

A SOCIO-GRAPHIC STUDY OF GAELIC
IN CAPE BRETON, NOWA SCOTIA

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A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Applied Linguistics

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada

July 1980

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ABSTRACT

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This is an ethno-linguistic study of the Gaelic language as it is spoken in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. The study surveys the network of institutions which directly or indirectly support Celtic culture and the Gaelic language in this region of Canada. It includes a historical background containing a diachronic account of the Gaelic speaking population of Cape Breton Island, their origins, patterns of settlement in eastern Canada, their primary language of communication, and evidence of their ethnic identity in terms of their interaction with their environment. Considerable attention is given to the role of the formal education system, with a survey of present programs for the learning, use and maintenance of the Gaelic language. Results of structured interviews on Gaelic usage are presented with an analysis, along with a number of observations of a descriptive, socio-graphic nature involving accounts of the language used in a number of social settings. The study indicates that strong social

pressures are weakening Gaelic in most areas, particularly inter-generationally, but also in some traditional areas. Informal interviews and meetings with Gaelic speaking Cape Bretoners provide the basis for a section on attitudes for and against Gaelic. The study concludes with an examination of some of the possibilities for the maintenance and promotion of the language in Cape Breton.

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I. Introduction

Despite the fact that a large number of the Gaelic speaking settlers in Eastern Canada still continue to demonstrate a strong link with their Celtic background, particularly in the maintenance of the Gaelic language, few recent studies have been undertaken and no current overview of the topic exists. The most recent research is that of John L. Campbell, "Scottish Gaelic in Canada" (1936), C.W. Dunn, Highland Settler: A Portrait of the Scottish Gael in Nova Scotia (1953), Gordon W. MacLennan, Canuint Ghàidhlig De Chuid Chontae Inbhir Nis, Ceap Breatainn (A Gaelic Dialect of Inverness County, Cape Breton) (1973) and D. Campbell and R.A. MacLean, Beyond the Atlantic Roar: A Study of the Nova Scotia Scots (1974). It is particularly important in the current climate of encouragement for linguistic and cultural pluralism (Novek, 1978; Kovacks, 1978) that a broad overview of the use of Gaelic and of Celtic culture be made available to provide a basis for future ethno-linguistic research of a more detailed and quantitative nature.

This study observes linguistic rather than geographical boundaries. However, Celtic culture and especially the use of Gaelic as a living language is virtually restricted to Cape Breton Island and a small number of scattered communities in the Counties of Pictou, Antigonish

and Guysborough in eastern Nova Scotia and in various isolated communities in Prince Edward Island (Statistics Canada, 1971).

The purpose of this paper is to provide a broad overview of the present day Celtic culture on Cape Breton Island, the institutions which directly or indirectly encourage it and its various manifestations with particular emphasis on the Gaelic language. The study, in the form of an ethno-linguistic monograph, includes an historical introduction to the material containing a diachronic account of the Gaelic speaking population of the region, their origins, patterns of settlement in eastern Canada, their primary language of communication, evidence of their ethnicity in terms of their interaction with their environment and in their dealings with local and provincial authorities.

A broad characterization of the current situation is offered in terms of (1) the specific components of Celtic culture which are still practiced today in the region and (2) the institutions (churches, Celtic societies, formal social gatherings, etc.) which directly or indirectly encourage Celtic culture and in particular the continued use and learning of the Gaelic language. Considerable detail is given to the role of the formal education system with a survey of the present programs and practices for

the learning, use and maintenance of the Gaelic language and heritage.

In addition to the above descriptive survey which provides information relating to the formal and institutionalized means of maintaining Celtic culture, results of a structured interview on Gaelic usage in Cape Breton are presented based on the methodology of Kenneth MacKinnon's Scottish study, Language, Education and Social Processes in a Gaelic Community (1977). An analysis of the structured interview is provided including suggested trends and directions of Gaelic usage in Cape Breton.

A number of informal observations of a descriptive, sociographic nature concerning the use of Gaelic are also presented. These observations involve accounts of the language used in a number of social settings.

Informal interviews and meetings with Gaelic speaking Cape Bretoners provide the basis for a section of this study concerned with attitudes for and against Gaelic, language loyalty and possibilities for the maintenance and the promotion of Gaelic.

Finally, suggestions are made as to fruitful avenues along which further research into the linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of the Gaelic language in eastern Canada could proceed.

II. Historical Background

The Celts, from whom the modern Gaelic-speaking Scots and Nova Scotians derive, are first recorded in about 800 B.C. along the Danube in what is now southern Germany, i.e. Bavaria, Baden and Wurttemberg, and that area drained by the Main east of the Rhine. At their furthest extension, around 50 B.C., Celtic tribes had occupied the territory from the British Isles through all of south and central Europe, including the greater part of the Iberian peninsula, and as far east as Asia Minor.

The Celts (from Greek Κελτοι) reached the peak of their power and cultural flowering in the fifth century B.C. It is from this period that they began their migrations westward. The Gaulish-speaking tribes whom Caesar was to meet in the first century of Roman expansion into western Europe, i.e. into Gaul, were their descendents.

Today the Celtic languages consist of two branches, Brythonic and Goidelic, or P-Celtic and Q-Celtic owing to the Indo-European q^u- appearing as p in Brythonic, e.g. Welsh, Breton and Cornish, while in Goidelic, e.g. Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Manx, it remained as q, later becoming k (written 'c'). The following are examples demonstrating this primary distinction between P-Celtic and Q-Celtic:

Lat. <u>quattor</u>	Ir. <u>ceithir</u>	W. <u>pedwar</u>
Lat. <u>qui</u>	Ir. <u>cia</u>	W. <u>pwyr</u>
Lat. <u>quinque</u>	Ir. <u>cuig</u>	W. <u>pump</u>

Brythonic-speaking tribes were the first Celtic people to arrive in the British Isles. According to Gregor (1980), except for Pictland, viz. the area of Galloway and the region of northern Scotland, Brythonic was the language spoken throughout the entire region of the British Isles, including Ireland, from the sixth to the first century B.C. (p. 21).

Speakers of the other linguistic branch of Celtic, Goidelic, established themselves in Ireland in the first century B.C. and quickly absorbed the indigenous inhabitants of the area. They were later to spread to the Isle of Man, assimilating the indigenous element there as well.

In the fifth century of the modern era, migrations from Dáil Ruighe Fhada ('Long Arm's Portion') in northern Ireland introduced the Goidelic language, or Old Irish, to the western shores of Scotland. The Scoti, or Irish, called their new kingdom Dal Riata, which was situated in what is today the region of Argyll. Their language spread rapidly throughout all of Scotland, assimilating both Picts and Britons. By the ninth century Gaelic (Irish 'Gaeilge', Scottish Gaelic 'Gàidhlig', Manx 'Galick')

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or 'Gaelg') was the lingua franca of the entire region except for the Anglo-Saxon south east which had been usurped by the Angles from the Picts in the fifth century.

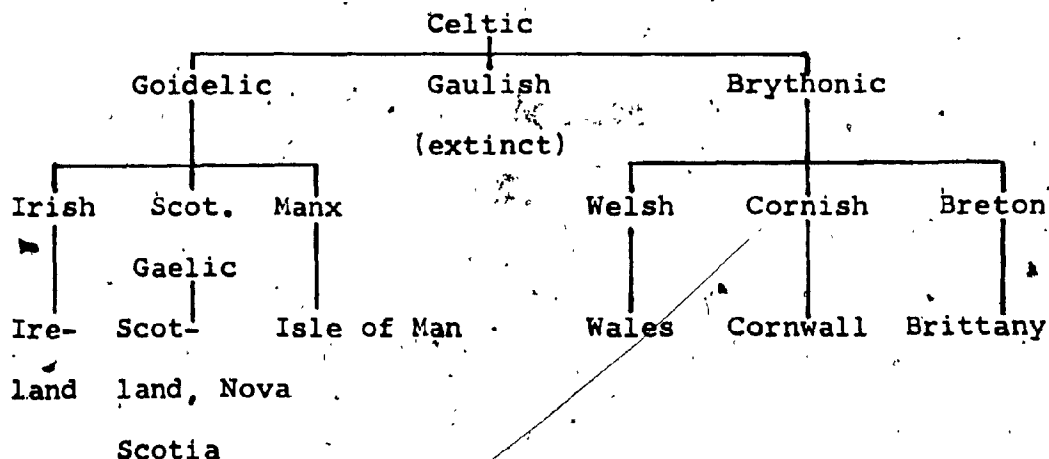
It was during the period of the Anglo-Saxon invasions, and after the Romans had left Britain in the fifth century, that Brythonic, or British Celtic, split up into Welsh, Cornish and Breton (see Fig. 1).

The eighth century was a period of considerable turmoil for the entire western shores of Britain and Ireland, brought on by the invasions of the Vikings. By the beginning of the ninth century, they were in control of the extreme north of Scotland, as well as the Hebrides (Gaelic Innse Gall, 'Isles of the Foreigners'). The Western Islands of Scotland were to remain in the hands of the Norsemen until the 13th century. It is interesting to note that the Hebrides today, in spite of over four centuries of foreign occupation, represent the strongest Gaelic speaking areas of Scotland, and perhaps of the entire Gaelic-speaking world, with the possible exception of Donegal and Galway in Ireland.

Between the ninth and tenth centuries the Gaelic of Scotland began to differ significantly from that spoken in Ireland. According to Jackson (1951), from the 15th and on into the 17th century, historical developments

tended to increase these differences and to mark the Gaelic of Scotland as unique (pp. 71-97). Also, by the 17th century a distinctive Scottish literature had emerged. Thus, although Celtic scholars with a knowledge of either Scottish Gaelic or Irish could communicate with one another in either tongue, the average Gaelic speaker would experience considerable linguistic difficulty. Scottish Gaelic and Manx can be considered modern dialects of the original Irish Gaelic language. For an extensive treatment of the historical development of the Irish language and its dialects see O'Rahilly, 1976, chs. XV, XVI, XIX.

Figure 1. The Celtic Branch of Indo-European



The period in Britain subsequent to the Norman invasion in the 11th century, witnessed great rapid reverses for Gaelic Scotland. Intrusions from the south, first by a French and English speaking merchant class, viz. the

Anglo-Normans, and later by military and political advancements leading to the eventual Union of the Crowns and the persecutions resulting from the Statutes of Iona (viz. Mi-Rùn Mor Nan Gall, 'the Great Ill Will of the Lowlanders'), culminated in the Jacobite movement among the Scottish/Gaelic speaking Highlanders in the 18th century.

The Highland uprisings in that century had as their aim the overthrow of the Hanoverians from the throne. The last attempt, in 1745, to establish the exiled Stuart monarch, Charles Edward ('Bonny Prince Charlie'), on the throne resulted in the disastrous defeat of the Highland clans at Culloden in 1746. The Highlanders were vanquished and the central government assumed control.

For centuries the social unit of Highland life had been the clan system; a system based upon kinship and allegiance to the clan chief. In time of war this allegiance took the form of bearing arms against a common enemy. As a result of the defeat of the Highland clans at Culloden the para-military clan system was abolished; Highlanders were disarmed; and even prohibitions on Highland dress were instituted. As Hunter (1978) points out, all over the Western Islands and Highlands of Scotland throughout the remainder of the 18th century and up until the middle of the 19th century, there was social turmoil and upheaval; clan chiefs became landlords, clansmen be-

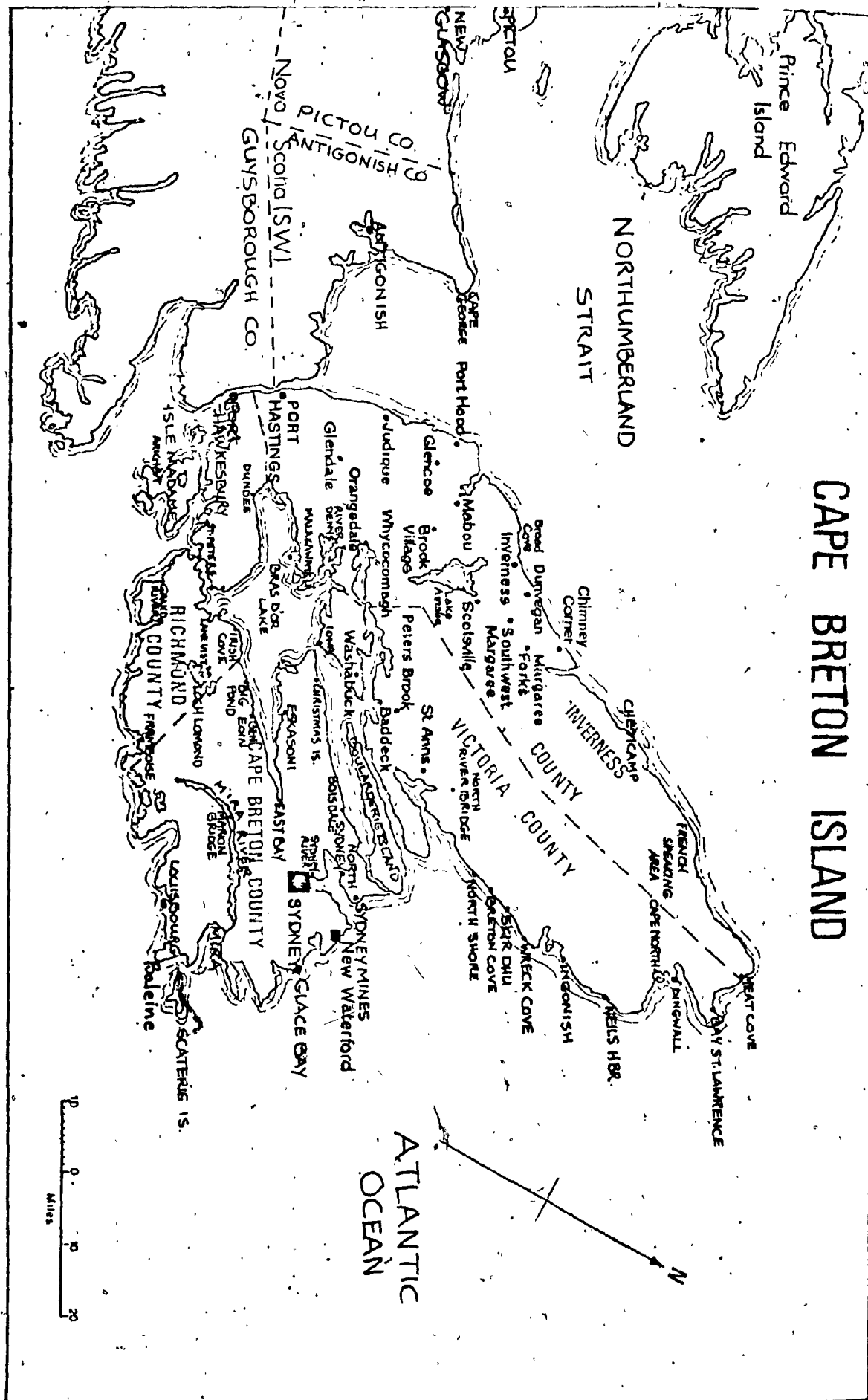
came their tenants (pp. 15-16). Many clansmen were to be dispossessed altogether in the infamous Highland Clearances, to make way for sheep, which were to be the new economic basis of the Highlands. Others were crowded into places too small for even subsistence farming. The end result of developments after Culloden was the massive exodus of tens of thousands of Highlanders from their homeland, many of whom were to make new homes in Nova Scotia.

III. Highland Immigration to Nova Scotia and Patterns of Settlement

The first Scottish settlements in Nova Scotia were in 1629 at Baleine Cove (Fig. 2), on Cape Breton's south-east coast, and at Port Royal on the Nova Scotia mainland. Neither was to last very long, however. Scottish immigration to Nova Scotia was barely noticeable until the last quarter of the 18th century, precipitated by events discussed in the preceding chapter.

Pictou County (Fig. 2), situated along the shores of the Northumberland Strait in the northeastern section of the Nova Scotia mainland, was the first region in the area to receive substantial numbers of emigrants from Scotland. This first wave of settlers was lured to Nova Scotia by land agents in Scotland, and as stated by Campbell and MacLean (1974), in comparison to their countrymen who were

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to arrive later, in the 19th century, they were a little better off (p. 36).

About 4,000 Scots were to arrive in Pictou between 1773 and 1838. Many of those of Highland Catholic descent did not remain in Pictou, but crossed over the Northumberland Strait to Prince Edward Island, or moved on to the neighbouring County of Antigonish; while others were eventually to move on to Cape Breton Island. Those settlers who remained in Pictou County were essentially a Presbyterian population, many of them Gaelic speaking Highlanders from the Sutherland and Ross areas of Scotland. Significant numbers of Lowlanders were to settle in Pictou County as well.

The vast majority of settlers in Antigonish and Guysborough Counties were Roman Catholic and Gaelic speaking. The first phase of immigration into these counties included many soldiers from disbanded Highland regiments, largely from the Island of Barra in the Hebrides. This first group was followed by settlers from various parts of the Highlands, such as Chisholms and MacIssacs from Strathglass and Camerons and MacMullans from Lochaber.

Cape Breton Island, separated from Nova Scotia by the Strait of Canse, was at first slow to attract Highland settlers. In the early 1800's, Inverness County (Fig. 2), encompassing almost the entire western half of

the Island, was receiving some of the settlers who had moved on from Pictou, Antigonish and Guysborough Counties, and also some from Prince Edward Island.

Early population figures are difficult to estimate. In fact, few records exist for Cape Breton until 1820, the year Cape Breton was reannexed to the Province of Nova Scotia.

According to Campbell and MacLean (1974), the first group of Highland settlers to arrive in Cape Breton directly from Scotland, landed at Sydney in 1802 (p. 20). Between 1815 and 1835 many more Scots were to arrive in Sydney, but for the most part they were to move on and establish communities along the Mira River, the East Bay area of the Bras d'Or Lakes and the Loch Lomond-Loch Uist area on the south side of the East Bay Hills (Fig. 2).

The Gaelic line of settlement on the west coast of Cape Breton was meanwhile well established, from Port Hawkesbury through to Craigmore ('Creag Mór'), Creignish ('Creaginnis'), Judique, Port Hood, Nabou, Inverness and Broad Cove, to just below the Acadian communities around Cheticamp. (The French speaking Acadians were the first settlers to the western shore of Cape Breton, arriving in the 1780's. Isle Madame (Fig. 2), on the extreme south coast of the Island, is another district which was settled

by the French.)

Waves of immigrations continued throughout the Margaree River Valley, through Skye Glen ('Gleann Sgitheanach') and over to Lake Ainslie (Fig. 2). The Lake Ainslie district represents one of the earliest settled areas. By the 1820's this area saw MacGregors, MacKays and Campbells from areas of the Inner Hebrides such as: Mull, Coll, Tiree and Muck; MacCormicks from South Uist; MacLeans and Walkers from Arisaig and Lochaber; and MacDonalds from Moildart.

Meanwhile Barramen were settling the central Bras d'Or region of Iona and Grand Narrows, and along the south shore of St. Andrew's Channel (Fig. 2). People from the Islands of Lewis, Harris and Skye were establishing themselves all along the north shore of Cape Breton from St. Anns to Cape North, and along the north shore of the Bras d'Or Lakes including the north side of Boularderie Island. Thus, by 1830 Highland settlement had reached its peak, although immigration was to continue until the 1850's.

It is estimated that by 1830, at least 13,000 Highland Scots had settled in Cape Breton. But some authorities (Campbell and MacLean, 1974) suggest that the figure is probably much higher, owing to the fact that there was only one Customs House on the Island, at Sydney, and that many ships' masters were unloading immigrants on the

west coast of the Island and at various points in and around the Bras d'Or Lakes (p. 21). By 1838 the entire population of the Island was in the vicinity of 38,000, with Gaelic speakers the majority group and evenly split along religious lines, i.e. Presbyterians and Catholics (Martell, 1942, pp. 8-9).

Campbell and MacLean (1974) state that during the final phase of Highland immigration some 16,000 settlers came to Nova Scotia and that about half of this number were Highland Scots who came to Cape Breton (p. 98).

Until the outbreak of World War II the Scots were to form the largest single ethnic group in Nova Scotia. They easily maintain this distinction in the eastern Counties of Nova Scotia, most noticeably on Cape Breton Island.

IV. The Transposition of Highland Culture to Cape Breton

In Scotland, Gaelic culture thrived unchallenged from the sixth century to the time of Margaret, Queen of Scotland in the 11th century. Although Gaelic culture continued as the dominant culture throughout much of Scotland in the Middle Ages, from the 13th century onwards Gaelic ceased to be the language of the Scottish Court and of the nobility, resulting in a serious loss of prestige for the language. The eventual fatal loss of political con-

trol in the 18th century and the series of chaotic events that followed (cf. pp. 10-11), prevented the Gaels from establishing a unified educational system which would have guaranteed literacy in their language. As a result, although the great majority of Scottish immigrants to Nova Scotia were unilingual Gaelic speakers, there were few who were literate in their language.

Gaelic: An Oral Culture

Following the Protestant Reformation in Scotland, much of the knowledge in the use of the lyre, harp, pipes ('piob-mhor') and fiddle, as well as the longer folktale and medicinal heritage, were attacked severely. However, a considerable body of this knowledge survived in the New World and does to this day, particularly the tradition of Highland piping ('piobaireachd') and fiddling, and to a lesser extent the longer folktale and medicinal heritage.

Scottish settlers in the eastern Counties of Nova Scotia brought with them a rich heritage of poems, household games, arts, dances, music and an unwritten literature, but especially songs: songs for milking, churning, hay making, rocking the baby, love songs, drinking, lamenting and milling songs. They also brought with them the ceilidh, a social gathering of friends for the purpose of entertainment. The ceilidh, prior to the advent

of larger public events, was often marked by sgeul-achdan (stories) and the tradition of the seanachaidh (storyteller), clan historians and the sloinneadh (those versed in pedigree). The early immigrants to Nova Scotia, like their forefathers in the Old Country, placed considerable importance on oratorical skills; Gaelic satirical quips, puns, proverbs and riddles were as much a part of the ceilidh as music and dance. Throughout the long winter evenings, in the years that followed the initial settlement of an area that was isolated from the mainstream of North American life, the Gaelic speaking immigrant enjoyed a culture and a way of life not too dissimilar from that of the Islands and Highlands from whence he came.

V. Depopulation of Rural Cape Breton

The population of rural Cape Breton had reached its peak by the 1880's. From this time that population continued to shrink dramatically. Dunn (1974) compiled census figures for 1881 and 1941 for a few of the predominantly Gaelic areas of Cape Breton illustrating the extent of the depopulation (p. 126):

<u>Census District</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1941</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Judique	2,027	904	(55.4)
Hogamah North	1,787	696	(61.0)

<u>Census District</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1941</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Grand Narrows	1,464	852	(41.9)
S.W. Margaree	1,246	731	(41.3)
Little Narrows	817	455	(44.3)
South Gut St. Ann's	788	315	(60.0)
North River	768	434	(43.5)
North Shore	697	327	(53.0)
Framboise	680	397	(41.6)
Loch Lomond	437	170	(61.0)

This phenomenon of the depopulation of the countryside was by no means exclusively a Cape Breton or Maritime one; all over Ontario and Quebec similar developments could be seen at this time. However, the industrialization of Cape Breton at the turn of the last century, with the opening of the coal fields and steel mills around Sydney Harbour, offered an attraction that many Scots from rural Cape Breton were willing to yield to (cf. MacGillivray, 1979, p. 6).

Although by 1941 industrial Sydney had realized a growth of over 13 percent its 1881 population, it was not Sydney that received the bulk of the Gaelic speaking exodus. Campbell and MacLean (1974) estimate that there were 40,000 Nova Scotians living in New England in 1880, and that about 75 percent of this number were living in Massachusetts, or the "Boston States" as this

region came to be known locally (p. 108). For it was to Boston and its environs that Cape Bretoners were to gravitate, at least until the 1930's. After World War II and up to the 1960's Toronto was the focus for people from this region in search of work; presently it is Alberta.

Meanwhile the Intercolonial Railway had been completed in Cape Breton, drawing its manpower from the labour pool of the Cape Breton countryside. The end of hostilities in the American Civil War saw the diminution of trade spin-offs for all of Nova Scotia, while the Province's position as a major maritime power waned with the advent of steamships.

Factors not attributable to the age of steam and machinery were at work too. Most notably was the problem of overpopulation; ironically, one of the major forces that drove the Highlanders from their original homes a hundred years or more before. Dunn (1974) provides an appropriate illustration of this point in his Highland Heart in Nova Scotia: John MacKenzie from Barra arrived in Christmas Island, Cape Breton in 1821 with his wife and one child. He bought a 100 acre farm for 70 pounds. His wife subsequently bore him nine more children. Four of MacKenzie's sons raised their own families on the original 100 acres. The total number

of children in these four families was 32. Thus, the original 100 acres which were considered a godsend to MacKenzie in 1821 hardly offered the same abundant opportunity to the 32 grandchildren. The girls of the third generation were the first to marry and move away. Most of the boys also left and found a living elsewhere. Thus, small farms, pushed to the limits in providing food for so many, became impoverished (pp. 124-25).

It was at this stage, within three generations of Highland settlement, that the Gaelic language and culture in Cape Breton received one of its severest setbacks. The wealth of poetry and song composed by local Gaelic bards in this period testifies to the fact that it was not without reluctance that Cape Bretoners left for greener pastures.

VI. The Decline of Gaelic

In 1881 the total rural Scottish population in Nova Scotia was 128,000. The Majority of these Scots, especially in Cape Breton, would have spoken Gaelic, although census figures do not provide data on the exact numbers. By 1931 the Scottish rural population had fallen to 75,000, a loss of 53,000 or more than 45 percent in a period of 50 years. This serious reduction was not confined to the villages and farming communities. Although people from Inverness and Victoria Count-

ies were entering the industrial towns of Cape Breton from 1881 onwards, even here, as Campbell and MacLean (1974) point out, the Scottish population had fallen from 62.5 percent in 1881 to 40.7 percent in 1931 (p. 106).

The census for 1931 reports 24,303 Gaelic speakers for the entire province of Nova Scotia. It is interesting to contrast this figure with those of John Lorne Campbell who conducted a private census by means of questionnaires which were sent to all the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic parishes in 1932. Campbell (1934), while recognizing the shortcomings of his census methods, stated that 30,000 was a more likely figure for the number of Gaelic speakers on Cape Breton Island and the neighbouring county of Antigonish (p. 161). J.G. MacKinnon (1934), then editor of the Cape Breton Gaelic weekly newspaper Mac Talla ('The Echo'), in responding to Campbell's census figures, suggested from 35,000 to 40,000 the number of people who spoke Gaelic, i.e. in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island (p. 161). Campbell (1934) observed in conducting his census that it was very rare to find any Cape Bretoner bearing a Highland name, older than 35 years, who did not speak the language (p. 162). Regardless of whose figures we are inclined to accept as representative of the number of Gaelic speakers in the 1930's, by 1941 the actual number of people speaking Gaelic

in the Province had been drastically reduced to 12,000 according to the Canada Census reports for that year (III, p. 562).

Even more significant, from the point of view of the diminution of the language, is the point made by Campbell and MacLean (1974), who state: "In 1931 there were 36,187 people of Scottish descent under the age of twenty-five. It would be expected that any ethnic group wishing to retain its language would expose the younger people to it. But this was as often the exception as the rule" (p. 107).

In 1961 there were less than 8,000 who reported Gaelic as their first language. Quite likely there were others who failed to report Gaelic as their mother tongue and yet others who spoke some Gaelic or at least understood the language. But even if the census figures were regarded as only partially complete, it would appear obvious to even the casual observer that Gaelic could disappear as a spoken language in Nova Scotia. In a generation or two children would no longer learn Gaelic from their parents.

In 1971 Gaelic was dropped from the census reports. (Actually Gaelic and Welsh were grouped together.) Estimates put the number of Gaelic speakers in Cape Breton at about 5,000.

Factors Behind the Gaelic Language Decline

Aside from the general observation that Gaelic, like many immigrant languages in the New World, surrounded by the sheer force of the English language, could hardly have been expected to survive as an ordinary language of communication, there are a number of factors behind its decline. The fact that it has survived at all in Cape Breton may be cited as a test of its strength in this last bastion of Gaelic in North America.

Firstly, there were repressive influences in Scotland that had a carryover effect in the New World. As early as the 17th century, with the decrees of the Statutes of Iona (1609), clan chiefs, chieftains and more well to do Gaels were to have their children educated in the English language. The compositions of Highland bards indicate their remorse at the fact that the clan chiefs were becoming less and less supportive of the learned bardic orders. Furthermore, the policy of the Highland schools set up by the Church of Scotland and the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge was to eradicate Gaelic, not to foster it, i.e. the policy of teaching monoglot Gaelic children through the medium of English. Even the Scottish Education Act of 1872 opposed the use of Gaelic as a medium of instruction and discouraged it as a subject in Highland education.

Subsequent Education Acts were not much better.

The Education Act of 1918 did make some provision for the teaching of Gaelic, but it was not until much later that Gaelic was considered as a bona fide subject in Highland schools, and not until very recently that Bilingual programs have been incorporated in the elementary and secondary schools of Scotland. (For a fairly extensive treatment of the position of the Gaelic language in modern Scotland, see Thomson, 1976.)

Although provision was made as early as 1841 (Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1841, c. 43, sect. 14) for the teaching of Gaelic or using the language as a medium of instruction in Nova Scotia (along with English, French and German), there is little evidence of any kind of continued official support. Furthermore, the Gaels, particularly in the isolated Cape Breton countryside, were too engaged in sustaining a livelihood in the first two or three generations of settlement.

When, in the third generation, large numbers of Gaelic speaking children began entering the schools in Cape Breton, English was the medium of instruction with Gaelic rarely taught even as a subject. The fact that Gaelic speaking children were being schooled in English, particularly at this crucial phase of out-migration in the third generation, was to have disastrous consequences. For as Gregor (1980) states: "It is not enough for child-

ren to learn a language at their mother's knee; they must be taught through it and about it in school; otherwise it will be submerged under the language of instruction and be quickly lost when the child leaves school and enters a non-Celtic world" (p. 314).

Naturally, the decline in Gaelic was only a part of a greater socio-economic problem besetting the region (see ch. 5, pp. 18-19). The period of exodus (1881-1941) from the rural communities had a two-fold effect in terms of the language: 1) The traditional rural strongholds were weakened both in numbers and in light of the fact that Gaels began to accept the notion that education was coincident with a knowledge of English; 2) For those who left the rural communities, subsequent resettlement in the cities and towns discouraged the use of Gaelic. Contact with English speakers, whether in the schools or the cities, was to present a serious challenge to the Gaels' identity. A gradual development of a sense of pride in using English and concomitant shame for many in speaking Gaelic resulted in a serious loss of status for the language. Those who went to the "Boston States" are said to have "lost their Gaelic in a year" (Campbell and MacLean, 1974, p. 109) and upon their return visits to the Island were noticed speaking with American

accents (cf. song, An Té A Chaill Ad Ghàidhlig, "The Woman Who Lost Her Gaelic", p. 94).

Even more serious for those who remained in Cape Breton was that many parents often discouraged the use of Gaelic among their children. In many cases Gaelic became a "secretive language", spoken only by elders when speaking of intimate or jovial matters. Comments such as, "My father and mother refused to speak Gaelic to me when I was young" are not uncommon among older Cape Bretoners today.

Although local schools were having an incredibly powerful Anglicizing force, the first few decades of the 20th century saw many of the remoter areas of the Island opened up to trade, commerce and tourism with the construction of new roads. Thus, the element of economic security was added to an already strong case for acquiring English. It is interesting to note that there were pressures placed on non-Gaels to speak Gaelic during this initial phase of access into rural Cape Breton. I have heard from older Gaelic speaking Cape Bretoners that travelling salesmen, mostly Jews and Syrians from Sydney and the Nova Scotia mainland, were quick to learn enough Gaelic to transact their business affairs.

Rudyard Kipling, in his book Captains Courageous, mentions

two black men from the West Indies who were fluent Gaelic speakers living in the River Denys area of Inverness County (Fig. 2). Presumably there were others among the Micmac and Acadian people on the Island who had acquired Gaelic in their frequent contacts with Gaels.

With the Great Depression of the 1930's and the outbreak of World War II Cape Breton was to lose many of its young Gaelic speaking men. In 1939 three Nova Scotian Highland regiments were formed in the eastern counties of the Province: the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, the Cape Breton Highlanders and the Pictou Highlanders. Many of these men from Gaelic speaking areas were either killed overseas or did not return to their home communities after the cessation of hostilities in 1945. From a linguistic viewpoint such losses were to have tragic consequences. As Gregor (1980) states: "The loss of a father can be a tragedy too. It may mean that a family will not be brought up to speak the mother's tongue, and thus the loss of speakers in one generation is carried on, multiplied in geometric proportion, into the next" (p. 239).

It was largely due to the isolation of the rural communities in Cape Breton that the Gaelic culture flourished and was able to continue for such a long time. Industrialization in eastern Cape Breton however, at a time

when small landholdings and large families were straining Gaelic communities on the Island, may have provided economic relief for many, but it did little to insure a future for the language in the industrialized towns of Sydney, Glace Bay, New Waterford, North Sydney and Sydney Mines (Fig. 2). For the Gaelic speaking Cape Bretoner who entered these towns found himself competing for jobs with many others from different ethnic groups such as: Ukrainians, Serbs, Croatians, Poles, Italians, French and Syrians. The cultural cohesion that these newly urbanized Gaels had been accustomed to in rural communities throughout Cape Breton hardly existed in the towns. Many ceased using it, or as Campbell and MacLean (1974) suggest, claimed to have done so (p. 284). Many too were discouraged from using it at their places of work and in the schools. Yet, others attempted to perpetuate the old traditions in the towns, in marked contrast to regions such as Grand Mira, Boisdale, East Bay, Big Pond, Iona, Mabou, Port Hood, Glendale and Judique (Fig. 2) where the cultural homogeneity remained intact and such efforts were unnecessary. However, the use of Gaelic declined in the rural communities too, even if at a slower rate than in the towns.

Renewed Interest in Gaelic

At about the time World War II broke out a number of prominent Nova Scotians recognized that Gaelic was in retreat and felt strongly enough about their heritage to try to effect measures to save the language. In 1939 the Gaelic College at St. Ann's, Victoria County, Cape Breton (Fig. 2) was founded. The first year of operation the College offered summer courses in Gaelic for beginners and an advanced course for native speakers. Material covered in these courses included: Gaelic etymology, phonetic combinations, inflections, correct pronunciation, Gaelic bardic literature (Nova Scotian and Scottish), Gaelic proverbs and quips, Celtic history, and social economics. A considerable portion of the program was devoted to the origin and interpretation of Gaelic melodies and songs, vocal and choral instruction, and the unification of Gaelic melodies with piobaireachd (Highland piping).

By 1950 the Nova Scotia Government had appointed a Gaelic advisor to work in the provincial Department of Education's Adult Education Division. Major C.I.N. MacLeod, a Celtic scholar from Kintail, Rosshire, Scotland occupied this position until 1958 when he became head of the newly established Celtic Studies Department at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish.

As Gaelic Advisor to the Ministry, MacLeod was instrumental in establishing programs for prospective teachers of Gaelic. Between 1950 and 1955 over 50 teachers received full credits in Gaelic at the Nova Scotia Teachers' Summer School in Halifax. During this same period (1950-55) Gaelic classes began to be taught in four Cape Breton schools, i.e. for periods of one hour per week.

In 1969 An Comunn Gàidhlig Cheap Brèatunn ('The Cape Breton Gaelic Society') was founded with its headquarters in Sydney and affiliated chapters were soon established throughout the Island. The main objects of this organization as stipulated in its Constitution and By-laws (1969) are: "The perfecting of the members in the use of the Gaelic language; the cultivation of the language, poetry, traditions, legends, books and manuscripts; the vindication of the rights and character of the Gaelic people, and generally, the furtherance of their interests whether at home or abroad (Art. 1a).

VII. Current Support for Gaelic

In terms of the institutions which either directly or indirectly support the continued use of Gaelic and the development of Gaelic culture, a wide variety of ethnic related courses are offered by various institutions in Cape Breton, e.g. Highland dancing, round and square

dancing, Highland games, singing, piano playing, history, literature and even "ceilidh appreciation"; most of which Watson Kirkconnell once referred to as the "picturesque incidentals". However, it is the intention in this section to highlight those institutions which emphasize the linguistic aspects of the culture.

While there is no Gaelic Institute on the Island, the College of Cape Breton and its Archives, the Beaton Institute (named after Sister Margaret Beaton, or Sister Margaret of Scotland, one of the principal founding members of An Comunn Gàidhlig), together foster Gaelic and Celtic Studies in the College curriculum offering credit courses in the Gaelic language, literature and history; children's Gaelic courses and Gaelic choral singing.

Along with An Comunn Gàidhlig, the College has established a scholarship fund for promising young undergraduates to study in Scotland. Through its College Press it also serves as a publishing agency for Gaelic materials housed in the Beaton Institute. The Institute has collected many and various valuable records of Cape Breton's past, such as: books, records, tapes, maps, periodicals, pamphlets, letters, newspapers and photographs. Books about Cape Breton and by Cape Breton authors can be found in its book collection. The music collection contains books, records and tapes. The collected tapes make up

one of the finest regional collections in the country. The Gaelic collection is said to be the finest available in Canada. Many books about Cape Breton folklore are also preserved there.

Kovacs (1978) has indicated that studies such as sociological and anthropological research, concentrating on the group, in many instances have overshadowed the contributions of individuals (p. 476). The Jonathan G. MacKinnon Memorial Lectures, recently inaugurated by the College of Cape Breton, aim at paying tribute to the men and women who either through their writing, musical contributions or scholarship, have made substantial contributions to Gaelic and Celtic culture.

In addition to the above mentioned activities, the College also offers a fairly extensive language program through its Continuing Education Department. Teachers for these programs, viz. non-credit courses, are native speakers of the language who have been trained by visiting professional language teachers from Scotland.

An Comunn Gàidhlig at Sydney, and through its affiliated chapters throughout Cape Breton, also offers language programs. From its large Gaelic speaking membership it provides teachers for its own programs at Taigh nan Gàidheal ('House of the Gael'), as well as for the Gaelic

courses offered by the Continuing Education Department of the College of Cape Breton. Furthermore, through its social and cultural entertainment section it sponsors popular ceilidhs and special Gaelic programs such as sgeulachdan ('professional Gaelic storytelling') and regular evenings of Gaelic singing.

While there is great potential within An Comunn Gàidhlig for promoting the language, its members are in genuine need of direction amidst a general level of naivete. For instance, although it can boast of a growing membership, it has done little to attract younger members and thus assign a continuum to the future of its operations and constitutional aims.

Statutes providing for Gaelic instruction in the public schools of Nova Scotia go back as far as 1841 (see p. 25), but there has never been much official encouragement for the actual incorporation of Gaelic in the school curriculum. Another thing which must be borne in mind is that Highland culture was for the most part reflected in an oral literature, not a written one, as already mentioned (pp. 17-18). Furthermore, the Gaelic speaking immigrant considered the whole question of education as being coincident with English. This attitude can easily be traced to the intolerable and oppressive conditions which Gaelic had to struggle with in Scotland.

(For an extensive treatment of this subject see MacKinnon's The Lion's Tongue, 1974.) In fact, as John Lorne Campbell of Canna (1948) has remarked, Gaelic is probably unique among modern European languages in the New World context in terms of the treatment which it had received in the country of its origin (p. 69).

Gaelic then is presently taught as an optional subject in several public schools in Cape Breton. But its mainstay is in the public schools of Inverness County on the west coast of the Island, where Gaelic and its traditions have remained strongest and for the longest period of time. Only recently, the Mabou Gaelic and Historical Society, situated in the heart of the County and a long time proponent of the inclusion and expansion of Gaelic in the public school program, has requested from the provincial authorities the immediate establishment of a "task force" on Gaelic to upgrade and extend the Gaelic courses in that area (The Oran, Nov. 23, 1978, p. 7).

It is interesting to observe the activities of such organized groups as that mentioned above in the light of the experiences and observations of other investigators elsewhere. For instance, Martin L. Kovacs in Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education states:

Multiculturalism as adopted by the Canadian Government in 1971 appears to have as its main purpose the achievement of an ethno-cultural democracy, something which is yet to have really surfaced at the school level to any appreciable degree. This is in spite of the general educationists' consensus that the child's personality springs from his native culture... and that sudden and complete severance from the ancestral native culture of the individual often leads to other types of alienation as well, is being recognized by the practitioners of education only very gradually. (p. 487-88)

Kovacs (1978) concludes, echoing the position of many of those concerned with Gaelic in Eastern Canada: "Despite a more cautious assessment today of the school's potential to reform the basic structures of society, the school can contribute very greatly to the promotion of social cohesion, and at the same time, of the freedom of cultural maintenance including customs, values and languages." (p. 488).

The parish church, in rural Cape Breton especially, whether Roman Catholic or Presbyterian, is an active social institution reflecting the ethnic identity of its parishoners, e.g. St. Andrew's in Coxheath, St. Columba's

in Iona, St Margaret of Scotland's Church in Grand Mira North (Fig. 2), etc. In some of the Presbyterian churches in Cape Breton there are regular Gaelic prayer meetings; in others, various parts of the service are occasionally recited in Gaelic. Presenting, a Gaelic form of singing hymns, is still popular in various congregations. This style of singing hymns and other musical compositions, goes back to the time when due to a lack of hymnals, and also because of illiteracy, an individual standing before the congregation would slowly and methodically chant the lines of a verse, pausing after each line to hear others present in the assembly echo the refrains. While the original purpose for presenting has since disappeared, it lingers on, enjoyed primarily for its unusual musical qualities.

The Ceisd ('Question') is another Gaelic religious activity peculiar to the Presbyterian Church in Cape Breton. While not as widely held today as in the past, it is nevertheless an excellent occasion for observing Gaelic without English. Members of the congregation gather to pray and meditate on biblical or theological issues and address themselves to a question concerning religious worship. As well, there are Gaelic commemorative services held in honour of outstanding members of the community now deceased, and also occasional burials and christenings.

While I personally know eight Gaelic speaking Catholic priests in this area, the Roman Catholic Church evidences a lot less use of Gaelic or support for the language in its services than the Presbyterian congregations. This is most likely attributable to the fact that for centuries vernacular languages were unheard in the celebration of the Catholic Mass. With the reforms in the Church after the Vatican Council in the early 1960's, Latin was replaced by English as the language of Catholic Church services in the Scottish parishes throughout eastern Nova Scotia. However, the occasional Gaelic Mass may still be heard and I have it on record that several priests continue to hear confessions in Gaelic from older parishoners. Otherwise, Gaelic as far as the Catholic Church seems to be concerned, is reserved for eulogizing at funerals, and from time to time at special commemorative events. It should be noted however, that outside the institution of the Church itself, there are some outstanding Catholic priests who are major exponents of Gaelic culture in Cape Breton, viz. musicians, Gaelic singers, dancers and organizers of Gaelic social events.

One final area concerning support for Gaelic involves an examination of Gaelic in print, on radio, television and other forms of the electronic media.

If one were to travel the length and breadth of Cape Breton he would be hard pressed to find a roadsign or other public display of Gaelic, other than perhaps the traditional Highland greeting, Ceud Mile Fàilte ('A Hundred Thousand Welcomes') on the outskirts of a town or a village; or Tigh Litreachan, along with Post Office and Bureau de Poste on the face of a rural federal building; or Aite Sheumais ('James' Place') or some other name printed on a rural mail box; or Sealladh na Mara ('View of the Sea') and other descriptive titles painted on roofs or sides of barns; or the occasional bumper stickers with assorted rallying cries, such as: Suas leis a Ghàidhlig ('Up with the Gaelic'), Cum Gàidhlig Beò ('Keep Gaelic Alive'), Gàidhlig! ('Gaelic!') and possibly for those who have lingering doubts, Tha Gàidhlig Beò ('Gaelic is Alive'). Yet this area can boast of an impressive list of Gaelic publications in this century as well as in the latter part of the 19th century, particularly out of Sydney (but also out of nearby communities such as Glace Bay, Antigonish, Charlottetown and Pictou (Fig. 2)).

It was out of Sydney, the largest urban area on the Island, that Mac Talla was published (1892-1904), edited by Jonathan G. Mac Kinnon. Mac Talla still ranks as the longest continuing Gaelic newspaper in the world. Widely

read in its day by Gaels throughout the world, this weekly publication was written entirely in Gaelic, including the advertizements. Each issue contained sections on bardic lore, Highland and local history original compositions and melodies and current news events from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia and from around the world. Subscriptions to Mac Talla never exceeded 1,400, and it was this fact, according to D.M. Sinclair (1945, p. 108), that caused it to cease publication in 1904. The editor, Jonathan G. MacKinnon, was a prolific Gaelic writer himself. He proved particularly adept at translating, producing translations of Tolstoy's, Where Love Is ('Far am bi gradh, bidh Dia') in 1924, Thomas Hardy's, The Three Strangers ('An Triuir Choigreach'), and others. MacKinnon also wrote a history of Sydney (1918) and subsequent to Mac Talla's closing he edited Fear na Ceilidh ('The Visitor'), a Gaelic monthly (1928-30).

James MacNeil, author of Gaelic Lessons for Beginners (1939), edited a Gaelic monthly entitled, Teachdaire nan Gàidheal ('Highland Messenger') which was published in Sydney and ran for about 10 years (1925-34). Other periodicals published in this region include: An Cuirtear Oq Gaelach ('The Gaelic Tourist') which began publication in Antigonish in 1851 and continues to this day (renamed The

Casket); Am Mosgladh ('The Awakening') which was printed from 1923 to 1933; and An Soluis Iuil ('The Beacon') which began in 1926 and ran for a short time.

There were a significant number of works written here dealing with religious themes as well as collections of bardic poems and Gaelic songs. (For a fairly complete listing, see Scottish Gaelic Books, Pamphlets, and Articles, Published in Canada and written by Canadians, 1967.)

While the actual number of Gaelic publications is now minuscule by comparison to previous decades, there is a considerable stock of literature available throughout the area in the archives, college and public libraries, bookmobiles and bookstores.

The College of Cape Breton's Beaton Institute subscribes to a considerable number of Gaelic publications from Scotland, including periodicals and newspapers which are readily accessible to the general reading public. An Comunn Gàidhlig also subscribes to a number of Gaelic periodicals for the use of its members. St. Xavier University in Antigonish houses an extensive collection of Celtic materials, including current publications.

I have personally investigated all of the libraries in Cape Breton, taken note of their Gaelic sections and

found that on the average there are between 50 and 100 Gaelic titles . Upon inquiring of the librarians as to the frequency of Gaelic titles requested from the libraries , I was informed that there is generally a steady request for Gaelic books. One of the tasks of the Gaelic Advisor who was appointed by the Ministry of Education in 1950, and also a long standing aim of An Comunn Gàidhlig (see p. 31), was, and is, to ensure that adequate Gaelic materials be made available in local libraries. It appears that this responsibility is being shouldered by the parties concerned, including the Cape Breton Regional Library's Rural Bookmobile Service.

Gaelic columns exist in local newspapers and periodicals but there is no single publication reflecting strictly a Gaelic nature. Occasional Gaelic commemorative issues do appear and An Comunn Gàidhlig puts out a regular Gaelic-English newsletter. Cape Breton's Magazine carries a monthly Gaelic feature of several pages. Printed Gaelic advertisements while not numerous, are in evidence in several papers and periodicals.

New local publications, by no means abundant, are yet strongly in evidence, i.e. language learning materials, Gaelic readers and anthologies of locally composed poems, songs and bardic collections.

Bookstores are of course another element reflecting the use of and the demand for Gaelic printed material, as are music stores in the selling of records, tapes, song books and music sheets. On the average one can expect to find between 20 and 30 Gaelic titles in practically all bookstores in the area, as well as a large volume of records and cassette tapes.

From spot-checks in Gaelic speaking homes it is customary to find at least a Gaelic bible, and perhaps also a dictionary or a Gaelic grammar. Periodicals from Scotland such as Tocher (a bilingual quarterly from the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh containing traditional tales, songs and music) and Gairm (another Scottish quarterly printed only in Gaelic and containing a great variety of material, both traditional and current), while not numerous, regularly pass through many hands according to several individuals that I interviewed.

Except for the occasional advertisement, Gaelic is rarely heard on local television stations. There are on the other hand two weekly half hour radio programs in Gaelic which enjoy a wide popularity. Last New Year's Eve an hour long Gaelic program was broadcast from Cape Breton to the Western Islands of Scotland via satellite.

VIII. Gaelic Usage in Cape Breton

One of the primary goals of this study is to determine the patterns of Gaelic usage in Cape Breton. Among the social variables which have been isolated as determinants of usage in the literature, we have Ferguson's (1959) formality-informality contrast; Haugen's (1956) more general list of social factors, such as: age, sex, occupation and political affiliation; Rubin's (1968) dimensions of formality, intimacy, location, seriousness, sex, first language learned and predicted language proficiency. Rubin (1968) not only isolated those variables which she considered to be operating determining usage in the Paraguayan situation, but specified the hierarchical order in which they are to be examined (p. 18).

In their study of the choice of pronoun in European languages, Brown and Gilman, as reported by Rubin (1968), isolated solidarity and power as two significant variables. (p. 95). While Gaelic does have a 'formal' and 'informal' pronoun system similar to tu and vous, i.e. thu and sibh, second person singular and second person plural respectively, I would be hesitant in attempting to ascribe solidarity and power as variables determining usage in the Cape Breton context. My reasons are clear if one examines the Gaelic speaking population as a fairly homogeneous socio-economic group in Cape Breton, i.e.

Gaelic speakers generally occupy lower occupational levels in the overall socio-economic scale with little or no evidence of class conflict. Furthermore, from my own observations, the use of one or the other pronoun is not rigidly fixed; there appears to be a growing element of interchangeability in the use of thu and sibh. This is, perhaps expectedly, particularly so among second language learners. One old informant told me that in her day one would invariably address an older person, clergyman or professional with sibh, "...whereas nowadays no one seems to bother." Of course, for those who are definitely more at home in Gaelic, the distinction is maintained, as it is obviously by all speakers for singular and plural.

In terms of who meets whom and for what purposes one language is used over the other, Mackinnon (1977), in his study of the Gaelic community of Harris, in Scotland, suggested that Gaelic was the principal language of face to face relationships, such as: with spouse, with other family members, old people, to older relatives, and for moralizing and communalizing; while English was used for business and politicizing (p. 172). Mackinnon made extensive use of the questionnaire approach in his study. One of these questionnaires P. (150-51), which he conducted among Gaelic speaking adults in Harris, to determine

the language (Gaelic or English) used in specific speech activities, is adopted with certain modifications in the structured interview, a technique which I employed in determining patterns of Gaelic usage in Cape Breton.

Techniques and Procedures of Investigation

"Linguistic research uses principally techniques of elicitation, recording and analysis," according to Charles A. Ferguson (1975); he goes on to say that such techniques are "only marginally relevant to a sociolinguistic study (p. 4)." Ferguson (1975) suggests as the four most effective techniques: gathering information from published sources; receiving information and advice from experts and knowledgeable persons on specific areas and problems; questionnaires; and field observations and interviews (p. 4). The first two techniques have been substantially employed in obtaining the data discussed in the foregoing. We shall now turn to the latter two, i.e. interviews, field observations and questionnaires.

Problems and Pitfalls

Geography. Cape Breton Island represents a fairly large area. Shaped like the claw of a giant lobster, it stretches 100 miles from Chedabucto Bay in the south to the Gulf of the St. Lawrence in the North, and measures

another 100 miles from its eastern and western extremities. Much of the northern part of the Island is mountainous, while the so called 'heartland', or the central part, consists virtually of an inland sea, known as the Bras d'Or Lakes. It became evident at the outset of this research that I would be unable to attend every Gaelic function or event or visit many people who would have otherwise provided me with interesting and valuable details. Since I was born and raised on Cape Breton Island and have been interested in Gaelic for a number of years, I had from the beginning, therefore, compiled a directory under place names, including known speakers and authorities on things Gaelic, which has proven most useful as a contact guide in my excursions throughout the Island. I have also received generous help from two close associates living in other areas of the Island where Gaelic is spoken. They have provided an invaluable service in each keeping a log book of Gaelic observations and events that I would otherwise have missed living in the eastern region of Cape Breton, viz. Sydney River.

Being Prepared. Perhaps one of the most important things about interviewing is being prepared, that is, establishing contacts within the community, making the necessary inquiries and setting a definite time and date

for the interview. I have also found it worthwhile to prepare questions beforehand, as well as to be informed about events in the community, those of the past and the present. Knowing your population can prevent some embarrassing moments and even possible interview breakdowns. For example, I have found it wise not to ask questions which which I suspected would prove off-putting to the interviewee, questions that would be quite acceptable to a Roman Catholic concerning cures or sitichean ('little people') for instance, might be volatile issues to a Presbyterian owing to the proscription on such Celtic beliefs during the Protestant Reformation.

Religious affiliation is still considered an important social factor in Cape Breton, especially among older people. How one handles questions concerning such issues may have a bearing on the success or failure in getting the kind of cooperation one is seeking. By way of anecdote for example, the first interview I conducted was with an elderly, retired Presbyterian minister who was living alone in one of the remote areas of Cape Breton. Our initial few minutes together were faltering as I saw that he was sizing me up. Suddenly he said, "What faith do you belong to then?" Having been raised a Catholic, and not of any loyal Highland line either, but of Irish-French

heritage, it would soon become evident that I had not much Presbyterian in me. There was some hesitation in my response and finally I recalled a line from a song I once heard sung by Joan Baez and I replied, "Well sir, I'm a Catholic, a Protestant and a Jew." This humoured my old friend to no end and we went on to conduct my first and perhaps one of my very best interviews.

Recorders. There are pros and cons with regard to the use of recorders. Rural people are often shy and even suspicious of such electronic gadgetry. I found it better to leave the recorder in the car and later establish its presence by offering to play some Gaelic tunes.

Memory. Recent studies (Hughes, 1943; Kelkar, 1975) have supplemented language usage research by means of descriptive observations or monographs of language situations. I found it more practical to rely on memory for such material, except perhaps for names, dates, times, addresses and other such detail. Writing on the spot in a little black book draws attention and steals from the flow of the moment.

Expense. While mailed questionnaires have been used extensively in conducting sociolinguistic research of a quantitative nature, with large populations under investigation, for my purposes I have found it too expensive; instead, I have used the structured interview technique.

Ferguson (1975) suggests that in sociolinguistic field work, it is "the personal on-the-spot" investigation, such as, interviews and observations of everyday life and classroom activity, that in the final analysis, provides the more critical technique to the researcher (p. 4).

Structured Interviews

The analysis of language use which follows is based on rather extensive interviews with 20 informants, four each from five geographically separate communities on Cape Breton Island, i.e. four each from the Counties of Cape Breton, Victoria, Inverness and Richmond, and four from the main urban area on the Island, the Sydney Harbour industrial area. (Fig. 2). The rationale behind this geographically based selection procedure was to get as broad an "Island view" of Gaelic language usage as possible.

What is interesting, from the point of view of the spread of Gaelic speakers in Cape Breton, is that there are pockets of speakers all over the Island, rather than whole villages of Gaelic speakers. In one village, Glendale, in Inverness County (Fig. 2), seven out of ten houses I visited reported at least one Gaelic speaker; in one home there were five Gaelic speakers, viz. all members of the family which consisted of one woman and four men ranging in ages from 35 to 67. But one could as easily find

Gaelic speakers in Glace Bay, Sydney, New Waterford and other towns surrounding Sydney Harbour or communities around the Canso Strait area (Fig. 2). This situation has arisen due to a lagging agricultural economy in the traditional rural bastions of Celtic culture and the natural pull of the towns for employment reasons and as places where an ageing population could retire, i.e. in guest homes for the elderly.

No special sampling technique was employed in selecting the informants. In all cases they were known speakers of the language who were easily accessible for an interview. However, I believe the sample is in some way representative of the Gaelic speaking population of Cape Breton, i.e. of the older, native speaking population. The sample does not contain any speakers who have acquired the language as a second language nor does it include any speakers under the age of 50 years old. This was not by design but just as it turned out in my data.

The structured interview approach provides what I believe to be a rough basis for admittedly high-, medium- and low-incidence areas where Gaelic (or English) is used. The interview schedule employed is adapted, with certain modifications, from the questionnaire used by MacKinnon (1977) in his study of the adult population of Harris in Scotland.

MacKinnon (1977) collected considerable data along the lines of various social parameters, i.e. age, sex, education, occupation, etc., thus enabling him to treat "young versus old" and other contrasting elements for separate analyses. However, because of the insignificant numbers of young Gaelic speakers in the Cape Breton context, the interviews I conducted were with an older adult population, with minimal formal education, primarily rural, male, and engaged in primary industries such as farming and fishing. Thirteen of the informants declared affiliation with Roman Catholic parishes, while seven claimed they were Presbyterians.

The questionnaire defined 36 different situations and inquired of the informants to what degree, "often", "sometimes" or "infrequently", they would most likely use Gaelic in each of the given situations (Appendix I).

As the number of informants here is low, no statistical claim for significance or reliability is attempted. The data on interviews was intended to indicate or point to suitable areas for future research in this region along more quantitative lines.

General Factors Influencing Usage

Thus, while my data hardly qualify as statistically significant given the low numbers I am dealing with, a cursory examination of the data in Table I indicate certain

Table I

Degree of Gaelic Usage in Specific Situations
from Interviews Conducted in Cape Breton N=20

Rank Order	Speech Activity	Degree of Usage		
		High	Medium	Low
1	Older Relations	15	3	2
2	Older People locally	14	5	1
3	To Gaelic Speaking Strangers	14	3	3
4	To Tell Jokes	13	4	3
5	Prayers/Worship	13	2	5
6	Drinking	12	5	3
7	Greeting and Parting	12	3	5
8	With Spouse	12	2	6
9	At Public Entertainment	11	6	3
10	In Arguing	11	4	5
11	On the Farm	10	7	3
12	Swearing	10	6	4
13	To Gaelic Teacher	10	3	7
14	At the Garage	9	3	8
15	Church Meetings	9	3	8
16	At Club/Society Meetings	8	9	3
17	Talking About Men/Women	8	5	7
18	In Dreaming	8	4	8
19	In the Street (Rural)	7	9	4

Table I (continued)

Rank Order	Speech Activity	Degree of Usage		
		High	Medium	Low
20	To Minister/Priest	7	6	7
21	Dances (Rural)	7	4	9
22	Greeting Cards	6	5	9
23	On the Telephone	5	3	12
24	To Young People	2	2	16
25	Dances (Town)	2	1	17
26	Sports/Recreation	1	2	17
27	In Counting	1	2	17
28	In the Street ((Town)	1	1	18
29	To Travelling Salesman	0	2	18
30	Letter Writing	0	2	18
31	To Government Officials	0	1	19
32	Telephone Operator	0	0	20
33	To Doctors	0	0	20
34	To Lawyers	0	0	20
35	In Restaurants/Eatouts	0	0	20
36	At the Bank	0	0	20

trends that are not at all at variance with MacKinnon's study (1977); strong social pressures are weakening Gaelic

usage in most areas, particularly inter-generationally and also in other traditional areas.

However, one significant factor perhaps not reflected in Table I is that most of the informants when asked which language they would most likely use in a given situation replied, "a mixture of the two" or "mostly Gaelic but some English too", indicating that the distribution of usage of the two languages is not mutually exclusive. This fact is further substantiated by observations in Gaelic speaking homes and at Gaelic cultural events and social gatherings. Statements such as, "People spoke a lot more Gaelic when I was younger" and "Many of the Gaelic speakers are dead or are very old", point to the general overall decline of the language, and even in the traditional domains of Gaelic usage there is a significant shift to English.

An area exhibiting some pressure strengthening Gaelic usage is in the field of public entertainment, i.e. mods, the ceilidh, milling frolics, festivals, concerts, etc. While the traditional ceilidh has been around in Cape Breton for generations, it too has undergone drastic transformations since the advent of television. Thus, the occasion for people in the country to meet regularly at some neighbour's house for music, song, dance, storytell-

ing and conversation, has largely given way to the convenient entertainment from the dominant culture via television, although there are indications that the ceilidh is undergoing a come-back in certain areas.

Sgeulachdan, or Gaelic storytelling, has practically disappeared in Cape Breton. This is now the preserve of the professional collector, attempting to rescue from oblivion stories which have been handed down by word of mouth from one storyteller to another through many generations. I have noted one occasion recently, however, where a noted sennaiche, or storyteller, recited stories throughout the evening to an assembly of Gaels in Glendale, in Inverness County (Fig. 2). While people gathered specifically for this purpose, it was the first Gaelic storytelling in years in this region.

Milling frolics, or luadh, is a type of Gaelic entertainment which has actually grown in popularity in recent years throughout the Island; this, in spite of the fact that the original purpose of milling, or curing the home spun cloth, disappeared many years ago. There is hardly a community in Cape Breton which does not host at least one frolic during the year.

These events are always held indoors, in a parish or community hall. They are generally very well attended, even though only a small number of those in attendance

actually participate in the "milling". Participants sit around a large wooden table (bord luaidh) and sing a certain class of song which is particularly associated with the luadh, while working a large piece of woolen cloth back and forth across the table to the rhythm of the song. The songs, many of them locally composed, consist of between 15 and 20 verses. After five or six have been sung, the singers retire for 10 or 15 minute breaks. These events are excellent occasions for observing large numbers (between 100 and 150 people on the average) of Gaelic speaking people intermingling and conversing in Gaelic.

Another kind of entertainment which seems to lend itself more and more to what may be called a Gaelic event is the outdoor event which is a popular feature nowadays as a Cape Breton summertime activity. This is what Campbell and MacLean (1974) refer to as the "leisure culture". Ten years ago these festivals and concerts, which now fill the calendar on summer weekends, were practically non-existent. For the most part they are still non-existent in Presbyterian Victoria County, where the Gaelic retreat is more conspicuous. But in dozens of small villages throughout Cape Breton and Inverness Counties, there are now annual outdoor festivities featuring a wide variety of Celtic cultural events, including piob-rach (Highland piping), Gaelic singing, fiddling and set

and step dancing. And frequently one hears the contributions that various people have made towards these events being lauded.

Even more interesting, however, is that such events attract considerable crowds, particularly from the neighbouring villages and communities and isolated farming areas. These are probably the only occasions, throughout the year in Cape Breton, except for the extensions of these types of happenings during the wintertime, where significantly large groups of people assemble from the traditional strongholds of Celtic culture. In this relaxed and generally leisurely atmosphere there is a noticeable element of Gaelic being spoken among the people gathered.

Comments on the Results of the Structured Interview

Rubin (1968) identifies the ambiguity of a number of the questions in her study (p. 110). Some of these ambiguous items are of course inevitable, as I have discovered in my study in Cape Breton. For example, two of my informants did not drink and two had never married. For easy tabulation these were included in the low incidence column but should be read as "not applicable". While the spouses of three of my informants had died, the question on language used with spouse concerned the likelihood of the degree of Gaelic usage in this specific situation, i.e.

while the spouse was living. In general, I believe the answers to the questions are borne out by observations in the field.

Very few of the number of people I interviewed or met in Cape Breton declared they used Gaelic alone for any but the most intimate and personal functions. High incidences of Gaelic usage are for the most part in actual face-to-face relationships or contact situations such as, with older relations and older people in the community, as well as with strangers who are known speakers of the language.

The question on drinking perhaps requires some clarification. In rural Cape Breton one drinks in the home, usually in the kitchen with neighbours or close friends. Although Gaelic may be heard in the lounges and taverns of the larger towns, it is usually from visitors who are in town on a regular shopping day from the country.

While the majority of informants stated the likelihood of using Gaelic in telling jokes, it was naturally assumed that the interlocutors were conversant in Gaelic. Some informants stressed the uniqueness of Gaelic for humorous tales and quips. I have frequently heard similar comments on the special features of Gaelic for expressing love, anger and sadness. One informant boasted that Gaelic had more words than English and other lang-

uages for "things of the heart".

From the list of speech activities enumerated in Table I (p. 54), the likelihood of a relatively high incidence of Gaelic usage begins to diminish with the question as to the language used in speaking to the local clergyman. Here the incidence of high and low usage is evenly distributed. Gaelic clergymen are becoming a rare commodity in Cape Breton, evidencing the retreat of a traditional Gaelic stronghold. By way of contrast, it is interesting to note the results of a questionnaire circulated in the 1930's by John Lorne Campbell (1936) which stated that of the eleven Roman Catholic churches he sampled, eight used Gaelic; and of the thirty-one Protestant churches enumerated, twenty-three used Gaelic (p. 129).

Campbell (1948) also found upon further inquiry that four or five of the members of the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia from Cape Breton at that time were Gaelic speakers (p. 69). The likelihood of using Gaelic today in speaking to a government official, however, is indeed slight. Only one informant indicated speaking Gaelic to a government official to any appreciable degree. The one notable exception, I learned from my informant, was in reference to occasional conversations

with the member of Parliament and present Minister of Finance, Allan J. MacEachen, representing the federal constituency of Cape Breton-the Highlands. MacEachen is a well known personality throughout Cape Breton and known locally as a fine Gaelic speaker and supporter of Celtic culture.

A popular activity throughout most of the year are dances held in local community halls in the Cape Breton countryside. These halls are often owned and situated on the grounds of the parish church. Unlike dances held in larger towns of the Island, country dances evince a fairly equal distribution among old and young age groups. The music is almost always traditional Cape Breton fiddling and the dances are of the set variety, often referred to as "round and square" dances. Participants at these dances sit around the perimeter of the dance floor; conversations are usually lively and when you meander through the sitting area, a considerable amount of Gaelic may be heard. Much of the talk is of a jovial or humorous nature. One can often find people hanging around outside the hall, usually men sharing a drink, and Gaelic interspersed with English may be heard.

By contrast, town dances are highly segregated by age groups. Although one is unlikely to observe as much

Gaelic being spoken at these events in the towns, it is nevertheless a common feature of dances put on by associations such as An Comunn Gàidhlig which overtly support Gaelic usage. Otherwise, Gaelic at town dances is an insignificant element, competing as it is with the standard North American styles of music and dance which appear directed primarily at the younger age groups.

Literacy in Gaelic is still rare in Cape Breton. While this is clearly reflected in Table I (p. 54) in responses to the question of Gaelic usage in letter writing, it is interesting to see informants' responses to the question on the use of Gaelic for greeting cards, such as those exchanged at Christmas and New Years. Since greeting cards require only a few written words, e.g. Nollaig Mhath (Merry Christmas) or Bliadhna Mhath Ur (Happy New Year), the relatively high incidence of Gaelic usage reported for this activity in Table I is not at odds with the relatively low incidence of Gaelic used for letter writing. Of course many older people admit to being able to read Gaelic, but the practice is usually reserved for reading the Bible. Due to the absence of Gaelic in the schools in former years, those of the older population who are able to read taught themselves.

As a further indication of the level of illiteracy in Gaelic, it is interesting to note that with only a few

bilingual exceptions, posters advertising Gaelic events in Cape Breton are invariably in English. According to MacKinnon (1977), this practice is not uncommon even in Gaelic areas of Scotland (p. 143). Thus, although there does not appear to be a really strong demand for literacy in Gaelic in Cape Breton, it is a skill which some have acquired by themselves. Others, particularly younger people who have had the advantage of some formal instruction in Gaelic, have professed ability in reading and writing.

Although all of my informants admitted speaking Gaelic only infrequently to a telephone operator, five of those questioned indicated that they often spoke Gaelic on the telephone to their interlocutor, i.e. to someone other than the operator; three indicated they used Gaelic from time to time and the remaining twelve of the sample stated that they did so infrequently.

Almost everyone represented in the sample informed me of the ban on Gaelic over telephone and telegraph lines during World War II. This ban originated with the Board of Censors as a wartime measure to prevent foreign languages being used in telecommunications. This move created considerable reaction among Cape Breton's Gaelic population. Several local councils protested vehemently and the ban was later dropped. (The Highlander, Nov. 24,

1971, p. 7; Dec. 8, 1971, p. 8).

Another story I heard from one of my informants concerned a Gaelic speaking man from Sydney who entered the local telephone office at this time, to report that he had been cut off in a telephone conversation with a friend. The local manager told the plaintiff that the reason for this action was that he had been speaking a foreign language, to which the Gaelic speaking man replied, "Och, but it is yourself that speaks the foreign language!"

No connection is here claimed for the relatively low incidence of Gaelic on the telephone or to an operator. Yet the telling of these incidents might provide some idea of the pattern of beliefs and attitudes that people have about their language vis à vis official pronouncements such as the one cited.

Possibly the most glaring indication of the general decline of the language is reflected in the relatively low incidence of Gaelic usage in speaking to young people. For, coupled with the fact that only a few of all the elementary schools in Cape Breton offer Gaelic as an optional subject, the future prospects for language maintenance look pale.

The number of young, elementary school children I

encountered who could speak Gaelic was very small indeed. (However, from personal observation I have noted five infants being raised with Gaelic.) Although many of the Gaelic speakers I have met in Cape Breton openly testify to this sad state of affairs, recognizing that no language can continue without a young population educated in the language, many others exclude the younger element from Gaelic affairs and make no allowances for incorporating this vital element. This "gerontological" outlook, regarding Gaelic as the exclusive preserve of the aged, does not augur well for the future of the language and is only too clearly reflected in the conspicuous absence of children within Ah Comunn Gàidhlig.

There are ample numbers of children of course who are able to sing Gaelic songs from choral training. And there is no doubt that in the process of learning songs, one does acquire a word stock in the language, as well as an idea of how the syntax works in the language. But when this knowledge is restricted to one activity, with little or no encouragement to incorporate it and extend it through the spoken language, such activities become little more than formalized rituals.

The relatively low incidence of Gaelic usage in sports and recreation is not really surprising when one

considers that organized sports and recreational activities are largely found in the more populated areas, whose residents are able to afford the facilities and trained personnel. The only exception to this general trend is the annual Highland Games held in the town of Antigonish on Nova Scotia's mainland (Fig. 2). Since this is a Scottish cultural event one would expect it to be equally describable as a Gaelic event. However, this is not the case. Participants in the Games come virtually from all over Canada and the United States and thus, are not simply culled from Nova Scotia's eastern counties. This fact of course does not exclude the significant numbers of Cape Breton participants in the various athletic events and their accompanying rooting teams.

Thus, Gaelic may be heard at the Games, but rarely, if ever, occupying equal status among announcers, score keepers and referees or even among participants for that matter. It is more likely to be heard as an aside among the crowds in attendance, and only faintly audible, as it is spoken informally and intimately.

According to Mackey (1977), the fact that one knows a language is no guarantee that one will use it. He notes that almost a third of the fluent Irish speakers in Eire seldom speak their language because of such in-

hibiting factors as fear of criticism or appearing too conspicuous among large numbers of English speakers; and that roughly half of another third do not succeed when they do try to converse because of a lack of practice (p. 4). I believe that there are equally large numbers of Gaelic speakers in Cape Breton who are also affected by similar inhibiting factors and perhaps by a host of others even more difficult to isolate. For example, several residents on the north shore of Cape Breton, whose social behaviour, including outgoing activities such as those mentioned in the foregoing, are seriously restricted due to their entrenchment in a set of religious beliefs which discourage music, drinking and large social gatherings.

Given the fact that most of the Gaelic speakers in Cape Breton are engaged in farming, fishing and other forms of manual activity, it is not surprising that few would have occasion to speak Gaelic to those in the higher echelons of the socio-economic ladder, such as doctors, lawyers and government officials. One would hardly ever expect Gaelic to be used in speaking to a cashier or waitress in a restaurant or to a teller or other bank employee. Even if such an unlikelihood were to occur, when it came to counting or arithmetical operations, the language used would most probably be English (cf. Table I).

I have observed small scale business transactions however, involving the sale of meat and livestock, where almost the entire event was conducted in Gaelic, including the price/lb. But in these instances there was little actual computing taking place.

The most obvious reason why the Gaelic speakers in my sample resort to English for computing, is the fact that they have been schooled in English. MacKinnon (1977) suggests, on the other hand, additional factors accounting for the possible preference of English in computing, over Gaelic. He states that to an English mind the vigintal system (cf. Table 2) might appear clumsy, perhaps old fashioned, imprecise, unbusiness-like or unscientific (p. 147).

Table 2
Gaelic Number System

1 <u>aon</u>	8 <u>ochd</u>	15 <u>coig deug</u>
2 <u>da</u>	9 <u>naoi</u>	16 <u>sia deug</u>
3 <u>tri</u>	10 <u>deich</u>	17 <u>seachd deug</u>
4 <u>ceithir</u>	11 <u>aon deug</u>	18 <u>ochd deug</u>
5 <u>coig</u>	12 <u>da dheug</u>	19 <u>naoi deug</u>
6 <u>sia</u>	13 <u>tri deug</u>	20 <u>fichead</u>
7 <u>seachd</u>	14 <u>ceithir deug</u>	21 <u>fichead 's a h-aon</u>

Table 2 (continued)

22	<u>fichead 's a dha</u>	70	<u>tri fichead 's a deich</u>
23	<u>fichead 's a tri</u>	80	<u>ceithir fichead</u>
24	<u>fichead 's a ceithir</u>	90	<u>ceithir fichead 's a deich</u>
30	<u>fichead 's a deich</u>	100	<u>ceud</u>
40	<u>da fhichead</u>	110	<u>ceud 's a deich</u>
50	<u>da fhichead 's a deich</u>	120	<u>ceud 's a fichead</u>
60	<u>tri fichead</u>	1000	<u>mile</u>

It is my contention that there is nothing inherent in the vigintal, viz. base twenty, which would prohibit one from using it, providing of course that one had had the occasion to be schooled in it.

IX. Gaelic in Education

If any single factor, other than the large exodus of Gaelic speakers from the rural strongholds beginning in the 1880's, can account for the sudden demise of Gaelic in Cape Breton, it must surely be the conspicuous absence of the language in the schools, either as a medium of instruction or as a subject in the curriculum. Nor does Gaelic ever seem to have been seriously considered in the schools. This is in spite of the fact that at least up to the beginning of World War II, the Scots formed the largest single ethnic group in the Province and even continue to do so in Cape Breton.

As long ago as 1841, Gaelic was recognized by the Provincial authorities as an official medium of instruction in Nova Scotian schools, along with English, French and German (Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1841, c. 43, sect. 14). But as Campbell and MacLean (1974) contend, as far as Gaelic was concerned, too many of Scottish background "...paid little more than lip-service to the vital issues of education" (p. 164).

Undoubtedly, the bulk of the Scottish immigrant population and their descendents, at least up to the 1850's and 1860's, were more concerned with sustaining a livelihood in an unknown country than with matters of education. But there were other vitiating factors operating here as well. The first of these is self-evident for anyone familiar with Highland culture and its development. That is, Gaelic culture was essentially oral. It is only in very recent times that literacy in Gaelic had reached any significant proportions. The concomitant interest in, and general acceptance of mother tongue instruction is also a relatively recent development, particularly as regards the Gaelic speaking population of Britain and its former colonies.

While it is easy to cite statutes such as that of 1841 as evidence of the official recognition of Gaelic

as a medium of instruction in the schools of Nova Scotia, it is quite another thing to find any kind of continued support from official quarters.

During my survey, I have frequently heard from older residents of Cape Breton that Gaelic was taboo in the schools and that if found out one would be severely chastized or punished for speaking the language. Similar stories relate the spying activities of some students who would report that so and so was speaking Gaelic on the school grounds or to and from school. Why teachers, many of whom would have been native speakers of Gaelic themselves, would have resorted to such measures to curb the use of Gaelic among their students is not at all surprising when one perceives these same negative positions on the language reflected in their superiors' reports to the Ministry:

...the teacher has to labour under many disadvantages...from a circumstance which is peculiar to this country...and that circumstance is the perpetual contest which the teacher has to wage in combating (sic) the peculiarities of idiom and pronunciation consequent on the prevalence of the Gaelic language. This to persons having a limited acquaintance with its effects upon a school may seem a matter of

trivial importance, yet perhaps but few realize fully how great an obstacle it is to progress in the acquisition of a thorough English education in the County. (Annual Report, Superintendent of Education, Inspector's Report, Victoria County, 1870)

However, the lack of a Gaelic element in the Nova Scotian school curriculum did not go entirely unnoticed, particularly after the turn of the 19th century. From time to time various petitions were put before the provincial government. One such petition, headed by M.R. MacLeod of Sydney and signed by a large number of Cape Breton and Nova Scotian Scots, suggested that Gaelic be included in the course of study in the common and high school grades of Nova Scotia (Assembly Petition, 1920, no. 35).

In 1921 Gaelic was included in the curriculum as an optional subject, providing a qualified teacher could be found to teach the language. Naturally, since Gaelic had hardly ever been taught in the schools, the seemingly insurmountable problem of finding people qualified to teach it remained, and the results of the government's now favourable disposition towards the language were consequently negligible.

Concerning this issue, Dunn (1974) elaborates on the problem of teaching a language one has never actually

studied but which one speaks fluently:

Gaelic grammar and spelling cannot, of course, be mastered overnight. English speaking people have inherited a long tradition of studying their own mother tongue. Yet even the university graduate who has devoted his attention to its intricacies during twelve years of school and four years of college furtively consults a dictionary to verify the spelling of quite simple English words and hesitates about grammatical usage. How much harder must this process be then for people who have always been discouraged from studying their own language. (pp.146-47)

Pressure from various organized cultural groups, while a continuing feature of the twenties and thirties, had little if any effect in drawing official attention to matters concerning Gaelic in education. The only noticeable event concerning the actual teaching of Gaelic in the 1930's was the establishment, in 1939, of the Gaelic College at St. Anne's, Victoria County (Fig. 2).

The Gaelic College was the brainchild of a local resident, A.W.R. MacKenzie. MacKenzie had a strong desire to see all facets of Highland culture preserved and he devoted his energies to this goal. Up to his death in 1967,

the College, under his direction, offered an intensive summer program to students from all over North America. Along with programs in Celtic music and history, literature, philosophy and social economics, the College placed a strong emphasis on its language classes, offering a range of courses for different age groups and competency levels.

With MacKenzie's death in 1967, however, the College began to turn more and more to the Nova Scotia government for financial assistance. The result of the province's funding, according to one source, has been disastrous as far as the College's original aims were concerned (Personal Communication from Mrs. Tina Morrison, former Gaelic teacher at the Gaelic College). For several years now the College has been losing ground as an autonomous local institution, controlled more and more by the Provincial Department of Tourism, with politically appointed administrators determining its policies. These developments have sparked considerable controversy within the Cape Breton Gaelic community, but particularly between the teaching staff of the College and the administration, resulting recently in Gaelic staff resignations. The reason suggested for these resignations was that the College was not working along the lines for which it was originally intended, that is, the promotion and preser-

vation of the Gaelic culture, "...but as a tartan circus, with the attraction of tourists as the first priority" (Cape Breton Post, May 5, 1979, p. 6).

In spite of the success of the Gaelic College program during the 1930's and 1940's, in affording Gaelic instruction to thousands of students through its summer courses and later through its winter extension and adult courses, it became evident by the 1950's, particularly after the release of the Dominion Census figures for 1951, that more drastic measures would have to be taken to halt the rapid decline in the number of Gaelic speakers.

The 1931 Census reported 24,303 native speakers of the language. The 1951 Census figures report only 6,789 Gaelic speakers, i.e. figures for mother tongue only; thus, within the space of twenty years there was a loss of 17,514 speakers.

Consequently, the 1950's saw some official government support for the language and culture in the form of grant-aided adult language classes to promote local leadership and to strengthen the prestige of the Gaelic language, as well as the inclusion of Gaelic in the public school curriculum.

In accordance with a newly established policy of sup-

port for the language, and Scottish culture generally, the Province set up a Gaelic Service within the Adult Education Division of the Department of Education and appointed a Gaelic Advisor to head the Gaelic Service. It was under the direction of the Gaelic Advisor, Major C.I.N. MacLeod, that teachers were trained, materials prepared and classes established in four public schools in Inverness County in Cape Breton. The Department of Education, through the Gaelic Service, published two works during this time for the teaching of Gaelic: (1) Simplified Gaelic Lessons for Beginners, consisting of one long-playing record and a script; and (2) An t-Eil-threach ('the exile'), a collection of original Gaelic poems and songs written by the Gaelic Advisor, C.I.N. MacLeod. Also, throughout the 1950's, MacLeod contributed numerous Gaelic articles, i.e. stories and local history, to three popular local newspapers: The Eastern Chronicle (New Glasgow), The Casket (Antigonish) and Cape Breton Mirror (Glace Bay). Together with the Nova Scotian folklorist, Helen Creighton, MacLeod edited Gaelic Songs in Nova Scotia (1954). MacLeod also prepared and broadcast two half-hour Gaelic radio lessons which ran for 23 weeks over two mainland Nova Scotia radio stations: station C.K.E.C. in New Glasgow and

station C.J.F.X. in Antigonish.

Until 1958, when he accepted a teaching position in the Celtic Studies Department at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, the late C.I.N. MacLeod had travelled extensively throughout Nova Scotia, working with adults and young people, making them aware of their Celtic heritage through the Gaelic language, music and dance. After his acceptance of the position at St. Francis Xavier University, however, although he continued to be active on a more private and personal basis, the position of Gaelic Advisor became inoperative, in spite of various requests to have the position refilled.

If the Province were serious about its promise of support for the language and culture of the Gaels, it would be incumbent upon it to provide much more direction and planning than it has done since MacLeod's transfer of services. For, while it does provide classroom space in the schools throughout the Island for evening classes, it has done little to bolster the presence of Gaelic in the day school curriculum. Notwithstanding the fact that the Ministry of Education permitted an extension of the Gaelic option from the elementary to the junior and senior high school levels in 1970 (N.S. Teach-

er's Union Newsletter, Vol. 9, No. 1), the only qualification a teacher need have to teach Gaelic is that he or she speak the language. Thus, training in the teaching of the language is deemed unnecessary and the only material available from the Ministry for classroom use is that already referred to, i.e. MacLeod's record and script, Simplified Gaelic Lessons for Beginners, produced in the 1950's.

The only other condition required for Gaelic to be accepted in the high schools is that a minimum of 15 students express an interest. If less than 15, the school is required to make other arrangements in order "...not to interfere with the regular time-table of the school" (The Teacher, Sept. 1, 1970).

There are only seven schools on the Island where Gaelic is presently taught, two in Cape Breton County and five in Inverness County. Of the five in Inverness, two are in jeopardy of losing their Gaelic programs due to their teachers leaving the area. In an area where certified teachers who speak Gaelic are rare, to say nothing of certified teachers who have been trained to teach the language, the present situation does not augur well for the continuation of these programs.

It should be borne in mind that there are people who are native speakers who have received some training

in teaching Gaelic from various qualified teachers brought over from Scotland's Jordanhill College, by An Comunn Gàidhlig or the College of Cape Breton, but by and large they are older members of the community who have not had the advantage of a formal education and are thus unacceptable to the Ministry as certified teachers capable of operating within the school system.

The outgrowth of this predicament has been the realization of Gaelic classes in continuing education programs sponsored by An Comunn Gàidhlig, the College of Cape Breton or the Provincial Ministry of Education's Adult Training Division.

Since 1975, the College of Cape Breton, through its Continuing Education Department, has offered each year four different non-credit Gaelic courses through its facilities in Sydney: (1) Beginner's Gaelic, (2) Advanced Gaelic, (3) Conversational Gaelic, and (4) Gaelic for Children. From inquiries made at the College, I have learned that enrollment in these courses is usually between 15 and 16 students per year. Instructors for these courses are usually drawn from the native Gaelic speaking pool of An Comunn Gàidhlig.

An Comunn Gàidhlig also offers courses itself through Taigh nan Gaidheal ('Gaelic Society Headquarters') in

Sydney and through its various affiliated chapters throughout Cape Breton. This summer (1980) it has embarked upon what is perhaps its most ambitious project in its ten year history; a Gaelic summer school program for over 100 students.

The Continuing Education Department of the Ministry of Education, as has been mentioned, is becoming increasingly active in setting up programs wherever there is a demand.

In addition to these programs, approximately two dozen in all, in 1974-75 the College of Cape Breton began a credit course in Conversational Gaelic and also a credit course in Celtic History (in English). As well, the College intends to offer a Gaelic literature course in the Fall of 1980.

Classroom Observations

In an effort to familiarize myself with the language, in the last few years I have been enrolled in several of the above mentioned courses, viz. a Gaelic credit course at the College of Cape Breton; two non-credit courses offered by the Ministry's Continuing Education Department; two non-credit courses offered by the College of Cape Breton; and two non-credit courses offered by An Comunn Gàidhlig. In preparation for this study I have also sat

in on several other courses and have had extensive contacts with local Gaelic teachers and students of all ages.

What follows is an attempt to describe in general terms the behaviour of teachers and students in two of these classes.

Gaelic Class 1. This class took place in Sydney in the winter of 1974. The teacher, a woman about 60 years old and a native speaker of Gaelic, stood at a chalk board in the front of the class. There were eight women and three men seated, plus three late comers (one woman and two men), making a total of fourteen students. The range of ages was between 25 and 55.

This two hour class, scheduled to begin at 8 p.m., did not actually begin until 8:30 p.m. However, the class promptly ended at 10 p.m., with a half-hour tea break between 9 and 9:30 p.m. Thus, the total instructional time was one hour.

The teacher individually greeted students as they entered the class with, "Ciamar a tha thu?" ('How are you?') or "Ciamar a tha thu a'dol an nochd?" ('How are you going tonight?'). But no attempt was made to elicit an appropriate Gaelic response from the students.

There was considerable talk, almost all in English, about certain difficulties in the pronunciation of Gaelic.

words from previous sessions. The teacher provided the proper pronunciation of each word, asking the occasional questioner to repeat the word after her.

At 8:30 p.m. the teacher turned to the chalkboard and wrote ten Gaelic sentences while most of the class looked on; several others were chatting among themselves during this time. When she had completed writing the sentences, the teacher turned to the class and asked them to read the sentences in chorus: (1) "Tha an cat aig an taigh." ('The cat is at the house.');

(2) "Tha an cu aig an doras." ('The dog is at the door.');

(3) "Chan eil an taigh beag." ('The house is not small.');

(4) "Ach tha e mor." ('But it is big.'). etc. Students were then asked to volunteer translations of these simple Gaelic sentence patterns into English.

At the completion of the translation exercise, the teacher erased the board and proceeded to write ten corresponding interrogative sentences in Gaelic, to which the students were asked to take a few minutes to write the appropriate answers in Gaelic in their notebooks.

Since most of the students appeared familiar with the technique, they finished in short order by merely jotting down the original ten sentences. A few others hesitated over spelling or inquired from their neighbours what they

had got for number eight, and so on. The students were then asked to read their answers individually. There was a tea break at 9:p.m..which lasted for a half hour, during which time no Gaelic was spoken. When class resumed at 9:30 p.m. there were more translation exercises and some new vocabulary items were put on the board, e.g. uinnean ('onion'), snèip ('turnip'), curran ('carrots'), etc. Finally, students were asked to prepare a small menu for the next class.

Before the class ended, one student asked in Gaelic whether there would be a class the following week, since Christmas was approaching. Her response, in English, was to ask the other members of the class if they had understood the question. Some of them had and several offered a translation. The teacher suggested they meet the following week as scheduled, since there was a lot of work to do before the term. Class was dismissed with traditional parting expressions in English and Gaelic, e.g. "Beannachd leibh" (lit. 'Blessings on you.') and "Oidhche mhath leibh. ('Goodnight.').

The above might appear exaggerated to the average educated reader. Although I have had to rely on my memory of this event, it nevertheless represents one of my earliest and most indelible impressions of language teaching in untutored hands.

Gaelic Class 2. This second class took place in mid-winter, in 1979, in the village of Whycocomagh, situated on the western shore of the Bras d'Or Lakes (Fig. 2). The teacher was a 35 year old man who had been speaking Gaelic for about 15 years; he had acquired the language in Cape Breton and from various sojourns in the Highlands and the Western Islands of Scotland.

There were twelve students in the class, seven men and five women, ranging in ages from 18 to 40.

This two hour beginner's class took place in a local school and began promptly at 8 p.m.

The teacher entered the class with hand drawn pictures on bristleboard. The pictures depicted farming and fishing activities, such as: making hay, milking, fishing from a boat, drying fish, as well as entertainment activities such as a ceilidh, a milling frolic, etc. The two hour class was conducted almost entirely in Gaelic.

The teacher took his first poster (Fig. 3), depicting a rural scene and displayed it to the class. In very clear Gaelic he proceeded to outline the story depicted in the drawing: "Seo an taigh aig Iain agus Màiri." ('This is John and Mary's house.');

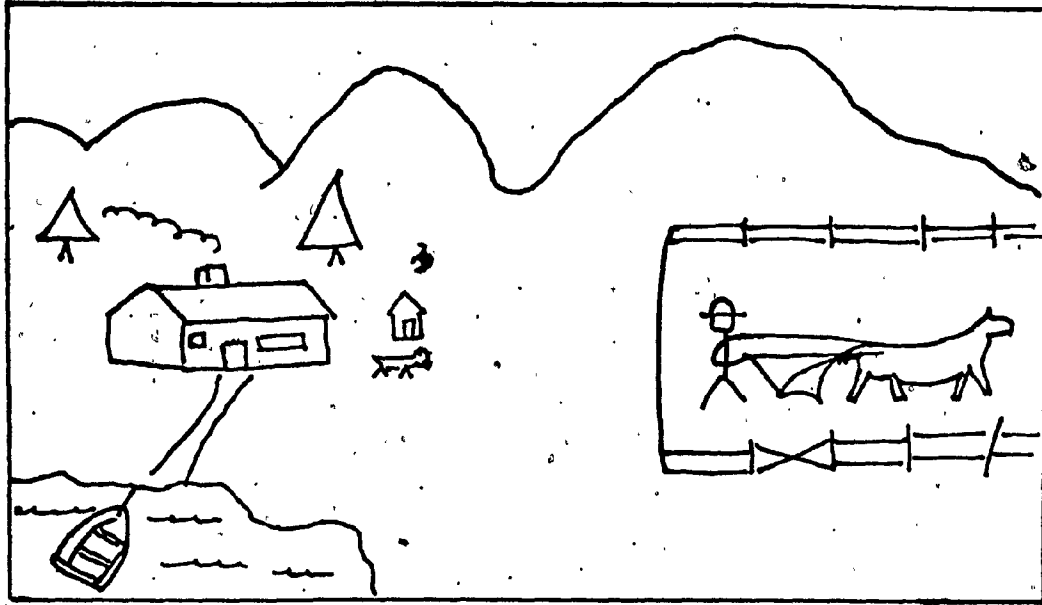
"Seo an cù aig Iain." ('This is John's dog.');

"Tha an taigh mòr." ('The house is big.');

"Seo an taigh beag." ('This is the outhouse/privy.');

"Seo

Figure 3. Poster from Gaelic Class 2



an uinneag." ('This is the window.');

"Tha craobh aig an taigh beag." ('There is a tree by the outhouse/privy, '), etc.

After the teacher had completed the story in this fashion he began to ask a series of appropriate questions: "Dé tha seo?" ('What is this?'); "Dé tha sin?" ('What is that?'); "Co tha a fuireach anns an taigh mhór?" ('Who lives in the big house?'), etc. Students were asked to respond individually. When students answered with a single word, they were assured that they had answered correctly, but were encouraged to respond in complete sentences. Students were then asked to answer questions posed by their classmates concerning the drawing. After the students had

been drilled on declarative and interrogative sentence forms related to the story, the teacher threw out a few intentional errors to elicit negative statements from the class, e.g. the teacher pointing to the boat on the shore says, "Tha am Bàta anns an loch." ('The boat is in the lake. '); a student volunteers the correct sentence, Chan eil. Chan eil am bàta anns an loch. Tha e air a' chladach." ('No. The boat is not in the lake. It is on the shore. '), etc.

Before tea break, the teacher asked if there were any students who would like to retell the entire episode in their own words, in Gaelic. The students appeared anxious to demonstrate what they had learned. At 9 p.m. the class broke up for tea break which lasted for 15 minutes. During this 15 minute period the entire class was engaged in speaking Gaelic; some among themselves and others with the teacher.

The class resumed after 15 minutes and the same general procedure followed for the second poster picture. Before the end of class, students were given the vocabulary, sentence forms and the complete stories in the form of handouts to be taken home and practiced for the following week. Finally, the students were given the words to a short, simple Gaelic song which they sang in chorus several times before dismissal with considerable spirit.

The class ended just after 10 p.m., with parting remarks all in Gaelic. Some students remained after to speak with the teacher about the possibility of bringing a fiddle and other musical instruments to class the following week for a small ceilidh.

Most of the classes I observed in Cape Breton would fall somewhere between the quality reflected in these two brief sketches.

Self-declared Levels of Linguistic Competency

In the course of my classroom observations in Continuing Education programs, and in courses offered by An Com-Gàidhlig, I spoke to 111 adult students. Of this total, 23 were native speakers of the language who had enrolled in a Gaelic course for one of the following reasons:

- (1) to learn to read Gaelic; (2) to learn to write Gaelic;
- (3) to improve their speaking ability; or (4) to meet

Gaelic speaking people. Of the remaining 88 students, 26 were repeaters, i.e. they had previously received some formal instruction in Gaelic. Seven of them had completed more than two previous courses. Of the 62 who claimed to have had no prior formal instruction, over 50%, viz. 35 students, claimed some knowledge of the language prior to registration, e.g. Gaelic clan, family and place names, expressions of parting and greeting, a song or two, a proverb, etc.

Of the 26 repeaters, that is, those who had completed at least one full Gaelic course previously, 19 claimed to be able to understand simple lessons and conduct elementary conversations in Gaelic; two claimed that they were able to understand a lot of what they heard but were unable to speak it, or spoke it only with difficulty; three claimed that they were fairly fluent; and two claimed considerable fluency.

Opinions on Learning/Teaching Gaelic

On several occasions I conducted small scale investigations among adolescents and older members of the community to determine people's opinions about Gaelic language courses. These investigations were usually carried out at local hangouts, such as dance halls, taverns, or at a ceilidh in a private house.

Most opinions, especially among older people, were favourable to the idea of Gaelic courses. "I wish there was more Gaelic in the schools in my day" and "Oh yes, it's important, even if you get only a smattering of it" are typical opinions. However, some older people were highly reactionary towards any notion of acquiring Gaelic from formal instruction or from books. One informant's remarks perhaps typify this position: "Well, I took those courses year after year, but what's the use of

learning: "Tha an cat aig an taigh" ('The cat is at the house') and "Tha thu a'dol dè'n sgoil am màireach, nach eil?" ('You are going to school tomorrow, aren't you?'). You can't get Gaelic from books and I never met anyone coming out of these courses put on by the schools who could carry on a talk in Gaelic."

Several younger people regretted efforts being made to burden an already heavily loaded curriculum with Gaelic and felt that more emphasis should be placed on "practical" languages, such as French and Spanish. The devaluing of the local culture through the process of general mainstream education has been observed by MacKinnon (1977), in his study of the Gaelic speaking population of Harris in Scotland, where pressures are increasing "to acquire languages of wider communication and the culture of the politically and economically dominating groups" (p. 174). I recall an instance which clearly underlines the bifurcation of language and cultural issues among young and old, in a visit to a community on the north shore of Cape Breton. The older members of the family sat around the kitchen table conversing in Gaelic, while the younger members of the household were seated before a blaring television in the next room.

Most Gaelic teachers I spoke to were encouraged by the increasing number of language courses available, al-

though they were generally critical of the lack of assistance they received from their employers, e.g. materials, facilities, etc.

One Gaelic elementary school teacher I spoke to in the Big Pond district of Cape Breton County (Fig. 2) stated that not all her young students learned to speak the language with the same facility: "Usually it is the children whose parents have Gaelic that actually learn to speak it very well. But it is much harder for the little ones with no Gaelic at all in the home."

Frustrations at having learned a fair amount of Gaelic from classes but the inability to use it in the full range of social situations is an additional problem. Mackey (1977) suggests that one possible explanation for this is that the language classes are not demanding enough of their participants (p. 6). In my class visits, on more than one occasion, I was struck by several factors that I felt were contributing to the general ineffectiveness of the programs, eg. the amount of English used in teaching the language; the lack of suitable materials; little or no teacher training or course preparation; and unusually long tea breaks. It appears that what is called for most of all is a general elevation of language consciousness among the people whose charge is the imparting of the language in the classroom.

Perhaps most important of all with regard to language classes is that they be made enjoyable for teacher and student alike, but certainly not at the expense of more English than Gaelic, for this would obviously undermine the purposes of such programs.

There is a number of positive spin-offs from such adult education programs as those mentioned, foremost of which is the establishment of small cells of people interested in speaking or learning to speak the language. This is an important role of such schools, as Mackey (1977) has pointed out: "The socially-oriented school should build up interpersonal relationships at that level, personal relationships which might flourish and continue" (p. 5).

One of the most startling observations in examining the use of Gaelic in Cape Breton is the relatively small number of children getting exposure to the language. For example, I know of only four children who are being raised in Gaelic on the entire Island; these children, all of pre-school age, are from four separate families living in Inverness County. While the situation is better now than in former years, as far as the widespread accessibility of courses is concerned, the only children learning Gaelic in Cape Breton are those students in four public schools of Inverness County; one school each

in the communities of Big Pond and East Bay (Fig. 2); one class through the College of Cape Breton; and the summer schedule of courses offered at the Gaelic College at St. Anne's. While there may be some other children's programs that I have failed to note or that I am unaware of, this fact alone substantiates MacLeod's (1965) claim that Gaelic may not survive the turn of the century in this last Gaelic bastion in Canada (p. 10).

Speaking to more educated Cape Bretoners, I have heard the suggestion that immersion or nursery programs be set up in certain areas in Cape Breton where Gaelic is strongest, e.g. in Mabou, Iona and Glendale, in order to insure a continuation for the language. To date no such development has arisen. Perhaps before any development of this nature occurs a great deal of attention would have to focus on existing programs to improve teacher training. Mackey (1977), commenting on efforts at language promotion in Ireland, which evidence similar problems to those experienced in Cape Breton, suggests that:

What is needed is a high level of motivation in class, a teacher with a high level of linguistic knowledge and competence in the language, and of course a high level of teaching skill, and all these at one and the same time. It is important to

remember too, that even a slight improvement in competence in the language giving rise to an increased love for it is a major factor, too.... (p. 6)

X. Attitudes and Loyalty to Gaelic

Evidence for attitudes and loyalty was collected from unsolicited remarks made during structured interviews (p. 50) and from general observations among teachers, students, farmers, tradesmen and fishermen in the towns and communities of Cape Breton. But songs too, reflect a people's attitude towards their language. Songs have been composed in Scotland and Cape Breton praising this ancient language for centuries. They are still widely sung in Cape Breton.

One of these songs is entitled, An Té A Chaill A'.

Ghàidhlig ('The Woman Who Lost Her Gaelic') (cf. p. 27).

I cite a portion of this song here for it centers around a particular phenomenon which was reportedly commonplace in the latter part of the 19th and early part of 20th centuries. This was the period of considerable emigration of Highland Scots from Nova Scotia (see chap. V). A common complaint among the people who remained was the rapidity with which many who ventured to the Boston area lost their mother tongue and upon returning had donned American accents. This satirical song was composed by the Bard MacDermid of North Shore, Cape Breton around 1880. The part quoted here, along with the translation,

is taken from Gaelic Songs of Nova Scotia by Creighton
and MacLeod (1954):

Labhair mise gu càirdeil,
"Ciamar tha thu, a sheann leannain?"
Guh do shìn mi mo làmh rith,
'S thixst mi, "ghràidh, dean a crathadh."
"Bheil thu gu math 'm a shlàinte,
No bheil thu tàmh anns a' bhaile?
Ciamar tha d'athair 's do mhàthair,
'S a bheil mo chàirdean-sa fallain,
's a h-uile neach, 's a h-uile neach?"

Threagair ise gu moiteil,
"You're a Scotchman, I reckon;
I don't know your Gaelic,
Perhaps you're from Cape Breton,
And I guess you're a farmer-
You're too saucy for better-
So I will not shake hands,
And I would rather at present,
Be going off, be going off."

Las mo ghruaidhean le tàrmuilt,
Ghluais m'àrdan le caise;
A thaobh cinnidh mo mhàthar

Cha robh àrach air agam;

'S o'n s i fhéin bha gun nàire

Thàinig càil gu mo theanga

"S thuit mi rith 'anns a' Ghàidhlig,

Gun ghuth àrd, gun droch fhacal,

Gun tuirt mi so, gun tuirt mi so.

Tigh Iain Ghròta gu slorruidh,

'S mìle mialaint is mallachd

Dhuit fhéin 's dha do sheòrsa

Dh 'fhàs cho pròiseil 's cho spaideil.

'Nuair a thig sibh an taobh so

Bidh deis ùr oribh is boireid;

Theid a Ghàidhlig air chùl,

'S théid bhur cunntas mar "Yankaich",

A chinn nan creach nan creach, a chinn nan creach.

Translation

I spoke kindly (and said), "How are you, my former sweetheart?"

I stretched out my hand towards her,

And I said, "Loved one, shake it.

Are you well, and do you live in the city?

How is your father and your mother;

Are my relatives in good health

And each person I know, and each person I know?"

She replied, haughtily, "You're a Scotchman, I reckon";
etc. (as in Gaelic text)

My cheeks flushed with reproach,
My wrath swelled quickly;
As far as my mother's ancestry was concerned
I had no control;
And since the young lady herself was without shame
A marked desire came to my tongue,
And I said to her in Gaelic,
Without a loud voice or improper word,
I said this, I said this.

May you stay in John O'Groat's forever,
And may misfortunes and maledictions
Descend upon yourself and your kind
Who became so arrogant and smart.
When you visit here
You will be dressed in a new suit and bonnet;
Gaelic will be brushed aside
And you will be called Yankees,
You perpetrators of devastation, you perpetrators
of devastation. (pp. 27-30)

Another song composed in Cape Breton around 1938,
on the occasion of the founding of the Gaelic College,

points to the continuing trend of those who ventured to the United States, and even among those who remained in Cape Breton, to abandon the Gaelic. The song ends on a rallying note, urging all to keep up their Gaelic. The three verses quoted here are from a recent Nova Scotian publication of Gaelic songs, Beyond the Hebrides/Fad air Falbh as Innse Gall by Fergusson (1977):

Saoilidh mi gur amaideach

Do neach a bhi cho stairneil-

An deidh bhi anns na "States" car bliadhn'

Gu'n dhiochuimhnich e a' Ghàidhlig,

I think it is foolishness

That one should be so stupid-

That after twelve months in the "States"

He should forget his Gaelic.

Tha moran ann ar duthaich-

Gun teagamh 's e cuis-nair 'e-

Gun Bheurla a chuireadh mach an cù

'S nach can iad aon ghuth Ghàidhlig.

And many in our country-

It's certainly most shameful-

Whose English can't put out the dog,
Won't speak a word of Gaelic.

A ghilleann òg 's a chaileagan,
Matha sibh 'gam chloistinn,
Ged shiubhlaidh sibh a deas no tuath
Na leigibh suas a' Ghàidhlig.

Now all young men and maidens fair,
If you are listening to me,
Though you should wander north or south
Do not give up the Gaelic. (p. 127)

Although a lot of satire has been aimed at those Gaels
who went to the Boston area, not all who journeyed to the
United States were quick to give up their Gaelic and High-
land customs as the following verses from the song Do
Chomunn Gàidhlig Bhoston (To the Boston Gaelic Society)

indicate:

Suas i suas i, leis a' Ghàidhlig,
Suas i suas i, cainnt ar màthar;
Suas i suas i, leis a' Ghàidhlig,
Anns gach aite 's ann gach tir.

Bho 'n tha Beurla 'gam fhagail mabach,
Ni mi cuanag anns a' Ghàidhlig.

Sing the praises of the Gaelic,
 Sing its praise, the mother tongue,
 Sing the praises of the Gaelic,
 In each place and each land.

Since the English makes me stutter,
 I shall sing my song in Gaelic. (Fergusson, 1977,
 p. 123)

Several locally composed songs commemorate a turn
 for the better for the language. One of these songs,
Faillt 'Teachdaire Nan Gaidheal' ('Welcome Highland Mess-
 enger'), welcomes the appearance, in 1925, of a new Gaelic
 publication in Sydney (cf. p. 40). Two of the song's
 verses reflect the pride in the language's antiquity and
 its special characteristics:

A Ghàidhlig bhlath nach d'fhuaireadh na b'fhearr
 Cur dan-is crabhadh an ceill;
 B'e ar coir 's ar comain gu latha-bhrath
 Seasamh g' a tearmainn o bheud.
 Bitheadh a cliu a reir a coir
 'S gach oil-thigh g 'a chuir a meud,
 Is gach oide a' toirt dhi a diu
 Cur a h-oilein gu feum.

Gaelic, muse of the Hall of Shells

In the days when men felt young,
 Of tongues, the best to worship God,
 And when Beauty's praise is sung.
 Let learning's schools around the world
 All hail its culture the more,
 And scholars turn with rightful pride
 To the riches of its lore.

Cainnt nan sonn Oisean, Oscar is Fionn,
 'S Calum Cille naomh 'nan deigh,
 Cainnt spreigeil nan làoch a choisinn an t-saors',
 Mu Allt a' bhonnaich do 'r treubh;
 Cainnt nan treun fhuair cliu anns gach stri
 An eachdraidh ar tir gu leir,
 A bha 'n Albainn uair o dheas gu tuath
 An cuirt nan uaislean gleusd.

Spoken by Ossian and Finn,
 Mighty in battle were they.
 Its thunder told when kith and kin
 Won Bannockburn's gory fray.
 Language of heroes since renowned
 In each struggle of our land.
 Once spoken in Alba's realm
 From Wick to the Solway Sand. (Fergusson, 1977, p. 125)

Finally, I have included one further song (see Appendix 2) written by the local bard, Hugh F. MacKenzie from Christmas Island, Cape Breton. This song is particularly significant in that it is a recent composition by one of the great stalwarts of Gaelic culture in this region. Mackenzie was instrumental in the founding of An Comunn Gàidhlig Cheap Breatunn, from whence this song gets its name. The song is full of praises to the past glories of the Gaels and the rich heritage of the Gaelic language. What is more revealing, however, for a recent composition, is that it has a sharp ring of optimism for the future of Gaelic in Cape Breton; the song was composed in 1969 to make the occasion of the founding of An Comunn Gàidhlig Cheap Breatunn.

I have found it revealing to regard some of the ways in which people are remembered in a folk society, such as Cape Breton, both as a reflection of the attitudes and beliefs that one has for one's ancestral language and culture, and as evidence of the respect within Gaelic communities for someone who has made a substantial contribution to the culture. The following list provides some idea of the kinds of activities or "professions" that warrant esteem among Gaelic speaking Cape Bretoners. No attempt has been made to order these "professions" in terms of their degree of status: senachaidh ('storyteller'), bard

('poet'), maighistear-sgoile ('school teacher'), sgoilear
 ('scholar, student'), sgriobhadair ('writer'), séinnair
 ('singer'), dannsaí ('dancer'), piobair ('piper'),
 s sloinntear ('genealogist'), fear togal-fuin ('precentor'),
 cf. p. 37), fear-ciúil ('musician'), fidhleir ('fiddler'),
 etc.

Yet English is the prestige language, the language of social advancement, in Cape Breton as it is throughout the Atlantic region. One does not learn Gaelic to move up the social ladder. But what is interesting is the degree of prestige that Gaelic holds within areas where Gaelic is still spoken. People fondly refer to so and so, whether living or dead, in terms of what they do, or did, which is distinctively Gaelic in outlook. This prestige value system is of an intrahierarchical nature and it is especially in evidence among Gaelic speakers, although not exclusively. One frequently hears eulogies in English praising the musical or bardic contributions of some passing member of a community.

In the past, Gaelic was seen as something of a handicap to progress or social advancement. It was English which was looked upon as coincident with education. Many parents came to value English so highly that they forbade their children to speak or learn Gaelic at all.

Not infrequently one hears from older learners,

"My parents had the Gaelic; it's all they spoke to each other with." Thus, these same people acquired a sound understanding of Gaelic but, because of these parental constraints, they did not grow up speaking the language at all, or at least not very well, and some of them have enrolled in courses to learn how to converse, read and write the language.

Some of the attitudes which regarded Gaelic as an impediment to getting ahead in a modern world have carried over to the present and are reflected in various comments, such as: "Where are you going to speak it outside of Cape Breton or Scotland?"; "What's the use of it?"; "It hasn't got enough words in it."; "The Gaelic language is inadequate as a medium for communicating technical or abstract concepts.", etc.

In discussing the "inadequacies" of Gaelic, one old gentleman asked me, "How do you say kangaroo or banana in Gaelic?" Alluding to the fact that these words were borrowed from other languages with which English has come into contact, I replied, "But how do you say them in English?"

Speakers sometimes exhibit a self-conscious attitude when using a borrowed lexical item from English, the primary donor language for almost all borrowings; as if such a practice were the exclusive prerogative of Gaelic. As

Dunn (1974) has remarked on this subject: "They are convinced that their language has lost something of its ancient grandeur when it stoops to borrowing" (p. 145).

One rarely hears negative statements directed against borrowings in English; this is in spite of what one noted Gaelic scholar has said on this matter: "Gaelic has an almost unlimited capacity for the formation of new terms from existing roots, a feature which hardly exists at all in modern English." (McKay, 1974, p. 4).

Attempts to meet the challenge of these "linguistic deficiencies" in the form of new coinages have appeared from time to time but their adoption has met with little real success.

While in the past a Gaelic speaking person having a knowledge of English may have been regarded with considerable envy and this possibility may very well have operated as a stimulus for some speakers to borrow English words and to use them indiscriminately in their Gaelic speech, today it is not unusual to hear someone being criticized for such a practice: "That's not Gaelic he speaks, it's gibberish."

Indeed, prestige has been cited by some linguists as a major factor in heavy borrowing. Nader (1962) has suggested however, that the problem is much more complex than

the prestige element indicates, and that various contexts of speech situations should be examined as well as a broad range of other cultural factors (p. 24-26)

In a preceding section of this study considerable attention was paid to those institutions, such as schools, churches and societies, which have demonstrated visible support for the Gaelic language. However, it should be pointed out that such support is minuscule when one considers the overall spectrum of institutions and organizations that exist throughout Cape Breton. In the long run, Gaelic, like Guarani in Rubin's study (1968), is appreciated and supported more by individuals than by institutions. Even within the institutions enumerated, it is a small number of individuals whose devotion and vitality ensure for those institutions a continued interest and support for Gaelic. Colum Iain MacLean's observation (1975) of Scotland's gaeltacht ('Gaelic speaking region') applies equally well to Cape Breton:

That there is widespread devotion to the language throughout the Highlands is beyond all doubt, but it is not the enthusiasm of zealots whipped up by propaganda, it is the spontaneous devotion of a disinterested but unfortunately inarticulate mass to something they feel is a very vital part of their spiritual lives. (p. 90)

Understandably, those who have Gaelic generally speak very highly of their language. Statements concerning its unique musical qualities, its rich emotional vocabulary, its cultural importance, its antiquity, etc., are commonplace. But not uncommon are certain negative attitudes towards the language, even among some who are native speakers. These latter attitudes are essentially guarded and held secret. One would rarely hear them voiced at a public gathering or at such events as have been described in the foregoing pages. In a recent conversation with a man of considerable stature within the Gaelic speaking community, the following opinion was expressed: "Whether this man or that has more Gaelic is of little real significance. What is important is that the culture is alive and well. That's the important thing!"

The recognition of the cultural importance of Gaelic was summed up adequately by Michael MacLean, a local fiddler and fiddling instructor, in speaking to a school principal on the subject of Gaelic in the curriculum: "Cape Bretoners love their piping and fiddling music but there'll be none of it as we know it unless there's more Gaelic being learned. The language and the music are one. All this fine Gaelic music we enjoy came out of Gaelic heads. If the language goes, the music will

never, never be the same."

There is not always a one to one relationship between positively expressed attitudes and language loyalty however. As one local commentator put it, "Bithidh iad a 'moladh na Gàidhlig, ach 's ann a 'Bheurla" ('They praise Gaelic alright, but in English').

While pride may exist without an expression of language loyalty, the reverse is hardly true according to Rubin (1968, p. 16). One highly significant observation concerning many Gaelic speakers is their seemingly unshakeable practice of shifting to English in the presence of even one English speaker. Gaelic speakers are shy about speaking their language in the presence of anyone who is not a native speaker or who is unable to understand it. I have seen what began as a Gaelic speaking evening, where everyone in a private house spoke and understood Gaelic, turned around to an English speaking one due to the presence of just one English monoglot. This kind of situation would of course not occur if it were not for the fact that there are presently no Gaelic monoglots in Cape Breton. Feelings of inferiority about the quality of one's Gaelic are also strongly in evidence.

At the 1979 International Gathering of the Clans

held in Nova Scotia, delegates from Scotland, including "clan chiefs", poets, singers and other dignitaries, were reported remarking that they were astonished that people in Cape Breton had held on to their Gaelic so well and for so long. One Cape Breton woman who I spoke to at the Glendale Fiddling Festival in Inverness County, told me that she was initially very apologetic about her Gaelic when speaking to some visiting Scots. Her feelings however, quickly shifted to pride when she realized that she had more Gaelic than her interlocutors.

Many Cape Breton Gaels who I spoke to were surprised at the fact that, with only a few exceptions, the "chiefs" who visited Cape Breton on this occasion were without Gaelic and many of them did not even make their home in Scotland. One old Cape Breton seanachaidh ('storyteller') was overheard saying, "Give me Highlanders with Gaelic, not kilts," referring to the strong presence of one of the cultural trappings as opposed to the relative absence of the more significant aspect of Highland culture, the Gaelic language.

Mackey (1977) has pointed out that attitudes may be influenced by the learning success or failure in formal situations (p. 3). Mention has already been made of certain negative dispositions of some people who had formal exposure to Gaelic in the classroom (see p. 88-89).

Negative feelings about learning the language sometimes point to linguistic characteristics, such as the lack of correspondence between the orthography and the spoken language, the rules of aspirations, the irregular verb system and the velar quality of its sound system. Special qualities attributed to the language evidencing positive attitudes have already been mentioned and include: age, contributions in literature, song, story and music from early times to the present, and its vitality, referring to the fact that Gaelic is a living language in Cape Breton and Scotland, in spite of the enormous adversities of the past.

Swadesh (1948) in his socio-linguistic commentary on obsolescent languages, notes that language is the most persistent of all cultural factors; that even after the immigrant language begins to lose ground to another dominant linguistic group, "there are certain groups and personalities that persist especially in retaining the old language" (p. 234).

There is an insistence by many in Cape Breton, some informed, others not so informed, that Gaelic will soon become extinct in Cape Breton and that now the language is uttering its dying gasps. But others feel that it will grow, that it is too important a heritage to let die.

This latter group point to the renewed interest in Gaelic

in the classrooms, the media and in areas of entertainment. According to some Gaelic is indeed undergoing a renaissance.

XI. Conclusion

It is true that Gaelic is less under attack now than it has been in the past. The denigration of the language in the schools, shops and industry of the towns now seems to have turned around somewhat in the face of increasing attention in Canada to cultural minorities and their languages in the wake of a rising French-Canadian nationalism. But even with the kinds of support trickling from the government sector, and from the various local ethnic organizations in eastern Canada, the real thrust for Gaelic in the area under study is the "spontaneous devotion..." of Gaelic speakers themselves to which Calum Iain Maclean refers (see p. 105).

It is upon these people, the native speakers, as Smith (1968) points out, that the final responsibility for the continued use of the language rests (p. 80). What is interesting in the Cape Breton situation, among those who support the language, is a certain lack of sophistication coupled with a general level of naivete. To many, but particularly the young, Gaelic folklore, song and music are unknown. While Gaels of the past may be cited for having been negligent in their efforts to ensure

that the language remain in the school system, they can hardly be held responsible for the little attention that their folklore, history, song and music have received in mainstream education, vis à vis their very substantial contributions to the development of eastern Canada. To transmit the contributions of this heritage would entail a considerable extension to present activities in this field among scholars interested in the preparation of materials for use in the schools.

While An Comunn Gàidhlig and other organized groups have made considerable efforts, faced largely with a disinterested and apathetic population, nothing short of a massive campaign in the schools will ensure a future for the language. The training of native speakers, especially for the teaching profession, is very important for the future in the face of present odds.

Ruairidh Mackay, former president of An Comunn Gaidhealach ('The Highland Society') in Scotland, speaking recently in Cape Breton, suggested the need for missionary work among Cape Breton Gaels:

They must understand that if it were not for the Gaelic people there would not be any clans. Nor would there be the vast body of Gaelic song and poetry, or the great treasure of Cape Breton fiddle music that they love so much.... We owe it to people

to let them know their splendid heritage, to give them more than the externals. You've stayed Gaelic in style and friendliness and hospitality and you've proved that Gaelic is an adaptable language, not a museum piece. (Cape Breton Post, Aug. 11, 1979, p. 7)

One occasionally hears the opinion expressed that only by official recognition and support will the language be saved from extinction. But surely the will to survive must be there in the first place, otherwise what does survive will likely be no more than the superficial trappings.

Concerning the general population's potential for promoting the language, Angri Peer (1977) has this to say about Rhaeto-Romansh: "It may well be asking too much to require of a man in ordinary circumstances to earn his bread and provide for his family, but also to exert himself on behalf of preserving the purity and utility of the mother-tongue" (p. 10). I believe many Cape Breton Gaelic speakers are faced with a similar dilemma. The great bulk of their daily routine is taken up by work and livelihood commitments. But as Mackey (1977) has stated, "...all language survival has a price tag. Anyone who thinks that language survival can be got for nothing is under an illusion" (p. 12). In the Cape Bre-

ton context, that price tag includes more than dollars and cents, more than one's annual membership fee in local societies and organizations; it includes time, energy and manpower, as well as a good deal of planning and professional advice and a long term commitment to specific policies and goals.

Institutions can provide encouragement in promoting the language in sundry ways, such as the establishment of "live-ins" in gaeltacht ('Gaelic speaking') areas, grants for study and research, prizes for Gaelic achievement in the schools, incentives for parents who teach their children the language, setting up various singing, prose writing and poetry competitions, etc. But ultimately the onus is on each speaker to use the language whenever and wherever possible. For it is only by speaking the language that extensions into the areas of usage are to occur and a future for the language secured.

Outside of increased personal usage by all members of the Gaelic speaking community, perhaps the outstanding local untapped resource is the electronic media, particularly television. For as Mackey (1977) states: "Television is certainly the most powerful medium for the maintenance of language through planned programming. If it gets into the home and if it attracts listeners it

will help to maintain the language by promoting at least passive bilingualism and comprehension" (p. 17).

A very interesting development has occurred in recent months in Cape Breton which indicates a positive note for the future of Gaelic. Through the efforts of a small core group, a series of meetings has taken place at various places on the Island to discuss matters specifically related to the promotion and maintenance of Gaelic. What is even more interesting however, is that these meetings, billed as Còmhhdhail nan Gaidheal ('a Conference of Gaels'), are conducted entirely in Gaelic and are independent of existing organizations and societies. In the four months they have been held, these meetings have generated some impressive new starts, including the establishment of regular Gaelic columns in five newspapers in eastern Nova Scotia. At one of these meetings held in Mabou, Inverness County, the primary agenda item centered on cutbacks in the County schools system and the potential effect this would have for optional subjects such as Gaelic. It was decided at this meeting that what was needed to strengthen Gaelic in the curriculum was large scale public support from the County rate payers. Thus, a questionnaire is to be circulated to all parents in the County to elicit their support for the expansion and

improvement of the Gaelic program in the Inverness County schools. The Psychology Department of St. Francis Xavier University, at nearby Antigonish, has indicated that it might be interested in undertaking this study. If this kind of statistical data is forthcoming it could be very useful in convincing educational and governmental authorities to redirect their thinking on matters pertaining to Gaelic; and provided the response proves positive, this procedure might be used again to improve the position of Gaelic in schools elsewhere on the Island.

Television was the subject of the còmhhdhail ('conference') held in Baddeck, in Victoria County, recently. Parts of BBC Scotland's production Can Seo ('Say This!') were shown by VTR and considerable discussion ensued about the possibility of purchasing the program or arranging an exchange between the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

The program Can Seo, a television series for beginners in Gaelic, was produced by BBC Scotland in conjunction with the Celtic Department of Glasgow. It was televised throughout Scotland last year. It consists of twenty 25 minute television programs. Each of the programs contains a teaching section, background material and a serial story. In addition, to complement the television

series, there are twenty weekly 15 minute radio programs. There is also a text with chapters corresponding to each of the twenty television programs. If arrangements can be made to have this entire program broadcast in Cape Breton and eastern Nova Scotia it could have a significant impact on the learning and teaching of Gaelic in this region.

Finally, tribal, ancestral and minority languages are shed daily throughout the world because of the necessity to learn major link-languages, such as French, English and Spanish. In the past, Gaelic speakers were compelled to learn English for similar reasons. No such compulsion or pressure exists for learners of Gaelic as an ancestral or second language, nor for those who wish to maintain Gaelic as their mother tongue. Why then, do they bother? While the ultimate answer to this question lies beyond the scope of this study, a possible hint is suggested by Gregor (1980):

The modern world has advanced at least so far that it will no longer stand aside and see a language, anymore than a species, disappear. Much however, depends on Celtic-speakers themselves. Let them reflect that languages are not killed; they commit suicide. (p. 367)

Suggestions for Future Research

Regional Census. While estimates of the number of Gaelic speakers in this area range from 5000 to 6000, the actual number is not known. It would be profitable, from the point of view of language policy and planning for the future, to conduct a regional census throughout eastern Nova Scotia, along the lines of the Irish Committee on Language Attitudes Research Report (1975).

Tovey (1978) in her discussion of language policy and social development in Ireland, cites the Report as illustrative of more than a mere head count of Irish speakers. The Report went a step further in establishing a paradigm for competency in a regionally conducted census, i.e. the census asked of the informants whether they had no Gaelic, the odd word, a few sentences, parts of conversations, most conversations or whether they were fluent native speakers (p.10).

Dialectal Research. Nineteenth century Gaelic dialects were transposed to this region during the great flood of Highland immigration. The Gaelic spoken by Cape Bretoners today still reflects their origins in the Islands of Scotland, such as Skye, Lewis, Harris, Barra and the Highlands. Few linguistic studies have been done in this area and a comparative study merits consideration.

Borrowing. The only study to date on the subject of borrowings in Gaelic as it is spoken in this part of Canada was by Campbell (1948), but no extensive work in this field has been undertaken in recent years. It would be profitable to investigate this area to see to what degree rules of aspiration, accent and the various Gaelic inflections have been retained in the borrowed items as an index of language maintenance. Also, and equally rewarding, would be an analysis of the kinds or categories of items borrowed, possibly indicating those areas where the dominant (or donor) language has wielded the greatest influence.

Testing. No tests have been designed or administered to measure the effectiveness of Gaelic language programs in Cape Breton. For example, nothing comparable to the Scottish Certificate of Education, Learner's "C" Grade Examination in Gaelic exists for students learning the language. In order to assess and improve present programs and thus plan for future ones, tests at least comparable to those of Scotland will have to be designed.

Appendix 1

Sample of Questionnaire Schedule Used in Structured
Interviews to Determine the Degree of Gaelic Usage
in Specific Situations in Cape Breton

Name	Occupation
Residence	Education
Age	Religion
Sex	Marital Status

Introductory Statement:

I want to know with whom you speak Gaelic, in what situations and to what degree or extent you use Gaelic. I have prepared 36 questions related to different situations where you might use Gaelic. Please answer the questions with "often", "sometimes" or "infrequently" in terms of the likelihood of your using Gaelic in these situations.

Questions:

Often Sometimes Infrequently.

1. Do you use Gaelic to argue?
2. Do you dream in Gaelic?
3. Do you use Gaelic to tell jokes?
4. Do you swear in Gaelic?
5. Do you pray in Gaelic?
6. Do you count in Gaelic?

Appendix 1 (continued)

Questions:

Often Sometimes Infrequently

7. Do you use Gaelic when you are meeting or saying good-bye to people?
8. Do you use Gaelic in speaking to the telephone operator?
9. Do you use Gaelic when you are alone with your spouse?
10. Do you use Gaelic when you are speaking to your doctor?
11. Do you use Gaelic with older people around your area?
12. Do you use Gaelic when you are speaking to young people?
13. Do you use Gaelic when speaking to strangers who speak Gaelic?
14. Do you use Gaelic when you are at the bank?
15. Do you speak Gaelic at dances in the country?
16. Do you speak Gaelic to traveling salesmen?

Appendix 1 (continued)

Questions:

Often Sometimes Infrequently

17. Do you speak Gaelic when you are speaking to your older relations?
18. Do you write letters in Gaelic?
19. Do you use Gaelic when you are in the street in the country?
20. Do you speak Gaelic when you are at the local garage?
21. Do you speak Gaelic with your minister or priest?
22. Do you speak Gaelic when you are drinking?
23. Do you speak Gaelic when you are at a dance in town?
24. Do you use Gaelic when you are dealing with lawyers?
25. Do you use Gaelic around the farm/boat when you are working?
26. Do you speak Gaelic on the telephone?

Appendix 1 (continued)

Questions: Often Sometimes Infrequently

27. Do you use Gaelic to write greeting cards, such as at Christmas or New Years?
28. Do you use Gaelic when you are at a ceilidh, mod, festival or concert?
29. Do you use Gaelic when you are in the street in town?
30. Do you use Gaelic when you are speaking about men/women?
31. Do you speak Gaelic when you meet a Gaelic teacher?
32. Do you use Gaelic at Club or Society meetings?
33. Do you use Gaelic in restaurants or other public eating places?
34. Do you use Gaelic when you are dealing with government officials?
35. Do you use Gaelic in sports or recreational activities?
36. Do you use Gaelic at church meetings?

Appendix 2An Comunn Gàidhlig Cheap Breatunn

Teannaibh dlu is seinnibh ceol;
 Deonamh cridhealas, gu leoir,
 Gu'm bheil a' Ghàidhlig fhathast beo,
 'S aobhar leom dhuinn bhi g'a labhairt.

Gather round and sing the songs;
 Let them ring out joyously,
 Let's show that Gaelic's still alive
 Proudly let us raise our voices.

A' chanain 's aosda tha fo 'n'ghrein;
 Bha i anns a 'Gharadh fhein.
 Nuair a chunnaic Adhamh Eubh
 Thuirt e, "m'eudail 's tu mo leannan."

The oldest language 'neath the sun,
 'Twas in Paradise itself.
 And when Adam first saw Eve,
 Said he, "m'eudail 's tu mo leannan."

Gu'n robh cuid de 'n t-sluagh an duil
 Gu'n do chaill i brigh 's a cliu,
 Ach fhuair i aiserigh as ur,

'S tha i muirneach mar a chleachd i.

There are some folks who believed
That she'd lost her worth and fame,
But she has risen once again,
And she's loved as much as ever.

'S lionmhor caraid aic'

An Ceap Breatunn tir mo graidh;
Thog iad a bratach gu h-ard,
'S cha tuit i gu brath gu talamh.

Many friends of her remain
In Cape Breton, land I love;
Raising her standard on high,
They'll hold it aloft forever.

Thuir na Gaidheil le guth cruaidh,
"Cumaidh sinn ar canain suas,
Cha teid i gu brath do 'n uaigh;
Gheibh i onair, buaidh 'us ceartas."

Spoke the clansman with clear voice;
"We shall keep our speech alive,
She never will see the grave;
Winning honour, fame and justice."

Siol nam fear bha fearail, treum,
 B'fhuilteach iad le lannan geur,
 'S tric a chuir iad gu ratreut
 Luchd na Beurla ri uchd catha.

Seed of men so manly, brave,
 Blood, they drew with weapons sharp,
 Often forcing the retreat
 Of the English from the battle.

Ged chaidh bacadh a bha teann
 A chuir air an cainnt 's an ceol;
 A dh' aindeoin bagairtean Rìgh Deors,
 Chum iad beo iad 's bi iad maireann.

Though restraints that were severe
 Were put on their speech and song;
 In spite of threatening from King George,
 They are living and they'll live on.

Tha comunn ur air bonn 's an ait',
 Toirt urachadh do chainnt nam bard;
 Iad 'ga cumail fallain, slàn,
 Anns an inbhe ard a chleachd i.

And now a new club's in this place,
That will revive the speech of bards;
They will keep it healthy, hale,
Just as fine as in the old days.

Tha buill aigeanach air ghleus,
Aontach ann an gnìomh 's am beus,
Deanamh dichìoll a tha treun,
'S o 'n a' Bheurla tha 's an fhasan.

Busy members are at work,
One they are in acts and aims,
Trying hard to gain success
And put English out of fashion.

Aig gach coinneamh gur e'n gnath,
Gu 'ceolmhor' binn bhi seinn nan dan,
Thug an sinnsridh nall thar sail,
O na baird bha an Tir nam Beannaibh.

At each meeting it's the custom
With music sweet to sing the songs,
That their sires brought o'er the sea
From the bards in the Land of Mountains.

'S e mo dhurachd dhuibh an drasd',

Buaidh is piseach ann ar cas.

Bithidh dileas fad ur lath'

Do Chomunn Gàidhlig Cheap Breatunn.

This the wish I send you now,

May you prosper in your work,

And be faithful all your days,

To the Gaelic Club of Cape Breton!

(Fergusson, 1977, pp. 129-30)

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