cannot be expected to have developed the necessary expertise'. Parents held a high regard for 'black coat' employment, and there existed a paradox of living in a society that would necessitate them making a living from the soil yet regarding 'black coat' employment as the 'worthiest ambition'.<sup>42</sup> As early as 1932 Governor Kittermaster commented, 'The desirability of concentrating on a pure form of English requires earnest consideration'.<sup>43</sup> This was in an effort to shift the emphasis away from all things English being superior especially when connected to those professions close to government, such as the civil service and the law.

Regarding the local 'patois' in Jamaica, Le Page points out that it was, 'Hard to dignify something that you have been taught to regard as the essence of the undignifiable'.<sup>44</sup> A study of communities in Northern Belize revealed the problem that instruction in class was given in standard English to children with competence only in the vernacular. However, explanation was often given in Spanish or Creole, even at High School.<sup>45</sup> It is unclear therefore, to what extent 'explanation' was given and in what measure this affects the de facto situation. Burns was in favour of promoting languages other than English; he conceded that most 'experts are for the vernacular, they might be right in thinking that a child will learn more in its early years if taught in a language it understands'.<sup>46</sup> An earlier memo revealed an awareness of this issue:

With the advancement of education and the lengthening of the school life; the development of Spanish as a second language will probably be economically desirable. Whether it is desirable and possible to develop an indigenous culture and literature (Carib or Maya) it is for those on the spot with local knowledge to consider.<sup>47</sup>

In this, the divisiveness centres on class-linguistics and cleaves society into 'haves and have-nots'. Nonetheless, in Belize, linguistic ability encouraged cross-ethnic solidarity

because class was not necessarily based upon ethnicity, and significantly many educated Belizeans spoke Creole.<sup>48</sup>

The emphasis on English as the main method of communication reinforced the type of subject being taught, particularly in social and humanities studies. One report stated, 'It is hoped that the publishers would supply a supplementary Reader in history and geography specially adapted to British Honduran conditions'.<sup>49</sup> This took until the 1950s to appear.

By 1942 some general West Indian histories were provided, but questions were raised as to whether they were actually being taught, and did the teachers know anything about Caribbean history, themselves having been steeped in English history.<sup>50</sup> The inappropriateness of subjects taught to subject-people was not unique to British Honduras. Carter Woodson wrote of education in the Deep South:

The seat of the trouble is in what the Negroes are now being taught. Their education does not bring their minds into harmony with life as they must face it. The Negro boy sent to college by a mechanic seldom dreams of learning mechanical engineering to build upon the foundation his father has laid, that in years to come he may figure as a contractor or as a consulting engineer.<sup>51</sup>

Woodson lays an equal share of the blame for this attitude with the Negroes in a similar fashion to observations made about black coat employment in British Honduras. Parental attitudes largely governed their children's approach to what was worthwhile in education.

Racial tensions also existed within schools and some groups such as the Garifuna protested at the discipline imposed by churchmen. The Garifuna leader, T.V. Ramos wrote in *The Belize Independent* of 21 January 1942 under the heading of 'STANN'CREEK NOTES'.

Pupil teachers in the Wesleyan School have access to beat up people's children, this is an everyday routine and should the aggrieved parent go to the teacher to lodge a complaint he

gets no redress; -- the teacher acts as though he is a law unto himself.--I have witnessed on different occasions pupil teachers being compelled partly against their will to hold down a big boy who might have resented the evident cruelty of the teacher, who come right over him with all his might and beat him mercilessly with the strap.<sup>52</sup>

Clearly life within denominational schools was not always one of Christian persuasion.

Similarly Ramos also put the moral standing of some teachers into question:

the conduct of a few female pupil teachers during last year 1941 is not impressive, three of them known definitely to be in a state of pregnancy continue to teach in the school without any resistance from the present management and notwithstanding public indignation.<sup>53</sup>

In turn this inherent bias perpetuated Creole influences throughout society, whereas they were the dominant single group by the apex of the 30s and 40s, their numbers totalled less than half of the population: 27,000 Creoles; 14,000 Maya; 10,000 Hispanic; 5,000 Carib; 1,000 others; the ratio being, 27,000:30,000. Therefore the English connection propagated Creole superiority, and the system succeeded in permeating a Creole based Belizean consciousness.<sup>54</sup>

Yet the Creoles were not so overwhelming as to inflict a forced acculturation on the non-Creole groups.

Some friction occurred as training paradigms were originated externally. Consequently most of the teachers were Creole or Garifuna. Unfortunately this not only brought a dominant culture, but a disdain for Indian traditions. Non-Indian teachers, particularly the Creoles, considered the Indians as 'backward' and 'talked down' to them.<sup>55</sup> However, much of this was due to the rivalry of the Creoles over their social superiority to the Garifuna. The Garifuna had entered the teaching profession in British Honduras 'wholeheartedly' at the behest of the Catholic church, and taught all groups in the rural areas; whereas the Creole teachers were unwilling to teach outside Belize Town or to accept the Garifuna within their ranks.<sup>56</sup> Creole teachers were content to allow Caribs to dominate the rural teaching spectrum as long as they

did not attempt to influence the agenda within Belize Town. *The Clarion* published a letter by one Carib teacher bemoaning this attitude.<sup>57</sup> This was a significant recollection of Alan Burns in his later autobiographical account of these years. He stressed the 'bitter resentment' of the Caribs because the 'Negroes' look down on them.<sup>58</sup> The Indians were well aware of these attitudes but education was seen as a means of gaining access to 'modernity' and prosperity.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, without a history of serious conflict between the Indian and other communities certain levels of minor animosities could be tolerated, given sufficient economic incentive.

By 1921 60% of the population was Catholic, but denominational adherence did not prevent mixed marriages. The Methodists compromised by nominating male offspring to the Protestants and females to the Catholics.<sup>60</sup> The mandatory nature of Catholicism and the female more often determining the religious practice of a family provides a key to the wider spread of Catholicism.

It is to these church missions into the rural areas that we perceive the greatest level of early integration. Burns was to comment, 'The Mayas are all Roman Catholics, in theory at any rate'. Was Burns casting doubt over their sincerity? Possibly they converted to Christianity for the social benefits, yet in this it appears the Maya were prepared to be obedient. Burns continued, 'The Jesuit priests have much influence over them'.<sup>61</sup> Although the Catholic church was predominantly Hispanic/Indian it was not exclusively so. The Catholics were more ethnically diverse by the late 1940s than the Protestants, with a large element of Catholic Creoles living among and partially orientated towards the Mestizos.<sup>62</sup> The position in 1943 reveals the Catholic predominance: '63 Roman Catholic, 17 Anglican, 14 Methodist, 2 Baptist, 1 Salvation Army, and 2 Government schools'.<sup>63</sup> Although Burns antipathy for the

wastefulness of the denominational system is well-evidenced he does not disparage the abilities of their teachers:

The Roman Catholic mission was very largely supported by American contributions, the priests were well-educated men and better preachers than most I have listened to in the colonies. The Methodists were fortunate and ran a very good secondary school. The Baptist minister, who was the senior unofficial member of the legislative council when I arrived, served in British Honduras for a great many years.<sup>64</sup>

Burns did achieve some measure of success in expunging duplication, even if this did not mean the acceptance of secular schooling. Within the new development areas Burns claimed there were only nine schools with an attendance below twenty-five, but in each case the school was the only one in the vicinity.<sup>65</sup> They remained in denominational control, yet it would appear that parents would not forbid their children to attend a school controlled by another denomination, as providing some form of education was a priority. Burns executed a degree of diplomacy here. His overriding concern had been to, 'placate the denominations without surrendering too much, if any, powers'. He applied a similar strategy in relation to the parents; taking the decision to fund these changes from 'General Revenue' rather than a direct 'Education Tax' on rural workers who could ill afford further taxation.<sup>66</sup> The necessity for compromise in British Honduras is revealed when the Rockstone Point Government School was later deemed to have been a failure.<sup>67</sup>

#### **Prescriptions for pupil attendance**

Many were 'racially Creole and culturally Mestizo' due to long residence in a dominant community.<sup>68</sup> This diverse support was aided by the spread of Catholic Credit Unions, formed initially in May 1944 as the Holy Redeemer Credit Union, and eventually spreading to other non-Catholic community groups. British Honduras soon possessed the only 'fully

pledged Credit Union in a British West Indian school'.<sup>69</sup> The Colony had clearly developed a positive attitude towards education as a means to social betterment in general, and the government were also beginning to see education in broader terms. Yet there were economic encumbrances inhibiting attendance. As early as 1932 Governor Kittermaster had complained, not only of the separation of pupils from their parents due to the long distances involved in secondary education but that, 'the high rate of fees is far beyond the means of an ordinary parent of a primary school pupil'.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless this element of separation was an important component in the process of adjusting the younger generation to other ethnic groups, furthermore without the ingredient of economic incentive familiar to their parents.

Compulsory attendance had been enforced at the primary level by 1939, but with no attempt at a similar provision for secondary pupils, possibly due to the private nature of secondary schools. According to that year's education report attendance was now running at 80 per cent, which compared favourably to the West Indies. An increasing number of pupils were staying on until they reached the school certificate standard.<sup>71</sup> It may be that being a largely agrarian economy parents were willing to send their children off to school for the day when small and incapable of productive work, then wanting them at home during what would be the high school years to work the land or earn a wage in the forests. In the interests of sustaining a rural economy the government may have, de facto supported this activity. Similar parental attitudes were evident in parts of rural England at the turn of this century.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless in enforcing attendance local inspectors had to accommodate individual circumstances: 'Attendance officers employ "peaceful persuasion" when dealing with truants and that in the face of genuine hardship e.g. absence of clothing or lack of food they exercise

discretion in enforcing the law'.<sup>73</sup>

Attendance officers may have employed peaceful persuasions but the government was not slow to enforce strict codes on young children in the use of the juvenile facility in the village of Pomona, Stann Creek. In October of 1933, the Superintendent of Police had taken up the case of an 8-year-old child by the name of Eustace Tescum. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary he described Tescum's circumstances:

He simply will not stay at home or go to school. He roams the streets and no one knows where he sleeps. The only way his parents can keep him home is to tie him to a bed, but immediately he is released he runs away again. His parents are not unkind to him. He has been arrested several times by the Police wandering abroad at nights and he has been whipped several times. There is insanity in his family and it may be that he is tainted although, apart from his wanderlust, he appears to be normal. -- as far as I can see the only thing to do with him is to send him to Pomona.<sup>74</sup>

The Superintendent admitted that Tescum's only abnormality was his 'wanderlust'. Sending him to a juvenile institution such as Pomona may appear severe by present day standards but clearly exceptions could be made in a 1930s colony. He continues with his plea: 'The DC [District Commissioner], Belize says that he has received instructions not to commit any boy less than 11 years of age. This is an abnormal case and I recommend that the DC receive authority to commit this boy to Pomona'.<sup>75</sup> The Principal of Pomona commented in a letter to the Colonial Secretary, 'I have no objection admitting the boy referred to in (1) if you will give permission for his admission as an inmate to this institution'.<sup>76</sup> So, on 2.11.33. the 8-year-old Tescum was made an inmate of Pomona. How long he remained there is unclear.

It was commented upon that children were well turned out in town but were, 'handicapped by unsuitable diet and unhygienic conditions. Parents require education even more than the children and widespread propaganda particularly with reference to questions of hygiene and

food would render a real service to the community'.<sup>77</sup> Admirable work was being done at the Infant Welfare Centres and Burns had insisted on a school meal for all children; as well as regular school inspections by Doctors and Dentists, with follow-up home visits.<sup>78</sup> By 1942 a Whitehall report was able to boast of free milk and medicines and that few schools were without latrines or a proper water supply. Importantly for the community Parent Teacher's Associations had been established successfully, with schools running open days, involving whole villages in their activities.<sup>79</sup> Since 1943 more than \$24,000 had been spent on church schools by Whitehall and \$23,000 from local funds'.<sup>80</sup>

As the 1940s drew to a close, the Secretary of State approved a free grant of \$44,000 for the purpose of building a technical high school in the capital.<sup>81</sup> The idea of the technical school was, to provide a grounding for thirty boys each year twelve to fifteen years of age 'to make them better fitted to later apprenticeships',<sup>82</sup> and that curriculum should also match future employment.<sup>83</sup> 'Fees should be on a sliding scale from free to the highest charged in private secondary schools'. This was in line with the government's long standing policy of a shift from 'inappropriate' education, which is for the professions, and one allied to economic development. Furthermore this also allowed the authorities one more government school in its attempt to gain control of the education system at all levels. In this parents had to make a written declaration regarding religious education, a bold innovation for British Honduras and one that might have been seen as undermining church hegemony.<sup>84</sup>

Further, the *Belize Independent* 29 May 1942 placed the need for scholarships in racial terms,

It is imperative that steps be taken as early as possible towards raising our educational

standard to that of the members of the Caucasian race belonging to the British Empire. -- I beg to be allowed to make a plea for University scholarships [they] are available in all West Indian Colonies. These scholarships are donated not only by the governments of those Colonies but also by the grateful residents who have made their fortunes in them. -- Take up when war is over.<sup>85</sup>

Education was making inroads into community life, although the training and standard of teachers remained a constant problem. It was observed in 1939 that 33% of teachers were non-native. A matter of some concern for a government committed to promoting British cultural sentiments, but not one that overly worried the Roman Catholic Church to whom the majority of foreign-born teachers belonged. In fact the greater problem existed with many of the lay teachers of all denominations as most only possessed a primary education. It was from the Catholic Creole group that the nucleus of the People's United Party, the post war unions and the independence movement emerged. As with the broader Catholic community this body possessed a more diverse support than the Protestant Creoles, who were largely, if not specifically, Belize City based; thus aiding inter-ethnic rapport and the coming Belizeanization process, building upon the solid foundation of Creolisation.<sup>86</sup>

The war years moreover, bore a witness to the absence of many teachers who left to join the forestry unit in Scotland, or to Panama for defence work under the US government; events that further increased the ratio of foreign to home-grown teachers; the latter now being mainly part time and untrained.<sup>87</sup> A later report looked forward to the 1950s and reaping the rewards of scholarships with a steady supply of teachers from the West Indies.<sup>88</sup>

#### **Conclusion:**

The 1950s brought new leaders to the fore in the Colony; those who had been nurtured during the education period encompassed in this chapter. Future People's United Party leader George

Price had been educated as a Jesuit in America, almost taking vows. What is crucial here is the role the Catholic church was beginning to take in Belizean politics, indirectly through its base within Belize's most prestigious educational establishment, St. John's College. Price, Richardson and Goldson were all St. John's Alumni as well as the closely linked Christian Social Action group.

British Honduras was fortunate to be outside the mainstream of metropolitan interference in its affairs, thus allowing the development of its own agenda. It might be suggested, however, that this was controlled by the church, but given the existence of an equilibrium in interdenominational rivalry during the 1930s and 40s, then a system of national development may have taken place that was largely a people's agenda. Therefore in addition to maintaining a relative freedom from government interference, neither side of the church dichotomy could gain ascendancy, therefore ordinary people, by way of social interaction, could develop a strong ethical code that flourished separately from dogma and ritual. When added to the growth of cross-ethnic religious and cultural development in British Honduras this inhibited the furtherance of the power factions that tend to cause social and political strife, as has been witnessed in such as Jamaica and Guyana. It is to this period of nationalism and independence movements that this thesis shall now progress, for the development of the role of education in multi-culturalism.

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## **Part Two**

### **National Unity and Educational Philosophy in British Honduras 1949-1964: A Period of Rhetorical Development**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Part Two is divided into three chapters each concerned with a different theme of education between 1949 and 1964. These dates signify two turning points in the history of Belize as a nation. The opening year of 1949 witnessed a devaluation crisis that provided the channel for effective middle-class political activity determined upon independence, in contrast to the old single-issue working class movement of the 1930s. The period closes in the year 1964 when British Honduras achieved an internal self-government or 'Home-Rule' and, for the first time, complete control of its education system, thus marking an appropriate turning point to begin Part Three of this thesis. Chapter Five shows how the dichotomy between, values and workplace-in- education, prevalent throughout the British Caribbean, ascribed itself to the long-standing State-Church dichotomy already revealed in Part One. Furthermore cultural tolerance is examined to witness the type of society that developed in British Honduras through its emphasis on 'values' as the chief motivator within the education system. Chapter Six follows the course of state-church conflict begun in Chapter Three, revealing a shift in the equilibrium of power both within the church as a whole and within the political sphere, and in favour of the Roman Catholic Church. This would have consequences for the post Home-Rule period covered by Part Three. Chapter Seven examines the limited changes that actually took place. This form of analysis provides a view of the applied aspects of multi-cultural cohesion, derived from the ideas and actions of educators and state-church hierarchies. Each chapter shall provide its own conclusion, summarising the arguments put forward and placing them within the context of the overall thesis, and examining the idea of this period as transitional between British Honduras as a firm Colonial power in the 1930s

and 40s and the path to independence between 1964 and 1981.

This introduction will provide an overview of the manner of middle class politics during the period as well as a brief return to the education system prior to 1949. National unity in a multi-cultural society such as British Honduras was based on the necessity of purveying the one nation principle, however, in Belize this has been less difficult to achieve as many of the determinants were already in place. Anti colonialism played its part as it did in other areas of the Caribbean, but secondary research has revealed that there existed a web of loyalties that denied the exploitation of ethnic, religious, cultural, regional, or political affiliations. The Creole phrase of 'All-a-mix-up' is more appropriate than the 'All-a-we-da'-one' of Jamaica, and aptly describes Belizean cultural life by the 1950s and 60s. Road building schemes, begun in the 1930s, had brought cultural groups together for economic purposes where little history of hostility existed. Importantly for Belizean coexistence the largest single group, the Creoles, were able to provide a cultural cohesiveness without the cultural dominance with which it is often accompanied. In relation to these points, Parham and Hagerty were able to provide a succinct summary on the state of Belizean cultural affairs:

The uniqueness of Belizean culture, its multi-cultural nature and the frequency and ease with which often sacrosanct social, linguistic, and cultural barriers have been broken--This phenomenon has produced a folklore and a society that are unique, varied and intriguing to those who study it <sup>1</sup>.

Creolisation and Belizeanisation existed in the 1930s and 40s as active processes but remained unstructured as ideas until the growth of national identity in the 1950s when the idea of Belizeanisation became formalised through the independence movement, encouraging research into aspects of Creolisation as a precursor to Belizeanisation. The succeeding chapter shall examine the path followed by education along with seminal issues from the 1930s that grew to prominence in the 1950s. One such was that education was becoming 'certificate

driven'.<sup>2</sup> Another was the actual shift to training for the economy that had been recommended by J. C. Dixon, 'Practical subjects are coming in slowly due to the scarcity of appropriately trained teachers'.<sup>3</sup> Foreign influence within the education system will be more fully discussed in Chapter Six, however a summary of this 'problem' will serve to complete the view of education under examination here. Mr. Rutledge of Trinidad comments: 'Two-thirds are Roman Catholic through the American Mission. In Belize and Stann Creek the Americans teach them. Elsewhere teachers are German nuns [with] imperfect English. Foreigners must be dispensed with'.<sup>4</sup> The existence of foreigners in education was not new but British official interest was, this being linked to a desire to develop a common cultural frame of mind with a British vision. These plans were largely frustrated during the 1950s, not only with the continuance of denominational foreigners, but with the arrival of many more voluntary aid workers, particularly from the United States. The issue of Jesuit/Roman Catholic influence is fundamental to the history of education in British Honduras and will be dealt with separately in Chapter Six.

Initially, a recapitulation of the progress of education from 1931 to 1949 is necessary to establish the antecedents of activity in the 1950s. This will be followed by a review of the new middle-class political situation nurtured in the disturbances of the 30s and 40s and the activities of the St. John's College Alumni, but precipitated by the devaluation crisis of 1949. The significance of these events is the establishment of a new force of native politicians within the old power structure and their eventual influence on the school curriculum. Political adjustments in British Honduras were made without recourse to physical violence, even though the language of violence was often heard from the PUP.

### **Resume on education**

The reorganisation of British Honduran schooling was born out of the chaos of the Great Depression and not a concern for social improvement. Additionally reorganisation originated in the sheer destruction of the 1931 hurricane, and the denominations were quick to re-establish themselves, particularly the Catholics. During the early 1930s the churches began to rebuild their schools and establish new missions in the rural hinterland whilst the government made gestures towards reform but with little activity. Although this was a period when the church surged towards Belizeanisation, disaster expenditure and the end of regionalism in pupil recruitment forced much of this upon them. The refusal to reinstate boarders was a realistic decision taken in the light of a shortage of facilities, and the end of political volatility in the Central American republics; so the need to come to British Honduras to receive an education had diminished. This domestic development facilitated a heightened Catholic involvement in the political arena.

Education suffered from many of the encumbrances of the pre hurricane period, not the least of which were financial. Reports and speeches were seen as a useful sop to those demanding reform in the Colony, and provided the illusion of progress. These phenomena are clearly found throughout the British Caribbean but British Honduras exposed its uniqueness through the Government's almost total dependency upon the denominations for the delivery of education, and the financial independence of the Roman Catholic Church.

The system of education in British Honduras where towns and villages would operate with two or more denominational schools when a single school would have been sufficient, was heavily criticised during these years primarily through both the Government-sponsored *Easter Report* of 1934 and the later *Dixon Report* of 1936. It was here that the official

documents revealed a degree of conflict between state and church over the nature of reform and the ability of the church to limit their effectiveness.

Austerity and disruption to normal daily life became common to most parts of the British Empire during the Second World War. However the British Caribbean colonies, especially British Honduras, found themselves on the margins of the war effort. The British Government was keen to maintain good order leaving itself free to concentrate on the war. In these circumstances education reform continued throughout the 1940s even though labour agitation had diminished. Therefore, the war touched British reforms used to curb disorder in the colony.

Conflict between church and state endured and duplication of effort continued to be a thorny issue throughout the Caribbean area. Duality and secularism were linked and while the churches appreciated the economic arguments they understood the attack on their right to multiple church schooling in the communities as the deliberate encroachment of secularism. By the latter half of the 1940s the Protestant denominations were unable to compete with the well-funded Jesuits, and financial stragglers such as the Baptists found difficulty in maintaining their schools.

### **The emergence of middle-class politics**

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the political climate between 1949 and 1964 from which to proceed with an assessment of the rise of Jesuit power within the education system in British Honduras. "In the post-war period British foreign policy became increasingly allied to that of the United States, in opposition to the USSR and communism".<sup>5</sup> Britain was keen to maintain US involvement in the Atlantic/European theatre, rather than the Pacific theatre, which would have left Britain and the Commonwealth

to stand alone against the USSR. Therefore, Britain had to adapt to the anti colonial mood of the US and the UN. From 1949 a new element of conflict arose within Belize, between the Colonial Government and the rising ambitions of the People's United Party (PUP). Albeit outwardly political, this new civic consciousness would have, as it began to demand independence, a major influence on the development of a national identity unique and separate from that of Britain. This in turn began to spread through the education system, by way of the 'Belizean Studies' programmes within the curriculum. It has become clear from previous chapters that the labour movement of the 1930s and 40s was unable to progress further without the financial support and influence of a politically-active middle-class, such as that being nurtured within the halls of the Catholic St. John's College and ostensibly financed by the chicle millionaire Robert S. Turton. Indeed the reciprocal influence between the PUP and St. John's College is evidenced by the activities of the College Extension Department of the 1950s, in offering night classes in trade unionism to the general public. Although the Acting Superintendent of Police did feel that affiliation was exaggerated he also commented that the Jesuits had left themselves open to criticism by,

Permitting [the PUP] the use of their school rooms for meetings, by conducting extension school courses at St. John's College in conjunction with the GWU, and by their keeping aloof from making any statements condemning this group, but I do not think they warrant the special emphasis laid on them by Mr. Ingrams.<sup>6</sup>

Whilst the Superintendent did not appear overly concerned with the activities of the Jesuits in supporting the PUP, it is a measure of the Government's uneasiness that the Police were drawn in to report on both parties. The PUP were becoming active in making demands and in 1951 wrote directly to the Secretary of State for the Colonies asking for an amendment to the constitution to allow for an elected and representative government.<sup>7</sup> They enclosed three resolutions:

1. Permission for TUC leaders to visit operations; directed mainly at the Belize Estate and Produce Company who would not allow Union representatives on site.
2. Self-government for British Honduras
3. Abolition of import controls.<sup>8</sup>

The Government, rather than respond directly to demands for reform, placed its emphasis on undermining the PUP by immediately instigating two police reports to look into the genuine representativeness of the PUP.<sup>9</sup> Regarding a political meeting of 16 June 1951 the Governor wrote 'you will observe that it is stated that only about 175-200 persons attended the meeting'.

<sup>10</sup> Yet the government here is relying on the impression that 200 persons were an insignificant number, but it should be considered that this represented about 1 per cent of the Belize City population which, pro-rata could have been viewed as reasonable for a fledgling party.

Whether the Government was being devious or simply ingenuous in minimising support for the PUP is not clear.

Bolland stressed as noteworthy the continuance of unrest and, by 1950, the passing on of Soberanis' mantle of leadership to George Price.<sup>11</sup> He disagrees with Grant that the labour movement pre-1950 was negligible, or that devaluation was the real crisis.<sup>12</sup> It is certainly true that Soberanis and the labour movement of the 1930s established a regular pattern of unrest and protest previously only sporadically evident. Nevertheless, however much devaluation may not match the momentous events of those years it was certainly a catalyst that generated fresh political action.

As in 1931 there was a locally perceived financial mismanagement by the British Government regarding Belizean economic affairs, the events of which were used skilfully by those favouring independence to discredit the British and Colonial Governments. In September 1949 the British Pound was devalued by 30%. Although the British Honduras

dollar was tied to the US dollar and at first exempted, contemporary opinion felt that devaluation would be beneficial to British backed companies in British Honduras. This view is evidenced by the activities of the mercantile elite. It emerged that they had been stockpiling imported goods to take advantage of favourable exchange rates, also, transferring capital of \$2 million to Britain. This action discredited them and particularly their opinions to the ordinary Belizean people. <sup>13</sup>

The Governor admitted that whilst denying the imminence of devaluation, the position had been 'under constant review'. <sup>14</sup> The government had already worked out that devaluation would create a revenue increase of \$105,000 whereas extra expenditure would only be \$69,929. Rather than give the benefits of devaluation to the government of British Honduras, Mr Baker, a Whitehall official, commented that the Colonial Office was hoping this could be devoted to reducing the grant-in-aid'. However the Governor deftly added \$14,600 to the Agricultural Department's budget to recoup some of the benefit of devaluation for the colony and not the government's coffers. Baker remarks, 'This causes much consternation'. <sup>15</sup> The colonial government did manage to extract some benefit from this crisis but overall, devaluation provided another example of open neglect by the British Government in this already impoverished colony.

The main issue was not local speculation, rather, the impending Belizean political leaders had been, '--rudely reminded that the institutions which made the vital decisions were completely outside the people's control'. <sup>16</sup> Absence of fiscal control became a matter which local politicians wished to rectify. It all seemed to have begun with the devaluation of the British Honduras dollar on the 31st December, 1949. The following month (January 1950) 'a

'People's Committee' was formed by ten or a dozen persons', John Albert Smith being a founder-member and George Price and Philip Goldson being among the original members. Leigh Richardson was at the time in Great Britain, but upon his return to British Honduras in August 1950, he too helped to form the 'People's Committee'. On 29th September, 1950 the 'People's Committee' was expanded into the People's United Party, Smith was the Party Leader, Price the Secretary and Goldson the Assistant Secretary. Richardson was elected Chairman of its central council. <sup>17</sup>

In order to strengthen and consolidate their position the committee's middle-class leadership realised that as Catholic Creoles based in Belize City they needed to gain ground in the districts, so they co-opted the General Workers Union (GWU), benefiting from its nationwide branches. This move was not without its critics: *The Daily Clarion* [a Government supporter] related the 'suspicion' that the committee was '--only serving Catholic action and the whims of a rich man or men', <sup>18</sup> possibly alluding to the activities of the Belizean chicle millionaire, Robert S. Turton.

The People's Committee remained extremely popular, and after developing into the (PUP) by November 1950, gained five seats and a majority on the Belize City Council. This was the beginning of middle-class dominance in Belizean politics that was not supportive of the colonial authority. Bolland correctly sums up the situation: 'the middle-class leadership of the PUP was successful in achieving a constitutional de colonising action but at the expense of an authentic autonomous working-class voice in the nationalist movement'. <sup>19</sup>

In the meantime the PUP came under attack from the opponents of nationalism in the now infamous King's Hall incident. The city council had functioned for 46 years without a portrait

of the British monarch in its place of assembly. In July 1951 the anti nationalists moved a motion to site the King's portrait in the City. This presented the PUP with a predicament: a vote for the motion would be seen as contradictory to their anti colonial principles, whereas a vote against would certainly be interpreted as disloyal to the Crown. The PUP attempted to avoid this complication by suggesting that their reforms were met first. The opposition then petitioned the Governor to dissolve the council, to which he readily agreed and appointed an interim, unelected council under the presidency of the retired Colonial Secretary.

During the early 1950s American containment of communism policies matched British colonial designs and American money underwrote the Empire as a safeguard against the Soviet Union and the potentiality of Communist revolution from within. In British Honduras the opposition Crown loyalists were keen to deprive the nationalists of their main power base even if this meant dispensing with democratic government completely. Now in 1954, at the height of the Cold War, the British became 'worried' about possible 'ideological contamination' of the PUP. Previously, in 1953, the British Government had revoked the constitution of Guyana on the grounds of Marxist infiltration. In British Honduras, Price and the PUP and were well known for their stance of 'Central Americanism against West Indianism', that is their support for further ties with the Central American republics. They saw the West Indian Federation as a continuation of colonial control over the economy, and were not impressed by British arguments for defence against communism.<sup>20</sup> Gerald Cattouse, a known supporter of the PUP spoke on Guatemalan radio:

The English Governor, Garvey is trying to force Federation down your throats. Federation is not good. The Bahamas, British Guiana and British Honduras have all expressed their desire to stay out of Federation. [The Governor] has urged the people to express their wishes to the Legislative Council. But the big joke is that this council does not in effect constitutionally represent these people.<sup>21</sup>

Not surprisingly the Governor denounced the PUP assertion that his Government wished to influence people regarding West Indian Federation. However the last paragraph of a reported speech by the Governor refers to the biblical story of, 'selling your birthright for a mess of pottage', does just that and continues, 'and you must consider whether an attempt is not now being made to sell your birthright for a handful of quetzales'.<sup>22</sup>

Colonial officials were becoming alarmed at the activities of the PUP. The public relations officer had stated that,

The PUP were being used as instruments in the Cold War as Guatemala is almost certainly communist influenced. Price, Goldson and Richardson are fanatical. [Pollard] is so venal that his Catholicism would not prevent him from working for the communists if he felt that gain could be achieved that way.<sup>23</sup>

After denying any wish to influence British Hondurans against the PUP the British held an enquiry into their connections with Guatemala one a month before the election in an attempt to undermine the PUP.<sup>24</sup> In spite of this, the popularity of nationalism was not easily subverted and the PUP won eight of the nine seats in this first general election under adult suffrage, and continued to exert a broad unity in opposition to colonial rule.

Politics continued to develop in a non factional manner with no ethnic identity attaching itself to the state, a consensus shared by a number of scholars observing British Honduran society. It was fortunate for multi-cultural development that the largest single group, the Creoles, were an overall minority. Elites existed in British Honduras, but were not racially drawn.<sup>25</sup> Thus Belizeanisation did not have to be forced upon the people, simply encouraged, contrasting with other multiracial territories such as Guyana and Trinidad which dichotomise into two major groups, African and East Indian. They were sharply divided by 'polarised institutions and values', and interaction is minimal, more at the national level.<sup>26</sup> Unlike

Belizeans, who held a web of loyalties and attitudes. Hanson's research supports Grant and Bolland: 'There is nothing like the absolute divisions between East Indians and Blacks in Guyanese politics--Ethnic identity is generally less important than income, occupation or party identification'.<sup>27</sup>

The 'plural cleavages' that existed in British Honduras often cut across each other. Polarisation subsisted around political leaders, a case being George Price: 'Those who identified with him often adopted his political stance'.<sup>28</sup> Consequently the PUP developed a policy of distancing itself from racial difference and encouraged national unity from a broad multi-cultural base.

On the 1st October 1961 at 1am, slightly more than thirty years after the devastation of 1931 came Hurricane '*Hattie*'. Gusts of up to 200 mph devastated Belize City with five-foot high waves swamping the city streets and crashing into the houses. The political consequence of *Hattie* was to dissuade many foreign investors from financing Belizean projects. Additionally, and unlike 1931, many businesses were insured and payouts for hurricane damage amounted to £7 million, much of which left British Honduras, bound for banks in London, New York, and Jamaica. \$BH 9 million was paid out to merchants in Belize City.<sup>29</sup> From that point in time the main political polarisation revolved around any party that could convince the electorate that it was capable of withstanding foreign encroachment in the Belizean economy, thereby taking political partisanship further away from race-and-ethnicity.

Foreign investors had been further deterred by the long-standing Guatemalan claim and subsequent threats of an invasion. The dispute is well documented and only has relevance here for its ability to assist the government in the Belizeanisation programme. From the 1950s

as its economy began to recover, Britain started to relinquish the Empire in favour of Europe. By 1959 Harold Macmillan and the Secretary of State for the Colonies Iain Macleod were convinced that the Empire had become a millstone. In 1961 Macleod stated that British Honduras was ready for independence at any time in line with the rest of the British Caribbean. However the delay of twenty years was not caused by British intransigence but by Guatemala's persistent threats, an element that gave Belizeans two colonial oppressors. Nevertheless ministers, instead of centring the debate on old nineteenth century treaties, argued that Belizeans had a right to independence from any other power, that the Guatemalan claim was a continuance of colonialism. After this new approach they won the support of the entire United Nations assembly, with only seven abstentions.<sup>30</sup>

In British Honduras the 1950s and 60s government grew steadily more independent from British colonial authority. The year 1954 saw universal adult suffrage and a Legislative Assembly of nine elected, three nominated unofficial members, and three official members. The Governor no longer sat in the legislature but remained the Chief Executive with reserve powers. The mass participation of Belizeans marked the end of Crown Colony government. From 1960 to 1963 the Legislative Assembly was expanded to twenty-five members, eighteen of which were elected. The Governor remained as Chairman of the Executive Council, but without a vote.<sup>31</sup> The period under review ended in 1964 with the establishment of a full internal self-government.

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**Part Two**  
**National Unity And Educational Philosophy in**  
**British Honduras 1949-1964: A Period of Rhetorical Development'.**

**Chapter Five**

**'MANHOOD OR MANPOWER': THE HEART OF EDUCATIONAL DEBATE**

The preceding introduction provided a canvas for the primary purpose of this chapter, which is to reveal a critical focus on the aspects of educating for 'manhood' or 'manpower' that grew out of the movements for change emerging throughout the British Caribbean, and their practical application in British Honduras. The need for both vocational and academic education had a long tradition within English educational philosophy. H.C. Dent cites AD 57 and Augustine's foundation of a church at Canterbury, where he organised, 'two types of schooling, "Grammar" for any boy or man (girls were not supposed to need it) and "Song", a vocational education intended to prepare choristers – and acolytes who would assist priests in the conduct of church services'.<sup>1</sup> The modern emphasis on this dichotomy developed because the increased competition between "metropolitan and imperial powers" necessitated a more skilled workforce.<sup>2</sup>

The chapter divides into three sections. The first provides a case study of the Mennonite settlement in British Honduras during the mid 1950s, the purpose of which is to reveal the high level of cultural tolerance in a society that was value driven within its education system. The second section forms a succinct introductory discussion of the prevailing educational philosophy throughout the British Caribbean concerning education either for the workplace or as a purveyor of values. This is followed by a view of the practical application of these two modes of thinking within the British Honduran sphere, drawing conclusions as to why 'values' education remained pre-eminent and why each found its own group of supporters. The chapter itself will conclude by

assessing the importance of these philosophies both retrospectively and for their effect on the relationship between church and state.

### **Cultural tolerance: the Mennonite migration**

The 1950s saw the beginning of greater Creole-Mestizo interaction in which 'dissonance' was 'uncommon'. Brockmann describes 'chain links throughout Belizean society', claiming that links between ethnic groups, religion and political affiliation were difficult to sustain nationally.<sup>3</sup> It is indicative of a society integrated successfully at the micro level that Belize was able to absorb the highly distinctive Mennonites. These were originally 300 peasant families of Low German extraction who migrated to Belize through Canada and Mexico between 1957 and 1959. They settled in the remote parts of Cayo at Spanish Lookout, and Shipyard and Blue Creek in Orange Walk. The Mennonite migration provides an excellent example of the successful absorption of a group who differed considerably in race, religion and culture from British Hondurans.

Initial reactions towards migration were favourable yet mixed. Local education officer Signa L. Yorke was involved in the lengthy debate over the nature of Mennonite schooling in the Colony. Her chief concern was, 'What such a self-contained unit will contribute to a people and place so badly in need of new blood as British Honduras is left to be seen. I am wondering - why not immigrants from Barbados?'<sup>4</sup> Typically the Treasury-Colonial Office answer to West Indian migration was subjected to funding criteria:

These people are quite different from the Jehovah's Witness types who make themselves a nuisance wherever they go. -from the community point of view the Mennonites would settle with no cost to the local government, whereas the West Indian settlers would certainly involve expenditure'.<sup>5</sup>

Yorke was perhaps concerned with the insular nature of Mennonite schooling which was also a

much-discussed topic. Nevertheless, the cheaper option appeared to have found immediate favour with the British Government.

Yet, not all Mennonites were keen to migrate from Mexico. A letter from Mr. Pope, the British Vice-Consul in Chihuahua, shows that some of the elders may not have been willing to move: 'The presiding Bishop, 80 years' old Isaac Dyck of Camp 16, does not approve at all, but he is apparently not offering any active opposition to those who want to go'.<sup>6</sup> It appeared that the younger element wished to leave though their reasons were unclear. The letter does not reveal any level of strain within the Mennonite community and continues, 'Bishop Frank Dyck of the Santa Elena colony, a more modern thinking leader of the sect, is all for it, and says he will go too'.<sup>7</sup> Usually, Mennonite migrations have resulted from interference to their way of life. Crombie of the High Commission in Ottawa provides an insight into more recent migrations: 'More orthodox elements left Canada in the 1920s and in 1948, because of the fear of secularisation, migrated to Mexico and Paraguay.'<sup>8</sup> The largely successful battle against secularisation, of course, was an issue at the heart of the state - church conflict in British Honduras, and may have influenced the Mennonite decision. Pope effectively summarises the main issues involved, 'The whole deal hinges on whether or not the government of British Honduras wish to grant these people the religious, military and educational freedoms they asked for. If so some 200-300 farmers would want to emigrate before next spring or summer, with probably an even larger contingent wanting to go a year or two later'.<sup>9</sup> Eventually 1,713 individuals crossed the Mexican border into British Honduras, between 1 January 1957 and 30 June 1959, although some 230 eventually turned back.<sup>10</sup>

The Colonial Office was optimistic of a settlement and appeared not to be presenting too many difficulties on the matter of education. Robert Major, the Development Commissioner in British Honduras was exceptionally keen to make progress, because the industriousness of the Mennonites was well known:

As to the teaching of English our legislation does not appear to require that English be taught or the medium of instruction. However, grants to primary schools are conditional on these things being done. I imagine this would not concern the Mennonites and their seems to be no legal bar at present to their conducting their education in whatever language they choose. There are obvious advantages to basing the education system on a single language. In the case of the Mennonites it may be a good thing to make an exception. How far it is possible to guarantee them this, so long as the community is in the Colony, is difficult to say.<sup>11</sup>

Evidently the Mennonites could not be compelled to teach in English, but financial help was dependent upon these criteria being met. Again Major intimates that the Mennonites could support their own schools. Interestingly this financial independence did not concern the British Government as it did with the Jesuits, largely because the Mennonites remained insular on all aspects of community life, particularly matters of state. A noteworthy point here might be the establishment of a precedent for teaching in a particular group's first language rather than English. The Hispanic and Indian communities might have taken note.

The Colonial Office response was mild, merely wishing the Government to maintain its final authority. However, consideration had for some time been given to the idea of a migration to British Honduras to improve the agricultural base. This was seen as the simplest and cheapest solution, and so found favour with Whitehall. Mr Baker replied to Major as follows:

But you would, I think, have to insist on the right to satisfy yourselves as to the adequacy of the buildings and the standard of schooling and to retain the power to close unsatisfactory schools and to compel attendance at better ones provided by the state.<sup>12</sup>

According to Pope the Mennonites were opposed to his suggestion that they are obliged to give instruction in English in their church schools, however he does comment that in Canada and the United States they 'of course adhere to the laws on education and do so willingly'.<sup>13</sup> Revealing an inclination to compromise on a cultural matter if this did not conflict with their spiritual tenets. Crombie adds, 'I understand that there has at no time been any actual conflict, let alone violence, between the Mennonites in Canada and the authorities. In general they are most honest and law-abiding people, deeply religious and good farmers'.<sup>14</sup> Entering British Honduras was relatively simple as the Mennonites held Canadian passports, thus were British subjects. Once settled they established church schools from the age of 6-13 for boys, and from 6-12 for girls.<sup>15</sup>

Although determined to maintain their distinctive social and religious system, the Mennonites have changed virgin lands into productive farms, not subsistence, contributing greatly to the Belizean economy for which contribution the government, respectfully, grants them exemption from national service and welfare contributions<sup>16</sup>.

A government report of 1958 shows they had made progress already in agriculture and poultry. The report provides a full breakdown of families, types of settlements, machinery, tools in use and their settlements at Spanish Lookout, Blue Creek, and Shipyard. An anonymous commentator on the file remarked:

Relations with the local inhabitants have progressed satisfactorily. A few local families who were established and lived at Blue Creek prior to the arrival of the Mennonites have been permitted to stay on, and the men are given employment whenever work is available. Labourers employed by the Mennonites have expressed satisfaction with regard to both conditions of work and wages.<sup>17</sup>

The latter comments reveal a mutual satisfaction although it was certainly helpful that some economic benefit ensued from this settlement. A visit from the Mennonite Central Committee in

Akron Pennsylvania confirmed the initial success of the community,<sup>18</sup> and a personal letter from a Mennonite elder, Mr. Wiebe supports this: 'Health is quite good in the Mennonite community. Many have a nice home and are planting and trying to make the best of it, although we find many things to learn'. He goes on to describe all the crops and thanks the government for all their help.<sup>19</sup>

The Mennonite settlement was one of the great success stories of British Honduras especially in terms of cooperation from, and between the Colonial and British Governments and the wider community, at all levels. Whilst often in conflict with each other, the churches had consistently shown their preference for church schools of any denomination over state schools. The acceptance of the Mennonites in Belizean society serves to highlight this preference and the peaceful integration of Belizeans at the individual level, which allowed for a tolerance of self-isolation within the community. This indicated the encouragement of Belizeanisation rather than its imposition, and revealing how ethnic groups had selected that which they required of the so-called dominant Creole culture rather than submitting to forced acculturation. To the present day the Mennonites are the leading dairy farmers in Belize and are leading contributors to the economy.

**Skills and values: Educational philosophy throughout the British Caribbean**

Not long after the arrival of the Mennonites the PUP took a political decision that was spurred by Hurricane 'Hattie' Its relevance here is for the decision made in its aftermath to shift the nation's capital to a 'Canberra' style development in the centre of the country in the Cayo district. This represented not only a physical move but also a cultural one from the Creole heart-land to a predominant Mestizo/Maya community. It was intended that the new capital of Belmopan would

wax as Belize City simultaneously waned, this has never happened. Due to poor agrarian planning and Belize City's continuing appeal as a centre of night-life Belmopan has remained little more than a village of government buildings and workers. However, this action did serve to show the PUP desire to encompass the whole country in its march towards independence <sup>20</sup>.

The movement for independence had implications for educational development and practice in British Honduras, and in turn education influenced national attitudes. A discussion concerning the dichotomy of aims and objectives in education existing throughout the British West Indies during this period will reveal the input of government policy and the way British Honduras differed culturally from other West Indian states.

J. J. Figueroa, a poet and Professor of Education at the University of the West Indies, supported the philosophy of education based upon 'vision and values', against the prevailing vocational focus on skills and economic development. He suggested that education had come to mean 'more a code of activities than it does a creative release'. He does not deny the need for nation building, rather that education should fight against the idea that belonging to a national group is what justifies men and women: 'Human development is not subject to group development-Educate for manhood, not manpower.' <sup>21</sup> He makes an interesting and effective comment that with all the talk of relating education to work the elite groups still sent their children to private schools to receive a traditional education that developed a 'fully-rounded' individual. He suggests that modern agnosticism and a widespread fear of indoctrination causes schools to back away as 'purveyors of values'. <sup>22</sup> Figueroa strove for an education that improved the quality of individuals, which in turn would improve the quality of society.

At a conference of West Indian education officers held in Barbados during December 1951, the opening speech of Sir George Steel echoed the educational philosophies of the period:

Some people would identify those ideals with the age-old search of the philosophers for the means of enabling men and women to live what is called the "good-life". Some, and I among them believe it to be the one main purpose of education to give future citizens a moral and spiritual background, to assist them in supporting the burdens of adult life. Many again see a more practical end, in the spread of mental and technical training, to each pupil according to his aptitude and ability, which will enable the economic resources of the community, on which all welfare depends, to be used to the fullest advantage and be developed to the maximum extent.<sup>23</sup>

Although essentially supporting the primacy of moral and spiritual education, Steel's words were searching for a compromise with technical training, one that would find only limited success in British Honduras.

Even those supporters of academic education were nevertheless inclined towards work-based education at the professional level. The British government in 1929 had prompted a shift towards vocational education. The Phelps-Stokes Commissioners, an American philanthropic body established in 1911 by the will of Caroline Phelps Stokes, a New York philanthropist with a lifetime concern for the didactic needs of the disadvantaged, had been the inspiration behind the 1923 advisory committee on Native Education in Africa. Stressing the role of community education, the Fund's interests include the edification of African-Americans, Native-Americans, Africans, and the rural and urban poor. Eventually, their findings were extended to all colonies.

British policy had previously dictated that Colonial education and social welfare developments must be funded from colonial revenues. The British Parliament enacted the *Colonial Development Act 1929*, with Section 1 tethering educational development to educating

for manpower. The British Treasury could now make advances to colonial governments solely for "the purpose of aiding and developing agriculture and industry in the colony and thereby promoting commerce with, or industry in the UK".<sup>24</sup> Within this context the Treasury now had extended powers to aid vocational education. In Belize this was to be used to develop technical and agricultural training. However, academic education remained in the forefront. A report on secondary schooling by G.S.U. Petter, Educational Advisor to the West Indies Comptroller made the following comments:

In any self-supporting community an essential ingredient is the nucleus of highly intelligent and responsible people from whose ranks must be drawn the administration, the lawyers, the doctors, the leaders of political and religious support. -- confirming myself to education of an academic type that is to say, an education which lays emphasis in the development of powers of abstract thought and which seeks to enrich the intellect.<sup>25</sup>

However, research in British Honduras did not reveal a satisfactory standard regarding this type of education. Statistics for three Protestant schools reveal a low level of academic ability:

Wesley	142 pupils	45% academic calibre.
St. Michael's	84 boys	33% " "
St. Hilda's	102 girls	25% " "

115 new entrants across all 4 schools of which 48 academic calibre.

Petter commented, 'my findings after my (extensive/consultative) visits can be summed up in one sentence: out of the grand total of pupils in the four schools which I visited, less than half are suited to the task which they are being given'.<sup>26</sup>

#### **Purveying values in British Honduras**

This attitude of developing the individual first in order to strengthen the group was equally represented in British Honduras yet, unlike other Caribbean territories under British rule, the principal representation of the 'manhood' argument did not rest with any secular body. The denominations controlled schooling and were not afraid of purveying values. Indeed they saw

this as their *raison d'être*, 'The Roman Catholic Church was firmly wedded to the principle of the religious bias of all education,' and the only fear of indoctrination they held was for the encroachment of secularism, '[they] saw in the proposal [for a government High School] an attempt to introduce the thin end of the wedge of secularisation'.<sup>27</sup> The following quote from a spokesman for the Roman Catholic mission accurately encapsulates the church's commitment to educate through its own values:

Education is very definitely a church responsibility. The church has a right to the means conducive to the end for which the church has been established, eternal salvation of souls; and since every form of instruction as well as every human action has a necessary connection with man's last end, it cannot be withdrawn from the dictates of the Divine Law of which the church is the guardian, interpreter and teacher.<sup>28</sup>

Additionally, the same speaker was determined to show how the State should contribute towards education, 'The function of both State and Church in education should be secured in close association with each other--'. However to the State, he quickly allots the position of a junior partner in this relationship, 'The State's responsibility in education is a right and a duty conferred on it by God himself'.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, as the church regarded itself as the 'guardian' of the 'dictates of the Divine Law' then clearly they demanded the primary responsibility for teaching children. Whilst this situation placed British Honduras firmly within the debate on educational priorities, the church had expropriated the right to dispense values leaving the state to argue for workplace education. However, neither the Colonial government nor the churches were interested in nurturing ideas of nationalism through Belizean Studies, an area that would be left to the PUP.

Other educationalists were more concerned with defining the goals of society, for which they would provide a suitable education system. Whilst discussing nation building in Jamaica, Archer

suggests: 'The task of education is to identify the goals of a society, define them in a communicable way to the masses, and summon the participation of all concerned--Education precedes nation building as theory precedes practice'.<sup>30</sup> A clear goal of the Colonial Government was to marry education to the perception that agricultural training should be at the forefront of educational policy. However, there was a felt need to overcome parental pressure. Education for the professions was still viewed as a way out of social deprivation and upward mobility. Members of a Sub-Committee examining the possibility of an agricultural school had toured Stann Creek, Toledo, and Belize District and offered this opinion: 'in this country the primary school is an instrument of upward social mobility. Parents send their children to school not to follow their own unrewarding and backbreaking farming vocation but to pass exams and escape to better things'.<sup>31</sup>

It was therefore, felt that the perception of farming as a noble activity had to be fostered within schools. At the primary level the inefficient school garden had to go. 'The term School Garden with its connotation of past failure should be discarded'. School Farm was mooted as a possibility. Importantly the report recommended that gardening practice should show improvement over what parents did at home. However, the committee members decided that practical methods of farming should not be taught in primary schools but at the secondary level of education, allowing for primary children to visit an 'already prepared laboratory for their observation'.<sup>32</sup> These laboratories were to be attached to all new Junior High Schools whilst encouraging Grammar Schools. Schools should instil the 'Worthwhileness' of labour--'that hard work is not per se correct -- It must be productive'. Unfortunately the spectre of a penury and an unwillingness to invest in good ideas tended to undermine these intentions. Instead of

recommending a designated agricultural teacher - this was inexplicably rejected as 'divisive' - the alternative of teamwork spread across all the teaching staff was suggested.<sup>33</sup> Consequently this provided a less qualified level of instruction within the existing budget, and further diluted the effectiveness of these good intentions.

In British Honduras the educational dichotomy of manhood and manpower was not simply split between factions. The value driven churches were equally in favour of education for the workplace. Father Khol spoke at the Teacher's Vacation Conference on January 4th, 1957: 'it was the heavy responsibility of teachers to train them properly to take their places in the community-' But Father Khol stressed a complex where values and morality training were axiomatic to education. He continued: 'not only will the grown-up child have a right to vote, he will be a free individual, free to convince and be convinced either for good or evil. The child must be taught to determine when words are beautiful but false'.<sup>34</sup> Thus the manpower and manhood arguments were intertwined in church thinking. A work-based curriculum without moral training was unthinkable.

As it was unlikely that any of the denominations were going to turn their schools over to the government or convert to purely vocational schooling the impetus was limited to a government initiative for the development of a technical high school. The Colonial Government looked to the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund (C D & W) for a loan. Education Officer Dr. F. J. Harlow stressed the link with economic development but claimed that school qualifications were overshooting their mark: 'Successful boys after four years' secondary education with a scientific and technical bias would quite rightly aspire to higher posts as technical assistants and not jobs in

the workshop'.<sup>35</sup> The difficulty in finding employment for well-qualified graduates was a problem. The Government feared losing them immediately to the West Indies or the United States. Harlow suggests developing both types of course, for the professional and skilled artisan. Unfortunately this meant predominantly boys. Whilst the inclusion of girls was considered desirable, 'for financial reasons he understood that a choice would have to be made'.<sup>36</sup> His comments are indicative of attitudes towards educating girls in 1950s British Honduras.<sup>37</sup> The course would be structured to three years' study at school, post primary, and a two-year course at the technical college. Studies would then continue with part-time or evening classes. Governor Rennison, in a letter to the Secretary of State, estimated that after three years the schools would be expected to produce, 'twenty boys of the skilled artisan type'. Ten further boys would go on for two more years to become technical assistants or university graduates.<sup>38</sup>

On the 7th January 1952 the technical high school opened, at HMG expense, with 41 pupils, of which 21 were girls and 20 were boys. G. H. Walwyn BSc (Hons), was appointed as Principal with Miss Mary Wright and Mr. A. J. Francisco his assistants. One week later Governor Garvey visited and commented on the 'well-appointed classrooms'.<sup>39</sup> The British Honduras Technical High School was a success and two years later a Colonial Office minute commented that technical schooling was only provided in Trinidad, Jamaica, British Honduras, and British Guyana (evenings only). The school was praised for being, 'equipped to a high standard by the predecessor of the present Principal'. One hundred students aged 13-17 studied in four classes with boys and girls separate. Secondary level courses led to the Overseas Certificate Examination in Technical Subjects, whilst success in evening classes resulted in City and Guilds, and Associated Examining Board certificates.<sup>40</sup> Future curriculum plans included, commercial

subjects, 200 pupils by 1959, manual training extended to primary schools (Metalwork and woodwork, boys, needlework and cookery girls), also adult and vocational equivalents. However it was in the interest of the government to show its own project as a success, especially in comparison to the denominational schools. The Monkey River Agricultural School reported, 'eleven successes in published exams - Social work included a self-help plan under which the pupils themselves were able to buy their own equipment - Reading Club, a pen-pal association and the start of scouts'.<sup>41</sup> Significantly, in respect of secondary places an education minute relates the 'low standard of education of most candidates for admission', implying poor elementary standards for which the churches would be held entirely responsible.<sup>42</sup>

This criticism was also extended to the secondary system. The Governor stressed that the secondary school system in British Honduras was inadequate for the needs of the country, claiming that this was evidenced by the small number of candidates for University and some indifferent performances when there. His comments laid emphasis on the root cause going all the way back to primary school and essentially deficiencies in teacher training.<sup>43</sup> Some statistical evidence exists to suggest that standards were not high. The education department provided a regular monthly report to the Governor on conditions in British Honduras. The report for July 1951 stressed a problem of juvenile delinquency, and commented on the, 'Large turnout for Reverend Hugh Sherlock, Director of Boys Town, [for young offenders] Jamaica. [A] lecture illustrated by films-was held at Harvey Hall'.<sup>44</sup> Although the correction of delinquent behaviour was a government responsibility, it fell to a church to provide the necessary facility. Listowel Boy's Training School was a Salvation Army-managed 'Approved' school with government aid. Significantly, sources mention a high level of illiteracy upon entering at 12 years combined with

a high degree of religious freedom. <sup>45</sup> Arrangements for two prisoners to take correspondence courses with the British Institute of Engineering Technology were singled-out for praise. <sup>46</sup>

With regard to academic achievements through the Primary School Certificate, a report on technical schools was critical of the statistics presented by the grant aided elementary schools which stated a 50 per cent pass however, only 50 per cent of children who reached Standard VI actually took the exam, so the pass rate figure for all Standard VI children was closer to 25 per cent. Additionally only 70 out of 94 aided schools entered candidates, making the pass rate substantially lower than 25 per cent. The report's author commented, 'Standard of work is lower than it should be, not enough are qualifying to sit - too many of those who do are unfit. All must strive harder to overcome the handicap to progression'. <sup>47</sup> The *Belize Billboard* commented that the primary leaving exams of 1957 were not difficult.' A glance showed that the questions were not too difficult for an average 5th Standard child'. The paper makes a vague reference to, 'some sources', which said that 'many teachers are not putting out as much effort as they should'. Adding, 'Teachers are poorly trained especially at small schools'. <sup>48</sup>

Criticism of the quality of schooling was not confined to pupil results. The *Belize Billboard* headlined its education section with, 'TEACHERS MAKE POOR EXAM SHOWING'. This had been prompted by the results of the 1st Class Teacher's exam for 1952 where only one teacher, Ebenezer School's Ambrosine Gillette, had passed and 19 others failed.<sup>49</sup> As the decade progressed the papers reported a scandal of teachers cheating at their own examinations: 'Acting Director of Education Mr SE Daly announced he would discount the entire history paper after he had discovered that some of the teachers had obtained copies of the exam questions even before entering the exam room'.<sup>50</sup> Whether this reflects the intrinsic standard of teachers or the quality of instruction they received is not clear. The *Billboard's* editorial, 'VIEW' provided two analyses during August 1957, which supported a mixture of these views, suggesting perhaps an ill-motivated teaching profession. The first maintained the view that teachers were at fault, 'It is not so much the low percentage of passes that bothers us it is the quality of the work done by the candidate at the exams' [primary and teacher training exams] but then points to poor supervision due to a lack of education department staff: 'Each district ought to have its own district education officer and - there ought to be an Education Officer devoted to adult education'.<sup>51</sup> The second view lays the blame on the reorganisation of teacher training and the decision not to send pupil teachers to Jamaica:

We are painfully slow in our efforts, and as a result, our teachers are getting less training than they would under the Jamaican scheme. -- we shall turn out more semi-trained people - we are turning out a host of demi-trained people under the pupil-teacher system. -- It all adds up to short changing our population -In the United States and Britain university training for teachers is regarded as a normal thing. -- Our teachers do not ordinarily possess any skills of themselves outside the three Rs.<sup>52</sup>

However, by July 2nd, 1959 the same paper reported that 332 teachers had sat for the Teacher's and Pupil Teacher's exams with 144 being successful.<sup>53</sup>

Others were less critical of teaching staff. Emory King, a prominent local historian who came from the United States to British Honduras during the mid 1950s has since educated his children at schools in Belize. When questioned regarding the constant criticism of the standard of teachers in schools through government reports from the 1930s onwards, he was firm in his opinions regarding the teachers' passion for their pupils:

They were dedicated! . They were missionaries, although they were not official missionaries it was in the -- like the Black Cross nurses. These were women in the community who were dedicated to going. If somebody was sick, they'd come to your house and they help you and they'd, and all for nothing. The teachers in my view and Doctors and so on who get more concerned with money and promotion and longer vacations and all that are doing it for the money and the vacations and not because they love to impart knowledge to the young. [laughs] Go out on strike if you don't like it. <sup>54</sup>

Emory King was clearly protective of that generation of teachers, and this could be construed as nostalgia, but King never attended school in Belize and his response was to the resultant education of his own children. In fact his only personal comparison would have been to one of the various systems of United States education. King's view was similar to other interviewees. Local Justice of the Peace, Nick Sanchez noted, 'They were really good teachers. They care for you. They cared for you. They cared for the individuals'. This caring attitude, Sanchez firmly linked with discipline: 'When they given you a lickin' they tell you, 'I'm kickin' because I like you. I love you kids and that's why I'm beating you, because you are gonna learn something'. <sup>55</sup> However Sanchez went on to explain school discipline as a benefit to society in general, both through the generations and of his old teacher:

It was their life. Sixty-five years old - she has taught for 52 years, er, 51 years from 19[21] to 1972, and never, never -- I've seen her beat parents with a stick, because she taught the parent 25 years ago. You come in here now and you think you are gonna be hot with her - she whacks, you know [ . . . ] in her domain. My brother and I we were together in the same school. We look and we talk about, you know, and we so much agree with her now. <sup>56</sup>

Although Nick was blatantly nostalgic in his defence of corporal punishment, his tone was merely attempting to show how this approach permeated the whole of society and created a greater sense of community. The following statement aids us in understanding his meaning:

Because when day of reckoning comes she was going to use up on you - in front of your mother or your father. It didn't matter if she was going on the street and she saw you did something. Our summer holidays were from about the end of April til about to June. Don't do anything on the 15th of May or the 20th of May. You're not going to get away with it. And don't do it in front of your mother that you'll think, "Well I'm in front of my mother, I can get away with this". No way man! That's when she goes even worse, because she's gonna give your mum hell to.<sup>57</sup>

Here we witness, not the importance of corporal punishment, but the community teaching of morality, not simply the seconding of values to one lesson of religious or ethical studies on one particular day as found in secular education, where students might enjoy their studies but take little forward to their other lessons or life in general. Human activity appears to fly to extremes. The churches provided a sense of values and morality, which suffused all studies, but students also had to accept the dogma and ritual of the particular denomination or faith. Whereas secular education, rids schools of this but also 'throws the baby out with the bath water', losing the pervasive sense of values vital to community development beyond the school. Belize has consistently preferred to pay the price of dogma and ritual in the development of its society and education system from a mixture of economic and numinous motives. Sanchez continues by revealing more of the spirit of teaching from his school days:

So, the 10th of September's coming up. That's our national day celebrations, and as stern as she was and as miserable as we thought she was, on the 10th [. . .] she would take the kids and she would bake the cake from her own wages. She'd get some tarts. She'd make up some things, she'd get us some lemonade, and everything was there for us.<sup>58</sup>

Sanchez reveals the capability of teachers to blend beneficence with a firm discipline, although it

is questionable whether this provides a respectful or simply obsequious society.

### **Development plans for education**

By the end of the decade the education department was shifting similar criticisms towards the secondary and tertiary sphere. However, this was not simply due to church/values training being deemed inadequate. Perhaps there was more of a mismatch? Did the British Honduran pupil adapt well to the secular demands of the University College of the West Indies? Was this therefore, a justification for founding a University College in British Honduras, structured to continue the work of denominational education? Certainly there were criticisms of the student response to studying abroad. The *Billboard* of December 11th, 1952 commented on the 'alarmed discovery' of the large percentage of graduates living abroad, 'successfully practising their professions as teachers, dentists, lawyers, doctors, businessmen, the banking business, and commerce'. The paper typically adopted the government line of encouraging students into the industrial professions. However, it is also interesting to note a typically British Honduran societal response to the problem by adopting a biblical analogy to exalting manual work, reminding its readers that, 'Christ was a labouring man for the greater part of his life'.<sup>59</sup> Whatever the case, education department officials were ready to lay the blame on tardy preparation at the elementary stage instead of evaluating the overall system from the primary to tertiary levels.

Deficiencies in education could not be exclusively laid at the door of the churches, given that there would have been no education in British Honduras without church involvement, a reason readily acknowledged by some officials at the Colonial Office, 'As long as the British Honduras government is necessarily dependent upon voluntary organisations for help in much of its work I am afraid that we cannot have everything the way we should like it to be'.<sup>60</sup> Moreover another

official added a more accurate point, 'I should be inclined to suggest that the main barriers to educational reform are lack of money, and public opinion'.<sup>61</sup> Although innovations such as the British Honduras Technical High school were a success, British Honduras still trailed in the Caribbean league table of funding, with 14% of the country's annual revenue allotted to education. Only Jamaica and Trinidad were lower, with 13% and 13.6% respectively. Barbados, British Guiana, Antigua, St. Kitts, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Dominica and Montserrat all spent more, with the latter at 44.1%.<sup>2</sup>

Such levels of funding typically resulted in reports examining ways of running the education system in a niggardly fashion. One such report from a Whitehall-based education committee considered selective primary places but rejected these as, 'politically undesirable, educationally unsound, and administratively impracticable'. A Mr. Ward suggested that one trained teacher should supervise three classes with 'less trained [cheaper] though intelligent assistants'. He goes on to suggest 'experimentation' but points out that this system 'rarely makes any money'. Then why even consider the experiment? It cannot have been seen as an improvement in educational standards to allow one teacher to teach three classes. Or was this seen as a suitable standard for colonials?<sup>63</sup>

The report is characterised by ready but often insincere and superficial discourse. One member of the committee proposed to reduce primary schooling to three years and concentrate on literacy - 'not as an ideal but facing reality in poorer communities'. This was immediately dismissed: 'we shall be inviting the scornful indignation of progressive educationalists'. The report soon settles into a glib format of, encouraging 'education for life and the welfare of the

community' and 'Books should be available widely and not just in school'. Item 13 advocates 'on going part-time learning', but with the inevitable provision of finding voluntary helpers. All of these comments managed to produce a voluminous report with little follow up action. <sup>64</sup>

The British government continued to reveal its desire for quick and inexpensive 'fixes' in the matter of curriculum reform. A Colonial Office minute summarises the shift in power from the Colonial authority to the PUP, providing a degree of uncertainty: 'The elections held March 20 have resulted in a complete changeover in elected government members. It is not known yet as to the viewpoint that the new government will have towards the curriculum revision'. <sup>65</sup> On 15 November 1956 Dr. Finn, a UNESCO school's curriculum expert from Alberta in Canada, was drafted in by a British Honduran Government, which now included the PUP. Employed by the Education Department Dr Finn worked closely with the church leaders. <sup>66</sup>

A personal letter however, from Signa L. Yorke of the Education Office in Belize City to Miss Gwilliam at the Colonial Office reveals some discontent with Dr Finn's methods:

Then I came in on the discussion of the primary school curriculum drawn up by Dr's Finn and Diaz. My big criticism is that the whole curriculum is a Transcription of Alberta Curriculum for their grade school. Dr. Finn is from Alberta and claims he knows little of the English situation and English books. In fact he is not prepared to see any virtue in anything English. <sup>67</sup>

She suggests he has merely copied the Alberta curriculum quoting this extract: 'In rural areas it is best that the children use pencils in winter as there is always the possibility of ink being frozen in cold weather!!!!'. <sup>68</sup> As Dr Finn could not even edit his work to provide some semblance of having considered the British Honduran case (and its tropical climate) Miss Yorke's views must carry some credibility. Given the PUP stance on independence perhaps Dr Finn's antipathy to all things

English may have been a favourable quality in the minds of the PUP members. Miss Yorke had some misgivings regarding the PUP, 'Our anti-British party is now in power. What is going to be the outcome of it all I cannot say'.<sup>69</sup> She also adds further concerns regarding Dr Finn's ideas:

Consider the children. Their environment, the needs of the community etc. then look around and examine how others have handled similar situations. You may adopt their ideas but see that it is adapted to suit local conditions.--I am not satisfied at all with the curriculum for teachers but Dr. Finn is the expert, he should know.<sup>70</sup>

In fairly typical government style plans were still being formulated ten months' later.

Moreover, misgivings similar to those of Miss Yorke must have reached Whitehall as the Secretary of State wrote the following to the Officer Administering Government on 17 September 1957, noting the disparaging reference to *Mr. Finn*: 'I hope you will persuade Mr. Finn to reconsider any plan he may have for applying for UNESCO assistance since I regret that it would, in the light of HMG's policy, not be possible for me to forward it to UNESCO'.<sup>71</sup> The *Billboard* was critical of government's, 'alleged grounds for scrapping the Finn scheme was that it was not suitable for existing conditions - it was not scientifically organised and it called for too many text books' The report was,

Never made available to the public by government -- spent a whole year in this country preparing his work [in] constant consultation with staff of the Education Department, with Managers of Schools, with teachers, with others concerned with education in this country. Dr. Howes as he arrived was asked to give his opinion on the Finn Report and it was largely on his recommendation that the whole Finn scheme was thrown out. --regrettable that those who see objections did not raise these objections while he was still in the country'.<sup>72</sup>

The solution to curriculum reform for Protestants and Roman Catholics was seen as separate and different largely because of the unwillingness of Catholic managers to allow any government intrusion. The same report also highlights other inadequacies within the schools. Protestant

schools were 'badly staffed, housed and equipped, especially as regards the teaching of science'. Thus they were more amenable to a government proposal to centralise sciences at British Honduras Technical College, as well as to pay the salaries of the non-Roman Catholic schools of St. Michael's, St. Hilda's and Wesley and to pay the salaries of three graduate teachers. Unsurprisingly the Catholics did not wish this form of funding as this would give the secular authorities direct control of teachers. Nevertheless they preferred such offers as assistance in the form of a capital grant for construction of Lynam College in Stann Creek Valley. This was simply a grant and lacked any regulatory powers.<sup>73</sup>

Figueroa was not denying the need to provide an educated work force, or for the role of education in nation building. He was concerned that an emphasis on a system dependent on report cards and exam results was the 'epitome of philistinism and anti civilisation [and] not the creative release of the human spirit through education'.<sup>74</sup> Bolland expressed the view that education in British Honduras was '--in danger of teaching beliefs and values rather than national unity'.<sup>75</sup> What danger? Bolland is obviously referring to church beliefs, but if these were thrown out whose would take their place? As Figueroa suggests there is room for both: National unity can flow from a sound teaching of beliefs and values as education improves the quality of thinking in the individual.

British Honduran schools during the 1950s and up to 'Home-Rule' in 1964 appeared to conform to these ideals of moral and spiritual learning. Yet because of their denominational nature were tolerated as a malignant presence by the British and Colonial governments, although it is difficult to imagine British secular schools with their limited budgets and thoroughly

vocational focus being able to provide a similar level of personal development for the individual, or to benefit the peaceable cohesion that characterised British Honduran society.

Plans for nation building in the Caribbean however, were based on the assumption that 'the Commonwealth Caribbean would move towards political unity', but the West Indies' Federation collapsed in 1962.<sup>76</sup> During the 1950s, the Jesuits had exercised a substantial influence over education in British Honduras, which also carried political ramifications. They were more interested in expanding the Central American connection as evidenced in the following statement:

The mission has made great difficulty about pupils going from their schools to the UCWI. Furthermore, the Jesuit mission in British Honduras undoubtedly looks, for its own reasons, to enhancing the Central American connection of British Honduras rather than to its connections with West Indians in general and the Federation in particular. The big boys' secondary school in British Honduras is run by the Missions for Central America, not British Honduras alone, this obviously has an important bearing on the attitude of the missions'.<sup>77</sup>

The 'big boys' school' being St. John's College. Clearly the Jesuits would wish to expand into an area that was predominantly Roman Catholic encouraging a Hispanic/Catholic in-migration, and eventually affecting the gradual shift from Creole centred culture.

Throughout the Caribbean the nationalist trend away from British influence did not wane and was evidenced by the appointment of Philip Sherlock as its first Director of Extra-Mural Studies. As an academic trained in the West Indies he was, 'readily acceptable to the many nationalist leaders'.<sup>78</sup> Gordon reports Kidd as saying that nothing carried 'greater weight or consequences' in department thinking.<sup>79</sup> Yet education for work and nationalism is criticised elsewhere within the sphere of British West Indian culture. Bacchus points out that in Guyana this type of education

has simply reconfirmed the old status hierarchy of white to coloured to African/East Indian.<sup>80</sup> At the highest level the Catholic church remained constant to its Christian value driven objectives. The Jesuit Provinces were positive towards Pope Pius XI's encyclical on the 'Christian Education of Faith', reiterated by Pope John XXIII and reported in *The Belize Times* of January 13th, 1959:

It is proper that there should be many children who can find in good Catholic technical schools a specialised training and a truly Christian education that will permit them to be tomorrow's professional and moral elite of which the church and the world have such need'.<sup>81</sup>

Emory King reflected on the state of British Honduran society in the 1950s and the relationship between church, education and society:

The manners. People had good manners. Partly perhaps because of the British influence, and certainly because of the religious influence. And everybody was exceedingly polite and deferential. We combined the teaching of the three 'r's, reading, writing and arithmetic with the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount --- and what they learned in the way of not only good manners but moral principles, fair play, and not to blot your copy book and so on.<sup>82</sup>

### Conclusion

This chapter has revealed a high level of cultural tolerance in British Honduras demonstrating a power at the individual level of society to choose its own levels of cohesion. However, at the institutional level conflict remained a constant feature. The dichotomy in educational philosophy did not simply range between educationalists, in British Honduras the debate settled upon church and state, however the church had long held its position as a purveyor of values, whereas the state had begun to align itself consistently with the workplace and vocational schooling. These respective philosophies appeared irreconcilable and while both parties wished to provide a good standard of education each had very different views as to the means for its achievement.

However, as the 1950s drew to a close and the country edged towards Home-Rule so the will and

influence of the Colonial Government began to wane. The Belizean politicians were gradually becoming the dominant force in education. In consequence of these shifts in power the Roman Catholic Church expanded its authority, whilst simultaneously the Protestant church found it increasingly difficult to command its old prerogatives. The following chapter will examine this rising influence of the Jesuits both from a denominational perspective and as a potent foreign influence.

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**Part Two**  
**National Unity and Educational Philosophy in**  
**British Honduras 1949-1964: A Period of Rhetorical Development'.**

**Chapter Six**

**THE AMERICAN JESUIT INFLUENCE ON BRITISH HONDURAN EDUCATION**

This discussion will now focus on the foreign influences within the church in British Honduras and the British government's reaction, revealing a decline in the British will to rule, and a shift in the balance of power between and within both church and state. The old equilibrium of Protestant political power being challenged by Catholic financial independence and numerical superiority, as established in Part One, was now being eroded. This balance had provided a unique mix whereby neither denomination could secure hegemony over the population, and church and state were equal in matters of education and the spreading of cultural values and national identity. But with the emergence of a native Belizean politics in the form of the People's United Party (PUP) led by George Price and its common ground with the Roman Catholic church, the balance of influence began to shift from a Protestant/Colonial matrix to a Jesuit/PUP alliance. This transition period concerning late colonial politics in British Honduras/Belize is examined with the benefit of Colonial Office documents pertaining to the Jesuits in British Honduras, oral testimony of Belizeans, newspapers and documents from Belize itself. The chapter will develop the theme of the devaluation of British and Protestant power in favour of the Jesuits. The opening section provides an insight into the state of opinion concerning the extensive influence of the Society of Jesus in British Honduras. Two sections follow this, both concerned with a new awareness of the extent of Jesuit autonomy firstly through the actions of the Protestant church and finally those of the British and Colonial Government officials.

Although the country remained as British Honduras officially, many were now regarding themselves as Belizeans unofficially, thus the terms used throughout this chapter will reflect these differences. Belizean educators such as Perdome began to stress the education of *Belizeans* for *Belizean* citizenship and many contemporaries took the view of education as a powerful social engineering tool. <sup>1</sup> Unlike most other areas of the British Caribbean Belizean teachers still broadly saw the role of teacher and catechist as synonymous. Ashcraft and Grant discussed these roles as separate entities. They stressed the wasted effort of having multi denominational schools in areas that should barely possess one school. But in this they made no attempt to see the churches point of view or that of Belizean people for whom there was no education without religious instruction. <sup>2</sup> Perhaps they would have preferred material gain and civil strife? And, in their rush to rid schools of church dogma they should have asked whose dogma would take its place?

By the mid-1950s the Department of Education remained staffed by the British, and official policy asserted nondenominational goals and education-for-development. But as in the past, official policy remained less effective due to a lack of available funding, ensuring the continuance of denominational control. <sup>3</sup> Neither was British policy in line with the thinking of the rising Belizean politicians such as George Price. In a later report in the *Belize Times* Price espoused his long held position:

Those who try to confine the church strictly within the four walls of the church building are attempting the impossible- church and politics share a joint responsibility in creating a proper climate for the spiritual, intellectual, and material growth of the human person. <sup>4</sup>

Even the opposition National Independence Party assigned similar qualities:

the active role of religion in the education system is a precious heritage that all political

parties and all farseeing citizens want to see continued in this country and particularly after the country becomes wholly responsible for its own affairs. <sup>5</sup>

Education has been identified in Belize as the most important role of the church and that the PUP believed in its key position, proclaiming a causal connection between religiosity and the development of democratic institutions. <sup>6</sup> However, it is not always clear just how much the Belizean people were religious or supporters of the church for the welfare benefits it could bring to the community. Nor is it clear whether the enthusiasm of George Price and others for church involvement in education was due to the inability of the government to adequately fund the schools entirely from government resources or additionally, Price's alignment with church objectives may have been another form of anti-British activity.

#### **Growing concerns and the Whitehall reaction**

During the 1960s, many Belizean nationals were sent to the USA to train for the Jesuit priesthood; none persevered. This may have been due to the extreme rigours of religious training, significantly, none returned. <sup>7</sup> This could indicate the attractions of an American lifestyle or that once free from the peer group and family pressured religious environment of Belize the superficiality of their belief reared itself. How far were those who remained in Belize, and their families, driven by religiosity or the need to run parallel with the denominations in order to achieve an education?

For the purposes of this discussion it is the *fact* of denominational education and its permeating influence that is important rather than the depth of spiritual belief inherent in Belizeans; although the latter may have some bearing on how far that teaching was maintained beyond school. Previous research has shown that the churches dominated Belizean life such that

it is difficult to imagine church teaching as ineffective, but it is indicative that Whitehall's concerns over Jesuit power increased as its ability to affect the situation diminished.

The power and influence of the church in British Honduras were already well known to Whitehall, but the growing connection between the PUP and the Roman Catholics had begun to cause concern. Not least of these concerns was the left wing emphasis of the PUP, particularly to a British Conservative government. During 1953 Rawle Farley, a tutor at the Belize City based extramural department of the University of the West Indies, wrote to Lady Gore expressing his concern over foreign influence in British Honduran education. Although his comments were politically biased, they were valuable in revealing the degree of anxiety over foreign dominance. He describes the prominent non-British element as, 'the root cause of trouble', and heavily criticises the PUP as, 'anti-British, pro-American, anti-Federation, anti-immigration, anti-development, anti-anything that the British put forward. All the leaders are Roman Catholic and they are all taught in classes conducted by the American Jesuits'.<sup>8</sup>

The PUP were certainly against any immigration from the West Indies, in line with the Jesuits. Both wished to emphasise the Central American connection as their natural constituency. This policy was in contradiction to British Government policy, which hoped to perpetuate the Anglo connection throughout the Caribbean. A headline in the *Belize Billboard* read 'BRITISH CARIBBEAN FEDERATION BILL WELCOMED IN COMMONS'. It was in the House of Commons that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, A. Creech-Jones was quoted as supporting the West Indian connection: 'I hope that Federation will eventually be on a wider basis and that British Guiana will consider the desirability and the advisability of coming in and that British

Honduras will feel very much the same'.<sup>9</sup>

In support of Whitehall the Belize Billboard promoted the West Indian connection, and attempted to entice the church, particularly the Jesuits, to become involved,

It is only fitting that the church should now be closely allied with the endeavour to bring opportunities to Caribbean peoples.-- One of the most beneficial steps taken by the British Government has been the establishment of University Colleges in those regions of the Commonwealth where the people are moving towards political independence. Here in the Caribbean we have the University College of the West Indies --We are happy to see the Jesuits of British Guiana numbered among those giving their support to the University College.<sup>10</sup>

A headline regarding college extension programmes, 'CARNEGIE HELPS UCWI WITH \$12m FOR SURVEY OF EXTENSION WORK,' was dangled before the churches as an inducement.<sup>11</sup>

However, a headline in *The Belize Times* of February 11th, 1962, some five years later, revealed both the Jesuit/PUP attitude and their final inclination in respect of British endeavours:

'GUATEMALA GIVES SCHOLARSHIPS TO 39 BELIZEAN STUDENTS',<sup>12</sup> thus strengthening the Central American connection and direction.

The PUP were certainly against any immigration from the West Indies, in line with the Jesuits. For both wanted to emphasise the Central American connection as their natural constituency. Farley enveloped every kind of foreign influence as anti-British, although he did highlight a real problem among Jesuit schools in that all the texts were US/Jesuit authored. However Farley's assertion is both biased and his motives intentionally critical of Roman Catholic education.

The mixed use of American and British texts however, did make for a difficult situation within the curriculum when students were required to sit for British examinations. Students were also

encouraged to go to American universities, in particular what Farley disparagingly describes as an, 'Obscure Jesuit place called Marquette University', <sup>13</sup>

The church has huge American funds, and this American brand of oratory is used in spectacular pageants to show the glories of America, the contrast to the constitutional British order. Universal adult suffrage will be used through the GWU to entrench this order of Jesuits in political power. <sup>14</sup>

Although clearly Farley is extreme in his accusations his comments do point to the difficulties being experienced between various sections of Belizean society as the growth of Jesuit power began to upset the old status quo.

The PUP had certainly been concerned over the new constitution which granted adult suffrage: to all Hondurans 21 years of age who could fill out the entire registration form before a Justice of the Peace. The Billboard quoted the Hon. John Smith, 'who, 'objected that suffrage should have no literacy tests that the Legislature should be all elected and the Executive Council have only delaying powers on bills'. <sup>15</sup> Undoubtedly the PUP wished to marshal all the potential electorates behind their move to independence, and as Farley asserted, ally the Jesuits. However, Farley's comments were indicative of his desire to frustrate the democratic vote because it did not suit his faction of British Honduran society. A recognition of this increased Jesuit strength prompted a later Governor to admit he believed that the 'only sound policy to follow is to recognise the power and influence of the Roman Catholic church in the country'. <sup>16</sup>

Farley suggested help from the Conservative Party, describing the Jesuit activities as a 'cunning and vicious subversive underground movement', likening this to Communism, in that it thrived on 'ignorance, poverty, superstition, fear'. <sup>17</sup> His comments were passed on to R.D. Milne at the Conservative Central Office who described Farley as 'a good friend of ours'. <sup>18</sup> And Peter

Smithers MP, Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister of State was concerned to support Farley's letter, 'In the Caribbean as elsewhere, political action is more urgently required even than economic development. This is but a small example of the kind of problem that arises'.<sup>19</sup>

The general response to Farley was a mixture of sympathy and pragmatic deliberation. The Parliamentary Under Secretary - the Earl of Munster- wrote,

I think the picture painted by Mr. Farley is a little too gloomy--He is of course, quite right when he talks about the influence exercised by the American Jesuits throughout the Colony, but his solution that they be replaced by a British order of Jesuits is, I fear impractical--I know that the Governor is very conscious of the pernicious influence of the PUP and he can be relied upon to do everything to combat it.<sup>20</sup>

Senior civil servants at the Colonial Office revealed a more accurate grasp of social realities in the Colony. An internal memo illustrated the British Government's awareness of its limitations in this matter,

As long as the British Honduras government is necessarily dependent upon voluntary organisations for help in much of its work I am afraid that we cannot have everything the way we should like it to be however much we may wish to carry out Mr. Farley's suggestion'.<sup>21</sup>

This simple comment may show pragmatic awareness but it also reveals the true nature of official British thinking in that they would have *wished* to carry out Mr Farley's suggestion.<sup>22</sup>

The memo continues, 'Until we have greater proof that there is anti-British propaganda in the schools in British Honduras, I do not regard failure in an American to understand the British system of education as being necessarily subversive --'<sup>23</sup>

Church activity actually assisted in the spread of western ideology. Lecturer Douglas Hyde found his Belizean audiences, 'receptive to his anti communist lectures'. Religion had contributed to a common ideological outlook: 'British Honduras has been spared from communist influence

so far because education has always been on a religious basis, the people were mostly Christian and political leaders reflected that Christian teaching'.<sup>24</sup> The *Belize Billboard* of July 22, 1952 made the connection between Christianity and anti communism but offered a more perceptive solution which might be seen as a criticism of capitalist government, 'Christians must always oppose the communist doctrine even at the cost of their lives and liberties. - But Christians should remember also that the best defence against communism is to remove the injustices that breed communism'.<sup>25</sup> Although communists might argue that injustice was inherent to capitalism and therefore irremovable from that system.

The Governor lent his support to the Jesuits, however his advocacy may have been that of a mediator rather than a champion:

They have considerable provocation from bigoted members of other religions who are apt to find Roman Catholic plots lurking behind every bush. I do not think the priests are consciously anti-British or anti-government. But there is none of the support that is unconsciously given to sound government by British clergy in other territories. They are not interested in whether they are helping or hindering the British government, they are trying to lead people to God, and of course lead them along the ways of thought which they have been brought up to believe. Since education is a large part of the work of the church, it is perhaps inevitable that more than half our children grow up with their moral training unlinked to British ways of thought.<sup>26</sup>

Under the guise of further training for his secretary, Farley requested that he wished to improve his filing system. 'Could his secretary spend some time in the Colonial Secretariat - also at the Education Department - Public Record Office and Social Development Department'. T. D. Vickers, the Acting Colonial Secretary astutely refused Farley. 'I have had to decide against allowing her to come in here for training, since so many of the papers in this office are of a confidential nature'.<sup>27</sup> He could only offer Farley the Public Record Office, a place of lesser confidentiality, perhaps recognising that the Colonial Secretariat, the Education Department, and

Social Development Department might provide Farley with the kind of information he required for his political purposes.

#### **Protestant reforms and the Catholic reaction**

Some measure of support existed for the Jesuits among the British in Whitehall, whilst others in the Colony were not easily appeased. Suspicion of Roman Catholic activity was not limited to the right wing lay community. The Protestant church had an interest in frustrating the growth of Catholic power. Governor Rennison claimed that many influential Protestants and Anglicans, 'Courtenay in particular' were extremely in-balanced in their suspicions to the extent of, 'being openly offensive at times'.<sup>28</sup> Other Protestants wished to contain the influence of the Roman Catholic church within the education system.

This was a period of radical reform among the Protestants who were less able to fund their schools than the Jesuits. G.S.U. Petter, an Education Advisor from Hastings House in Barbados visited British Honduras in December 1955 and made recommendations that involved some amalgamation of Protestant schools, either within or between denominational configurations. In his report Petter commented: 'In my own mind there is only room in Belize for one non-Catholic secondary school of the academic type and the solution that I am going to propose stems from that conviction'. He recommended the establishment of a Belize High School and Technical Institution and to set up a governing body 'representative of religious denominations involved'.<sup>29</sup> Petter made further recommendations regarding other Protestant schools:

- (vi) To preserve St. Hilda's as a fee paying secondary of a non-academic type providing girls with an internal diploma and preserve the valuable social and moral training ---
- (vii) To pursue the same policy with St. Michael's if finance permits; otherwise to discontinue it and use the building as an Anglican kindergarten and prep.
- (viii) To preserve Wesley College as a fee paying school for boys and girls of 11-15, thus reducing congestion in the senior classes of Methodist's elementary schools.<sup>30</sup>

Petter's motives appeared to be the establishment of a government school through the amalgamation of Anglican and Methodist management, 'the argument that able children should be concentrated in one school is, I believe, impossible to defeat'.<sup>31</sup> It has been suggested that ecumenical management generally encouraged secular, rather than church control. However, this was not Petter's view,

Both Anglicans and Methodists should be able to enjoy the confident knowledge that they have a stake in the policy of the new school, if arrangements are made for Ministers of religion to superintend the teaching of religious instruction to members of their own denomination --.<sup>32</sup>

But here we witness the arrival of single-lesson marginalising of religious study, by bringing two denominations into one school and effectively removing the permeating influence of religion.

During an interview, Harold Godfrey, the present day manager of Methodist Schools in Belize, expanded on a different view on the results of ecumenical school management,

Because you can make a school is a name. We have an ecumenical High School in Stann Creek. The main ecumenical high school. The fact is it operates as a government school. Because you cannot have an ecumenical school when people have no alternative to making the decision. It's supposed to have been the Methodists, Anglicans and Catholics--it should have been an ecumenical school -- but the duties and responsibilities have never been worked out. So there's a board and the board is operated by government. So who runs the school? So government schools are actually ecumenical now.<sup>33</sup>

Evidently Godfrey is saying that multi denominational management nullifies the power of the churches and allows government control.

Nick Sanchez was surprised that government schools offered only a limited religious education, however he did relate his experiences with the Canadian education system:

They don't? [teach religion] Because why I ask this is because when I first went to Canada, my wife was a teacher, and I made a quote from the bible and she said, 'Well what does that mean?' I said, 'Well what do you mean, "What does that mean". Didn't you go to school?

Didn't they teach you no religion? She said, 'No, I didn't go to church, I went to school'.  
And that was the first time I ever heard that -- <sup>34</sup>

The idea of religion and education as something separate was incredible to Nick and Harold Godfrey.

This brief analytical overview of the state of Protestant education during the 1950s assists in explaining Protestant attempts to undermine the waxing Catholic power such as that which follows. A new plan for integrating church and state involvement in schools was proposed by the Reverend D.S. Ching, General Manager Methodist Schools and seconded by E.A. Hubbard, General Manager Anglican Schools:

What is needed is not a fresh compromise, but a new synthesis--As salaries are paid by the government complete control in staff matters should be assumed by the government -- the fiction that denominational managers are the employers of teachers in these schools should be abandoned. <sup>35</sup>

These church leaders simply echoed long held concerns of the Colonial Office. Claiming that for churches to be involved in 'care-taking' took them away from the educative task and was a form of 'secularisation'. However, the above plan also shows Protestant antagonism towards the Roman Catholics, which was an empire wide issue especially as grants paid for teachers salaries were often misdirected by the Roman Catholic church and used to build churches: 'Education is a state responsibility. Grants are not donations to church funds'. <sup>36</sup>

This willingness of the Protestant churches to surrender their own control over teachers may have been driven by a reluctant preference for government, rather than Catholic, power. As early as the 1940s Protestant authorities throughout the empire had known that they could not hope to maintain their dominance in a new era of mass education. Only the government could raise the

necessary resources however in British Honduras, the Missouri-based Jesuits financial independence from Britain allowed them to develop a partnership with the PUP and assists in understanding why Belize retains a denominational education system to the present.

Clearly these Protestants would have been happy to force their views on the community:

'Government serves the community by civic vocation and the church serves the community by a sense of a divine vocation, both are necessary to the community and each is necessary to the other in the field of primary education. Statutory synthesis [is] needed'.<sup>37</sup> Although the Reverend Ching denied 'advocating coercion',<sup>38</sup> his use of the term 'statutory synthesis' stressed a desire for the legal enforcement of government control in schools. It was proposed that the Government must take charge. Teachers' salaries were to be paid directly by government. Teachers should report to government with the right of appeal to government. Equipment, property and sanitation should all eventually become government responsibility. Whilst wishing to surrender the overall responsibility for schools to the government, largely due to financial difficulties, Ching and Hubbard were keen to maintain the church's educative function, 'to suppose that the church runs schools with the idea of exploiting the children for unspecified ecclesiastical ends is at once a demonstration of civic irresponsibility in the supposer and an indication of the need for Christian education'.<sup>39</sup>

The feasibility, of Ching and Hubbard's plan was put to the Secretary of State but swiftly rejected by the Roman Catholic church. Fr. O'Connor made it clear that the Roman Catholic management was satisfied with the 'present system' and did not wish to associate itself with, 'that proposal by the Rev. Ching'. Fr. O'Connor urgently requested that the Secretary of State be informed of

Roman Catholic objections. <sup>40</sup>

The dominant fear was not of an increase in Protestant authority but that of secularism caused by the removal of church influence over teachers. As civil servants teachers would be totally government controlled. Fr. O'Connor also noted the advisory status of the school board, which would remove even more power from the hands of the church whereas, the Director of Education would represent the secular authority. The church report to the Board of Education was quite firm in its thinking, 'Education is very definitely a church responsibility. --The function of both State and Church in education should be secured in close association with each other, but its object will not be secured by the present proposals'. <sup>41</sup>

The Catholic church, being financially independent, was antipathetic to any idea that was likely to undermine their authority, unlike the Protestants who were more dependent on government patronage and therefore amenable to allowing the State a direct influence within their schools. Governor Thornley suggested that opposition to the University College of the West Indies and West Indies Federation had to do with the Jesuit fear of education falling into secular hands. Such was the dread of influence beyond the church that Thornley claimed a teacher in the education department who took up a UK scholarship was told by a priest she would not get her job back on return. <sup>42</sup> This situation had shown the ineffectiveness of the Protestant church in driving through their reforms against the wishes of the Jesuits.

#### **The old order and evidence of decline**

British legitimacy to rule was tested throughout the 1950s particularly in the control of schools and the status quo between the State and the Roman Catholic church. The British Conservative

Government was suspicious of American Jesuit intentions in British Honduras. Government minister, John Profumo suggested a survey of Roman Catholics in the West Indies as he was, 'Concerned as to their influence'.<sup>43</sup> Jamaica was noted as giving no problems, however this was the only Colony to be under the New England province of the Society of Jesus. Some difficulties had been observed in St. Lucia (French clergy) and Dominica (Belgique), but no longer. The rest were [native] Irish, French, or English.<sup>44</sup> It was indicative of the problem the Government felt, that Profumo should emphasise the main concern that British Honduras remained Anti-British.<sup>45</sup> During the last year of that decade, Mr Rogers of the Colonial Office wrote that, 'The difficulties in British Honduras are notorious'.<sup>46</sup> The PUP were advertising General Worker's Union courses in TU. leadership. Interestingly three of the six lecturers were from the Jesuit St. John's College.<sup>47</sup>

British anti-American feeling was especially strong during the declining years of empire due to British pride in their culture, and an inability to offer effective rule, combined with the knowledge that the USA had superseded Britain as the major world power. In British Honduras resistance to Jesuit influence may have had an economic motive. A government report suggested that the, 'Issue of importance here is the 'knock-on-effect' of not having adequately trained local teachers ready. If Americans and American equipment used then eventually a preference will emerge for American equipment in industries served by technical education.'<sup>48</sup> Evidence suggests that the British Government were beginning to lose the will to battle with the churches, particularly with the prospect of independence, or at least home-rule, ever more likely. New and telling phrases of resignation were being uttered in the Colonial Office such as, 'that tiresome bone of contention, the Jesuit Mission in British Honduras'.<sup>49</sup> 'British Honduras is effectively a

Jesuit mission. Even though the Sisters of Mercy are Nazarenes they are under the authority of the Jesuit brethren'.<sup>50</sup>

Quite likely the Jesuits were beginning to sense the prevalent British attitude, that empire was no longer in the British national interest. Governor Sir Patrick Rennison, wrote to Hugh Baker at the Colonial Office. The letter stated that Fr. Crane wrote to Fr.'s Knopp and Raszkoski (latter his friend). Neither responded. Rennison commented.

I gave him concrete examples of the sort of difficulties that there had been between the government and the Roman Catholic church, particularly in education matters he made the right sort of sympathetic noises. He commented that the American approach in Jamaica was so very different from the American approach in British Honduras'.<sup>51</sup>

By 1957 concerns over Jesuit influence in schools reflected a mixture of anxious deliberations and an unwillingness to proceed to any tangible effect because of a decline in the British will to rule. The British government made a half-hearted attempt to reassert its influence after the resignation of Bishop Hickey. Governor Thornley considered Mr Roger's wish that a British bishop be appointed. However the Governor felt strongly that British clergy would have to be appointed before a British bishop could be installed. 'Vickers entirely agrees that in all circumstances much the wisest course now will be to avoid appearing to interfere further in the matter of the succession of Bishop Hickey'.<sup>52</sup> Thornley, at the opening of an education week, suggested that the 'Greatest of all needs' was 'Cooperation in the home' and the 'Path to success: Cooperation between church and state'.<sup>53</sup> However, Rogers was not convinced of the efficacy of Thornley's views, 'Frankly I must record my view that Sir C. Thornley in accepting the assurances of the members of the Jesuit Mission takes too much at their face value'.<sup>54</sup> Indeed he may, but Thornley's perception of British influence in that matter was probably more accurate.

The Governor preferred to make pacific statements. Regarding the agricultural school he stated: 'The Catholic mission ought to be congratulated on its foresight and its desire to help the people of British Honduras not only spiritually but materially'. To facilitate the development of the agricultural school the Government had generously made a concession of Crown lands but preferred to adopt a diffident posture in this respect. <sup>55</sup>

Clearly there was an undercurrent of feeling within the British ranks, ranging between a longing to return to the old precepts of imperial assertiveness and an awareness that control was slipping away. Eventually the appointment went to Fr. Hodapp, a Midwesterner from Minnesota. The Governor commented, 'Eminently satisfactory because he is right-wing. He is of German origin [with] none of the antipathy to everything British which we do notice in some of the other local Jesuit priests of Irish-American origin'. <sup>56</sup>

Hodapp had much to do with the rebuilding of St. John's College and the rebuilding of schools and teachers' houses in the North and a 'Close personal knowledge of the value of the grants made by HMG after 'Janet'. [Hurricane Janet 1957] <sup>57</sup>, which had cost British Honduras over S4.1/4m. <sup>58</sup> However these concerns are revealed as more ideological in origin. British government reports have already revealed a right-wing bias, not surprising in a Conservative leadership. Their condemnation of opposing elements has similar roots: 'Fr. Kramer absent from consecration' Kramer did not inspire confidence: he was, 'too often associated with Price and Ned Davis. I would say that he and Fr. White represented the left-wing of the clergy here'. <sup>59</sup>

George Price was also absent; he had hoped that Fr. White would become the Bishop. The report's topic is that of Dr Howe, the Education Officer, developing a single Teacher Training

College, but the opening remarks reveal further ideological bias:

I believe that the conservative and sensible element amongst the local Jesuit priesthood who are now in power are quite genuine about this. -- Dr. Howe has won much confidence with the clergy not just because he is Roman Catholic but because Fr. O'Connor knows he is a sound educationalist as well. As a result there are real hopes that Roman Catholic teachers will come in on a joint teacher training programme and that girls from St. Catherine's Convent will go to Belize Technical College for science and Home Economics'.<sup>60</sup>

Regarding Bishop Hoddapp, the author of the *British Honduras Dispatch* stated, 'I feel confident that he will not allow Price to use the Roman Catholic church for his own aims'.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps he underestimated the churches' ability to use Price and the PUP for *its* own aims and gain a greater hold on the political system, thereby eliminating the only power base of the Protestants.

However, complaints continued throughout the 1950s. Suspicion of the PUP remained strong.

The *Belize Billboard* of July 31st, 1959 stated 'The PUP want colonialism in British Honduras more than anything else, because without it they can never hope to stir the emotions of the people enough to rush them into government'.<sup>62</sup>

In 1958, Mr. Rogers reiterated the old problem that the American missions differ:

British Honduran Jesuits are all Mid-Western Americans. -- There have been occasions in the past, one or two quite recently where Roman Catholic priests have delivered themselves of statements which were rankly subversive and the Bishop has on occasion, taken action to bring them to book. -- The complaint is that they are anti-British and anti-Colonial in outlook and pass on their prejudice to their pupils and their congregations.<sup>63</sup>

In their defence however, Rogers claims that the cultural background is more significant than any other suggestion of deliberate intent, continuing the British line of appeasement towards the Catholic authorities. Harold Godfrey's evaluation of the Jesuit Mission in British Honduras provides a summary overview of Jesuit cultural attitudes towards the provision of schools:

AH! - Well, the Jesuit College believes the Jesuit College is in the States, and they all take

an Associate degree. So it's only an extension of the Jesuit system in the States. Simple as that. So, if you go to St. John's College you know you are in the American system. <sup>64</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has indicated the extent of Jesuit influence through their political affiliations with the PUP, and how they were in a strong position to ignore the British and Protestant factions. As this period drew to a close and 'home-rule' became ever more likely the British continued to reveal their reluctance to interfere in education matters beyond Colonial Development and Welfare plans for school buildings and even here they were reluctant to make these conditional. George Price and the PUP were using education, particularly history to attack colonialism. The recognition of Jesuit power highlighted a considerable withdrawal from the policies of the 1930s and 40s and the energetic attempts of men such as Governor Alan Burns to impose a national secular authority in education. However, this British apathy was not the salutary neglect of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries rather a disinclination to exercise imperial authority in an anti colonial world. The Jesuits for their part were building a partnership with the rising People's United Party, one that would ensure their future hegemony over the Protestants in British Honduras.

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**Part Two**  
**National Unity and Educational Philosophy in British Honduras 1949-1964: A  
Period of Rhetorical Development'.**

**Chapter Seven**  
**SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE**

Chapter Seven will examine the practical application of politics and educational policy into school life from the scant micro level extant sources. The chapter reveals further how individual people contributed to multi-cultural cohesion unencumbered by excessive interference from hierarchical activities. The background to events and the principal issues will form the initial section. The remaining sections will reflect the principal concerns of families in British Honduras. For instance, the opening of new schools for the convenience of children is illustrated. Where this was deemed impossible, parents were concerned to provide adequate transportation within slender budgets. Feeding the poor in schools was perceived by families, government and church as, a significant advance, and it was considered an important part of the curriculum content.

Allying nationalism and the needs of the work place to education, became de jure priority after World War Two, although the churches still gave precedence to religious instruction. Among the Roman Catholics the lay members had a passive role with no equivalent to the Anglican and Methodist synods. Lay Catholic influence was only tolerated in Parish Councils and prior to Vatican II, apart from St. John's College, Catholic schools had no board of governors. It is interesting to note that this new impetus for lay involvement did not come from the large expatriate Jesuit teachers and Governors but from external influences outside the local church hierarchy, reflecting a sustained local desire to maintain foreign hegemony in education.

This period was beset with problems of duplication of effort and an absence of interdenominational cooperation, exacerbated by ineffectual central government control. <sup>1</sup> The Protestant church began to shift its attitude away from sustaining separate schools, though this was prompted by impecuniousness. Perhaps the clearest example of resource wastage was the opening of two teacher training establishments in Belize City. Firstly a government college followed by a Jesuit institution. Thus, by 1957 the total enrolment stood at 27:18 at the government school and nine at the Jesuit college. Good economic sense prevailed here and in 1965, at the urging of a UNESCO team, the Jesuits abandoned their venture. Ashcraft points out the irregularity of some schools not having anyone to teach science whilst one school had a science graduate not teaching science. Ashcraft's argument is not that denominational schools are to blame per se, but that the passive involvement of the government, 'lacks a unifying philosophy' at the secondary level. <sup>2</sup>

Possibly the only single unifying effect which affected the whole of society was the impetus towards Belizeanisation (outlined in the introduction to Part Two). In education this amounted to more discussion than action but the general trend was nationalistic. The heavy reliance on foreign teachers hindered this process. The main problem was that while primary teachers required only a secondary education, secondary teachers required some form of tertiary training. Unfortunately facilities in Belize were inadequate, and so most teachers were American, British, or West Indian; usually priests, nuns, or lay church workers. Eventually the 1960s saw the arrival of volunteers from the Peace Corps, VSO, and PVLA (Papal Volunteers). They were brought in as a short term measure but became an 'enduring feature' forming chiefly, 'a continuous channel of US culture'. <sup>3</sup> During this period the arrival of volunteers was accepted as beneficial. The *Belize*

*Times* of February 24th, 1962 reported 'Peace Corps x 33 first arrived':

The strategic placing of these volunteers in the schools will be a decided boost to the teaching profession and to the students themselves, who are crying out for proper instruction. Because of our lack of University graduates our High Schools and Colleges suffer. <sup>4</sup>

Volunteers were not exclusively American. Two members of Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) joined the staff of Pallotti High School in September 1960, Misses Sara Mageean and Teresa Mulherin, 'replaced in 1961 by Misses Deanna Boga and Wendy Arden, who were here just two months when the horror that was 'Hattie' struck. Both young women worked like veterans during the hectic weeks that followed'. <sup>5</sup> The long term effects of continuing with foreign teachers were not recognised until the following decade, although an educational environment always concerned with strict budgetary controls has meant the retention of volunteers to the present day.

The early 1960s saw some denominational diversity in the districts with the expansion of Anglican and Methodist secondary school activity. Although the Nazarenes had opened a secondary school in Belize City and broken the Jesuit monopoly on Catholic education, the Sisters remained under the authority of the Jesuit brethren. However, between 1955 and 1965 many of these new schools lacked facilities for science and technology. A few vocational courses existed; bookkeeping, typing, and shorthand, directed mainly at female students. <sup>6</sup>

Denominational rivalry continued to provide a balance of power that denied either group hegemony: Roman Catholics not only had far more external funding from the USA but numerical superiority meant greater support; the majority of wealthy Belizeans, particularly merchants were Catholic. However because of the reluctance of Catholics to attend the Government Teacher

Training College the situation was, by 1964, that the Catholics had 61% of the primary schools but only 8% of the trained teachers while the Anglicans and Methodists had 31% but with 45% of trained teachers.

That the Belizeanisation process sprang from Creolisation is evident. Brockmann shows that since 1954 the PUP has been 'even-handed' in dealing with ethnic groups (Price himself was Creole paternally and Mestizo maternally while the remainder of the PUP were Creole) but this even-handedness has brought accusations from Creole leaders such as Evan Hyde of Mestizo/Maya bias, implying a prior Creolisation now adapted for the nationalist cause.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the distinction between the Asians and the Creole/Mestizo matrix had almost disappeared. Robinson refutes Bolland's claim that from the 1930s 'the various racial/ethnic groups of Belize do not subscribe to a common culture, ideology, or value system'.<sup>8</sup> Brockmann's research assists us to understand Bolland's view whilst supporting Robinson. He feels that the 'Ideology of ethnicity' is strong. Thus it is not difficult to understand why Belizean culture might appear differentiated. But, he continues, 'The practice is more blurred and civilised', and suggests that the prospects for continued ethnic harmony are excellent.<sup>9</sup> From a study of Northern Belize it appears that people wished to interact and not remain isolated within ethnic groups; that there was a strong desire to allow this to develop gradually through the generations rather than by any forced process. This is in line with other findings on educational modernisation in southern Belize.<sup>10</sup> Here, many of the older generations felt assimilation had overturned old traditions too quickly but no substantial ill-will existed towards this cultural synthesis: 'Frustrations translate into positive attitudes towards the educator of their children/grandchildren'<sup>11</sup> Similar dispositions have been found among the Garifuna,<sup>12</sup> and other much

smaller groups such as the Chinese, Lebanese, and East Indians.<sup>13</sup>

### **Requests for new schools**

During this period the Catholic church instigated a number of developments with regard to schools. By 1949 Catholic support in Belize City had grown sufficiently to justify creating a new parish that of St. Josephs.<sup>14</sup> The Jesuits inaugurated their new Landivar campus for St. John's College on 25 November 1952. It has been suggested that naming the college after a well-known Guatemalan poet indicated an original intent to reinstate regionalism. However, the increased intakes of Anglo-Creole students were pressing for more Belizean Studies. However this created a continuous complaint of anti-British teaching in history from Colonialists such as Rawle Farley, as indicated in the previous chapter.<sup>15</sup> This, combined with a strong nationalist politics (based upon St. John's Alumni), the call of the Vatican II Council for greater involvement of the laity in school governance, and a general state of peace throughout Central America, brought a new tendency for St. John's and other Catholic schools to adopt a more national perspective.<sup>16</sup>

Early plans developed along a government run technical school that after a four-year delay opened in 1952, offering an industrial, rather than an agricultural bias. Thirty-five of forty-one students were Creole and/or Protestant,<sup>17</sup> revealing a continued unwillingness for Catholics to attend non Catholic schools. The school offered a four-year, secondary education up to GCE 'O' level. Later, typing was added. By 1959 a single concrete building was added for motor vehicles as well as a science laboratory, plumbing, and home economics. During 1964, a UNESCO report recommended a partial rebuilding and reorganisation, although it was August of 1968 before a grant of £43,484 was secured. However the existing building could not support another storey so

a separate two-storey building was required, which forced an overspend on the grant of £24,750. However, in this case the British Government maintained the funding, which facilitated the addition of a Sixth Form for ten pupils taking 'A' levels.<sup>18</sup> The British Government was shown here to be willing to fund education directly related to the economy, just as the church has been shown in previous chapters to be less inclined.

The opening of Pallotti High School in 1957 provides a good example of foreign influence whilst extending the strength of Catholic education into the girl's schooling. Previously as there had been no school building the attic of the convent had been remodelled into classrooms. In keeping with the approach to the girl's schooling in 1950s British Honduras, Pallotti School was known as the 'Homemaker's Institute'.<sup>19</sup>

Pallotti High School opened its door on June 24, 1957. Humanly speaking we were not ready to begin this new apostolate: we had no school building; we had no trained Secondary School staff. But in the gentle urgings of his Lordship, Hickey, S. J. and Rev. J. White, S. J. we heard the Holy Spirit inciting us to step out in faith. And so we did. We had not many Peace Corps teachers workers with us, but those we had were excellent'.<sup>20</sup>

The school thrived and the \$70, 000 in damages caused by Hurricane Hattie in 1961 were alleviated by funding from the British Government, German Government and the German Bishop's Fund.<sup>21</sup>

Requests to the Governor for additional schools had in previous decades been in response to new road building schemes and the resultant establishment of further communities along these routes. However, occasionally the reverse situation would apply, where inadequate roads existed, as in the case of the residents of Sand Hill, writing to the Governor on February 12th, 1951:

Sometime in the past year we made a request for a school, but we gathered from your answer that Weston (Salt Creek) school would serve both places. Sirs, we feel that perhaps

you are not acquainted with the distance and the condition of the road. The distance is 4 1/2 miles between the two places. The road condition is rocky, and at times very bushy. When it rains or during the rainy season it is impossible for children at Sand Hill to attend school in Weston.<sup>22</sup>

The letter comments on a private school run by the Assembly of God. But this was really only a Sunday School. The residents were chiefly concerned that many of their children would reach an age where they would be too old to attend school, 'for some are going fast to the age when school may not admit them, and it pains us to know that our children may have to meet the future without education to guide them'. Clearly the residents were well aware of the slow-moving process of British colonial bureaucracy, and the value of, at least, an elementary education. Probably this prompted them to instigate a personal meeting with Governor Garvey only two days after their first letter.<sup>23</sup>

The authorities however, showed their reluctance to embark on a government-funded project and fell back on the usual route of approaching the churches. The Director of Education, Mr E. Brown commented to the Governor, 'The people belong to various denominations, none of which has sufficient adherents to warrant its putting up a school. I suggested that they might approach the Nazarenes'.<sup>24</sup> The Governor readily followed Brown's advice replying within 24 hours.<sup>25</sup>

Evidently, from the Minutes of a Board of Education meeting held on 1 March 1951 to discuss the request that a government school be built, 'the people of Sand Hill would be satisfied if a school were erected by the Church of the Nazarenes'.<sup>26</sup> The government had successfully continued its long-standing policy of shifting the responsibility for education provision on to the church, but in doing so further enhanced the power of the Roman Catholic church at the micro community level which, in turn, with the advent of adult suffrage, would strengthen them at the

institutional level. A petition from Middlesex parents to the Colonial Secretary two years later expressed similar concerns:

We the undersigned residing at Middlesex and Mothers of many children do hereby beseech thee to erect a school here however humble it may be, for the benefit of our children which are too small to be sent 4 1/2 miles to the nearest School. <sup>27</sup>

The petition was signed by twenty-three mothers representing forty-two children. However the file is concerned with activities one year later when the school was threatened with closure. The District Commissioner for Stann Creek reported that the school building had been provided by the local Citrus Company and the Roman Catholic church had engaged the teacher. The company and a Mr. Mallette paid the teacher's salary of \$40.00 per month. <sup>28</sup>

The difficulty here lay in the school's reliance on an individual parent, such as Mr Mallette, as a benefactor: Mallette wrote to the District Commissioner:

As from the beginning of this year I have sent my children to school in Belize and so can no longer afford to continue paying half of the fees. I spoke to Mr F. G. Sharp, Manager of the company and he is only willing to continue paying half of the fees as before. <sup>29</sup>

There were 21 children on the roll in January. Because of this Reverend M. M. O'Connor wrote to the Department of Education stating that,

We intend to keep the school going, even if entirely at our own expense, for some time longer. We shall be making an application for Government aid. These children ought to have an opportunity of going to school and apparently the only way of providing this opportunity is by having a school nearby. <sup>30</sup>

Transportation to St. Joseph's school at Nineteen miles was not considered feasible, and more expensive than having a school at Middlesex. Fr. O'Connor explained the economics of transporting children to St. Joseph's:

Trucks that may be travelling up and down the road cannot be depended upon. It would be necessary to engage a truck to make the two daily trips on all school days at definite times

and no truck owner will agree to that without being well paid, as he will necessarily have to sacrifice other opportunities of making money with his truck. We shall keep the school going for a time, at least, but we do hope the government will come to our aid and make the school permanent.<sup>31</sup>

The Stann Creek school survived, but transportation to schools in rural British Honduras had long been a problem. New communities had sprung up as a result of the road building schemes of the 1930s, making transportation relatively straight forward, although many of the older communities still experienced problems.

#### **Transportation and accessibility**

Accessibility was not always a matter of inadequate roads or muddy dirt paths. Copper Bank and San Fernando to Chunox in Corozal had no road access whatsoever. An internal government report stated that, 'There are now between 22 and 30 children being conveyed across the lagoon. In addition to the \$200 provided by the Government, the Roman Catholic mission it is understood, pays the owner of the dorey about S30 a year.'<sup>32</sup> Additionally those schools on main highways were often some distance from the smaller communities. The report examined three grant-aided schools on the Belize-Maskall Road, Ladyville, Rockstone Pond and Maskall. Investigations revealed that within a radius of five miles of Ladyville were to be found about forty children, eight of who live beyond four miles of the school. The other schools had similar problems. Although the numbers were not excessive, the cost of transporting them became an issue.

A year ago - estimated transportation - along the Belize-Maskall road, would cost some S2240 per year for the 80-mile run, for the usual 200 school days. But this estimate -- the bus would have to make two trips - each school day. The cost would therefore be nearer S4480 per annum or over S40 per child.<sup>33</sup>

Within government and education circles the debate centred upon who would pay to convey

pupils to school. The District Commissioner for Corozal wrote to the Colonial Secretary as early as December 1950.

The village of San Victor is three and a half miles from the village of San Narciso and has approximately 20 children of school age. I would suggest that instead of opening a new school at San Victor that the Education Department pay for transportation of the children -- to and from San Narciso--. I have discussed this matter fully with the Rev. Father MacCormack who is the R.C. local manager of schools here and he is very much in agreement with my views.<sup>34</sup>

However, it appears that even though the church believed this to be a sensible solution. Mr. E. Brown, Acting Director of Education wished the children to attend two different schools, one in the dry season and the other in the wet season,

I am informed that San Victor is nearer to Douglas than to San Narciso and it should be possible for the children to attend Douglas school in the dry season at least. Apparently the building of a road between San Victor and Douglas is not on the plan for this year.<sup>35</sup>

The Board of Education were concerned with a 'question of principle, i.e. whether the Government should accept responsibility for the provision of transport in rural areas -- since any general acceptance of the principle would involve a very heavy financial commitment'.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless the Board were concerned that special cases should be considered. 'It was agreed that the Government could not undertake the provision of free transportation generally'. Yet the necessity of sending children to two different schools and the obvious disruption to their studies was not to be considered as 'special': 'As relates San Victor, the Board felt that there was not a significantly strong special case for the provision of transportation'.<sup>37</sup> Further discussions took place on 13 November 1953 in the Standing Finance Committee but it was decided that this item could not be met from revenue but that it should be considered 'when members were reviewing possible disbursements from the Official Charities fund'.<sup>38</sup> However this possibility was quickly removed at the next meeting on 16 November, 1953 where it was decided 'not to provide for the

transportation of school children from the Official Charities Fund'.<sup>39</sup>

On the subject of San Victor the report is oddly silent, though under the overall heading of 'San Victor and Pembroke Hall and Estrella' the report does offer explanations for the latter two communities: 'The children of Pembroke Hall and Estrella are provided with transportation to and from San Joaquin School, by the manager of the sugar factory. The Roman Catholic Manager in Corozal contributes to the expenses but the cost is not known.'<sup>40</sup> We might therefore, assume that some such private arrangement had been made for San Victor. Clearly only local efforts were going to solve the transportation problem.

#### **Feeding the poor in schools**

Continuing the theme of the financial relationships between church-government-and private individuals, the provision of free school milk was a topical point in the early 1950s. In several villages in the North, the villagers were unhappy that the free milk issued to children had apparently been discontinued. The acting Colonial Secretary, J. N. Meighan was unable to say whether the discontinuance was temporary or permanent.<sup>41</sup> Evidently the free milk had not been discontinued. The District Manager stated that it was due to go on until August 1953, which, although dispelling the immediate rumours, still affirmed that milk provision was coming to an end. 'Progreso was the only village concerned and the school children are now receiving milk again during the school days'.<sup>42</sup>

For the school children provision of milk was subject to the same financial constraints as other areas of education. This was being reviewed at the highest level in the Colony. The Governor commented: 'I shall be most interested to see the final decisions on the main question.

This will be a big burden to assume in the budget forever'.<sup>43</sup> Fortunately recourse to charitable institutions was more readily available than in the previous two decades under examination. International bodies such as UNICEF could be approached even by governments to supply aid to cash starved colonial societies such as those in the British Caribbean. Just such an application saved the day for the issue of the free provision of school milk to British Honduran elementary pupils. The Colonial Secretary contacted the District Manager for schools in Corozal regarding the reduction in cost to the government: 'I would like to emphasise that this recent offer from UNICEF of Skim Milk at 5 cents per lb. means that our supply of milk for 4090 children for one school year will cost not S30, 000 but S3, 118 (U. S) = S7, 300 (B. H).<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless the letter also stated that UNICEF 'could not supply beyond May, and the Red Cross not beyond next year'.<sup>45</sup> But the proper establishment of a school milk programme facilitated by UNICEF and the Red Cross was enough to make the government continue with its provision permanently: 'Continuance of UNICEF Scheme. -- Government should take over the responsibility for this Scheme and voted S10,000.00 (B H) in the current year on the assumption that the cost in a full year would be S20, 000.00'.<sup>46</sup> Actual school milk distribution was to be provided on a self-help basis: 'Private to main district schools - school managers distribute to rural schools. Suggests using UNICEF Jeep and trailer instead of private element'.<sup>47</sup>

A concern expressed by the Colonial Secretary related to actual consumption:

The children who receive the milk are selected by the teacher concerned as she is the person most intimately acquainted with the financial situation of the families concerned. [fair] The difficulty is to ensure that the parents of the children concerned do not "lean" too heavily on this snack i.e. withdraw food (which they are in a position to supply)---<sup>48</sup>

The Colonial Secretary suggested apportionment should this occur. However it would seem

likely that parents from poor communities would do exactly what the Colonial Secretary was suggesting should not happen and see snack provision as a way to make savings on their own meagre budget rather than allowing UNICEF or the Red Cross to supplement government coffers.

The government was additionally involved in the supply of a midday snack, originally provided in Belize and Districts from a vote in the Medical Department's budget called "Feeding of Poor Children in Schools". The amount involved was approximately S10,000.<sup>49</sup> During an economic depression that followed a drought in 1949, Lady Garvey [the Governor's wife] raised a fund to augment this subsidy for the feeding of schoolchildren in Belize [Town] and in the areas most affected by the drought such as the villages in Orange Walk and Corozal. In Belize the food had been cooked in the Red Cross kitchen and supervised by voluntary Red cross workers and distributed daily. In the villages the churches took care of the cooking and distribution. However the fund was exhausted by this time and the Red Cross had assumed interim responsibility for this operation.<sup>50</sup>

The Roman Catholic schools were better placed financially to augment this system, 'The RC schools provide service free i.e. all money spent by them from this vote is spent on food'. Therefore, the children would be provided with a more substantial meal than the Protestant school children: 'In the case of the other denominations; premises have to be hired, a cook paid and utensils provided'.<sup>51</sup> As with the school milk programme the government agreed to augment this important service:

Feeding of poor children in the Districts, vote to remain unchanged as in estimates, Feeding of poor children in Belize, subvention at the rate of S3, 000.00 a year to be made to the

Red Cross. The sum payable in the current year will be S1, 500.00. <sup>52</sup>

The fact that UNICEF required payment in full meant that the vote for the 'Feeding of School Children' would be exhausted before the year ended. Therefore the Committee authorized further expenditure of S10, 000 for the School Children Feeding Scheme to meet the full cost of a year's supply from UNICEF. <sup>53</sup>

### **Curriculum Content: The priorities**

Government policy was set out in the Development Plan that called for 100% literacy along with secondary, technical, and agricultural schools. The 1960 census figures gave literacy figures of 90.5%, but the Honourable C.L.B. Rogers urged teachers to 'banish illiteracy' saying it was 'deplorable' that one in ten were illiterate. <sup>54</sup> These were seen as long overdue idealistic goals. Some funding came from the government but school management remained with the denominations. By 1960 the state had extended subsidies to all secondary schools though this was chiefly for staff and not building construction. <sup>55</sup> This may signify an attempt by the state to have a greater per-capita say in school affairs as paying for staff allowed for more involvement in day to day matters than paying for buildings.

Within the overall curriculum debate the government was attempting to move education towards the economy and certainly welcomed the UNESCO report which recommended redirection towards training craftsmen: 'The demand for properly trained workers in industrial and commercial organisations throughout the country is urgent'. A general reorganisation of the Technical College was envisaged with, 'removal of much of the present secondary school work to other appropriate establishments'. The report also recommended that the wooden building be replaced as it had already 'suffered extensive Hurricane damage'. <sup>56</sup> The long term plan was that

by 1970 a new Junior High school would take over the first two years of the present college course'. Much of the internal preparation would be concerned with the recruitment and training of teaching staff with the greatest shortages being in the Building, Engineering and Hotel Industries.<sup>57</sup>

Whilst training for work was categorised as a longer term priority, by the mid-1950s health education was perceived as an urgent matter. At a workshop held at the Matron Roberts Health Centre in Belize between the 4th and the 11th of January 1956 Philip Goldson, the Member for Social Services called for health education, 'to inspire the people in village, rural community and urban neighbourhood associations to undertake the planned transformation of their lives through study and action based on Health Education'.<sup>58</sup> Nutrition and sanitation were the principal aims of this drive, and methods brought back from a similar workshop at the Petit Jean State Park in Arkansas, USA were lauded. E. Losonczi the Medical Officer of Health reported: 'American Medical Association contributed books and pamphlets; the British Council provided study boxes, posters, films, literature on Belize; more films were kindly loaned by the American Consul in Belize'. Losonczi commented enthusiastically; 'in all our planning, the ideas of the Petit Jean Workshop Committee were freely used'.<sup>59</sup>

Within schools, it was decided as important to increase the role of the teacher. The School Feeding Programme was seen as an ideal medium for teaching health through hygiene and nutrition, and could be extended into classroom topics. Equally important was the educating of parents, and PTA meetings were utilised for health discussion.<sup>60</sup>

The issue of health education was not neglected in the intervening years and a further seminar

was held at the Matron Roberts Health Centre between the 3rd and 6th of January 1961. The emphasis lay on looking to teachers as early indicators of their pupils health problems, mental, physical and social. 'The Teacher - it is to him that the child goes first, full of habits and prejudices at home'. Health studies were to be promoted right across the curriculum, 'correlating nutrition with other subjects in the curriculum i.e.: Geography, visit a dairy, research dairy producing communities, arithmetic, calculating yield, English, Art, Science'.<sup>61</sup>

Health education was accepted and seen by most educationalists as of value. However, language was an area of contention. A report on English language teaching in British Honduras, was conducted by J. Allen Jones, Director of Education during October 1962 to consider the divergence between pupil speakers, Creole, Spanish and Mayan on Standard English as taught in schools.

General agreement among teachers that the use of Creole was a serious obstacle to an adequate command of Standard English. In (junior) primary and secondary's it was stated that the use of Creole was forbidden, though not at the infant level. --attempts made to eliminate its usage in the classroom.<sup>62</sup>

The removal of Creole had largely been successful but the quality of English was poor. But Jones was not entirely in favour of eliminating Creole. After interviewing among secondary teachers he commented, 'Only from one teacher did I hear what I hoped to hear, a scientific study of Creole'. This attitude was found to be 'lacking' among others. Evidently even Creole teachers looked upon their own dialect with disdain, 'Some non-British Honduran teachers evinced some sentimental interest in the language', but they study it "for fun", because it is "humorous", "colourful" etc. and not for any reason that might aid the educational purpose'.<sup>63</sup> Additionally no standard form existed across schools with some teachers conducting classes in their own tongue, Garifuna,

Maya, Spanish or the broader aspects of Creole dialect The latter being condemned by other teachers as 'bad language', 'illiterate talk', 'bad English'. But even those teachers reverted to Creole in social situations. During the 1970s the study of Creole as a language in its own right rather than as a low 'dialect' became an important part of the educational debate.

Brockmann's anthropological research has shown that by the 1950s many Mestizo's in the northern districts had become bilingual and much linguistic discrimination had ceased. Nevertheless, Creolisation was a major concern among Mestizo parents. One observer commented, 'The Creole scene [music, dance] is presently more exciting.'<sup>64</sup> Suggesting that Creole culture continued to be a force among other cultures in Belize. In support of the drive to accept other languages as important, if only as a supplement to English many felt that Spanish should be taught in schools as a second language. The *Belize Billboard* of January 5th, 1957 asserted, 'This country is naturally bilingual', and supported this with a letter from a teacher: 'I notice that a UNESCO education expert is here and is soliciting advice about the curriculum for secondary schools. I do hope he will recommend that the upper division of our elementary schools offer Spanish even if it is made optional'.<sup>65</sup> But some Spanish must have been taught by the time of the Jones report in 1962 although not across the country. Although the report had to recommend Spanish for instruction it also stated, 'Cannot compare English/Spanish teaching because one is taught as native and the other as a second language.'

### Conclusion

Chapter Seven has provided a balance to the previous two chapters in attempting to reveal the salient issues of the period and the application of education provision at the grass-roots level within individual schools. The difficulties of actually getting children to school were highlighted

within the inherent financial constraints. The reports used, embodied the continuing policy of the Colonial Government not to become enmeshed in continual financial commitment other than the grant-in-aid, a policy that clearly weakened their influence with the rural population. In turn evidence reveals that British Honduran education was considerably self-reliant if the local church contribution is entered into this evaluation. A consideration which strengthened nationalist ideals at the individual level, by encouraging greater local involvement in their own affairs, rather than as recipients of government provision.

The priorities of the 1950s and early 1960s were less concerned with academic reform than with the means of survival to study, building schools, getting to school, and remaining healthy enough to take advantage of an education. This was a period where the general desire for Belizean centred studies at school was evident but not so easily introduced because of continuing foreign dominance, to some extent at the level of instruction and school governance as well as from the colonial authorities. Fortunately, this conflicting set of ruling groups prevented each other from retaining hegemony in the general education of Belizean children, and ordinary people continued to develop according to their own notions of social construction. In this 1949 to 1964 is a period of imprecise activity and attitudes. This was less difficult to ascertain for the previous period, 1931-1949 where the separate strands of Americanisation, multi culture, the role of the church, and urban hegemony are much more distinct. Just as with the following period of 1964-1981, after self-rule, these themes become part of the official political agenda and enmeshed in everyday life.

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## **Part Three**

### **Shifts in the Balance of Power, 1964-1981**

#### **INTRODUCTION.**

Part Three reveals important changes in the equilibrium of power by the removal of colonial government in home affairs. Colonial rule had previously allowed ordinary people a degree of autonomy in the evolutionary process towards inter-ethnic cooperation. This is not to support colonial government but to depict the change in power structure that occurred with the removal of a significant element. However, it will be shown that the changing power structures did not affect this process and the shift in political emphasis to Catholic institutions serves here to illustrate the deep-rootedness of inter-ethnic relationships in Belize and the success of Creolisation and voluntary assimilation up to this point. The significance here is the greater acceptance in schools of Belizean Studies, between 1964 and 1981. This was a means of expressing and encouraging a national identity, and adjustment to the aftermath of the colonial past. Although its slow implementation and subsequent lack of adverse effect suggest that Belizeanisation was not quite such an urgent matter in the nation building process. Arguments around the value of secular education help to highlight the comparative value of denominational schooling. Foreign influence in Belize<sup>1</sup> is examined through the direct external influences of voluntary organisations and the more traditional persuasions of the Jesuit American background. Finally this part will assess the extent of actual inter-ethnic cooperation and the overlapping of cultural difference in Belizean communities, concluding with an estimation of the extent and depth of multi-cultural harmony in Belize.

#### **The People's United Party and its Cultural Links.**

Throughout the British West Indies colonial elite education had been the task of the mother country. It rendered prestige and legitimacy to the 'coloureds'<sup>2</sup> and ensured a high degree of obedience to the Crown among the political and professional sector. Control of education

among the Jamaican elites was an efficient tool in the perpetuation of British colonial hegemony in Jamaica, and other West Indian territories.<sup>3</sup> Many Protestants in Belize had followed an English tertiary education, either in the West Indies or in Britain, whereas those academically gifted Catholics already attending American influenced schools in Belize provided the exception by taking scholarships at Jesuit colleges in the United States; a large proportion of these Jesuit educated Catholics returned to form the political cadre within, and supportive of, the PUP and nationalism in general. The advent of self-rule and the franchise saw a shift in the balance of power in education in that the PUP supported the Catholic and therefore United States schools system. The PUP success in identifying itself with nationalism and the way to independence was a reason that enabled it to retain power throughout this period. By the 1960s, after a series of defections from the PUP that backfired, the PUP and George Price had become the indisputable leaders of Belize, with control of 17 of the 18 seats in the national assembly.<sup>4</sup> They went on to win every general election in Belize until 1984.<sup>5</sup>

The early 1960s saw a new young element in politics, led by such as Evan Hyde, Said Musa, and Assad Shoman, with no memory of Belize before the PUP, and whilst the latter were wooing foreign investors to further Belizean economic development, this new breed were observing in this economic behaviour how such a course of action would bring about neo-colonialism and a new dependency.<sup>6</sup> Whereas this group failed to flourish as a social movement, they did reveal a latent radicalism within the young people of Belize, forcing the concept of neo-colonialism, and the need to educate children as to its consequences, onto the political agenda.<sup>7</sup> After self-rule the PUP began to witness a shift in its own cultural composition by attracting members of the liberal professions and wealthy businessmen,

thereby strengthening Creole representation within the ruling elite,<sup>8</sup> and PUP representation within powerful elements such as the judiciary and civil service. For the law officers were mainly Creole and the legal system remained British.<sup>9</sup>

Adjustments in the general population balance took place when the culturally complex ruling elites merged. The 1960s and 70s witnessed the in-migration of thousands of Mexicans and Central Americans to Belize, increasing the foreign-born component of the population to approximately 11% by 1980. There was also a comparable out-migration of Creoles to the United States.<sup>10</sup> Both of these altered the makeup of the Creole-Mestizo complex, and a shift in focus from the Creole community. It is possible that as most Mestizos were agrarians and Creoles were predominantly urban, this variation altered the general trend towards urban growth. At independence, only 57% of the population were urban dwellers, a tiny shift from 51.4% in 1931, 60 years previously. This and a low population density provided Belize with a strong potential for agricultural development and a sustainable population growth.<sup>11</sup>

#### **The future of education in Belize**

At the point of self-rule in 1964 a UNESCO Educational-Planning-Mission visited Belize and drew up a report, which repeated former criticisms of a lack of overall direction from the Ministry of Education. This was followed by the government's own Education Report of 1965 which looked for, 'greater diversification of the curricula of secondary schools to meet more fully the varied needs, aptitudes and interests of the boys and girls who attend these schools'.<sup>12</sup> The first report provided a clear vision of the intention to overhaul the Belizean education system, and the second indicated the manner in which it would be frustrated by a Jesuit led government.<sup>13</sup>

During 1962 the United Nations Economic Survey Mission on Education visited Belize

with the intention of reviewing the whole education system. The members drew up a report that would consider a seven-year plan from 1963 to 1970. The following remarks emphasise the long held views of those who stressed the education for manpower arguments:

At present the entire educational system of the country has a distinctly literary bias that, it is no exaggeration to say, is quite out of conformity with the country's needs. It is vitally necessary in planning the educational system to take cognisance of the fact that the bulk of the country's adult population would be involved in agriculture in the future. It should indeed be one of the tasks of education to prepare successive generations for the role they would play in the economic life of the country and to equip them for playing this role in a modern and scientific way.<sup>14</sup>

Much of this was already established in the thinking of Belizean educators and politicians since the 1930s, but the United Nations report underlined the urgency and put forward a seven-year plan where all recommendations might be implemented. The visitors were careful not to criticise the denominational management of schools but some of their comments were thinly veiled attacks. Some were less obvious: 'The time has long since passed when education can be treated as a social service, 'Some 3rd world [countries] spend 25% even 33%, 'we are devoting little more than 12%'.<sup>15</sup> The report acknowledged that primary schools were the foundation of the Education system, but it was here that the church had the greater involvement, and of course it was here that, 'hearts and minds' could be honed for a specific purpose whether economic or religious. The report commented that primary schools had:

A strong Christian content. We have much to be glad and grateful for in this and much to preserve and nourish. But ours is a country in process of rapid change and facing great challenges. It is not surprising therefore that at this time we shall find cause for adjustments and improvements in the educational system ---<sup>16</sup>

The churches were wary of encroachment on their ability to influence the primary children. Some of the overt influence of the church through primary education had already been removed in 1944 when the English Education Act swept away the all-age primary system. In 1945, the West Indies' Royal Commission extended this to British Honduras reducing the

primary age from six-to-fifteen to six-to-twelve, with junior secondary schools automatically taking the age group twelve to fifteen years. It may be argued that this reform was limited in scope as most of the secondary schools in British Honduras remained denominational with only a small proportion of children qualifying for, or able to afford High School, the remainder leaving school with only a primary education. Such was the influence of the church that all-age primaries were still in existence at the time of the Belizean Government's evaluation report on UNESCO, which stated: '1. The General System - Revamping of: Single integrated system - End of all age primary eventually. Begin in Belize City. Great hopes to get the cooperation of the churches in establishing Junior High Schools in the near future'.<sup>17</sup> The Government had provided itself with enough room for manoeuvre in the following opening to its summary of conclusions on the UNESCO Educational Mission Report: '[A] fair and reasonable assessment. Will form the basis of the country's development plan in education to be carried out over the year -[subject to] *financial limitations and various modifications here and there*'.<sup>18</sup> [Emphases mine]

The government accepted the right of parents to have their children educated according to their religious faith, and reaffirmed its adherence to the, 'principle of cooperation between church and state in running the country's education system'. Nevertheless, the government agreed with the UNESCO Mission that, 'the time has come when steps must be taken to contain fragmentation, duplication and overlapping in the provision of school facilities'. The government was astutely using outside agencies to do its disagreeable work in criticising the church in education by supporting the church but also accepting certain UNESCO observations. The government therefore, decided that it would seek the cooperation of the denominations, 'in order to avoid fragmentation, duplication and overlapping'. As these items

were the direct result of denominational involvement, it would require a significant change of ideology to bring them to fruition. The government also decided to strengthen the Ministry of Education's control of the direction of the country's educational effort by giving it the power of decision on all purely educational matters, leaving religious matters and administrative details in the hands of the denominations. This was not an extension of their legislative authority, 'rather that the existing powers will be fully exercised'.<sup>19</sup> This gave the government much leeway in deciding whether it would actually change anything at all.

## References:

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1. Given that society in Belize [British Honduras] was now unofficially describing the country as Belize, Part 3 will follow suit except when referring to official statements or documents.
2. Please refer to the Glossary of Terms for an explanation.
3. Sherry Keith; 'A Historical Overview of the State and Educational Policy in Jamaica', *Latin American Perspectives*, (1978) Vol 5. Pt. 2, page 42.
4. O. Nigel Bolland, *Belize: A New Nation in Central America*, (Boulder Colorado 1986). 120.
5. It is significant that during 1984 when independence was no longer a political issue, and parties were forced to stand on the issues current, the PUP were ousted by the United Democratic Party, in the country's first post independence general election, bringing about a de facto two party system answerable to the whole range of the electorate.
6. Cope and Poynting's educational research has shown that foreign ownership is a common feature of British colonies including the old 'white' Dominions. 'According to Clough and Wainwright Australia is a "client state" with the highest level of foreign ownership and control of all advanced countries in the world except Canada', Bill Cope and Scott Poynting, 'Class, gender and ethnicity as influences on Australian schooling: An overview', in Mike Cole, *The Social Contexts of Schooling*, (London 1989) 218.
7. O. Nigel Bolland, *Belize: A New Nation in Central America*, 121.
8. C. H. Grant, *The Making of Modern Belize*, (Cambridge. 1976) 20.
9. *Ibid*, 24.
10. St. John Robinson, 'E Pluribus Qua: Belizean Culture and the Immigrant Past' *Belizean Studies*, (1988) Vol 16, Pt. 2, 29. O. Nigel Bolland, *Belize: A New Nation in Central America*, 41.
11. O. Nigel Bolland, *Belize: A New Nation in Central America*, 42.
12. Francis Humphreys; 'The Implementation of Belizean Studies Programmes in Secondary Schools, 1964-1987'. *Belizean Studies*, (1989) Vol 17, Pt. 2. pp 3-15.
13. George Price, leader of the ruling People's United Party had trained for the Jesuit priesthood in the United States and only returned to Belize due to family illness. He then progressed into politics with the backing and encouragement of chicle millionaire Robert S. Turton. He remains a fervent Roman Catholic and churchgoer to the present.
14. Report of the Planning Committee on Education, 1963 - 1970. MC 1592. Archives of Belize.

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15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. UNESCO Educational Mission Report: Summary of Conclusions Reached by Government. MC 1566. Archives of Belize.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

Part Three  
Shifts in the Balance of Power, 1964-1981

**Chapter 8**

**'BELIZEANISATION' WITHIN THE CHURCH-STATE DICHOTOMY.**

In line with the overall purpose of Part Three, which is to reveal the nature of Belizeanisation through education, its subsequent ramifications for multi-cultural cohesion, and the shifts in power that underpin this process, the purpose for this chapter is to examine Belizeanisation thematically, through the church-state education relationship. Were the advocates of Belizeanisation, national education, and progressive schooling all in the same camp? Were there Jesuit progressives, Jesuit Belizeanisers? The answers to these are paradoxical. The first section is concerned with the incorporation of homogenous study into the curriculum as a method of imparting nationalist attitudes, and how effective or necessary this may have been. Certainly politicians and educators gave credence to 'Belizean Studies', but some others have fewer clear memories of being taught much about Belize. The second section examines the issue of secularisation in its real or imagined forms from the perspective of church, government and educators, and seeks to highlight the reaction of state and church to this process which, in turn, emphasizes the extent of influence of these bodies on national development.

Essentially, this chapter continues the theme of educational philosophy from Chapter Five, particularly the 'manhood - manpower' debate, but now looks closely at the way in which post home-rule Belize continued to develop its national identity within the education process. By 1964 Belize had crossed the line from direct colonial rule to full, self-government. Therefore, it is important to the delineation of Belizean education, and more importantly the role of education in multi-cultural cohesion, to examine the extent to which

the indigenous educators differed from those of the colonial government. Clearly many educators would have held office under colonial rule but did the new paymasters affect their attitudes towards educational philosophy? With the passing of Colonial government, educators and politicians perceived a new priority that of developing a Belizean consciousness through what has been termed the 'Belizeanisation' process.

### **Belizean Studies and the curriculum**

Adjustments were taking place across the national spectrum and education did not escape modification. Yet while a Belizean Studies programme was looked upon as a major step forward in the furtherance of national identity, it took an unexpectedly long time to turn political rhetoric into solid achievement. At the point of self-rule in 1964 the UNESCO Educational-Planning-Mission visited Belize and drew up a report, which repeated former criticisms concerning a lack of overall direction from the Ministry of Education. The government's own Education Report of 1965 looked for, --greater diversification of the curricula of secondary schools to meet more fully the varied needs, aptitudes and interests of the boys and girls who attend these schools.

A teacher's vacation course, held in Belize City between July 28 and August 8, 1969 was notable for being the first course not to be conducted by teachers from the UK. Now it was an all national team, but one that, like its predecessors, continued to espouse the nationalist theme:

With the growing consciousness of all our people to be a nation, it is only right and proper that those who will be largely responsible for the moulding of the characters of the future citizens should analyse and strengthen what is their part in the building of the nation.<sup>1</sup>

The 'Manhood - Manpower' debate continued but with the emphasis on the individual as serving society: 'It is not one of making a choice between the individual and society rather it

is one of formulating an educational philosophy and an education system -- that will serve the needs and interest of both the individual and the society'.<sup>2</sup>

By 1971 national-history, cultural studies, geography, demography and government had not been included in the strategy to embrace Belizeanisation within the curriculum, although the Ministry seemed satisfied that secondary schools, '-prepared students adequately for the GCE examinations.<sup>3</sup> Between 1970 and 1971 Muffles College in Orange Walk began emphasising national history and local environmental issues, but this was largely an exception.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the 1970s officials and academics said much on this topic. Inez Sanchez, a former Education Officer condemned the colonial past for having alienated Belizeans from their cultural legacy, making them 'cultural and mental slaves'. Sanchez has remained a constant advocate of Belizean history in schools.<sup>5</sup> In the context of developing a national identity for Belizeans the need for promoting Belizean history and Belizean studies in general appeared paramount. A similar observation was made two years earlier during the home rule preparations of 1964, 'In building a nation, the history of a people is important. And it is not too late for the education authorities to start to take steps to remedy this situation'.<sup>6</sup> The paper progressed to laying the blame on educators:

So far there is no single history book, which includes something of everything that should be known about this country -- about its peoples, its cultures, its past. Today school children are being taught HISTORY, but their history lessons take up British History, European History, American History and little or nothing about Belize history or Central American History or even Caribbean History. (Except for the occasional exaggeration of the Battle of St. George's Caye).<sup>7</sup>

Education planners remained convinced that the teaching of Belizean history was important in spreading a sense of community not attached to colonialism. Inez Sanchez, Education Officer stated that history, 'is a subject that more readily lends itself for fulfilling these aims'.<sup>8</sup> He grandiosely claimed for history that it was,

The story of what human beings have made of themselves within the context of their physical and social environments. It is the account of moral adventure of mankind, of decisions for good and evil, and of the judgement revealed in the consequences.<sup>9</sup>

He included the codicil that, 'It is therefore crucial that schools produce boys and girls who would understand, appreciate and work for national unity'.<sup>10</sup> Again revealing the prevalent desire within the establishment elements of Belizean society to use all aspects to work for national unity.

The 1970s witnessed a government rush towards curriculum development regarding national identity and a Belizean Studies programme. Previously the debate dichotomised into teachers favoring education for personal development, while education for the colonial government championed national development. However, now that a government and teaching profession was both Belizean in composition it appeared that the latter were prepared to compromise and move towards the government stance, although they did not abandon their former position and at the outset of the 1970s offered the following:

Education for Personal Development

- (a) Physical Development
- (b) Social Development
- (c) Intellectual Development
- (d) Moral Development

(e) Emotional Development

(f) Aesthetic Development.

Education for National Development

- (a) Education for good citizenship
- (b) Economic Development
- (c) Education for Democratic living.
- (d) Education for unity and national identity.

Moral developments remained a constant and included home, school and church whilst teachers made biblical references such as, 'doing unto others what you would have them do unto you'.<sup>11</sup> The teaching profession was offering a compromise course of action that promoted national identity whilst not relinquishing their commitment to educating for personal development.

National identity had now become a national concern and this tended to incorporate

arguments concerning moral and economic development. Regardless of size or wealth most countries recognized the need for teaching some form of national history as a means of creating or protecting their national identity and developing a national culture. In Belize adjustments were taking place across the national spectrum and education did not escape modification. In the furtherance of a Belizean national identity a Belizean Studies programme was perceived as a major step forward. However the political oratory from the government was more ambitious than the actual implementation rate. A curriculum workshop was set up by the Education Department in 1970, at which J.A. Nembhard offered the following:

While the work of the rural school will differ in some ways from the urban school there should be no difference in the quality of education, the children receive from that offered in city schools. Children should therefore receive a "liberal education" which is not confined to any occupation they are expected to engage in when they leave school.<sup>12</sup>

History was placed within the Social Studies programme along with Geography and Civics, and concentrated upon. Nembhard continued: 'Our neighbours', Mexico, and Central America, as well as British Honduras, and a world-studies syllabus: to include the USA, India, China, and Britain'.<sup>13</sup> Such a course of study not only placed British Honduras within both a regional and international context but also enabled the government to use the influence of those nations on British Honduras to define an identity for its own nationals.

History itself was to centre initially on British Honduras, examining the Maya civilisation, the Caribs, Creoles, East Indians, Mestizos, and the recent Mennonite migration. A shift in emphasis to famous people of Belize, such as Portuguese benefactor Baron Bliss, the Garifuna leader, T.V. Ramos, and Independence politician, George Price, was designed to promote a new national self-esteem rather than dependency upon imported heroes from Britain and Europe. A shift in emphasis was used to follow the linear route of history from a

geographical, rather than political perspective. So, instead of Europe being the fount of Belizean history, a 'workshop' commentator advised that, 'In upper division, it is suggested that any detailed studies should be confined to the Maya periods and the history of Belize',<sup>14</sup> thereby offering a perception of Belize as rooted in the ancient Mayan civilisation, and further detaching the minds of Belizeans from their colonial past and the 'mental slavery' discussed by Sanchez above. Whether this was a totally honest view of the origins of the Belizean people is arguable and remains the subject of debate to this day, with African and European history presently competing for curriculum time. However, the purpose being to rid Belizeans of colonial indoctrination is plain.

Yet throughout the 1970s Belize continued to progress towards a national identity whilst national history as a curriculum subject was apparently neglected in practice. Three Belizeans educated by the Jesuits offered their views and memories of national history in schools. Alexis Rosado, now a high-ranking Belizean civil servant narrated his memories of history teaching in Belizean schools:

But, well, we studied Hernand Cortes. It was a European history. We learned about all the pirates that became heroes. But Belizean history per se, Belize, British Honduras, I don't remember any particular time of my primary school years. High school was World History, we had to do. And then after that, it was not C. H. Grant. It was a big book, I think it was made for—<sup>15</sup>

Alexis Rosado here refers to *Readings in Belizean History* edited by Fr. Hadel gathered from articles previously published in the *Journal of Belizean Studies*.<sup>16</sup>

Others support Rosado's observations. A Belizean archivist who wished to remain anonymous attended a Catholic primary school in Benque Viejo del Carmen, Cayo District, from 1974 to 1982. He commented on both the neglect of Belizean history and the quality of the material:

Belizean history? Belizean history was not taught as they are starting to do now. In fact you find that CXC in Belize, Caribbean history. Instead of our own history. --I think they started doing it. Teaching Belizean history but I think the change comes from when you come out from Primary school. They start to teach Caribbean history. -- In fact you don't know about Belizean history when you go to High School. Everything is Caribbean history or African history. And in the schools they taught us about Belize being, coming from slavery, African influence in Belize. Profound detailed information on British history. In fact in school they don't give you profound details in history. They only give you certain facts, about how many districts in Belize, eight districts, how many villages, how many ethnic groups, a brief history of the Creoles in Belize. You know, basic things.<sup>17</sup>

Evan X Hyde offered similar concerns. A leading Belizean/Creole author who had adopted the 'X' in support of the radical black movements of the 1960s, he attended the powerful Jesuit institution of St. John's College and for many years has continued to edit the *Amandala* [meaning Black Power] newspaper. He offered a characteristically contumacious view:

Yeah! So I made statements which were aggressive and accusical [sic] with reference to the fact that I felt that the education I received were racist. It wasn't balanced. I didn't know anything about Africa and I didn't know anything about America before Columbus. So this is an old practice. And the Roman Catholic church was the largest and most powerful church in Belize, and the Jesuits are the elite. There they control the best secondary schools for young men and the best junior college and they are not challenged on any dispute except African study. -- When I came out of SJC [St. John's College] in 1965 I didn't even know I hadn't even thought there was Caribbean history much less Belizean history. I did six years of British and European history.<sup>18</sup>

These individual assertions contradict the prevailing official pronouncements of the period and reveal the dilatory progress of implementation. Although the new government may have wanted to manoeuvre the accent from imperial culture to the homegrown variety it still suffered from the same restrictive finances that had encumbered the colonial government for so long, and which effectively rendered similar outcomes to dissimilar policies.

In charting the progress of Belizean education towards national studies Humphreys highlights the contribution of the church. Indeed, the scholarly journal, *Belizean Studies*,

remains published by the Jesuit's St. John's College. It began life as *National Studies*, in 1973, its first editorial statement being, ' --to make available to the people of Belize--the facts of our history, culture, and economic and social situation that are necessary to continue the process of building a national identity'.<sup>19</sup> The journal became *Belizean Studies* in 1976 and continued in those stated aims, remaining a publication controlled by the Catholics and essentially the Jesuits.<sup>20</sup> Writers such as Evan Hyde, whilst congratulating the success of government moves into High School education, criticised the lack of African History in schools, 'Regrettably these schools have yet to begin the teaching of African history, but in time, everything will come to be'.<sup>21</sup> Creole history was enmeshed in Belizean history, but Hyde was referring to cultural links with the African continent. Hyde commented in an interview that this remained a burning issue to the present.<sup>22</sup> Another interviewee, Eddison Trapp, was as quick to emphasize Hyde's point, that the Creoles of Belize needed an African History to define them as a group within Belize: 'I think in fact we can be taught about Black history per se it would put us in a much better position but it's gonna change. Yes! I feel confident it's going to come. Because the more you talk about history, I think, you can't go wrong'.<sup>23</sup> However, Trapp emphasised that this desire for African history was not separatist in motive, but was concerned with maintaining a Creole identity within Belize, 'No. We didn't fuss or fight with the Spanish or the East Indians. No. Which makes us so beautiful?'<sup>24</sup> He spoke with pride regarding the pacific mix of ethnic groups in Belize.

Peter Ashdown and Leo Bradley gave two groundbreaking lectures on Belizean history at the Bliss Institute on 22 October 1977 to a gathering of the Belize History Teachers Association. From the same meeting Father John Maher suggested creating a textbook from past articles in *Belizean Studies*, to be used in conjunction with Belizean studies courses. The

idea was readily accepted and became, *Readings in Belizean History Vol. 1*. Humphreys later credited the government with developing a strong Belizean Studies programme since 1982,<sup>25</sup> implying that such was not the case before, therefore Belizeanisation as a school participation was not deemed quite so urgent in the run up to independence. Perhaps because the older Creolisation with its process of voluntary selectivity by ethnic groups had already provided the necessary cohesiveness and only required a simple name change to be adapted by government to the single cause of nation building. However, continuing religious competition was a key delaying detail in the implementation of a coherent Belizean Studies curriculum.

### **The church, secularisation and nationhood**

Secularisation had been a constant spectre on the state-church education system from the 1930s, involving the church and the reforms of Governor Burns during the 1930s. In fact it had been an empire wide issue for some time. The minutes from a 1942 Catholic Bishop's meeting in Rhodesia read: 'The whole tendency of government regulations and legislation is clearly moving towards secularisation of education'.<sup>26</sup> As a philosophy it remained on the political agenda throughout the period under review, but as a practical matter gained slight advancement. Research into life in the Mayan village of San Antonio revealed a change in clerical attitudes. The early priests did not encourage educators beyond elementary schooling, sensing that modernisation was undesirable. The priests of the 1970s however (once the Catholic church was aware of its strong political position) held an opposite view, believing that education was an essential preparation for the outside world.<sup>27</sup> Modernisation would have to progress through the church, for the government 'recoiled' from the idea of secularisation. Although they went along with UNESCO regarding a 'National Education Council' and acknowledged the importance of relating socio-economic needs to education as 'fair and reasonable', by 1961 nine out of fourteen members of the council were churchmen.

In a 1964 issue of the *Belize Times*, an editorial by Adolfo Lizarraga called for an education not based upon white-collar: 'Today we are engaged in the giant task of nation building. Government and industry will not be employment agencies and schools will not be factories. There are too many jobs in the nation that cannot be filled simply because there are not enough trained people.'<sup>28</sup> A government economic survey of March 1966 followed a similar line:

From the point of view of economic growth, increased expenditure on education is necessary in order to remove the serious shortage of skilled people which otherwise will retard the pace of growth, the country is short of adequately trained people at the professional technical and craft levels. One of the difficulties is the failure to orientate the education system towards vocational and technical training.<sup>29</sup>

But vocational education had largely been expropriated, at least as an idea, by the government, therefore its historic links with secular education were obvious to the church. The report reiterated many of the criticisms put forward by UNESCO in 1964, and urged its plans for reorganisation. Yet, attempts such as these to reform education in British Honduras had the effect of fueling church suspicions. The government's reluctance to impose UNESCO on the denominations is evidenced by its tardiness in spending the UK Government's Colonial Development and Welfare allocation of \$464, 536 as a contribution to capital expenditure in this field, not something that is usually associated with governments in receipt of a substantial grant. Only \$39 k had been spent on capital items during 1964 and 1965 and \$23 k on recurrent items.<sup>30</sup>

Such a, 'disappointingly low level of expenditure', required some explanation since the UK Government had given approval as early as September 1964. The following findings of the survey point to the inherent waste of uncontrolled denominational schooling:

In part it may be attributed to the peculiar organisation of education in British Honduras that is largely in the hands of various religious bodies. This leads to considerable fragmentation of the educational effort to the extent that, for example,

Belize City which has a population of 37k has as many as six secondary schools managed by religious denominations. Apart from the obvious disadvantage of duplicating and wasting scarce resources, it causes practical difficulties when projects for rebuilding and expansion are being considered. The present understanding is that capital costs should be shared between the Government and the various religious organisations on a 50-50 basis.<sup>31</sup>

Some historians have criticised church influence, but apart from expatriate control the basis of their argument is concerned with duplication.<sup>32</sup> In 1969, Belize City's six secondary schools had a total enrolment of one thousand pupils managed by four different denominations; Corozal Town had two secondary schools, one Catholic with ninety-nine pupils and the other Methodist with thirty-four pupils. Grant suggests this system denied the Protestant secondary schools' cultural integration. Unfortunately suspicions developed on either side since the government had increased its involvement.<sup>33</sup> The Jesuits feared a loss of control through the government becoming its main competitor, or stepping into support the poorer Protestant schools, whereas the Protestants suspected the PUP financial arrangements as biased.<sup>34</sup>

Given the government's declared intent to maintain the church-state partnership an interesting development took place in 1974: Stann Creek High school (Anglican) and Austin High School (Catholic) merged to become Stann Creek Ecumenical College. The Ministry saw this as a solution to the problem of fragmentation and duplication.<sup>35</sup> Here there were no religious barriers to the introduction of Belizean studies. Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists were all represented on the Board of Governors but this had not proved to be a hindrance. Yet the Catholic suspicion that any shift from denominational management would incur a dilution of church influence in favour of a secular approach may have had some credence. Liz Balderamos attended both ecumenical and Catholic high schools in the 1970s. During a discussion with the author concerning an absence of clear demarcation lines

between denominations Liz provided a comparison between the two schools:

Right, then when I was going to High School, that is Ecumenical High, it was -- all around me there was never really any forced churches involved in their -- Now and again there was some religious function or something like that. Then I went to High School in Belize City - Pallotti. Catholic run school. Every week we had to go to church. Every morning we started the morning off with devotion. I guess that's where I really, really went "well the Catholic's church not really more for me". Because between what I was taught in High School and a Catholic High School for three years and I had to take religion. It was mandatory through the entire High School.<sup>36</sup>

Alexis Rosado was more dismissive of the problem of duplication: 'There is a lot of inefficiency but inefficiency you'll find everywhere, not that it's a good excuse but it's a good thing that there are schools'.<sup>37</sup> The churches saw any attack on duplication as a means by which government might oust the denominations from the management of their schools, and create a government school in their stead. Ecumenical-schools were seen by some educators as merely government-schools by another name. Just as purely government schools with interdenominational boards of governors were also seen as ecumenical but government controlled. When asked, 'if it was a government school everyone would come?' Harold Godfrey, manager of Methodist Schools in Belize commented:

But a lot of people don't want a government school. Some want a government school, some want a school Hispanic. Boom was a good example. There is only one school in Boom,-- a Methodist school. But because there was a sort of agreement that we don't push religion in the school. I think they would have to get the agreement -- So here we don't look for who is the Methodists in the school.<sup>38</sup>

Godfrey went on to confirm that these types of school did not teach religion, adding, ' a lot of people say the bible is the most important part of the teaching. So we have to get in the bible, I work in government schools, I work in Methodist schools, and I work with the Ministry of Education'.<sup>39</sup> The government did establish its own schools with three in Belmopan, but these were newly created institutions catering for the children of civil servants and other government employees, and were unlikely to have any widespread influence. Evidently the

attack on duplication did result in a dilution of religious instruction in favour of a secular curriculum, and church fears were founded.

The government's quandary lay in its recognition that education should become government controlled if it was to be expanded to meet modern demands of population growth and parental and pupil expectations through qualifications and employment prospects. However, the ruling PUP had developed strong links with the Catholics but were fully aware of their own fiscal limitations regarding education. The National Council for Education held a conference on 2/3 April 1970 and published its findings the following month. The Minister of Education provided a conciliatory speech on the matter of secularisation: 'The real source of fear lies in the term "government school". The Education Ordinance of 1962 defined a "government school" as a school 'maintained wholly from general revenue'. But, the Minister claimed, that this same ordinance stated that a government school may be assigned to: '(a) a part denominational; (b) a body (established organisation or incorporated group); (c) interdenominational management; (d) nondenominational management.' The Minister favoured 'c', interdenominational management, clearly a compromise choice. 'May I repeat, it is who is in charge of the day to day running of the school which is so important, and not who pays the bills? The speech not only offered both parties a say in the running of each school but followed the former colonial government's line of avoiding further financial involvement, 'This government is only prevented from putting more and more money into the present "Assisted Schools" because of shortage of funds.'<sup>40</sup>

The churches were seeking greater advisory power with ministers, but this was considered unconstitutional. However they were eventually to secure some control of the government schools as their management was placed under an interdenominational committee. The Belize

Technical College Prospectus of 1976 printed a list of the College Advisory Board which showed that out of 10 board members four were senior churchmen, i.e., The General Manager, Anglican Schools, RC Schools, Methodist Schools while the remainder represented the small denominations.<sup>41</sup> This follows a different trend from other British colonies, particularly in Africa where, by 1964, many were already nationalising their primary schools.<sup>42</sup> The different circumstances in Belize reflected the long-standing financial autonomy of the Jesuit mission, and its influence over the PUP government. The government went on record as considering it improper to assume too much initiative, and that its role was to assist. It thus disregarded all remaining UNESCO advice.<sup>43</sup> Perhaps interdenominational control might have struck the right balance. Additionally the 1964 UNESCO report claimed that the dual system was more expensive than if it were integrated,<sup>44</sup> at a time when most countries had changed to a secular system. Apparently various schemes had come to naught because the church denominations had been unable to provide their contribution. For example it had been impossible to proceed with the establishment of any of the junior secondary Schools scheduled in the UNESCO plan. A part of the failure was deemed to be due to the incapacity of the Ministry's current organisation to cope with the detailed planning involved.<sup>45</sup> However, the issue of expense may be correct overall, but to a government with a slender budget its own contribution might be far less than if it had total control. This lethargy may have been prevalent in more than one Caribbean country, and Figueroa wrote of the 'Dead hand' towards Caribbean history after 'an initially healthy start.'<sup>46</sup>

Humphreys takes it as self-evident that a secular system would bring a higher quality education, rather than offering a comparative analysis with other systems. In fact schools succeed on a financial level in other parts of the British West Indies less from secular control

than from large-scale absenteeism.<sup>47</sup> Schools in Trinidad<sup>48</sup> and Jamaica<sup>49</sup> suffered absenteeism due to ideological considerations. C.H. Grant observed that the Belize Government's policy of 'matching-funding' for projects brought greater inequalities because most of the urban Roman Catholic schools already had more cash available so were able to instigate many more projects, therefore attracting even further government funding.<sup>50</sup> This secular policy benefited elite denominational schools and perpetuated the hegemony of Belize City. Experience shows that secular education is not per se favorable to denominational education, and is just as likely to perpetuate imperial hegemony and feelings of inferiority to the old colonial masters.<sup>51</sup>

Grant has accused the government of 'soft pedalling' Belizean Studies' in secondary schools.<sup>52</sup> Humphreys claimed that the church-state system and foreign influence was a barrier to 'the enforcement of government policy on Belizean Studies courses'.<sup>53</sup> Again the churches feared secularisation, this time through an over-emphasis on nation hood. The state continued its dilemma of supporting the church and developing a modern national education system. State educators remained critical of the present system: The Education Department produced a report on the British Honduras primary school curriculum observing that, educational values were changing. 'We have realised that our present system is not producing the men and women of the calibre necessary for the healthy growth of a society'. The main critique was for 'parrot fashion learning': 'the whole system is based on putting facts into minds of the children from outside themselves. All education is valueless unless it is "personal discovery" rather than facts assimilated impersonally from outside'.<sup>54</sup> The accusation that the denominations were a barrier to unified progress had some credence historically, but it is also accurate to say that much of this was being corrected throughout the

1970s. During 1970 the influential St. John's College began to share responsibility with the local laity, and the Anglo-Creole Signa L. Yorke became its first woman Dean. Garifuna and Mayans were taking places at the college. Father General Pedro Arupes sent an open letter to the society, 'On Inculturation' as awakening 'cross-cultural sensitivity' in Jesuits. Arupes spoke of developing a 'personal inculturation from within' something that is more than 'wearing blue Guayaberas and sousing one's egg with red-hot pepper sauce'.<sup>55</sup> However, Fr. Arupes remained steadfast to the proselytising mission of the Jesuits:

Today our prime educational objective must be to form men-for-others; men who will live not for themselves but for God and his Christ - for the God-man who lived and died for all the world; men who cannot even conceive of the love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbours; men completely convinced that love of God which does not issue in justice for men is a farce.<sup>56</sup>

Clearly much of this change was concerned with protecting loyalties to the church and spreading its influence, but whatever the motives, the Jesuits adapted to a process of Belizeanisation and cohesiveness in a multiracial society as they had throughout the British Empire. In Africa they adjusted to Africanisation by developing the homogeneous priesthood.<sup>57</sup> By 1977, only four years before independence full governance of St. John's College was opened up to the laity, and where the leading educational establishment in Belize began others would soon follow.<sup>58</sup> At this stage the church provided enough reform to meet with the government demands for a modern system without surrendering control of its own schools.

Grant cites new threats to church hegemony such as greater urbanisation, but with migration it has already been revealed that Belize had retained an even balance between rural and urban populations. These components began to develop after independence threatening church power at the individual level, whilst during the 1970s and beyond, church hegemony

at the institutional level continued to grow in strength. The following chapter will investigate and reveal the further rise of Catholic power in education. Meanwhile, a superior threat to the basis of church authority was the increase in University education with, 'the tradition of higher learning loosening individual bonds of religion', and the influences brought back to Belize by returning graduates.<sup>59</sup> This supports the argument that those who 'loosened' were free from local peer group and family pressures, revealing the superficiality of their religious beliefs. It raises the possibility that ordinary people, as with the government, may have supported the church for the education and other welfare benefits it could provide, rather than for spiritual motives. Nevertheless it is the constant contact of the majority of the population with a strong moral education that has provided, along with Creolisation, an important ingredient in multi-cultural cohesiveness.

Returning migrants were simply one type of foreign influence in Belize. Most writers cite these influences as detrimental to the Belizeanisation process. Perhaps a lack of a total Belizean identity in favor of mere regional loyalties prompted the kind of problem highlighted by Belizean premier George Price as reported in the *Belize Times* of March 27th, 1966: 'Mr. Price called upon all Belizean students who have been trained abroad at the taxpayer's expense to return home and build the country into something they can all be proud of.'<sup>60</sup> This was an argument put forward by those wishing to maintain contact with the University of the West Indies, 'much more likely to want to come home than students trained in the more glamorous atmosphere of Europe and America'.<sup>61</sup> Was this desire to remain abroad simply a common point shared by students regardless of nationality, or a lack of loyalty to a national identity less defined than those of the United States or Britain? Rutheiser points out that American influence 'pervades all aspects of Belizean education policy'. He

also suggests that, '--as schooling is the principal venue for the reproduction of a society's core values and knowledge, it is a particularly crucial sector in which to assess the extent of the shift from British to American cultural hegemony'.<sup>62</sup>

### Conclusion

It has already been established that all the principal controlling elements of Belize (British Honduras) tended to negate each other's ability to dominate the cultural progress of the country in shaping its national identity. To recapitulate, within the church the Roman Catholics, because of their independent connections with the Midwestern Jesuits in the US, were financially more powerful than the Protestant churches. However the Protestants, due to their integral connections with the Colonial and British governments, remained politically ascendant, therefore neither was able to maintain hegemony over the populace. Yet, given this combination of wealth and political power the church overall remained strong enough to constrain the activities of the colonial government and prevent any serious exploitation of ethnic groups in Belize.

Advocates of Belizeanisation, national education, and progressive schooling tended to cut across the camps. The Jesuits as a body desired Belizeanisation in order to strengthen their hold on government as part of a concerted effort to shift towards a Roman Catholic centred 'Central Americanism'. Consequently they favoured national education for the workplace (agriculture) as a means to independence from Protestantism (British Caribbean rule). Given the Creole reluctance for agricultural labour this would also mean an influx of Roman Catholic migrants from the surrounding Central American republics. Paradoxically however, Jesuit education remained value driven, although their version of educating for manhood would necessarily be a Christian manhood.

The Protestant churches remained attached to the waning influence of the British and were less than active within the ideological debate. Although they persisted with the frock-coated academic style in support of their professional white-collar constituency.

The PUP, as representative of the state, was partially influenced by the Jesuits in their shared drive towards a Central Americanism. But, for the PUP/State this was a means to wrest secular power from the British. Notwithstanding, being a denominationally managed school system, value driven education was inescapable and education for manpower *and* manhood remained paradoxically intertwined. Belizean educators recognised the need for a workplace bias but stayed loyal to an emphasis on classical and moral education. 'Such was the invariable practice of the Christian missionaries of those days; to them religion and education were inseparable, and both indisputably the business of the church'.<sup>63</sup>

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  37. An interview with Alexis Rosado 1st Secretary on 5 December 1996 at the Belize High

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42. In Zambia the 'Rogers' Education Report of 1969 recommended that the management of schools should pass from the religious bodies to the headmasters. By 1974, Zambian based Jesuit, Fr. Max Prokoph was to comment: the Bishops 'grudgingly handed over all primary schools to government'. This was not an isolated view. In 1996, the Archbishop of Kasama was to note: 'We were forced out of the schools. We never decided to pull out. Government made it impossible'. Brendan Carmody, 'Zambia's Catholic schools and secularisation', *History of Education*, 364-368.
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**Part Three**  
**Shifts in the Balance of Power, 1964-1981**

**Chapter 9**  
**THE DEVELOPMENT OF CATHOLIC POWER**

The purpose of this chapter is to examine another facet of national development found in the shift of power in Belize from that of the pre 1964 period of colonial rule. This involves the emergence of a push for Belizeanization coexisting with a range of influences that complicated or delayed that push. In keeping with the overall theme of Part Three this chapter continues to deal with the theme of adapting education to the needs of an independence minded nation but the shift in political power towards the Catholic/PUP matrix requires separate attention. The previous chapter concluded that it has been established that all the principal controlling elements of Belize tended to negate each other's ability to dominate the cultural progress of the country in shaping its national identity, but simultaneously held the colonial government's aspirations for divisive control in check. Thus, the shift towards Roman Catholic power is revealed here as significant for the future development of Belize whilst also strengthening the argument that such a shift arrived too late for any substantial effect upon the condition of multi-cultural cohesion. This chapter reveals the use made of American culture by the Roman Catholics to undermine the old Protestant/Creole matrix and therefore shift the balance of power by acquiring the political influence long held by the Protestants. Changes in English educational attitudes in 1944 realised for the first time the ideal of universal free secondary education based upon a child's needs not the material well-being, status and power of their parents'. However, the oil crisis of the 1970s accelerated a recession and a fiscal crisis in public expenditure as the cost of services outgrew the political will to pay for them'.<sup>1</sup> The crisis affected Britain to a greater extent than the oil rich United States and prompted Belize to look to the US for aid even more than to Britain.

The opening section is concerned with voluntary organisations from the US. Their significance here is to elaborate on the additional if unwitting support available to the Jesuits in their political growth during the period of self-rule, as Americanisation was a means of undermining the old colonial/Creole power base. Americanisation did not promote a Central American/Catholic culture directly nor was it seen as a preferable culture to the British colonial, except that it was exploited as a means of separating Belizeans from their past, and allowing the Jesuits a freedom to develop this Central American outlook as their natural Catholic constituency. Jesuit expansion is clearly indicated by its role within education and the second section provides an analysis of the methods used to develop the separation from colonialism and at the same time strengthen the Catholic hold on education in preference to the Protestants. The third and final section addresses the implications of this expansion for the educational system and for the pupils, revealing yet another form of *duplication of effort*, this time within the curriculum.

#### **American voluntary organisations**

Importantly American attitudes changed during the post war period and throughout the period under review from the staunch anti colonial to one of neo-colonialism, and what has been termed the imperial succession.<sup>2</sup> The United States extended its influence through the use of Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) and USAID. Notably, the Peace Corps, unlike other voluntary groups such as VSO was, and remains, a government agency linked directly with US foreign policy objectives.<sup>3</sup> A group of thirty-three volunteers first arrived during 1962 and were predominantly employed in secondary schools. By 1967, with forty-six volunteers, Belize had the highest ratio of PCV to population anywhere in the Peace Corps world. The following year the number rose to eighty-five, prompting the Belize Government to cap the number at sixty.<sup>4</sup> Sherwood Paulin, Director of the

Peace Corps in British Honduras delivered an effusive address to his Belizean colleagues, 'To all our friends in British Honduras from, "the children of Kennedy". We can never again become the people we were before we came here. But then we would not want to'.<sup>5</sup> Once again, as in most matters educational in Belize, the acceptance of PCV during the 1970s was linked to finance. The US paid all the costs, constituting a significant proportion of a school's budgets. Some Principals however, welcomed other volunteers such as the British VSO, but refused to accept PCV because of the political agenda involved. Another Principal has gone on record as openly critical of the American presence, but still he took on more PCV each year because of the monetary advantages to his slender budget.<sup>6</sup>

One anonymous interviewee provided a conflicting view of foreign influence within schools:

In ours we didn't have much, you mean non-Belizean teachers? I remember in my days they were all Belizeans from Cayo. It has changed now. The influence of PCV schools and VSO's and church. For example, Benque well I can't remember if school, well the High School at Benque owned by the church, run by the church has a lot of American teachers. I think the majority are American teachers. The staff, 90 per cent are American teachers brought by the church to teach at the school. But primary level I can't remember of having American teachers or expatriates teaching at the school.<sup>7</sup>

Benque Viejo del Carmen is a market town close to the Guatemalan border; therefore, this recollection is influenced by the rural nature of the interviewees' experience. Apparently PCV influence may have been restricted to Belize City during this period. Alexis Rosado was aware of some expatriate influence in his school in Belize City, 'I won't say too many, I had say two or three in my whole er--(schooling). I have no idea where they came from, through who they came. I just know they were there and they weren't Belizeans. But they were good. I remember I had one in primary school, one in High School'.<sup>8</sup> Bennett highlighted areas that reduced the extent of Rutheiser's emphasis on American influence. He commented on the accuracy regarding the

American agenda and Belizean society's response but stated that the PCV was not placed in positions where they could 'Americanise' the education system, adding that any American influence in the tertiary establishment of Belize College of Arts, Science, and Technology (BELCAST) came not from outside but because the President, vice-president and most of its influential members are graduates of American universities.<sup>9</sup> However, this influence from the top encouraged a process of facilitation, which was then reinforced by inadvertent cultural synthesis or deliberate propaganda by American teachers practising their profession within Belizean schools.

At the outset of self-rule in June of 1964 *The Belize Times* was thanking Peace Corps and Papal Volunteers with regard to the opening of St. Peter Claver College in Punta Gorda, the largest high school outside Belize City:

Peace Corps and Papal Volunteers Thanked.

Their children can now enjoy a secondary education right here at home instead of having to travel to the capital as hitherto has been done.

For the first time in history, the people of Punta Gorda will be witnessing a graduation ceremony from a secondary school as St. Peter Claver College celebrates its first commencement exercise on 12/7/64.<sup>10</sup>

However, the Jesuits operated this in a similar fashion to St. John's College offering Associate Degrees as well as 'A' levels

One interviewee, who attended Catholic schools from 1974 to 1986, offered a less Americanised impression of the cultural orientation promoted by teachers:

Because we were under the er Queen under England so they always do tell us that England is our Mother. England is the Mother country. So we have to respect. We learnt that England, we were under England. So that England was the figure, so we had to respect that figure there. But they were not against England in fact we, people in the old days and up to now there's a little change in the attitude. We have become independent, but still we depend on England. But in the old days I remember, people spoke about England, a lot of respect for England because England helped us in everything, in schools, in education, aid for schools, and supplies. All those things. So there was, the teachers were colonial, colonialistic; they

spoke in favour of England, of the Queen.<sup>11</sup>

This probably exemplifies the gap between hierarchical attitudes and that of the ordinary Belizean. Yet the *Belize Times* continued to report on the efforts of the volunteers to pervade Belizean education. It is not surprising that the *Belize Times* should adopt a stance helpful to the pro American cause. The PUP wished to promote Americanisation as a means of opposing British colonialism and the *Times* was, and is, a PUP controlled newspaper. One Peace Corps volunteer arranged for six exchange students from high schools in the US to teach at the island school in Caye Caulker.<sup>12</sup> The Papal Volunteers held an Open House celebration at their Gabourel Lane HQ, 'designed for the members of the volunteers to meet Belizeans of all walks of life'.<sup>13</sup> It is unclear exactly how much the volunteers expanded American influence or whether this was used to undermine British influence and further the Jesuit/PUP cause but it must have been advantageous to the American Jesuits in Belize. However, in a country that was still a British colony it would be difficult to ignore British influence and this was reflected in the retention of British History within the curriculum. Although the inclusion of American history must also be noted. The *Belize Times* of June 30th, 1964 commented:

So far there is no single history book that includes something of everything that should be known about this country -- about its peoples, its cultures, its past. Today school children are being taught HISTORY, but their history lessons take up British History, European History, American History and little or nothing about Belize history or Central American History or even Caribbean History (except for the occasional exaggeration of the Battle of St. George's Caye).<sup>14</sup>

The Peace Corps did not appear to be anything more than a Pro-American organisation and notwithstanding individual preferences did not promote any particular religious bias. It is not suggested that any particular conspiracy to promote American history existed on the part of the American Jesuits, especially in a country so close to the US, only that such an ingredient, and the

increase of all kinds of United States influence assisted the extension of Jesuit authority over the other denominations. Just as the presence of the Peace Corps provides an American influence that is not of itself conspiratorial, but again aids the Jesuit cause of reducing the Caribbean/Creole/Protestant legacy, leaving the Jesuits free to shift to a Central American/Catholic culture.

### **Jesuit expansion**

Much of the influence from America, prior to the post independence boom in television, was sketchy. That Americanisation which permeated and influenced Belize foremost still came from traditional sources through the Jesuit presence. A critique of expatriate domination, shows that in 1964 after such a long-standing Roman Catholic presence in Belize, only seven out of thirty-three priests were Belizeans. Only Father Charles Woods was a fully-fledged Jesuit, and he resigned in 1969.<sup>15</sup> In defending their control the Jesuits were reluctant to allow Belizean teachers to rise too high, particularly to Principal.<sup>16</sup> The senior education officer, Dr. Howes had stated that finance and staff availability were a major problem but more importantly that, 'it will be necessary to think of having a staff in each school which has, in the main, a more permanent character'.<sup>17</sup>

Liz Balderamos, who attended the Roman Catholic Pallotti High School, recalled a different scenario regarding anti British feeling at school in Belize City when asked if the teachers were putting forward the idea that they were Belizeans now and not British?

Yes, definitely, definitely, in fact one year when I was in Pallotti there was this big Heads of Agreement. I don't know if you remember that and they decided "No more! Belize for Belizeans. That's it". And there were big demonstrations and riots here in the city and it was a good opportunity for me to just jump on the bus and go home to Mum for about a week. Because they just point-blank told the schools, "Close the doors. If not there's going to be problems", and pretty much that's what the schools did.<sup>18</sup>

This does not clearly suggest that teacher's attitudes were different from those in Benque Viejo del

Carmen but it does provide a contrasting view of life in the more politically active capital. When asked if her teachers were pro-British, Liz was a little more lucid:

No. No, from one experience, it was like it was an honour to become, to be identified, and to be identified as a Belizean. I guess maybe because of the way I experienced the whole independence scenario made me feel we had an identity of our own. The thing that scared me, suppose Guatemala really moves in, is the British really gonna take care of us?<sup>19</sup>

As with the previous interviewee any loyalty to Britain may have been motivated by self-preservation and Britain's ability to protect Belize against the Guatemalan threat. Interviewee, Denise Neal was asked if she were conscious of teachers putting across nationalist ideas in trying to develop a new nation. 'A new nation. I didn't find it difficult. Yeah. They were doing that'. She considered that the teachers were just pro-Belizean and not anti-British, with little anti-British feeling.<sup>20</sup> Reports still revealed a high level of British aid, particular in the field of education, such as the establishment of technical education, or funding of a curriculum for nursing.<sup>21</sup>

The Americanisation of education particularly in the humanities, was quite advanced within Belize City. Liz Balderamos attended a Belize City Catholic school from 1979, and she confirmed the American influence:

In regards to Belizean history was mostly like a social studies. Teaching under social studies the subject of Belizean history came in-- Like we were taught like the Cabinet and we were taught like Belize and the whole Geography in school was not very much Belizean Geography. History that I got was not very much Belizean History. It tended to be everything but Belizean history. Most of the information and most of the things I knew about Belize I gained from different subjects otherwise the history I took in High School stem back from the Arawaks and the Carib names and stuff. And then when I went on to Pallotti, which was the all girls' Catholic school, it was American history that I got. Pallottines? I -- it was privately run really and most of the nuns there were between being Americans and Belizean nuns. And they taught us American history. America as a continent, and very little world history otherwise.<sup>22</sup>

Denise Neal confirmed this approach to teaching Belizean history,

They didn't teach much about Belizean history. That's why people go like to the library now

and get different things. You know. Like get the things, which are history. -- They couldn't teach you that. They mostly teach us like outside history kinda things like that.<sup>23</sup>

Apart from the compilation volume from Belizean Studies, few resources existed for the teaching of Belizean history. C. H. Grant's excellent, *The Making of Modern Belize*, did not appear until 1976. Previously Belizeans had to rely on overviews such as A. R. Gregg's *British Honduras*, published in 1968 or the outdated and sometimes inaccurate introductory survey of Stephen Caiger's *British Honduras: Past and Present*, published in 1951.

Americanisation was realised by another former student from Belize City. Shereth Cattouse commented:

The subject we had in primary school, our subject was Maths, English, Social Studies, and Social Studies include like Belize City, not the Caribbean, just Belize City itself. And really Social Science, that wasn't in Primary School. -- They taught us like the population, the different ethnic groups we had, the culture. They have a saying that, "Belizean doesn't have any culture". We had American culture. The culture that we were taught about was like the Garifuna and Maya.<sup>24</sup>

Shereth's comments suggest the influence of PUP/Jesuit attitudes even though she was a Methodist attending an Anglican school. She states that 'they' deny a true Belizean culture yet promote the Garifuna and Maya. Is it a coincidence that the Garifuna was the ethnic group with the most difficult past in relation to the British, and the Maya were the group who were most representative of the native Central American culture beloved of the PUP and Jesuits as a means of disconnecting with the Creole Caribbean culture? Liz Balderamos's comments at <sup>(24)</sup> above also reveal a curriculum, emphasis on native Indian history.

The expansion of Jesuit authority and the resultant shift of the power ratio in their favour came after self-rule. Previously Catholic influence in education had been confined to their own 'school subsystem', although this had been quite extensive as they held a virtual monopoly in the rural

districts.<sup>25</sup> The Education Ordinance of 1962 had dissolved the denomination led Board of Education, handing over control to the new Belizean Government's Ministry of Education. However, Rutheiser describes this as 'highly symbolic'.<sup>26</sup> Because of the government's well-documented preference for church schooling, and its own minimalist action, Jesuit influence now extended into the offices of government; whereas previously, they had been restricted by the colonial authority.<sup>27</sup> Along with their wealthy US connections and large congregations the Jesuit mission was strengthened by the government's laissez-faire policy in education to the chagrin of the formerly politically powerful Protestants.<sup>28</sup> However, the PUP government was well aware that it was time for greater involvement in a modern education system. They attempted to handle the church with greater diplomacy than their colonial predecessors, reiterating their support for denominational education, 'In the country of Belize the churches are the partners with government in providing our educational services'. Yet, a government spokesman continued tentatively, 'These Belizean partners in education have done a good job, but as the job daily grows bigger, they need more and more help'.<sup>29</sup> The PUP were keen to let the churches know that it was time for the government to assume greater control. The *Manifesto for Belizean Progress* had this to say about education,

The PUP will sustain the church-state school system. It will aim at improving the quality of education at all levels, at orienting the system of education to meet the needs of the country's development, at extending secondary education. When the church-state system is unable to provide technical and vocational training, the PUP proposes that Government directly provides the services.<sup>30</sup>

This was a period of advance for the Catholic Church in influencing the school system throughout Belize to the extent that Evan Hyde's newspaper, *Amandala* accused two of the country's leading Jesuits of being 'almost co-premiers of the country'.<sup>31</sup> During an interview in 1999 Harold Godfrey described the situation as the Jesuits from the post 1964 period had developed it:

So we have a mixed system in Belize of the American and the English system of education. And we don't really know what we want. Nobody can describe the system we have in Belize. It's a mixture of different types. Til we come to, "This is what we want, this is what we will do", we going to have this problem. At first, you know, we had the English system, and then we had this big thing with the priests. Even, you know, you went to a school and they said, "This spelling isn't wrong anymore, it's gonna make it accepted because it's-- [American-English!] The children become confused. <sup>32</sup>

A report from the Department of Education at the University of the West Indies had recognised the long-standing problem of teaching English. The report emphasised that standard English is educated English but should be relevant to the country and culture in which it is spoken i.e. British English - American English - Belizean English - Australian English. Godfrey is of course suggesting standardisation of language rather than a mixture of British, American and Belizean English in schools. <sup>33</sup>

#### **The implications of Jesuit expansion**

A number of changes took place consequential to increased Catholic influence, *which* while primarily developing an understanding of the growth of Jesuit power also contributes to the discussion of Belizeanization. The adoption of the American STS exam to determine entrance to all secondary schools was opposed by the Protestant Boards of Management but without success. Later titled the Common Entrance Exam it was eventually renamed as the Belize National Selection Exam in 1981. The American College Test (ACT) became the entrance exam to the four Sixth-Form Colleges, and provided difficulties for students as they were expected to sit an exam based upon American syllabi whilst studying for the Caribbean Council Examination's (CXC) syllabi. In 1969 St. John's College Sixth Form became a member of the American Association of Junior Colleges and began to award its own American style Associate Degrees. <sup>34</sup> Two years previously the legislature was set to recognise the Associate Degree but two leading education spokesmen ensured the bill languished and died in the select committee of the Senate. <sup>35</sup> Yet by the early 1970s Belize

Technical College was able to proceed with its own Associate Degrees.<sup>36</sup>

How significant was the shift towards a more Americanized educational system? It is interesting to note that whereas Rutheiser, an American, notes a variation from British to North American cultural influences as significant, the Afro-Guyanese perspective of C. H. Grant takes it as axiomatic that the US, Canada and Britain are all of one 'Anglo-Saxon orientation',<sup>37</sup> thus de-emphasising the differences. Did Rutheiser place too much emphasis on American influences as such an important shift in cultural difference? This shift was creating a contradictory system of education whereby pupils were studying for Caribbean exams, which had their roots in British education and taking American exams, particularly at Sixth Form with American Degrees and GCE 'A' levels operating simultaneously. Was a Belizean curriculum any less compatible with American credentials than with British ones? Former pupils of St. John's College such as Alexis Rosado did not see any problem with this system,

--for an American culture. That's the sort of preparation you were getting at St. John's. Even the location. Even though it was, the teaching is for 'A' levels it was also for American exams. The General Studies was just coming in, at the time. And it was the new thing. Everybody was afraid of 'A' levels, the General Studies was an easier one, and it was -- it was definitely more suitable for American system. And I, which I think is good if you plan to go to the US.<sup>38</sup>

The US was the main tertiary destination for St. John's graduates, and Rosado shows that 'A' levels such as General Studies were readily adapted to the American system. However, why did the leading college in Belize offer American examinations alongside an English syllabus? During a conversation with Fr. Deickmann of St. John's College he said that they changed over to the Associate degree because most of their graduates went to America.<sup>39</sup> Alexis Roşado reveals the implications of this for academic and economic progression: 'Not just jobs but to continue studying.

Whatever your chosen field, at least you will have the general courses that you would need anyway to fulfil a degree, whereas the 'A' levels won't count for much if you go to the US'.<sup>40</sup> However, Harold Godfrey offered a fuller explanation for this move:

Well, the Jesuit College believes the Jesuit College is in the States, and they all take an Associate degree. So it's only an extension of the Jesuit system in the States, simple as that. So, if you go to St. John's College you know you are in the American system. Personally I think we have to make a decision on what we want.<sup>41</sup>

Godfrey remains a leading Methodist, but he was not implying any hidden agenda on the part of the Jesuits, rather, essentially that St. John's was not a Belizean school but an extension of the Jesuit system in America. This would be advantageous to the Jesuits in strengthening links with the US and further distancing Belizeans from British/Protestant influence, thereby increasing Jesuit political power, which in turn would increase their authority in the religious/educational mission. When asked how this affected the relationship with the University of the West Indies Rosado commented upon the present day outcome, 'A levels? Yes! But I mean how many students go to the University of the West Indies? [Rhetorical] We have a quota now. We can barely fit in our students at the University of the West Indies'. Evidently, with the emphasis on US education, links with the UWI eroded, 'They don't have enough space. Personally I think they aren't catering to the region, more to those countries that have the campuses'.<sup>42</sup>

Significantly, prior to self-rule in 1964 the colonial government had developed and maintained links with the University of the West Indies. Yet, during 1964, with the elevation of the PUP to government, British Honduras served notice that it could not afford to increase its support as the cost of running the University increased. Commencing in 1960, the contribution of 2.2% amounted to \$68,784. By 1964 this had become \$112,926, however, the University committee accepted the British Honduran case. Sound arguments were put forward for maintaining this relationship. It was

pointed out in a government report that the twenty-five British Honduran students already currently attending the University were on a par with the 2.2% paid. There would therefore, be no benefits to withdrawing and then paying fees.<sup>43</sup> Student wastage was raised in that they were much more likely to want to come home than students, 'trained in the more glamorous atmosphere of Europe and America'.<sup>44</sup> In fact a later visit by the Minister of Education brought the following comment,

Recently I was at the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies and had an opportunity to meet with our students at that campus. It was a useful meeting and it was clear that our students there are looking forward to returning home and making their contribution in developing Belize.<sup>45</sup>

Nevertheless, in the report the Ministry of Education was not satisfied that the benefits accruing to the country from its association with the University were as great as they could have been, although the author provided no explanation for this statement, simply that the, 'Potentialities are great; the actualities have been less satisfying'.<sup>46</sup> Notably, the PUP retained the links with the UWI, but gradually eroded the means for attendance, such as 'A' level study as the above comments from Alexis Rosado have illustrated.

In response to a question regarding the attitudes between pupils and from the teachers Eddison Trapp, an Anglican, revealed a difference in the make-up of an Anglican school, and confirmed the nature of St. John's College as American:

We had, er, we had Belizean teachers. I can recall two American teachers but they taught basically English, literature; things like those. Biology was being taught by Belizeans, Chemistry, Belizeans. There was not much foreigner teaching at St. Michael's. But at St. John's majority of the teachers were foreigners, were priests, were Fathers -[From America?] That's right, er --Yeah! They wanted control. -- St. Michael was an Anglican college. What you had Catholic and Methodist students there because for obvious reason they didn't qualify for --<sup>47</sup>

Trapp was asked if individual students 'got along' or if any problems were, hierarchical rather than with individuals?

That's right. I mean Black and white get along but you know the, the Hispanic people the white collar people think they are better than the guys that wears the jeans and etcetera because of history. The history that we are being taught, was being taught is saying that we were slaves. So that's changing. Cos you know, we don't tolerate much nonsense from people.<sup>48</sup>

Newspaper editor Evan Hyde alluded to US political influence in Belize during the radical period of the 1960s.

But the reality of it is that those young radicals who were thinking of a Cuban like model I don't know, I admired what the Cubans decided to do but we're only six hundred miles from Miami. And our people have been going to the States for many years and a lot of our people are in the United States armed forces. Our ties with America are such that for us to have embarked on any kind of an ideological crusade I don't know.<sup>49</sup>

Hyde recognised that political radicalism would have been folly and so wished to concentrate on educating his people:

As I said I was cultural more, I wanted areas to be opened up, and I wanted us to show our people at an early age they have a sense of their possibilities and not that they're, you know that you were not, we didn't just happen. So that issue, and I'm sure that the churchmen would have been stonewalling here, I'm sure that their support --- they are powerful people that control the economy, the employment, control the government, —<sup>50</sup>

So the transfer of power from colonial to homogeneous government did nothing to provide Belizeans with an ethnocentric education. By strengthening American links through the syllabus, subjects such as history and geography continued to offer an overseas emphasis. But Hyde is scathing of Jesuit rote learning:

I believe a lot of our black, brown, red, and yellow students never discover their real potential in school here because the Jesuits are continually down on them to listen and hush up. Here the white Jesuits don't allow you to argue with them, at least not in my time. They try to make you look stupid. If you get on a limb with them on a religious topic and they can't gun you down, they say it's a mystery. They say YOU CANNOT UNDERSTAND THAT.<sup>51</sup>

This dogmatic approach to teaching is not surprising given the distinct theological stance of the Jesuits. However, it is equally likely that this may have facilitated an emphatic association with American cultural concepts

Catholic power increased with the aid of the PUP/Jesuit alliance, but this worked with equal benefit for the PUP who, within one year of independence had achieved legal control of the secondary system, something the colonial authorities had attempted with no success. New secondary schools, including 6th forms, could now only be established with Ministry of Education approval, through the Chief Education Officer, 'It shall be an offence to establish and operate a school without the prior approval of the Minister given in writing'. Sites, plans, and usage, were all within the Ministry's remit as well as approval for any fee increase. The government would also control the core subjects of the curriculum such as English Language, Spanish, Maths, Belizean Studies, and science subjects. Change in management or location had to be notified within one month and schools would be subject to ministerial audit. A teacher-training diploma was also introduced for junior secondary schools. Breaches could result in closure, or the grant may also be withdrawn or reduced<sup>52</sup> This contrasts with the writings of Dr. Howe, Chief Education Officer prior to 1964: 'When I became Director of Education here I realized that I had virtually no powers as regards secondary education. Relations between heads of secondary schools and myself would have to be personal ones--that is if they wanted any guidance or aid from me'.<sup>53</sup>

The government had extended and strengthened its power without too much disturbance to the church position in everyday matters. In the final budget speech of the self-rule era, school development figured in every area of funding. As a country incapable of meeting all of its financial commitments independently, plans were prioritised across different budgets. Premier George Price's discontinued training for the Jesuit priesthood no doubt aided his relationship with the Catholic church. His budget speech is full of biblical references and the speech reflects his policy of a continuing partnership with the Catholic church beyond 1981:

The economic development and social progress of Belize will be enhanced by a wider scope of activities and a removal of the deep-rooted structures, which constrain growth and improvement. This can only be done by working an advanced constitution of independence. This we hold to be true and good. So we advance, people and government, young and old, to possess the land and govern it with righteousness and good husbandry. The bible tells us that, "The righteous shall possess the land and dwell upon it forever". (Psalm 37:29) It tells us that, " the plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance". (Proverbs 21:5) We go forward with courage in our hearts, with a will to work by our hands, and with faith in God, the ruler of the world'.<sup>54</sup>

The likelihood of Belize ever becoming an associate state of the US was alien to ordinary people, although it had been mooted within government confines. However, the reaction of Belizean students in the US is both supportive of the above nature of advanced Creolisation and indicative of a deep-rooted antipathy to anything American beyond the more superficial aspects of culture. Shortly before full independence the *Belize Times* of May 31st, 1981 carried the following subheading and a letter from Belizean students in America that reflects both attitudes towards Americanisation and the level of cohesion within Belizean society:

After Suggestion That Belize Become an Associated State of the US:

I reject this absolutely. I always look forward to coming home where the colour of my skin will not make the difference. Yes I sat in our Belizean class room with many ethnic groups for all the years of grade school and High School and was accepted by them for who I am and not the colour of my skin. -- People go to the US mainly for economic reasons; we all know that if our country was a prosperous one they would stay here in our beloved land. -- Here in Belize we can walk and live anywhere. Lets keep it that way. If Belize should ever become a state of the US (which I know it won't) our black and brown skinned people will all have to take a back seat. Our country would be flooded with whites from the US who would then buy out the best properties in the name of progress.<sup>55</sup>

The opening section revealed something of the secular influences from America as a means to aiding the Jesuit shift from British/Creole dominance. By 1981, at the point of independence, newspaper reporting reflected an increase in outside organisations that were active within Belize. Dr. Romeo Massy, a CARE-REAP curriculum consultant, visited 20 schools that were involved with REAP in the six districts of Belize.' The main objectives of REAP is to integrate rural life

studies into the curriculum of the primary school and the Belize Technical College'.<sup>56</sup> Under the USAID Economic Cooperation Programme, six primary schools were also being built.<sup>57</sup>

The Hon. Tom Usher, Deputy Education Minister told students that they would be receiving help to get their projects started through the 'generosity of the Heifer Project international', a non-profit organisation based in the United States of America. Usher also informed the students that, 'Two Canadian teachers from the Canadian Teacher's Federation (CTF.) -- will be working along with five Belizean tutors to conduct a three-week summer instruction for Belizean teachers in the primary school'.<sup>58</sup> A Belize City student was among the graduates from Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisburg Virginia; a four-year, fully accredited Liberal Arts College of more than one thousand students. Clearly, the pace of involvement with the United States education system was gathering by the point of independence, helping to secure the Jesuit position as an American oriented institution within the political sphere. Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic Church remained a wealthy organisation in its own right, as this report in the *Belize Times* May 24th 1981. confirms:

New St. John's College science complex was built at a cost of some \$440,000. \$25,000 from the Roman Catholic Church, a grant of \$170,000 from Government and \$20,000 in contributions from the local business community. Fr. Buhler explained 'that the Roman Catholic Church had paid the bulk of the expenses as part of its commitment to help provide quality education for the people of Belize'.<sup>59</sup>

The presence of the American Peace Corps represented an American agenda in Belizean education.

During the early stages of self-rule in, 1967, a Peace Corps report had stated,

The Peace Corps is proud to be here. Moreover it will be more proud when its services are no longer required - when the people of this country can say, "Thank you, for you assisted us in training our own. They are ready now. We don't need you any more". It is truly a paradox'.<sup>60</sup>

This statement may have been ingenuous or a mere sop, but the Peace Corps has remained ever

present in Belize, and it is doubtful whether a cash-starved third world country will ever deliver itself of *free* foreign teachers. Indeed Peace Corps Volunteers have the longest working relationship with the Education Department.<sup>61</sup>

The close of this period did however, feature a new shift in attitudes and links with the PUP.

Evan Hyde's newspaper stated,

For many years until 1974 the Catholic Church implicitly supported the PUP. -- But many Catholic priests and nuns since 1974 have been deserting the PUP for the UDP. [United Democratic Party] This is because they have been alarmed by the specter of communism within the ranks of the PUP.<sup>62</sup>

The paper describes this as, a 'remarkable union, Catholic Mestizos and the traditionally oppositional Methodist Creoles in the UDP', adding further political comment, 'While there are still right-wing hard line priests like Patrick Walsh who will remain UDP, church leadership can no longer rush to judge and condemn PUP leadership as communist'. Although the Jesuit influence remained powerful in the post independence era, it began to weaken from two major standpoints. Religion itself was giving way to the secular society expressed through the recently introduced 24 hour-a-day American television. Evan Hyde's earlier remark, 'Religion is something between you and God and there is just too many hustlers interpreting the Bible these days',<sup>63</sup> was followed in 1981 by this observation:

Belize City is no longer Christian if it ever was. It's mostly lip service now. - The less religious holiday New Year's is becoming more significant in Belize, as people here follow the example of the more secular and materialistic society of the United States.<sup>64</sup>

Finally, the modern Society of Jesus now suffers from a dearth of recruitment. Emory King commented that many Catholics no longer wish to live the celibate life.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, the Society has to rely more than ever on lay professionals with the resultant diluting of the zealous approach of the Jesuit fathers.

Yet as the full colonial period drew to a close Fr. Hadel Headmaster of St. John's College was able to make the following nationalist complimentary remarks concerning the nature of Belizean society both in relation to its giant neighbour in the north, and in the way forward for Belizean citizens:

Belize is a highly personal society -- stands in stark contrast to the highly impersonal American Society in which neighbours often do not know one another -- people in Belize are genuinely concerned about one another. -- Give them a country in which Caribs and Creoles, Mayas and Mestizos see one another as Belizeans first and only secondarily as Caribs and Creoles, Mayas and Mestizos. -- Not PUP first, not UDP first but Belize first, then Belize, then Belize again.<sup>66</sup>

This was, of course, a plea to maintain the old ways in the face of secular encroachment and the increasing influence of individualism.

#### **Conclusion**

This new imbalance in the denominational power structure had begun to exacerbate tensions and conflict. Providentially this did not begin to take place until after self-rule and after much of the multi-cultural fusion had taken place. Had this kind of conflict existed during an earlier period the process of Creolisation may have been frustrated and ethnic tensions could have been exploited by political groups, in the manner of Guyana, where 'ideological factionalism' around ethnicity had been invoked as a major social cleavage.<sup>67</sup>

The period 1964-1981 was, therefore, a time when the power shifts favoured the Catholic element in education, and began to exacerbate conflict between Protestant and Catholic groups. Fortunately, much of this conflict existed at the higher structural levels. In these conditions Belizean Studies programmes made slow progress and did not fully gather pace until after independence. It is at the individual level of society that oral history evidence aids our understanding of how much the Creolisation process had already directed Belizean society in a non-conflictive sense of Belizean

nationalism up to self-rule, before any political ascendancy was achieved.

The following chapter will look more closely at the actual process of national identity and Belizeanisation within the educational system. It will continue the idea that any disrupting of the old equilibrium during the self rule period had arrived too late to create dominant factions in Belize and that the old Creolisation process was firmly ensconced, requiring only minor adaptations to accommodate Belizeanisation.

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## **Part Three**

### **Shifts in the Balance of Power**

#### Chapter 10

#### **MULTI-CULTURAL COHESION IN PRACTICE.**

This chapter will begin to assess the continual effects of what might be termed 'Applied Belizeanisation', in an effort to reveal the true state of multicultural cohesiveness and aim to show how the period 1964 - 1981 contributed to the overall assertion of this thesis that despite a well-established rhetoric of difference a cohesive society was created in Belize rooted in the cultural values propagated through an often contradictory church-state education system. In previous chapters throughout this thesis the Belizeanisation process is revealed as linked with a process of voluntary assimilation termed Creolisation that had been ongoing in British Honduras/Belize since the demise of slavery in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The success and voluntary nature of Creolisation suggests that Belizeanisation was merely an expropriated term purportedly to synthesise the nation in the lead up to independence, but one that was superficial and unnecessary for the purpose of multi-cultural cohesion. At a school child's rally held on Friday 5 September 1975 at Rogers' Stadium, the Minister of Education delineated the established but fragmented ethos guiding the government's perceived relationship between education and nation building

You, our young Belizeans, do your part in building and developing by studying hard at school, by nourishing your love for your country, by taking pride in being Belizeans, and by learning of our history and our heritage, and of our struggle for social and economic progress and political independence.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally Dr Howes, a British educationalist based in Belize, was fully cognisant of the government desire to promote a continued partnership between church and state. Therefore, he recommended the retention of church influence in nondenominational secondary schools, although the emphasis lay on government provision and control:

The state's function is, in my view, a vital one, namely to help to the fullest of its

capacity those engaged in this tremendous task, - it should provide all necessary facilities for religious influence, as well as formal instruction, in secondary institutions which do not follow the normal academic pattern of our denominational secondary schools. Our secondary schools must make our young people more aware of their rights and duties.<sup>2</sup>

The use of school as a fermenting pot for nationalism was an important tactic of the PUP government during the period of home-rule, and in the approach to independence, offering a similar comparison with the old colonial methods of imperialist acculturation.

The previous two chapters have dealt with influences *on* the process of multi-cultural cohesion. Complementary to this it is intended for Chapter Ten to present *the* process of cohesion and Belizeanisation as it actually existed on a commonplace basis. Therefore, the first section shall explore the relationship of nationalism and the diverse ethnic complex of Belize to reveal the function of Belizeanisation. Further, the second section discusses the importance to families in Belize of schooling during this period, and how such enthusiasm dovetailed with nationalist requirements. Section Three highlights the processes of social mixing within and without the schools, indicating additionally the level at which Belize had already integrated before the government decided that such was a useful activity. The final section examines a level of group tolerance too mature to be affected by recent changes within the power structures in Belize between home-rule and independence. Such tolerance is indicative of a successful social interaction instigated by ordinary people and not imposed by government, denominations or commercial organisations.

#### **Ethnic diversity**

At the outset of Home-Rule in 1964 the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies Mr Nigel Fisher called the Belizeans, 'a proud people who have fought and prayed for this occasion'. But he warned against the establishment of discrimination among, 'our people,

which has [harmed] the country of British Guiana and others'. But Fisher's appeal possessed an economic purpose in that a government report had called for a sizeable population by 1975, which meant the government would have to encourage significant migration from other countries.<sup>3</sup> At this stage it had not been decided whether this would be from Central America or the West Indies. Britain had always favoured its own West Indian connection for obvious cultural reasons but the PUP were keen to undermine this potential British continuity, and the Jesuit agenda favoured the influx of Catholics from Central America. The increasing power of the PUP/Jesuits was to prove decisive.

The church, whilst wrangling for power at the higher levels, was more secure in its controls throughout the rural parishes; this applied to Catholics or Protestants. In Dangriga Parish it was normal to minister to at least five different language groups: English, Spanish, Garifuna, Kekchi and Mopan Indian.<sup>4</sup> The *Belize Times* called for greater emphasis on Spanish language and culture in school', and for rendering the National Anthem, "Tierra de Dias" in Spanish.<sup>5</sup> A later issue described the methods used by the Catholic Church in teaching the catechism in Toledo where at least four of the languages spoken in Belize were used. Fr. Leo Dogh, arranged lessons in Kekchi. Mr. Callisto Cayetano a Belizean studying for the priesthood at the Seminario Major in Tegucigalpa Guatemala read the lessons, which were recorded on tape and then sent to Fr. James Meehan in the USA, who produced a record of the lessons. The writer continued: 'Now with the help of a portable recorder, the Kekchi Belizeans can learn their religion in their own language. At the same time they will learn some English too as the lessons are in English followed step by step in Kekchi'.<sup>6</sup> This revealed a practical requirement for language instruction, both in retaining the Kekchi and developing the more universal English. It also revealed the wide network of resources available to the Catholic

Church in fulfilling any plans it may have within the communities.

Schools were supposed to teach in Standard English but often teachers resorted to Creole, especially in primary school. Denise Neal, who attended an Anglican primary from 1969 stated, 'they used to do more in Creole English. Now they are doing like more English more than Creole. They are not supposed to but they do it. Yeah! I mean now people don't speak Creole much but now in our day they used to speak Creole a lot, even school.' This was probably for practical reasons, as parents would speak Creole at home, although Denise did deny any feeling of learning English as a foreign language,

I never thought of it as a foreign language. It's good to speak it, because when people go abroad, most of the Belizeans have a summer vacation, so you go to bigger place and you have to speak English. – I can speak both Creole and English.<sup>7</sup>

Mixed ethnic grouping was a consideration in Shereth Cattouse's school days, 1968 - 1981, where she described it as a compound between Creole, Garifuna and Spanish. She stated that they all worked together, although she did highlight differences between the Creoles and Garifuna:

Well some they don't get along much. I think it's due to the language too. It's two different language. Cos I have a Garifuna neighbour and they keep up their culture and they don't speak English, mostly Garifuna and it's hard for me to understand. But there is no problem.<sup>8</sup>

This is a remnant from the British attempt to divide the two African groups during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Dana Clancy, a Creole who had attended Methodist schools in Belize City during the 1970s described how she was actively encouraged by family to regard the Garifuna as inferior. When she was a child, the 'Garifuna' was used as a 'bogyman' to frighten her to sleep.<sup>9</sup> Yet, overall the result does not appear to have created a serious rift but is regarded humorously. Liz Balderamos spoke of prejudice from her Garifuna teachers when she attended Dangriga High School:

They were a lot different and I think they still tend to be different. They -- I find them very prejudiced people. There were a couple of times I got into fist fights and stuff, and it would always be from the Garifuna people. You know teasing the little 'limey pickni' kind of thing and--. It used to get to me. But I had friends who were there and older and kind of take care of you sort of thing and make sure you weren't taken advantage of. When it got to High School, we weren't as big in numbers being a little white face or a little Spanish face. In my first year I can distinctly remember only three white faces in a class of thirty-five, and two out of those three white faces flunked out the first year, had to repeat so it meant I went on to another class. And some of the first response sections [unclear] I met maybe two more who were in my class during that time. And in my third year I remember only two white faces being in my third year. So you know it kind of put-- and they tend to be very kinda clannish, having a Principal being Garifuna and being prejudice certainly never helped.<sup>10</sup>

However, Shereth claimed that most of her teachers were Garifuna and they treated everybody equally, without prejudice.<sup>11</sup> Prejudice itself may have been minimal due to the interracial blood ties existing in Belize. Many people may have appeared to belong to one group or another but Evan Hyde commented:

Because I say you can be talking to someone who looks Black and his sister is Hispanic. You can talk to someone who is Hispanic and he have a strong Black reference. In my case I am a Black nationalist leader, or at least I was originally, and in terms of ethnicity I am, my paternity is going back to a lot of Europeans, and in my maternity there are Africans, but they are mixed into an India and a Spanish, you know. So to me this is a complex--. If you say something that is arbitrary or of a discriminating nature you may be looking at someone who is taking it personally, you see.<sup>12</sup>

From this writer's observations the Afro-European physiognomy of Evan Hyde is obvious but the East Indian and Spanish traits are indiscernible and bear witness to his comments. Perhaps, when dealing with each other, these hidden racial characteristics encouraged a cautious approach within the Belizean psyche? Educators had long perceived the introduction of a Belizean history into the curriculum as a unifying point, ethnically and culturally. The Minister of Education highlighted this as an unresolved issue as late as 1976:

Another matter dear to our hearts -- is the provision of textbooks in History and Geography. Teaching about Belize in these subjects has been very inadequate for a long time, because we have no authoritative texts. We expect that by September this year a "History of Belize" will be available. They have been written by recognised

scholars--.<sup>13</sup>

However, the PUP government's quandary may have been that an enlightened portrayal of Belizean History would perforce have highlighted the British connection at a point when the PUP desired to accentuate the Central American reference. Additionally the level of voluntary Creolisation that had already taken place in Belize casts doubt on the necessity of Belizean history as a tool for national harmony, although for future development its importance over colonial history is undoubted.

Alexis Rosado commented that the rivalry between groups was more common in Belize City, than in his birthplace of Cayo, particularly between St. John's College and the Protestant Excelsior or the government technical college:

I studied outside in the rural areas. I think the culture is a bit different. At least that's the experience I had when I first went to live in Belize City, when I went up into Sixth Form. It was a different culture, different mentality. People noticed that you were a Mestizo. You were a Spaniard. People noticed that you came from the out districts for example. That's when you become conscious of yourself.<sup>14</sup>

One anonymous interviewee put this down to 'making fun' regarding the different ethnic groups within his school in Cayo:

There were people from er majority Mestizos, there were coloured African you know. There were some white. We school would make fun of these kind of people you know. There was this envious attitude because you were a person from another country coming to live in this community'.<sup>15</sup>

The Minister of Education summarised the direction of Belizean ethnicity in a 1976 speech:

Gone are the days when we were obliged to watch from the sidelines as outsiders decided for us what cultural manifestations were good or relevant to the Belizean condition. We have every right to believe, whatever their stated objectives, that their judgements would inevitably be coloured by assumptions, by prejudices absorbed from their upbringing and more concerned with realizing the objectives of their nation state. The culture, which is most relevant to the Belizean man, is Belizean culture.<sup>16</sup>

### **The importance of education**

Did the different ethnic groups differ in the values they placed on gaining an education and in

their ideas about the purpose of education? Education was highly valued among ordinary Belizean people and continued to provide an essential conduit for the government's propagation of national identity and multi-cultural cohesion. Nineteen sixty-four to 1981 was a period of adjustment for the churches that were used to having complete authority over their schools and premises. Improving and extending educational facilities remained a priority of the government as it took over the reins of self-rule. Father Anthony Sylvestre recalled the 'difficult days after the hurricane,<sup>17</sup> for the people of Gracie Rock, the uncertainty of a site for the school, and then the determination of the church, government and people to build on the present site'. Premier George Price added his thanks in his usual sermonizing manner and 'dedicated' the hurricane shelter and school building, 'to the service of the people of Gracie Rock' and gave, 'public thanks to all of those who contributed to defraying the cost: the British Government and people, and the Anglican Church and its members'.<sup>18</sup> The British government provided educational funding after self-rule and continued to work with the churches to develop new schools. The *Belize Times* of March 6th, 1966 announced the following: 'Methodist Church Gets Land to Build School'. In the Lake Independence area, on a plot of land rendered workable by the Belize Government, the cost of the building was met by a gift of \$20, 000 from the Methodist Relief Fund of Great Britain and a grant-in-aid from the British Government.<sup>19</sup>

The Belizean government was keen to continue this mutually beneficial partnership with the churches. At a ceremony for the opening of a new building at Boom Methodist School on Wednesday 20 March 1975, the Minister for Education complimented the efforts of church volunteers,

'We reflect on the volunteers of the United Methodist Church who left their homes in the USA, who at their own expense gave of their time and labour assisting in the

construction of this building. It is a partnership which has served our communities well and it is our hope that it will continue'.<sup>20</sup>

Evidence available does suggest that the administration of funds was not even handed across the denominations. Similar aid was given to the Anglican church on 24 February 1967, in an agreement between the General Manager, Anglican Schools E. A. Sylvestre and the Chief Education Officer of British Honduras J. L. Blackett, 'an extension to the 'All-Saints Primary School in Belize City', paid for with a \$2500 *interest free* loan at \$250 a year for 10 years, the only restriction being that the materials for use on the building had to be purchased as far as possible from UK sources.<sup>21</sup> However, on 21 December of the same year a similar agreement took place between Blackett and the General Manager of Roman Catholic Schools, Francis J. Ring, S. J. The Government undertook to fill a plot of land in the Lake Independence area at a cost of \$1,275.00. But in this case the money was the subject of a loan with an *interest charge* of 1% per annum on the reducing balance calculated yearly with instalments of \$85.00, paid over 15 years.<sup>22</sup>

The government showed a keen interest in educational development although they were well aware of its importance to ordinary people. Empowerment was a crucial part of the rhetoric of the late 1970s and government wished to show its commitment to this course. For example in a speech by the Minister of Education at the official opening of the new Teacher's College buildings on Monday 3 May 1976, he stated,

It was a time when it was still the fashion to believe that Belizeans were not capable of managing their own affairs and that anything good had to come from abroad. The 1950s was a period of great social and political awakening here in Belize. The old Belize was in the process of evolving into the new Belize --the realization of the need for Belizean education to be given a new orientation. The old Colonial education would no longer do.<sup>23</sup>

Without any surrendering of religious hegemony the churches were also keen to develop group

decision making. Rochford says, 'Colonialism taught people to be spectators in their own country, isolated from decisions about themselves'.<sup>24</sup> Education was perceived as a key to progress and its importance to Belizean families is reflected by an increased level of involvement in school activities. During July 1976 the men of Silver Creek were in dispute with the church over a new brush school being erected. The men claimed that Fr. Cayetano had promised \$1500.00 for this purpose. Fr. Messmer, in the absence of Fr. Cayetano, had agreed to pay what Fr. Cayetano promised. However, on his return Fr. Cayetano claimed he promised "up to \$1500" Whereas the men insisted that he had agreed to \$1500. An entry in the church log book for July 1976 added in bold letters the abrupt comment, 'NOTE: Get things IN WRITING'.<sup>25</sup> This event reveals a new found confidence in local people when dealing with the church authorities.

A further entry, this time for August 1978 described a threat of trouble between San Antonio Central and Crique Jute villages. 'Ostensibly because Crique Jute men do not work in [the locality]. Really due to political religious strife and personal jealousy'. The village council presented demands that Crique Jute children 'attend a school'. Their letter was passed on to the Department of Education. Feelings were undoubtedly high because the logbook shows that the District Officer sent the police on Saturday August 26, and on opening day. Evidently there was no trouble. However, this did arouse further conflict when the school reopened. When Sister Caritori refused to use the Community Centre, a group of men from the village council went to the District Education Officer to complain that the school was crowded but the Sister would not cooperate and use the Centre. This appeared to be a further issue of control. The Education Officer had already been visited by the Sister, 'so he got men to admit that they had not been too cooperative. They apologised to Sister for their behaviour-rudeness when she had

gone to get key to center'.<sup>26</sup>

Grant confirms that between Creoles and Caribs education ranked high in their value system and many made financial sacrifices.<sup>27</sup> Nor did some parents allow denominational education to prohibit them from academic advancement; one such was Nick Sanchez's mother.

I stayed at a Catholic. We were Catholics. After about three years in schools - my mum was very practical you know - the effect that all this "Hail Mary", and "Our Father" create - "Let's get some 1,2,3, and some A, B, C," - over to the Anglican school. My Dad raisin' Cain, but to no avail. And so we went from the Catholic school over here - Holy Redeemer, then, er, a Catholic school over on the South Side, St. Ignatius. Then I went to a private school of about maybe twenty kids for one year. And they closed her down. And then we went to St. Mary's [Anglican] over here.<sup>28</sup>

Similar observations have been made of the San Antonio Indians of Toledo District, who scraped together the money for fees without scholarships.<sup>29</sup> Many older generation Indians were embarrassed by their relative backwardness to the other ethnic groups that economic development had brought them in contact. Mestizos also showed their determination to acquire an education. One interviewee described his parents' commitment:

We, in our family had economic problems, because I went to High School on a government scholarship. \$40.00 a month for my passage -- food and the school supplies, the books were free, but still that wasn't enough you know. But I could, I survived you know with twenty US dollars a month for food and passage at High School level. I think, if I didn't get a scholarship I wouldn't go to High School, my Mother being a housewife and my Father being a Mason. Speaking about families not school, there were economic hardships, sending their schoolchildren to school and all those things. -- So I think that I didn't pay anything just uniforms that my mum had to make for me you know, uniforms, shoes and all those things.<sup>30</sup>

Interestingly, the interviewee said that the schools were amenable to parents with financial difficulties, 'you could talk with the Principal and say, "Look I want my child to have an education but he, I cannot afford to give him a school". He felt that this charitable response was a benefit of church education, and would have been less easily achieved in a state

school.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps this was equally a benefit of localised management control, where the school principal would be well aware of the parents' financial condition, thus avoiding the complicated and bureaucratic process of means testing. However, there may have been some difference between the more personal environment of the rural church school and its Belize City counterparts. Denise Neal attended an Anglican primary school during the 1960s from Standard One to Standard Six. She stated that her mother could not afford to send her to High School after her father went away and left her mother with eight children.<sup>32</sup>

The San Antonio Indians sensed that education was the answer and blamed their bad experiences in relation to the outside community on a 'paucity of education'. These frustrations translated into positive attitudes towards the education of their children and grandchildren.<sup>33</sup> These moves were 'integrationist' and all about 'moving into the modern world'. However, in San Antonio, this involved moving a locality, usually to Belize City.<sup>34</sup> The development of St. Peter Claver College in the district capital of Punta Gorda, whilst initiating local urban hegemony, was at least an attempt to retain students in the area.<sup>35</sup> However those attending tertiary establishments would still be required to move to Belize City or even abroad.

At the date of interview Alexis Rosado, had risen to a high position in the Belizean Civil Service, however his parents did not have an academic background, and both of them finished studying in Standard Six. His Father started high school but never finished, 'I guess he just wanted to go on, start his life or whatever. But it wasn't a big thing at the time.'<sup>36</sup> Rosado was asked how his parents viewed education. Whether because they were an older generation that education had perhaps not been so important to them. It was suggested that some parents, particularly in rural areas where children were viewed as essential labour, might have encouraged their children to get out to work. However, the attitude of Rosado's parents toward

education was similar to those of the rural Maya:

They made us get into that habit of studying, and it was so we naturally wanted to study. It was an achievement to get to be first place in your class. For example when I was in infant primary from Standard One it was an achievement and we were all rewarded or something. I guess when I grew up to me, it was just natural. In fact just the feeling of achievement, you learned to appreciate. So that afterwards you didn't have to.<sup>37</sup>

Rosado stressed that this was an education both for personal development and for material gain, 'Both! I know my Mother, she was, "you have to work". They can't teach us everything so we have to go to school to learn. And then to get jobs to do things'.<sup>38</sup> Although education officers such as Dr Howes maintained that many of the problems found in the quality of schoolwork and examination results were caused by parental indifference.<sup>39</sup> As a parent with children in Belizean schools, US born Emory King valued church education for its high moral tone:

The schools, the churches, sponsored Boy Scout troops, Girl Guide troops in the girls' school. And many young men, well many old men now. [laughs] I forget how old I am. Many young men when I came here were in the scout movement and had been during the time they were in High School. And they still talk about those days of being in the Boy Scouts and what they learned in the way of not only good manners but moral principles, fair play, what is cricket and what is not cricket, and not to blot your copy book and so on. No. There are any number of men in their 60s today who swear by the scout room and what they learned –<sup>40</sup>

Education was prized among Belizeans of all ethnic groups as both a means of advancement and a passport to modernisation among their communities. Although the government continued to perceive education as an essential conduit for the proliferation of national identity and multi-cultural cohesion both of these, particularly the latter were well advanced at a micro-level across Belizean society before home rule.

#### **Gender and inter-ethnic socialisation**

Although ethnic integration was taking place on a national scale, there were still significant cultural differences between different ethnic communities. A study of the main sugar producing

regions in Northern Belize revealed a 'traditional machismo society'. Equal gender opportunities did not exist in the Orange Walk and Corozal districts.<sup>41</sup> Social interaction in Orange Walk was sexually segregated and women were far less likely to go to High School. Enrolment in the district High School during the early 1970s was 38% female and 62% male. In language 33% of males and 45% of women had little knowledge of English, the official language of Belize.<sup>42</sup> Mestizo culture was divided into separate spheres and women dominated the home. Creole women were much more independent. The Mestizos claimed this indicated that Creoles placed a lower value on family. However, stability statistics were identical for Mestizos and Creoles; nor was there any significant difference in Mestizo or Creole women in employment or female headed households.<sup>43</sup> Creole independence was more a matter of freedom to interact across gender and ethnic boundaries but did not indicate a substantial difference in attitude towards family.

Mayan culture was predisposed to separate spheres for men and women. In Santa Cruz, a Mayan village five miles south of San Antonio and with a population of 350, the men organised the village and provided the food. The women stayed at home to cook, wash, have and take care of the children. Five churches: Pentecostal, Nazarene, Catholic, Mennonite, and Baptist encouraged this culture particularly through the schools, where the inequalities were reflected in a sizeable differentiation in the secondary school ratio of boys to girls. In Belize City there were 126 girls per 100 boys, compared to 77 girls to every 100 boys in the rural districts.<sup>44</sup> The contents of a Unity Brigade Report stated that: 'The education level is very low although there is a school. The children come out at Standard VI with the knowledge for Standard I. The boys go to milpas [the fields] and the girls stay at home and wait to be married'.<sup>45</sup> However, even in the less rigorous environs of Belize City schools girls were

subject to strict discipline: *Amandala* March 30th, 1979 reported that Pallotti High School had found it necessary to expel nine members of its student body. One of the girls expelled was a senior who would have been graduating within thirty days. The senior was not allowed to graduate because, 'to yield would oblige her to reconsider the cases of the other girls as well'. Evidently one of the students had informed the school management that the girls were seen at a club called Castaways one night in December. Clearly, such disciplinary levels might be expected from a college run by nuns.

Separate spheres for men and women continued to be confirmed by the school curriculum where traditional subjects for girls remained in place into the late 1970s. The Belize Fashion Institute and School of Culinary Art, an all-girls establishment, held a graduation ceremony on Saturday May 8, 1976 at the Bliss Institute, the closing remarks of the Minister for Education appear to reflect the true concerns for female education:

We want to commend Mrs Cooper for the very valuable work she is performing in our community. We men know that it would be a dull world without women's fashion and while many of us may lack expertise in the culinary art, we certainly do not lack in our appreciation of a good meal. We say to her, "Keep up the good work", and be assured our recognition of your efforts.<sup>46</sup>

Such parochial comments, however well intentioned, were being reinforced in other areas. I.E. Sanchez, Senior Education Officer, in a speech encouraging teachers to exemplify 'correct' behaviour commented, 'for they are the leaders and everyday image of what adults are and in turn what children will eventually be'.<sup>47</sup> [After parents one would hope]. These were admirable ideals but primary school rules 31 and 33 enforced a domestic emphasis on a predominantly female teaching profession at the primary level.

[31] The services of a married female teacher may be terminated if it can be shown after due enquiry and to the satisfaction of the Head of the Education Department that her domestic obligations interfere with her duties as a teacher.

[33] Maternity leave 2x2 months. After two occasions of maternity leave - may be

granted leave or have her services terminated.<sup>48</sup>

The Baron Bliss School of Nursing in Belize City would only accept single status females between 18 and 30 years, offering a choice of training as a Hospital Nurse and a Rural Health Nurse, both leading to a certificate of general nursing and Midwifery, four years for the Hospital Nurse and four years and three months for the Rural Nurse.<sup>49</sup> Subjects such as Home Economics reinforced these gender inequalities through the teacher and the subject matter. Fashion, needlework, and cookery were all taught exclusively to girls, additionally personal and family relationships were also considered as a correct topic for girls. Teachers were to encourage them to, 'Discuss and try to create the right attitude towards the wonder of life and the family'.<sup>50</sup> Noble sentiments, but indeed in 1976 these were not yet matter for boys to address within the curriculum.

In relation to this, inter-ethnic marriage often caused a crisis in Mestizo families but ostracism subsided after children were born,<sup>51</sup> revealing something of the superficiality of difference in the Belizean communities, especially in the Corozal and Orange Walk districts, which were the most traditional of Hispanic locales in Belize. Nevertheless it would appear that for the Mestizo some form of economic or social advantage was necessary to promote family acceptance of inter-ethnic marriage. Brockmann suggested, 'The Creole is of a higher status than any Mestizo partner the Mestizo could legitimately have expected to marry'.<sup>52</sup> For the Creole the advantage might be the expected lightening of their offspring's skin, as this was still a highly prized condition in Belize. Formerly this would have been achieved through Anglo-Creole marriage, but Mestizo-Creole marriage now served to strengthen the bond between African and Spanish communities. But, as Evan Hyde stated above, inter-ethnic marriage was prevalent throughout Belize. He goes on to say,

Almost every family is mixed and one of the reasons for this is that there have been all these migrations of our workers. There are so many cases of women who have children for more than one man, sometimes three-four different men. And what happens is you can have someone who looks Black who has a lotta Mestizo or Spanish, you have somebody who looks Spanish who has an African grandmother or stuff like that, -- we are very mixed in Belize, and it complicates matters.

Hyde is speaking here of Creole women, which points to the independence of this group. It appears that the enmeshing of ethnic groups, whatever the motive, required only some token justification to overcome a habit of difference. One Belizean recalled the raillery of his school days, 'We among the class would make fun of someone who was from another colour, or someone who was from England or America, or Black, respectively called "Black" or "white-man". [But] I wouldn't say from the teachers. Probably they would be influenced because of our community'.<sup>53</sup> Liz Balderamos, a Catholic, revealed how this inter-ethnic mingling extended to religion:

Sunday church was never very much a big issue. If you were Catholic and you wanted to go to church, you go to church. In those days you weren't forced to go to church. And very often I went to Anglican Church because a lot of my neighbours were Anglican. And it meant just going to church and just going to church and having fun with kids more my age group. And if there was a harvest I don't need to attend -<sup>54</sup>

An absence of any significant animosity or likelihood of physical conflict between these groups, suggests that the underlying Creolisation synthesis was well established and accepted.

Whilst ethnicity in Belize generally remained ordered in traditional groups such as Maya, Mestizo, Creole, Garifuna, the complex web of inter-ethnic loyalties rendered these as mere statistical categories and provided for a high level of harmony and disaffiliation from controlling elements such as church and state. This evidence reveals an identification with a single-ethnicity while maintaining an awareness of their ancestral complexity.

### **Group tolerance**

The survival of ethnic difference is evidence of the tolerance of group identity within a desire

for the one nation symbol. A sense of [Christian] community and the spread of national identity appeared to permeate all elements of Belizean society during this period. Dr Howes' addressed the following points in his recommendations for secondary education:

The end product of our secondary education should be first and foremost the Christian citizen, one whose spiritual, moral, mental and physical powers have been developed to create an all round developed personality. The young person should be capable of not only earning a living but of doing his work, as perfectly as possible, he should learn through the family and the school that he is a member of a community, and that his own personality is enriched in proportion to what he gives to the community.<sup>55</sup>

However, one group that had long sought assimilation with the Creoles yet just as vigorously endeavoured to maintain their identity was the Garifuna or Black Carib. The British dealt with the Garifuna differently because they had a history of not being able to subdue them from the troubles in St. Vincent, which is why they brought them over to Mosquito Shore. This facet is often singled out to represent ethnic difference in Belize. However, most interviewees minimised the effect in their observations. Eddison Trapp linked together the Garifuna as 'Black-peoples', 'Cos the Black people, they are Creole, they have Garifuna, they have East Indian. These are Black people's'.<sup>56</sup> Whereas, as pointed out in the previous chapter another Creole, Dana Clancy, told stories of her Mother and Grandmother using the Garifuna as 'bogeymen' in her childhood, her parents even ascribing cannibalism to the Garifuna nature.<sup>57</sup> Although this appeared to be a limited observation, Liz Balderamos was critical of the Garifuna's apparent haughtiness:

You can find a few black Creoles who are prejudiced, but it's very very-- that you'll find that sort of prejudice. If I walk into a room, I can outright point out a Garifuna who was educated. I can say he has been one of the educated ones. They walk around with like a kind, air-of-feeling that they are better than the others sort a thing. It's just weird that I can walk into a room and do that.<sup>58</sup>

It became apparent throughout the interviews that the Garifuna had been singled out by previous generations for ridicule or as a deterrent for bad behaviour, but that this remained insubstantial.

Denise Neal revealed insights when referring back to her schooldays, through her simple statement, 'I didn't find anything a problem --Those people to me are probably better than the Belize are the Garifuna. They have nice place. They are very nice'.<sup>59</sup> Her reference to 'the Belize', meaning the Belizeans, possibly reveals her underlying belief that the Garifuna were a separate society and that Belize and Creole were synonymous. Nick Sanchez's comments were more revealing when asked if in schools they were thought of as ethnic groups or as Belizeans:

No, it wasn't too much ethnic. You could say it wasn't a factor. It could have been in some of the Anglican or the Methodist schools in the South, where you had the Garifuna people. You see. They were a mixture of African and Amerindian. They speak a different language. They have a different little culture than the Creole, which is African and European. OK. I don't care if you have your own cultural or historical way of life, we'll accept you along with that, as long as you join. The Mexicans came with their 'Day of the Dead', and the Latin Americans who don't want to use that holiday October Two that is November Two. That's all right you can blend it in with us. You know, Church of England says, 'Oh no no no no no, you don't bring that stuff to us.'<sup>60</sup>

The key phrase here being, 'we'll accept you along with that, as long as you join'. In attitude at least, this parallels the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in the United States where waves of immigrants were absorbed *through* the existing Anglo-Saxon culture. In Belize new groups were expected to become Creolised, although this has already been shown to be of a more voluntary nature, where groups absorbed only that which they felt to be necessary to successful assimilation.

Byron Foster gathered much information for the maintenance of religious worship in the face of church opposition originating in the maroon communities of seventeenth-century St. Vincent, involving African and Amerindian survivals regarding ancestral worship and spirit possession.<sup>61</sup>

The Creolisation process helped to bind Belizean groups without being oppressive. From it, people have selected what they wanted. For instance the East Indians are now clearly Creole but retain many elements of Asian culture. The Belizeanisation process is just an extension of that but to accommodate the Hispanics. Alexis Rosado agreed: 'Yes, I think so. Somehow we have

managed. I don't see anybody, any group affecting peace and stability in the country. There are the Garifuna, the Creole, the Hispanics, the Mennonites and they all get on in Belize'.<sup>62</sup> Rosado acknowledged that the success of the Mennonite assimilation exposed the quality of a society that could accept difference:

Oh yes. I think that's an excellent example of us living together accepting their differences. And we will never be a homogeneous society, and people talk about an ethnic balance, well what is the balance. I think that as long as everybody lived in harmony there will be a balance. But in terms of numerical figures 30% Creoles, 40% Hispanics or however you take it, as long as they live in peace and harmony.<sup>63</sup>

The government felt it was important to emphasise that the school was for the pupils, 'The Principal should ward against the use of "I" or "my school". The watchwords should be, "we, our school, our problem, our success'. The Creole phrase of 'Dis da fu we school' [This is our school] was considered appropriate.<sup>64</sup> All of this oneness was part of the greater drive towards national unity. The Student's Union of British Honduras entertained no radical ideology as it fully involved itself in the march towards independence. The Student's Association handbook dated, 22 March 1973 opens with a patriotic hymn reminiscent of the imperial kind promoted under colonialism:

Love thee with my heart, head and hand  
Claim thee as my Nation, home and land  
Sing with thee in thy frolics and thy song  
Pray to God that ever we shall belong  
To a free united people.<sup>65</sup>

The similarities between this and a poem recited by Nick Sanchez during his post-war school days are worthy of comparison:

And I stood up. I went up to the top of the class that had a little platform raised about this high. I said, "Mr Forrest, Miss Silver", and I said this poem,

Children of the empire your fathers fought and died  
I see you standing over them with honour and with pride  
That you may do the things you will and strike with all your might

For country and for freedom's sake. A country King and right

Children of the empire [. . .] [. . .]  
And glory in your brotherhood again and yet again  
Uphold your noble heritage, never let it fail  
Love the land that bore you, but the empire best of all

Children of the empire Answer to the call  
Let your voices mingle. Lift your heads and sing  
God save Great Britain and God save Britain's King

Well Mr Forrest was just gone. And well I mean he was just -- [laughs] "Miss Silver, don't you think we should give them a holiday [laughs] today". So that it was Miss Silver saying, "Lock up the school, boys". So she went on. [laughs].<sup>66</sup>

It might be suggested that national unity and independence were radical shifts from colonialism, but it appears that the PUP government was attempting to harness elements of the old colonial devotion to the empire to an equally fawning reverence for Belizean nationalism at the expense of a critical appraisal. Henry Anderson, president of the students' association provided the following eulogy:

Perhaps all our Caribbean and Latin American peoples should listen to the message amplified by our success, for we are from a nation of many peoples who are now working as one, building from many thoughts one thought, building from many cultures one culture, building from many people one people, strong in unity, building our new nation.<sup>67</sup>

This kind of oratory would be expected from a government spokesperson, however, we might expect some critique from a leader of the student's union during the 1970s. Or, perhaps Anderson was simply advocating ideas that were well established in Belize long before the independence movement.

Rosado dismissed any evidence of group intolerance within Belize as little more than banter, 'I think it is something that comes from people who have been thinking a bit too much. People who want to look at nitty gritty details'. However, he supports this with reference to the style of banter within Belizean sub groups: 'two Creoles are talking,-- they will use demeaning

language to disparage others in the groups. And the same thing when the Spaniards are together they use same thing against the other groups. But in general I think there is, it's not a serious matter'. Regarding the prevalence of intergroup harmony in schools Rosado alluded to a different process within Belize City. Rosado attended the rural Catholic primary of Mary Hill in the Corozal District and Secondary Sacred Heart High in San Ignacio, Cayo District. He then moved to Belize City where he attended St. John's College: 'As children you don't know the difference. I didn't know the difference. I didn't know the difference till I went to Sixth Form in Belize City. That's when I was exposed to, "Oh there is a difference". I didn't know'. It is significant that inter group rivalries would be prevalent in the more politically charged environment of St. John's and Belize City itself. However, Rosado was no less dismissive of this, 'You learn to fit in and after, it doesn't take long to realise that its just pure talk'.<sup>68</sup>

Even in the heartland of Creole culture, Belize City, tolerance of other groups was highly prized, particularly in language. Sanchez claimed that Belize endured a, 'superimposed foreign culture and an adopted lingua-franca'.<sup>69</sup> However, the nuances of social prestige have been investigated among 'city Creole' speakers and it was found that speaking Creole in the presence of non-Creole speakers could incur at least temporary ostracism from the offender's own group. This was not due to any inferior feelings regarding the vernacular, as was the case with Jamaican patois, but from respect for different language structures and particularly the social skills and status granted the speaker.<sup>70</sup> It is interesting to note that Liz Balderamos, a Creole speaker, applauded the way she was taught Spanish: 'He pretty much was a Garifuna guy. And er one thing I must say we are still friends today. He was one of my favourite teachers. He taught me Spanish like I never learn Spanish before. I took three years of Spanish. I got the knack of it'.<sup>71</sup>

Whereas, another interviewee, a Catholic Mestizo, was concerned at the manner, in which Spanish was often prioritised over English at his school in Benque Viejo del Carmen:

Even though one of the practices that I noticed in school that was the teacher would explain to students in Spanish when we live in an English-speaking country and where English is our main language. Teachers had a tendency of teaching in Spanish, because they found that the student would not understand in English. But to me you should teach your student in English. If you tell him in Spanish, tell him in English also. But there was that tendency that Spanish, because "Oh! He's too young. He will not understand". So that was the only negative that I saw --.<sup>72</sup>

The Belize Times of March 19th, 1966, noted the arrival of the linguist Robert Le Page, to discuss problems in the study of English in Belize.<sup>73</sup> However, during his tour of the country Le Page commented, ' that in Benque Viejo del Carmen the teachers were doing an extraordinary job in teaching English to pupils whose first tongue was Spanish'.<sup>74</sup> Whatever the individual feelings expressed it appears that social interaction along linguistic lines was quite advanced and civilised.

Denise Neal bears out the above comments that Spanish language training was not as prevalent in Belize City: 'That's why most of the people in Belize [City] doesn't speak Spanish because there were no Spanish teacher or anything like that. Believe that a couple learn Spanish because mostly in the High School'.<sup>75</sup> A report on the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in primary schools stated that teachers were not always from that community, 'i.e. not Spanish'.<sup>76</sup> A further report paper on 'Language and Educational Development in Belize' compiled in 1973 revealed a high percentage of exam failures in English.<sup>77</sup> Here, the report did not concentrate on Spanish speaking Belizeans but on Creoles who already possessed English language skills but preferred to speak the Creole dialect. The paper maintained that it was,

Possible to listen for hours to the play conversations of groups of primary school children without once hearing the standard form is, are, you, were, has, had or the s inflexion. This is the case even where children in the group have parents who are teachers, high ranking public officers, or professionals like lawyers and engineers.<sup>78</sup>

Optimistically it was reasoned, 'The Creole child can acquire "good English" by ad-hoc creations - as he passes through the primary school system'. However, when parents were asked to teach standard English at home the reply was, 'no it is too difficult'.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, the teaching of language arts in the primary school was advocated through all lessons. It was deemed necessary to 'aid personal growth' and as a means towards the 'development of human understanding', continuing the theme of expediency in using all educational means for the development of national cohesion.<sup>80</sup> To emphasise this, even a subject such as music was taken beyond its established therapeutic value into the realms of community

Education must have as major goals the art of living the building of personal identity and nurturing creativity. -- Education must consider a society plagued by changing values, hostility between generations, racial and international tensions and the challenge of leisure time. We must have a school system where the study of music is an integral part of education. The schoolboy interested in music and the Arts rarely finds himself in Juvenile Court.<sup>81</sup>

Education had, by independence, become a firm part of the national flag-waving banner

Involve yourselves in community organisations and community projects which are trying to improve your community -- We go forward, not backward, we have the vision of a new day, not live in dreams of the old days.<sup>82</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter has been to establish how the period 1964 - 1981 contributed to the general contention of this thesis that notwithstanding a well-established rhetoric of difference a cohesive society was created in Belize nurtured in the cultural values propagated through an often contradictory church-state education complex. The elements of this thesis here and evident throughout Part Three reveal a concern of the Belizean (PUP) Government to produce a nationalistic state of mind. However, it has been argued that national consciousness had already taken place, rendering the Government's Belizeanisation superfluous. Through the accumulated

evidence it may, circumstantially, be interpreted that the PUP were aware that neither they nor any other establishment body had not predominantly shaped the evolution of multi-cultural cohesion. In this, a process of nationalism defined by them and aided by the church may have been an attempt to gain some control of the national psyche, for political or economic purposes.

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## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The ending of slavery made way for a wage labour system that required a workforce educated to an elementary standard. The forestocracy of Belize had no intentions of diverting economic resources into the provision of schools. In turn the colonial government remained supportive of British business interests and refrained from investment in education. These imperial phenomena of neglect in education allowed the missionary zeal of the various church denominations to propagate in British Honduras. The Anglican Church appeared as a part of the state mechanism and concentrated its efforts in Belize Town, whereas the Methodists and Baptists developed missions to the rural areas. The first key to substantial change arrived with the Jesuits in 1851. Unlike the Roman Catholic presence in other parts of the British Caribbean and the wider British Empire, the Jesuits of British Honduras, after a brief connection with the English province, became organised from the American Midwestern states of Missouri and Mississippi. Such geographical independence brought a considerable amount of financial autonomy to the Roman Catholics, one that would provide for the gradual ascendancy of the Jesuits in British Honduras.

Economically and socially British Honduras was constructed along the lines of the plantation/ latifundia societies of the British Caribbean. Among the sugar plantations of the West Indies these patrons have been termed as the plantocracy. In Belize sociologists have referred to the patrons as, the 'forestocracy'.

The noted African American scholar WEB DuBois commented on the post emancipation period in the United States, 'The slave went free; stood for a brief moment in the sun, then moved back toward slavery'.<sup>1</sup> This could equally be applied to the former slaves of British Honduras after the demise of slavery in 1838. Therefore, the churches as in other colonial

societies became the principal source of welfare for most of the country's inhabitants.

A clear dichotomy of denominational interest developed in these years between Catholic and Protestant one founded on American anti-imperialist feeling and another British, within the Colonial establishment. The Jesuits became aware that their means, and eventually their superior numbers, were greater than their political impact, whilst the Protestants were conversely sensible of their political ascendancy through their Colonial attachments. Therefore, the Roman Catholic echelon retained a greater capacity for independence from Colonial control than might be found in other British Caribbean colonies, including former French possessions annexed by the British such as St. Lucia. Both denominations were keen to gain a following in the rural areas and small towns of British Honduras, but both saw the necessity of developing, and maintaining, a pre-eminence within Belize Town as a foundation for their endeavours.

The hegemony of Belize Town, and the Creolisation process were intertwined. The diffusion of Creole culture throughout British Honduras further augmented the primacy of the capital just as that same supremacy gave emphasis to the (supposed) virtuosity of Creole culture. Evidence supports Robinson's view that Belizeanisation was not some new phenomenon but a new cloak for an older process of Creolisation with an accommodation for a Hispanic/Mayan culture already heavily Creolised.<sup>2</sup> However, I have extended Robinson's argument throughout this thesis to include the position that Creolisation aided a process of gradual American influence, via the Jesuits. This was effective in neutralising Colonial power within education and the broader Belizean society while Creolisation, disseminated largely through church activity in education, facilitated the later nationalist efforts of Belizeanisation.

The role of the denominations, the ascendancy of Belize Town in the education system, and the Creolisation process discussed in the Introduction to this thesis all developed and synthesised during the period 1838 - 1931 and all were fundamental to the nature of education after 1931. British Honduras altered little respecting its social services until 1931 when the disastrous hurricane destroyed nine-tenths of the building stock of Belize Town. Part One pointed to the influences of divers' events in British Honduras that influenced the establishment of a modern education policy and practice. The worldwide economic slump clearly influenced the aspirations of the people for social change. But it was the fiasco of the post hurricane attempts at relief that revealed plainly the shortcomings of bureaucratic imperialism, too inflexible to provide an appropriate response with any urgency. Evidence from pre and post hurricane periods revealed similar pretexts for doing nothing, usually financial. The use of reports and speeches concerning the problems of teacher training, secular and denominational education, education for employment (with minimal follow up activity) was perceived as a useful sop to those demanding change in British Honduras, thus providing a chimera of progress in education. Furthermore, the 1934 *Easter Report* was prompted not by a straightforward desire to improve education but by a cut in grants. Real activity towards reform only gathered a pace after the *Easter Report* and coincided with the activities of Antonio Soberanis and the LUA.

Progress therefore, had to be made by clarifying existing practices within the current budget. However, such stimuli for government reform derived from a desire to promote secular education without alleviating the churches of any of their fiscal burdens. These phenomena are clearly found throughout the British Caribbean, but British Honduras displayed its singularity through the Government's almost total dependency upon the denominations for

the provision of education. Governor Burns applied the difficulties and potential solutions recognized by Easter and the later Dixon Reports. However, Burns was concerned to provide a modicum of reform in order to undermine labour agitation. These were shown not only as a Caribbean wide set of solutions, but as inconsistent with the particular system of denominational education existing in the Colony. Colonial Office archives betrayed a certain amount of conflict between church and state over the nature of these reforms, demonstrating how the church was able to render many of them ineffective.

British Honduran villages operated with two distinctive denominational schools where one should have been adequate. This duplicate system was shown as a significant point of conflict between church and state. Whilst the state, aided by the *Easter* and *Dixon Reports*, was highly critical of church doctrine, it is revealed that the state authorities wished to replace one doctrine with their own, educating for the workplace. The churches saw this as a direct threat to their supremacy in education and viewed secular education as limited in its benefits, bereft of moral guidance. It is suspicion of motive on either side that was the principal source of conflict.

By 1939 education in British Honduras was becoming more efficient and taking shape as a modern system. Teacher training and classroom supervision were established. Pensions were offered to older teachers to encourage them to retire rather than remain over long in post. The concept, if not the reality, of industrial education had become acceptable. However, the churches had not relinquished any jurisdiction over their schools to the government. It was not simply the century long period of the state's 'salutary neglect' that had strengthened the church control of schools. The British Government, itself beleaguered by economic depression, lacked the will to provide ample finances to build modern state schools, and transfer adequately

qualified teachers from overseas locations. Instead, the British and Colonial Governments chose to interfere with the system and provide fragmentary investment. In this respect, the church was not only able to maintain administrative control in schools and the education board but to dictate the level of reform to suit its own objectives. The war effort and post-war austerity in Britain had ruled out any change to this policy, and by the 1950s a powerful independence movement grew from the St. John's College Alumni that kept in check British Government authority in the colony's home affairs.

British Honduras was fortunate to be outside the main stream of metropolitan intrusion in its affairs, thus aiding the cultivation of its own agenda. Although the existence of an impasse in interdenominational conflict during the 1930s and 40s controlled this agenda, providing for a culture of a micro indigenous development. In addition to maintaining a comparative autonomy from government interference, neither side of the church dichotomy could acquire mastery, therefore ordinary people, by way of social interaction, developed a strong ethical code that flourished separately from dogma and ritual. When added to the growth of cross-ethnic religious and cultural development in British Honduras this inhibited the furtherance of the power factions that tend to cause social and political discord, as has been witnessed in such as Jamaica and Guyana.

Research into this period continued to reveal that the Roman Catholic church, because of its financial and cultural independence from Britain, was able to maintain a powerful hold on its broad ethnic base throughout the rural community. Yet, however much this gave the Catholics influence in the country they were kept from direct political leverage, unlike the less funded and diverse Protestant denominations. Therefore, collectively the church was powerful enough to withstand sporadic reforms from the government, but wanted the unity to command

total allegiance from the community at large. Due to cross ethnic support church leaders were unable to exploit an ethno-political following. Similarly the Colonial Government was unable to wrest public loyalty from the church. Therefore powerful factions existed in British Honduras that could influence single issues, with no single group being dominant. This provided a climate of cultural self-development among the populace. The processes of educational reform examined within Part One assist in revealing the limitations of the various controlling elements in British Honduran life.

As the country moved towards independence and the growth of homogeneous political activity the old equilibriums between and within state and church remained intact. Educators were concerned that an immoderate emphasis on a system dependent on report cards and exam results was the epitome of philistinism and anti civilisation and not the imaginative unbinding of the human spirit through education. Bolland couched the belief that education in British Honduras was in danger of teaching creeds and values rather than national homogeneity. But, in fact, as I have shown, there was room for both. National unity can emanate from a solid teaching of beliefs and values as education enhances the calibre of thinking in the individual.

British Honduran schools during the 1950s and up to 'Home-Rule' in 1964 appeared to accommodate these customs of moral and spiritual learning, yet because of their religious disposition were endured as an objectionable presence by the British and Colonial governments. It is difficult to imagine British nonecclesiastical schools with their confined budgets and thoroughly vocational aspirations being able to provide a similar level of personalized advancement for the individual, or to benefit the peaceable cohesion that characterised British Honduras.

Plans for nation building in the Caribbean were based on the presumption that the Commonwealth Caribbean would move towards political unity, but the West Indies' Federation disintegrated in 1962. During the 1950s the Jesuits had exercised a substantial influence over education in British Honduras, which also carried political ramifications. They were more interested in expanding the Central American connection, where the Jesuits could expand into an area that was predominantly Roman Catholic, encouraging a Hispanic/Catholic in-migration, and affecting a shift from Creole centred culture. At the highest level the Catholic church remained constant to its Christian value driven objectives, and the Jesuit Provinces were positive towards Pope Pius XI's encyclical on the 'Christian Education of Faith', reiterated by Pope John XXIII.

A high level of cultural tolerance existed among the communities in British Honduras. However, at the institutional level conflict remained a constant feature. The dichotomy in educational philosophy did not simply range between educationalists. In British Honduras the debate settled upon church and state, however the church had long held its position as a purveyor of values, whereas the state, in keeping with much of western education, had begun to align itself consistently with the workplace and vocational schooling. These respective philosophies appeared irreconcilable and while both parties wished to provide a good standard of education each had very different views as to the means for its achievement. Yet, as the 1950s drew to a close so the will and influence of the Colonial Government began to wane. The Belizean politicians were gradually becoming the dominant force in education. In consequence of these shifts in power, the Roman Catholic Church expanded its authority, whilst simultaneously the Protestant church found it increasingly difficult to command its old prerogatives. Rogers agreed but, continuing the British line of appeasement towards the

Catholic authorities, claimed that the cultural background was more significant than any other suggestion of deliberate intent. In reality, Jesuit influence was cemented by political affiliations with the PUP, and how they were in a strong position to ignore the British and Protestant factions. As this period drew to a close and 'home-rule' became ever more likely the British continued to reveal their reluctance to interfere in education matters beyond Colonial Development and Welfare plans for school buildings, and even here they were reluctant to make these conditional. George Price and the PUP were using education, particularly history, to attack colonialism. The recognition of Jesuit power highlighted a considerable withdrawal from the policies of the 1930s and 40s and attempts to impose a national secular authority in education. However, this new British apathy represented a disinclination to exercise imperial authority in an anti colonial world. The Jesuits for their part were building a partnership with the rising People's United Party, one that would ensure their future hegemony over the Protestants in British Honduras.

In 1958 Mr. Rogers reiterated the old problem that the American missions differ. Yet, in their defence Rogers claimed that the cultural background was more significant than any other suggestion of deliberate intent, continuing the British line of appeasement towards the Catholic authorities. Whereas Methodist school's manager, Harold Godfrey believed that the Jesuit College was only an extension of the Jesuit system in the States, offering American associate degrees rather than 'A' levels.

The application of education provision at the grass-roots level within individual schools revealed the difficulties of actually getting children to school as highlighted within the inherent financial constraints. The reports used, embodied the continuing policy of Colonial Government reluctant to become enmeshed in continual financial commitment other than the

grant-in-aid, a policy that clearly weakened their influence with the rural population. In turn, evidence reveals that British Honduran education was considerably self-reliant if the local church contribution is entered into this evaluation. These trends strengthened nationalist ideals at the individual level, by encouraging greater local involvement in their own affairs, rather than as recipients of government provision.

The priorities of the 1950s and early 1960s were, the means of survival to study, building schools, getting to school, and remaining healthy enough to take advantage of an education - not academic reform. Despite a general desire for Belizean centred studies, continuing foreign dominance at the level of instruction and school governance, as well as from the colonial authorities, retarded its implementation. Fortunately this conflicting set of ruling groups prevented each other from retaining hegemony in the general education of Belizean children. In this, 1949 to 1964 was a period of imprecise activity and attitudes. This was less difficult to ascertain for the previous period, 1931-1949 where the separate strands of Americanisation, multi culture, the role of the church, and urban hegemony are much more distinct. In the following period of 1964-1981, after self-rule, these themes became a part of the official political agenda and embroiled in everyday life.

The disruption to the old equilibriums in state and church power showed how this new balance of power had arrived too late to undermine the level of harmonious multi-cultural cohesion prevalent in Belize, restricting any ethnic, religious or political group exploitation. Grant accused the government of 'soft pedalling' Belizean Studies in secondary schools.<sup>3</sup> The church-state system and foreign influence were a restraint on the implementation of government policy on Belizean Studies. Again, the denominations dreaded secularisation, occurring this time by means of a government emphasis on nationhood. The state continued in

its quandary of sustaining a relationship with the church and evolving an up-to-date national education strategy, while state educators remained critical of the current system.

The Education Department produced a report on the British Honduras primary school curriculum that claimed that educational values were changing. The principal criticism was for 'parrot fashion' learning. The charge that the churches were an obstacle to consolidated progress had some credence historically, yet it is also correct to say that much of this was being rectified throughout the 1970s. Father General Pedro Arupes sent an open letter to the society, requiring cross-cultural receptiveness in Jesuits; however, Fr. Arupes likewise remained constant to the proselytizing crusade of the Jesuits. During 1970, the powerful St. John's College undertook to share control with the local laity, and the Anglo-Creole Signa L. Yorke became its first woman Dean. Garifuna and Mayans were gaining places at the institution. The Jesuits adjusted to a process of Belizeanisation and cohesiveness in a multiracial society as they had throughout the British Empire.<sup>4</sup> By 1977, only four years before independence, governance of St. John's College was opened up to the laity, and where the prominent educational institution in Belize began others soon followed. At this point the church furnished enough reform to satisfy the government demands for a modern system without relinquishing control of its own schools.

Urbanisation was seen by Grant as a fresh threat to church hegemony, but due to the immigration of agricultural workers and the exiting of large numbers of urban Creoles Belize retained an even balance between rural and urban populations. These trends intensified after independence threatening church power at the individual level, whilst during the 1970s and beyond, church hegemony at the institutional level continued to grow in strength.

Meanwhile, a superior threat to the basis of church authority was the increase in University education with, the tradition of higher learning loosening individual adherence to religion, and the influences conveyed to Belize by returning graduates. This strengthens the argument that when individuals were liberated from local peer and family pressures, the superficiality of their religious beliefs was exposed. Ordinary people (as with the government) may have aligned with the church for the school and other welfare benefits it could provide, rather than for devotional reasons. Nonetheless, it is the steady proximity of the majority of the population with a strong moral education that has produced, in concert with Creolisation, an important ingredient in multi-cultural cohesiveness. Returning migrants were plainly one example of foreign influence in Belize. Most writers refer to these influences as injurious to the Belizeanisation process. American influence permeated all aspects of Belizean education policy. Rutheiser suggested that schooling, as the prime setting for the proliferation of a society's basic values and knowledge, was an especially important area in which to consider the scope of the change from British to American (US) cultural supremacy.<sup>5</sup> I disagree that the cultural supremacy of America is evidenced by education in Belize. Throughout this thesis I have revealed American influence whilst evaluating its limits. It is most developed in Jesuit schools. Yet the Jesuits confine their influence to religious life and by the nature of their missionary style limit the encroachment of secular America. Protestant schools maintained their links with British education. Any use of Peace Corps volunteers is limited to their individual input as teachers within an overarching system, one that might have moved on from Colonialism but retained English aspects. These considerations do not to deny American influence but express the nature of its limitations.

The rise in Jesuit political power had begun to aggravate tensions and conflict though

propitiously, this did not begin to take place until after self-rule and after much of the multi-cultural consolidation had been established. If this kind of imbalance had existed during the earlier period, the course of Creolisation may have been impeded and political groups, as in Guyana, where ideological coalitions around ethnicity had created a crucial social fissure, could have manipulated ethnic tensions. Fortunately much of the conflict in Belize lay at the higher structural levels. In these circumstances Belizean Studies programmes made sluggish progress until after independence. It is at the individual tier of society that the oral history testimony facilitates a grasp of how conspicuously the Creolisation process had already directed Belizean society in a non conflictive sense toward Belizean nationalism up to self-rule, and before any political ascendancy was achieved.

Some of the nonecclesiastical influences from America facilitated the Jesuits' move from British/Creole dominance. By 1981, at the transfer to independence, newspapers reported an expansion in outside organisations active within Belize, such as CARE-REAP whose chief objectives were to concentrate agrarian-life studies into the curriculum of primary schools and the Belize Technical College Directed by the USAID Economic Cooperation Programme, six primary schools had also been built. Students received assistance to get their projects started by the Heifer Project international, a philanthropic organisation located in the United States of America. A Belize City student was among the alumnae from Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisburg Virginia, a four-year, accredited Liberal Arts College of more than one thousand students. Definitely, the pace of involvement with the United States education system was gathering by the point of independence, sustaining the Jesuit position as an American oriented institution within the political sphere. Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic Church remained a prosperous organisation in its own right. The participation of the

American Peace Corps represented an American agenda in Belizean education. In fact, Peace Corps Volunteers have the longest working alliance with the Education Department.

As the absolute colonial era drew to a close, church leaders were defining Belize as an exceedingly personal society in contrast to the highly dispassionate American Society. The cry was for a country where Caribs and Creoles, Mayas and Mestizos saw one another as Belizeans primarily, and only secondary as ethnic entities, not with political partiality but, 'Belize first, then Belize, then Belize again'.<sup>6</sup> This was an entreaty to conserve the old customs in the face of a secular incursion and the heightening influence of individualism.

The level of pacific multi-cultural cohesion established before 1949 remained successful in Belize in spite of major changes firstly to the political arena and finally to the ascendancy of the Roman Catholic church. Developments between 1964 and 1981 confirm the general assertion of this thesis that notwithstanding a well-ensconced rhetoric of difference a cohesive community was constructed in Belize rooted in the cultural values propagated through an often-contradictory church-state education system. The elements of this thesis evident throughout Part Three reveal a concern of the Belizean (PUP) Government to produce a nationalistic state of mind. However, national consciousness had already taken place, rendering the Government's Belizeanisation superfluous. The PUP was aware that a multi-cultural cohesion had slowly evolved that had not been predominantly shaped by them or any other establishment body. In this, a process of nationalism defined by them and aided by the church may have been an attempt to gain some control of the national consciousness, for political or economic purposes.

Clearly a social dialectic has existed to promote a synthesised, cohesive society, due to the

innate contradictions and conflict within the Belizean hierarchies, one developed with minimal interference from above. So, in Belize there has been a ubiquitous rhetoric of difference lacking any genuinely conflictive substance. Lundgren rightly commented: 'And the people of Belize are forgiving and tolerant and patient. They have not done what Gandhi warned us against, they have not taken on the violence of their oppressors'.<sup>7</sup> Of course, as Lundgren asserts, 'inequalities are rife, powerful outsiders', still control Belizean lives. There exists an 'ideology of fairness and equality in the face of gross unfairness.'<sup>8</sup> The findings throughout this thesis have challenged the belief that multi-cultural cohesion within Belizean society has progressed by design from the controlling interests within the church and state. Pacific cohesion has developed due to a set of nullifying circumstances. Clearly debate will continue as to the harmonious state of Belize and opposing views exist even in distinctly dichotomised nations such as Guyana. R.T. Smith maintains that cultural differences in Guyana between Africans and East Indians are residual with both acculturated to Creole norms. Leo Despres says they are separate and different communities with, 'no social structures, which serve to bring them together, no common system of cultural values allowing socio-cultural integration'.<sup>9</sup> Belizeans need to be alert and working constantly against inequality and oppression. However it is this very idea of fairness and equality, promoted by constant exposure to, what was an ecumenically powerful church system prior to 1964, that developed a society free from the organised violence of an ethno-political nature prevalent in Central and South America or the race hatred that exists in North America. Roman Catholic dominance of Belizean education came too late to disrupt or exploit the grass-roots forces of cultural integration. Racial contention in Belize is more a matter of habitual rhetoric and insubstantial, except for those who believe the rhetoric.

### **Postscript-1981**

In 1993 the Belizean government appointed a National Culture Policy Council NCPC to discover what Belizean culture was and how it should be advanced among the general population. Their findings derived from Bolland's categories:

1. The hegemonic mode - dominant ethnic groups.
2. The synthetic mode - the melting pot
3. The pluralistic mode - an all-embracing hyphenated form i.e. Belize-Creole, Belize-Maya, Belize-Mestizo.

The NCPC adamantly embraced the latter, but this should not be seen as a matter of choice but a matter of fact and a path long since trodden by the ordinary Belizean populace.

Belizean education continued to say one thing and do another. From her research in Punta Gorda schools Sarah Woodbury Haug claimed that, "The hiring of teachers in all schools tends to be based upon the personal knowledge of the individual by the principal".<sup>10</sup> Thus providing a continuum of evidence of Belizean society developing at a personal level in contrast to government requirements, and extending the church ethos of only accepting those reforms found to be acceptable, as discussed in Chapter Three.

Although the Jesuit influence remained robust in the post independence era, it began to weaken from three major standpoints. Religion itself was giving way to the secular society expressed through the recently introduced 24-hour-a-day American television, providing a secular view of prosperity and resultant disenchantment, in contrast with the more austere denominational Belize. Secondly, the modern Society of Jesus suffered from a dearth of recruitment. Emory King had commented that many Catholics no longer wished to live the celibate life.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the Society began to rely more than ever on lay professionals with the consequential diluting of the Jesuit fathers' zealous approach. Finally once independence

had been achieved, the PUP lost its unifying veneer as the anti colonial party, and was left to contest for power over the issues of the day rather than its former single-issue independence stance. After dominating the political spectrum for thirty years the PUP lost the first election after independence. Since then the PUP have shared power alternately with the United Democratic Party (UDP). Although, the Jesuits remain singly the most powerful church in Belize, the demise of consistent PUP power has lessened their hold on government. Thus, the firmly entrenched micro development of culture remains unaffected by shifts in the balance of power in Belize.

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## Appendix One – Chronology of events

### Slavery in Belize

- 1720s -First record of African slaves in Belize.
- 1754 -Spanish drive out Baymen who return within a year.
- 1763 -Treaty of Paris: Spain permitted British settlers to cut logwood; no boundaries defined.
- 1765 -Admiral Burnaby codified Settlement's Regulations, known as "Burnaby's Code".  
Public meetings passed resolutions boundaries of logwood works.
- 1765/68/73 -Slaves revolt.
- 1779 -Spanish forces capture Belize and take Baymen and slaves to Yucatan. Slaves freed after declaring loyalty to Spain. Baymen sent to Cuba.
- 1783 -Treaty of Versailles: Spain recognizes British rights to cut logwood in Belize between the Hondo and Belize rivers.
- 1784 -Settlers return to Belize; Despard appointed 1st Superintendent of the settlement.
- 1786 -Convention of London expands British rights in Belize to the River Sibun and permits mahogany cutting.
- 1787 - 1<sup>st</sup> hurricane on record
- 1787 -British evacuate Mosquito Shore and 2,214 "Shoremen" and their slaves came to Belize. Public meeting determined qualifications for owning mahogany works.
- 1788 -Maya attacked mahogany works on New River.
- 1798 -Battle of St. George's Caye
- 1802 -150 Garifuna already settled at Stann Creek.
- 1807 -Abolition of slave trade.
- 1807 -Public meeting directs the Magistrates to open a school for ten poor children.
- 1813 -Hurricane
- 1816 -1<sup>st</sup> free elementary school opened, for 12 poor children Honduras Fee School was founded by the Church of England.
- 1817 -Superintendent takes away power of settlers to issue lands; large body of runaway slaves reported in the interior.
- 1820 -Slave revolt.
- 1821 -Mexican and Central American independence.
- 1827 - Hurricane
- 1831 - Hurricane
- 1831 -Act passed to give equal rights to "coloured subjects" as to whites.
- 1832 -Large number of Garifuna arrive in Belize. Garifuna Settlement Day.

### Post slavery period.

#### Introduction to thesis

- 1834/38 -Slavery abolished. Apprenticeship system for four years.
- 1838 - Full abolition. Land ordered to be sold and no longer issued free.
- 1847 -Thousands of refugees flee the War of the Castes in Yucatan, into Belize.
- 1851. Jesuit missions arrive.

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- 1856 -North side of Belize City destroyed by fire.
  - 1859 -British- Guatemala Treaty over Belize. British Honduras Company (later B.E.C.) formed.
  - 1862 -Belize becomes the colony of British Honduras.
  - 1864 - Hurricane
  - 1865 - Labourers brought from West Indies and China, especially for work on sugar estates of BH Co.
  - 1866 - British troops routed by Maya in Yalbac Hills.
  - 1867 - British Troops destroy Maya villages and crops in Yalbac.
  - 1871 - Belize declared Crown Colony after Assembly dissolved itself in 1870. Three of four unofficial members in new Legislative Council represent landed interests.
  - 1893 - Hurricane
  - 1894 - Jesuits are no longer of the English Province. They are of the Missouri Province.
  - 1894 - Constables mutiny. Belizean workers riot for better pay.
  - 1902 - Hurricane
  - 1906 - Belize City gets electricity.
  - 1914 - World War I - Many Belizean volunteers served.
  - 1915 - Compulsory schooling becomes law.
  - 1915 - Hurricane
  - 1916 - Hurricane
  - 1918 - Hurricane
  - 1919 - Belizean troops riot upon return home.
  - 1920 - Hurricane
  - 1922 - Marcus Garvey visits Belize.
  - 1922/5 - Phelps-Stokes Fund - to survey the position of native education in Africa. Many findings adopted by colonial office.
  - 1923 - Advisory Committee on National Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies.
  - 1929 - Great Depression begins.

#### The Post-hurricane period

##### **Part One The beginnings of a modern education system.**

- 1931 September 10th-Great Hurricane - over 2,000 dead.
- 1933 - Guatemala re-asserts claim to Belize.
- 1934 - Hurricane
- 1934 - Antonio Soberanis leads workers protests.
- 1934 - The Easter Report on education
- 1935 - The West India Royal Commission
- 1936 - The Dixon Report on education
- 1939 - World War II.
- 1940 - Colonial Development and Welfare Act - spreads the West India Commission findings throughout the empire.
- 1940: Anglo American Caribbean Commission
- 1942 - Hurricane
- 1944 - Report on Mass Education in African Society. Sets the terms for the entire post

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war education policy.

1945 - Hurricane. World War II ends.

**Part Two: A period of rhetorical development.**

1949 - BH dollar devalued.

1950 - Founding of the PUP

1952 - National strike led by General Workers Union.

1954 - Vote for all adults.

1955 - Hurricane Janet

1960 - Hurricane Abby

1961 - Hurricane Anna

1961 - October 1<sup>st</sup> Hurricane Hattie. Belize City devastated.

**PART III: Shifts in the balance of power**

1964 - Self Government.

1968 - The "Webster Proposals": presented by USA media for Anglo-Guatemalan dispute, rejected by government and people.

1971 - Belize joins CARIFTA. Belmopan becomes capital of Belize.

1973 - Country's name legally changed to "Belize".

1975 - First pro- Belize resolution passed by General Assembly of United Nations.

1976 - Belize given "special status" in Non-Aligned Movement.

1981 - September 21st-Independence Belize joins Commonwealth, United Nations and Non- Aligned Movement.

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## Appendix Two

**List of Governors from 1884 - 1981** (prior to 1884 British Honduras was governed from Jamaica)

1884 Sir R. T. Goldsworthy, KCMG	1934 Sir Alan Burns, GCMG
1891 Sir C. A. Moloney, KCMG	1940 Sir John Adams Hunter, KCMG
1897 Colonel Sir David Wilson, KCMG	1947 Sir E. G. Hawkesworth, KCMG, MC
1904 Sir Bickham Sweet-Escott, KCMG	1948 Sir Ronald Garvey, KCMG, MBE
1906 Colonel Sir E.J.E.Swayne, KCMG, CB	1952 Sir Patrick Renison, KCMG
1913 Sir Wilfred Collet, KCMG	1955 Sir Colin Thornley, KCMG, CVO
1918 W. Hart Bennett, CMG	1961 Sir Peter Stallard, KCMG, CVO, MBE
1919 Sir Eyre Hutson, KCMG	1966 Sir John Paul, GCMG, OBE, MC
1925 Major Sir J. A. Burdon, KBE, CMG	1972 Mr R. N. Posnett, OBE
1932 Sir H. B. Kittermaster, KCMG, KBE	1976 Mr P. D. McEntee, CMG, OBE .

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## **Appendix Three**

### **Article accepted for publication**

Peter Hitchen, 'State and Church in British Honduran Education, 1931-1939: A British Colonial Perspective,' *History Of Education*, (2000) Vol. 29, No 3, pp.195 - 211.

### **Article submitted for publication**

Peter Hitchen, 'The American Jesuit Influence on British Honduran Education, 1949-1964: a British Colonial Perspective',

### **Book accepted for publication**

*Education and Multi-Cultural Cohesion in Belize, 1931 – 1981*, accepted by Cubola Productions of Belize.

### **Chapter accepted for publication**

*Education and Multi-Cultural Cohesion in Belize, 1931 – 1981*, (ca 30 page summary for inclusion in a university text book). Requested by Cubola Productions of Belize.

### **Conference paper**

History of Education Society - Annual Conference 11-13 December 1998 - Swansea Marriott, *A British Colonial Perspective on Education and Society: The Case of British Honduras, 1931-1939*'.

The Society for Caribbean Studies – One-day conference Land and Identity in the Caribbean

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22 March 2003 – University of the West of England (Bristol).

*Education, National Identity and the Function of Road Building in British Honduras, 1931 – 1949*.

### **Conference paper submitted**

The Society for Caribbean Studies – 27<sup>th</sup> Annual conference, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2003

Paper submitted for consideration, *'Education and Multi-Cultural Cohesion in Belize, 1931-1981: Overall Conclusions'*.

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## Appendix Four

### Oral History Biographies:

#### Interviewees:

1. Alexis Rosado\*
2. Anonymous.
3. Nick Sanchez
4. Harold Godfrey
5. Emory King
6. Eddison Trapp
7. Liz Balderamos
8. Evan X. Hyde
9. Denise Neal
10. Shereth Cattouse

**Oral historian:** Peter Hitchen July - September 1999, Belize City and Belmopan, Belize, Central America. \*Except 1, 5 December 1996, Belize High Commission, London England.

#### 1. Alexis Rosado

Date: 5 December 1996

Venue : Belize High Commission, London England.

Family name: Rosado First name: Alexis

Date of Birth: 22.08.70

Current Address: London

Place of Birth: Cayo

Occupation: Diplomat

Religious denomination: Roman Catholic

Ethnic origin: Mestizo

Primary school: Mary Hill RC, Corozal

Secondary school: Sacred Heart High RC, San Ignacio

Tertiary college: St John's College RC, Belize City

Wife's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Catholic/Mestizo

Father's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Catholic/Mestizo

Mother's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Catholic/Mestizo

Anonymity required: No

#### 2. Anonymous.

Date: 23 August 1999

Venue: Belize Archives Belmopan, Belize, Central America

This interviewee requested anonymity. All information is held by the author of this work.

Denomination: Catholic

Ethnic origin: Mestizo

Primary school: Roman Catholic

Secondary school: Roman Catholic.

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Wife's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Mestizo/Catholic  
Father's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Mestizo/Catholic  
Mother's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Mestizo/Catholic  
Anonymity required: Yes

### **3.Nick Sanchez**

Date: 25 August 1999

Venue: Nick's home in the Fort George District of Belize City, Central America.

Family name: Sanchez First name: Nicholas

Date of Birth: ca 1936

Current Address: Belize City/Canada (flying that day)

Place of Birth: Belize City

Occupation: Justice of the Peace/Local Historian/Tour Operator

Religious denomination: Roman Catholic

Ethnic origin: Creole

Primary school: Holy Redeemer, Roman Catholic; St. Ignatius, Roman Catholic; Private school n/k; St. Mary's Anglican School.

Wife's ethnic origin and religious denomination: n/k

Father's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Catholic/Creole

Mother's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Catholic/Creole

Anonymity required: No

### **4.Harold Godfrey**

Date: 25 August 1999

Venue: Nick Sanchez's home in the Fort George District of Belize City, Central America.

Family name: Godfrey First name: Harold

Current Address: Belize City

Place of Birth: Punta Gorda, Toledo District

Occupation: Methodist School's Manager

Religious denomination: Methodist

Ethnic origin: Creole

Harold Godfrey was interviewed in his capacity as Methodist School's Manager, therefore all details were not asked for.

Anonymity required: No

### **5.Emory King**

Date: 26 August 1999

Venue: Emory King's offices at the Fort George Hotel, Belize City, Belize, Central America

Family name: King

First name: Emory

Date of Birth: n/k

Current Address: Belize City

Place of Birth: USA (Now naturalised citizen of Belize)

Occupation: Justice of the Peace/Author/Entrepreneur

Religious denomination: Roman Catholic

Ethnic origin: Caucasian

Emory King attended university in the USA before being shipwrecked off Belize in 1953, where he has stayed and educated his children.

Anonymity required: No

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### **6.Eddison Trapp**

Date: 26 August 1999

Venue: On the balcony at 4 Fort Street, Fort Street Guest House, Belize City, Belize, Central America.

Family name: Trapp First name: Eddison M.

Date of Birth: ca 1965

Current Address: Belize City

Place of Birth: Belize City

Occupation: Catering supervisor

Religious denomination: Anglican

Ethnic origin: Creole

Primary school: St Michael's Primary, Belize City

Secondary: St Michael's College, Belize City

Wife's ethnic origin and religious denomination: n/k

Father's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Anglican/Creole

Mother's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Anglican/Creole

Anonymity required: No

### **7.Liz Balderamos**

Date: 26 August 1999

Venue: On the balcony at 4 Fort Street, Fort Street Guest House, Belize City, Belize, Central America.

Family name: Balderamos (nee Stewart) First name: Liz

Date of Birth: 1965

Current Address: Ladyville, Belize.

Place of Birth: n/k Belize

Occupation: Hotel/Restaurant Manager

Religious denomination: Roman Catholic

Ethnic origin: Creole

Primary school: Dangriga Roman Catholic/Government, Toledo District

Secondary: Dangriga High School RC, Pallotti High School, Belize City

Husband's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Mestizo/Catholic

Father's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Scottish/Roman Catholic

Mother's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Creole/Roman Catholic

Anonymity required: No

### **8.Evan X. Hyde**

Date: 31 August 1999

Venue: The Editorial offices of *AMANDALA* newspaper, Belize City, Belize, Central America

Family name: Hyde First name: Evan (the X is in the black power style of Malcolm X)

Date of Birth: April 1947

Current Address: Belize City

Place of Birth: Belize City

Occupation: Newspaper Proprietor/Editor

Religious denomination: Roman Catholic

Ethnic origin: Creole

Primary school: n/k

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Secondary: St John's College RC  
University: Dartmouth (USA)  
Wife's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Creole/n/k  
Father's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Creole/Roman Catholic  
Mother's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Creole/n/k  
Anonymity required: No

**9. Denise Neal**

Date: 31 August 1999  
Venue: Guest Lounge at 4 Fort Street, Fort Street Guest House, Belize City, Belize, Central America  
Family name: Neal First name: Denise  
Date of Birth: 26 January 1964  
Current Address: Belize City  
Place of Birth: Belize City  
Occupation: Hotel Front of House  
Religious denomination: Anglican  
Ethnic origin: Creole  
Primary school: St. John's Anglican  
Secondary: None  
Husband's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Creole/n/k  
Father's ethnic origin and religious denomination: n/k  
Mother's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Creole/Anglican  
Anonymity required: No

**10. Shereth Cattouse**

Date: 31 August 1999  
Venue: Guest Lounge at 4 Fort Street, Fort Street Guest House, Belize City, Belize, Central America  
Family name: Cattouse First name: Shereth  
Date of Birth: 1964  
Current Address: Belize City  
Place of Birth: Belize City  
Occupation: Hotel Front of House  
Religious denomination: Methodist  
Ethnic origin: Creole  
Primary school: Methodist, Belize City  
Secondary: Anglican High School for Girls, Belize City  
Husband's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Creole/n/k  
Father's ethnic origin and religious denomination: n/k  
Mother's ethnic origin and religious denomination: Creole/Methodist  
Anonymity required: No

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