

Government schooling and teacher identity: The exertions of the first-class teacher at Worcester, Cape of Good Hope, c.1856-1873

Helen Ludlow

Wits School of Education

University of the Witwatersrand

helen.ludlow@wits.ac.za

Abstract

In 1839 the colonial administration introduced to the Cape Colony one of the first systems of state education in the British Empire. This Established System of Education staggered along for a quarter century before the Cape colonial parliament voted to bring it to an end in 1865. Ambitious in its social and academic intentions, this “very English” system gained some acceptance as a model that could be aspired to – though not always in the intended form – even in predominantly Dutch-speaking communities like that of Worcester. The personal role of the teacher was central and Albert Nicholas Rowan, the government teacher at Worcester from 1856, was regarded as one of the more successful pedagogues within the Established System. This article examines the attempts of Rowan to make his school a viable entity. It engages with his personal identity as an overworked but well-qualified and respectable purveyor of knowledge. It notes how the social capital he possessed in terms of connection with the local Dutch Reformed Church could be mobilized to the school’s advantage. It also traces his attempts to steer his school through the waters of religious denominationalism – a denominationalism symbolic of competing cultural and political identities. The case study locates the teacher during a time of transition from an early model of government schooling – heavily dependent on one teacher in one classroom – to a “family model” of public schooling becoming common throughout the British Empire by the 1870s. The Worcester Government School lasted longer than any other at the Cape, as Rowan took on the identity of the more bureaucratic, paternalistic head master. It made way for explicitly secular, subsidized Girls’ and Boys’ Udenominational Public Schools only in 1873, as the local inhabitants assumed more responsibility for public schooling. The teacher’s reward was promotion to a position of educational surveillance and regulation in a new colonial inspectorate.

Keywords: Worcester; Cape Colony; Nineteenth century; Government education; Rhenish mission school; Teacher identity; Denominationalism; Albert Nicholas Rowan; Udenominational Public Schools.

Introduction

Albert Nicholas Rowan was the government teacher at Worcester in the Cape Colony between 1856 and 1872 and both built the most complex of the government educational establishments and kept it going long after most of the other government schools had closed. With its focus on Rowan, this article completes a series on the identity of Cape colonial government teachers employed within the centrally regulated Established (or New) System of Education launched in 1839 and formally brought to a close in 1865.¹

The history of mid-nineteenth century Cape colonial education is thinly documented. In 2010, in a case study of the Caledon government teacher, I noted the minimal engagement there had been in South Africa with pre-apartheid education history.² As recently as December 2013, Kallaway and Badroodien stated of education history in South Africa as a whole: “that there has been very little research in the field during the last 15 years”.³ Yet there are signs of fresh interest in aspects of colonial and mission education, enlivened in some instances by transnational approaches which are reshaping international history of education writing.⁴ Little appears to have changed, however, with regard to the history of education within the colony of settlement during the heyday of the Cape government schools (1839-1865). For the present it remains patchy in content and empiricist in construction. Malherbe’s 1925 overview of education history between 1652 and 1922 remains the most complete for the mid-19th century.⁵ Otherwise the field is covered only in a

1 H Ludlow, “Examining the government teacher: State schooling and scandal in a mid nineteenth-century Cape village”, *South African Historical Journal*, 62(3), 2010, pp. 534-560; “George Bremner, Graaff-Reinet and ‘a state of feeling’, 1848-1859”, *New Contree* 63, January 2012, pp. 113-140; “The government teacher as mediator of a ‘superior’ education in Colesberg, 1849-1858”, *Historia* 57(1) May 2012, pp. 141-164; “The government teacher who resolved to do what he could himself: Wynberg, Cape Colony, 1841-1863”, *Southern African Review of Education*, 19(2), 2013, pp. 25-47.

2 H Ludlow, “Examining the government teacher...”, *South African Historical Journal*, 62(3), 2010, pp. 536-537.

3 P Kallaway and A Badroodien, “Editorial Notes”, *Southern African Review of Education*, 19(2), 2013, p. 3.

4 For example, M Healy-Clancy, *A world of their own: A history of South African women’s education* (Scottsville, UKZN Press, 2013) on the mission origins and later trajectory of Inanda Seminary in Natal. S Duff tackles changing constructions of childhood and Dutch Reformed Church involvement in Cape schooling, particularly after 1870, in *Changing childhoods in the Cape Colony: Dutch Reformed evangelicalism and colonial childhood, 1860-1895* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); R Schwartz, “Industrial Education in Natal: The British imperial context, 1830-1860”, P Kallaway (ed.), *Empire and education in Africa: The shaping of a comparative perspective* (New York: Peter Lang, forthcoming) places colonial education policy in the wider frame of transnational discourses and meanings. R Elphick, *The equality of believers: Protestant missionaries and the racial politics of South Africa* (Charlottesville [Va.], University of Virginia Press, 2012) is a key new reference on mission education.

5 EG Malherbe, *Education in South Africa, I, 1652-1922* (Cape Town and Johannesburg, Juta, 1925); JJ Booysse, CS le Roux, J Seroto and CC Wolhuter, *A history of schooling in South Africa: Method and context* (Pretoria, Van Schaik, 2011), pp. 101-103, touch on the origins and demise of the Established System briefly, and wrongly state that fees were charged for first-class schooling when all elementary education in the government schools was initially free.

genre of popular institutional histories and some dated post-graduate research providing historical overviews of schools in particular towns.⁶ The thorough studies of the various Superintendents-General of Education at the Cape, recording their policies and practices, remain the most useful.⁷

This study reflects on the identity and career of a colonial government teacher while recording an important and generally overlooked colonial education project. The approach, while at times constrained by the official nature of sources, is informed by the understanding that identity is performed within the discourses and social practices of the time.⁸ The Cape Colony, permanently under British rule from 1814, was being shaped according to nineteenth century liberal conceptions; thus notions of governmentality and the meaning of denominational identity in a changing colonial order are considered. This is done as the experiment in government education took a final turn towards a different, less costly metropolitan model of aided schooling from 1865.

The intention of this study is to trace Albert Rowan's construction of himself as a first-class government teacher. Tom Popkewitz writes of the Enlightenment as "inventing" individuals with a sense of being "purposive actors" rather than victims of "transcendental forces", something that is very evident in Rowan.⁹ This educator felt himself capable, knowledgeable and self-sacrificing. His identity is most strongly represented in his public role at what he referred to as "my school" – the Worcester First Class Government School – and performed most deliberately in his extensive correspondence with his superiors.¹⁰ From 1856 to 1860 his tone is sometimes obsequious, largely truculent; his preoccupation "to make the education afforded in the Government [school] worth having".¹¹ This was in the context of perceived

6 DH Thomson, *The story of a school: A short history of the Wynberg Boys' High School* (Wynberg, Rustica Press, 1961) which clearly uses archival records but it lacks any references; J Linnegar, *SACS – 150 years: A history of the South African College Schools* (Cape Town, The South African College Schools' Committee, 1979); JML Franck, "Onderwys in die Paarl gedurende die 19de eeu, 1804-1905 (D Ed thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1964).

7 JI Janse van Rensburg, *Die lewe en werk van Sir Langham Dale, 1859-1872* (D Ed thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1943); WL Nell, *James Rose Innes as Educationist at the Cape, 1822-1859* (D Ed thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1973).

8 JB Margadant (ed.), *Introduction, The new biography: Performing femininity in nineteenth-century France* (Berkeley & Los Angeles, UC Press, 2000), pp. 1-10.

9 T Popkewitz, "The production of reason and power: Curriculum History and intellectual tradition," T Popkewitz, BM Franklin and MA Pereyra (eds.), *Cultural history and education: Critical essays on knowing and schooling* (London & New York, RoutledgeFalmer, 2001), p. 158.

10 This is primarily found in the Colonial Office (CO) education folders and those of the Superintendent-General of Education (SGE), located in the Cape Archives, Roeland Street, Cape Town (hereafter CA).

11 AN Rowan, "Teachers' Answers", G.24-'63. *Cape of Good Hope* (hereafter CGH). *Report of a commission appointed, in accordance with the addresses of the Legislative Council and House of Assembly, to inquire into and report upon the Government Educational System of the Colony.* (Hereafter, *Report of Watermeyer Commission*), Appendix II, p. 35.

personal and professional insecurity. Thereafter, Rowan's correspondence is muted and bureaucratic – that of the “head master” in the family school, orchestrating its expansion in a more supportive partnership with church and state. Rowan was widely regarded as a successful teacher, although he was not an uncritical supporter of the principles of the Established System.¹² He was later to judge the system thus:¹³

There was no bond of connection between it and the people. It was too liberal and too Governmental; and in addition, it was badly administered from its very commencement.

Worcester, where he laboured for sixteen years, was one of twenty-one Cape towns where a first-class government school was set up by the British colonial administration to provide a free elementary education to the town's children of every race and class. In addition, as a first-class school, it was to provide opportunities for a secondary education - in mathematics, physical science and the classics – to pupils who paid £1 a quarter for the privilege. Initiated in 1839, at the demise of slavery and at a time when egalitarian humanitarian discourses were dominant, the System's liberalism is reflected in the intentions to include and improve all of the Colony's children. It is reflected in a concern for a better-regulated population through administrative efficiency. It is also evident in the System's commitment to a non-sectarian (though Christian) curriculum, and to developing in children an understanding of rational scientific forms of knowledge. Finally, it is seen in the emphasis on obtaining well-qualified government teachers – initially almost all graduates of Scottish universities – who were able to teach, rather than resort to forms of rote instruction. To prove themselves qualified, they were required to pass an examination based on the Scottish *Chambers Educational Course*, which was implemented in the Cape government schools.¹⁴

In criticizing the Established System as being “too Governmental”, Rowan was chaffing against the constraints of a centralized system of colonial government regulation which proved to be both inefficient and at the same time left little legitimate room for local manoeuvre. This was particularly because of inadequate financial arrangements beyond payment of the teacher's salary and

12 JR Innes to Select Committee, 12 May 1857, AISC – 1857. *CGH. Report of the Select Committee appointed to consider the subject of education*, p. 29.

13 A Rowan, 6 July 1878, EG Malherbe, *Education in South Africa*, p. 95.

14 H Ludlow, “State schooling and a cultural construction of teacher identity in the Cape Colony, 1839-1865” (PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 2011), pp. 39-42; 45-46.

rent for his house and schoolroom.¹⁵ Rowan attributed his achievements in no small way to his co-operation with the local inhabitants, and this case illustrates how he drew on the social capital provided by the Worcester Dutch Reformed Church community.

When he felt frustrated in his goals of establishing a viable government school and a decent living for himself, Rowan resorted to a direct correspondence with the highest executive officer in government, Colonial Secretary Rawson W Rawson, seeking an almost pre-modern form of personal patronage. This reinforces a view of the British colonial state as failing to achieve the kind of regularity and efficiency in education that the Established System was intended to promote. At the same time the emergence by 1853 of the colonial parliament and by 1855 of new structures of local government began to shift power over education away from the governor and Colonial Secretary in important ways. Rowan's enterprise reflects a changing context as the state's initial conception of the workings of the Established System was modified, and Worcester – both its government school and the aided Rhenish mission school – pointed to new ways of managing education by the 1860s.

Worcester and schooling

This Boland town lies in the Breede River valley at the edge of the arid Karoo, separated from the capital and surrounding wine lands by a series of towering mountain ranges. Remoteness from the colonial centre is important in this study, with Worcester situated 120 kilometres northeast of Cape Town. It was laid out as a sub-drostdy in 1819 and took over the role of district capital from Tulbagh in 1822.¹⁶ By the 1840s it was the centre of a vast district of productive mixed farming, despite the scrubby nature of much of its terrain.¹⁷ When the Established System was introduced to its main town, the district had a population of 8 845, made up of roughly equal

15 JR Innes, 8 October 1861, "Minutes of Evidence Taken before the Education Commission", G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, pp. 3-5.

16 H Fransen, *Old towns and villages of the Cape: A survey of the origin and development of towns, villages, and hamlets of the Cape of Good Hope* (Jeppestown, Jonathan Ball, 2006), p. 174.

17 W Dooling, *Slavery, emancipation and colonial rule in South Africa* (Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg, UKZN Press, 2007), pp. 171-172. He also cites Worcester immigrant Thomas Heatlie as an example of a modernizing, mechanizing farmer in the 1860s.

numbers of white (predominantly Dutch) and coloured residents.¹⁸ The latter were largely descendants of Khoisan servants and the significant number of slaves who had laboured on the district's farms before emancipation.

Worcester was a carefully planned town with wide streets, gardens irrigated with "leiwater" from the Hex River and, at its centre, a "very large common – or market-place" known as Church Square.¹⁹ When approaching from the countryside, a first sighting of Worcester itself would be the tower of the Dutch Reformed Church, no accidental marker of the identity of the town in which this case study is located. Across the central square from the Dutch Reformed Church was the Rhenish Mission, with its complex of schools under missionary Louis Esselin.²⁰

Image 1: Worcester in about 1833, showing Dutch Reformed and Lutheran Churches



Source: C D'Oyley, H Fransen, *Old towns and villages of the Cape: A survey of the origin and development of towns, villages, and hamlets of the Cape of Good Hope* (Jeppestown, Jonathan Ball, 2006), p. 177.

18 "Return of the extent, population and stock of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope for the year 1841" shows it to be 4 044 whites and 4 801 coloureds in an area of 20 000 square miles, WL Nell, "James Rose Innes as educationist", p. 497.

19 Anon., *Life at the Cape a hundred years ago, by a Lady* (Cape Town, Struik, 1963), pp. 92-93.

20 The first Rhenish Missionary Society missionaries began their work in the Cape in 1829, in Stellenbosch, Tulbagh and the Cedarberg. J du Plessis, *A history of Christian missions in South Africa* (London, Longman, 1911), pp. 202-204. A Worcester mission seems to have been established within a few years, JS Marais, *The Cape coloured people 1652-1937* (Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1957), pp. 246-247; H Fransen, *Old towns and villages...*, Picture 61, p. 177.

As well as having a number of small private enterprises that blossomed and faded on the educational landscape, Worcester was the site of one of Governor Lord Charles Somerset's English free schools dating from 1822.²¹ The free schools, including that at Worcester, were undermined by ill attendance, poor supervision and a lack of suitably qualified teachers. By 1837, when Colonial Secretary John Bell, businessman and editor, John Fairbairn and astronomer, Sir John Herschel were conceiving of the Established System, it was this poor performance that persuaded them of the need for change.²²

Despite the inadequacies of the Worcester free school in the 1830s, there was a certain willingness in this Dutch community to avail itself of a basic English education,²³ as well as to participate in a local school commission. The school commissioners felt, however, that in terms of punctuality and regularity, the free school compared unfavourably with their perceived social inferiors at the Rhenish Mission School.

Under the Established System, Revd Patrick Black was recruited from Edinburgh University by the first Cape Superintendent-General of Education (SGE), James Rose Innes, and dispatched to Worcester in 1841.²⁴ In July 1842, there were 140 white and 434 coloured children under the age of fourteen in the town of Worcester. Of these, 173 were at or had been to school.²⁵ The institution of a first-class government school would result in a steady improvement in the educational dispensation for white boys and girls. The education of an eventual 400 coloured children in the four divisions of the Rhenish Mission School would continue to win approbation throughout subsequent decades.²⁶ This, as we shall see, would be the cause of some irritation to the government teacher. The bifurcation in local provision of schooling in the 1830s thus continued, and although school commission reports throughout the 1840s noted that no coloured pupil was prevented from attending the government school, they also noted that none did. In this former slave-owning community, the inclusive intentions of the Established System did not resonate with local leaders whose school commission finally

21 CA, 1/WOC 19/122, Proceedings of the Worcester School Commission, 1834-1854, for some information on the schools of the period.

22 G.24-'63, *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, pp. xxiv-xxxiv.

23 By the 1830s some Dutch was used in many free schools in order to retain pupils, and this appears to have been the case in Worcester. "Examination of the Free School 30 June 1835", CA, 1/WOC 19/122, Proceedings of School Commission.

24 CA, CO 499 JR Innes to Colonial Secretary (Col Sec), 22 May 1841.

25 CA, 1/WOC/19/122, "Return of white and coloured children in the town of Worcester under 14 year of age, in the month of July 1842", "Proceedings". This is a useful source as it lists all Worcester households in July 1842.

26 CA, CO 767 L Dale, "Report of recent tour of inspection in several divisions of the Colony", 12 May 1860.

stated in 1848: “No mixture of Classes and Races has taken place in the Government Free [sic] School in this Town and in our opinion a mixture of Classes and Races would prove disadvantageous”.²⁷

The career of Albert Nicholas Rowan, government teacher at Worcester

Albert Rowan was born in Stellenbosch, the son of William Rowan, an Irish land surveyor, and Johanna Smit.²⁸ He spoke Dutch²⁹ and was well acquainted with the Established System, having received his schooling at the Stellenbosch Government School under Black’s fellow Scottish recruit, Humphrey McLachlan.³⁰ Thereafter, for three years, Rowan served as assistant to his schoolmaster and mentor, an outspoken, scholarly and eventually broken man, with whom Rowan maintained an important relationship.³¹ From February 1848 to May 1856, Rowan was government teacher at Malmesbury,³² gaining, he believed, “the esteem and confidence” of a community whose appreciation of “a thoroughly English education” was only just beginning to develop.³³ Finally he took a sideways transfer to Worcester, regarded by the SGE as a more important position.³⁴

An efficient teacher re-establishes and advances government schooling at Worcester

Rowan took over in Worcester fifteen years after the establishment of the government school. His predecessors, Patrick Black (1841-1847) and the youthful John Hugo who effectively replaced an ill Black from 1844,³⁵ had introduced the *Chambers Educational Course* to the pupils who were regarded

27 CA, 1/WOC/19/122, “1843: Return of Day Schools, Public and Private”, July 1845-1846 – Queries answered: [The teacher] Mr Hugo states, “No distinction is made on account of colour and none excluded”.

28 GISA, *South African Genealogies 10* (Stellenbosch, GISA, 1986), pp. 231-232.

29 CA, SGE 1/27, Rowan to SGE, 5 August 1872.

30 JR Innes, Select Committee on Education, 12 May 1857, AISC-1857. *Report of the Select Committee on Education*, p. 32.

31 CA, CO 841, Dale to Col Sec, 16 September 1865; CA, SGE 1/15, Rowan to SGE, 29 March 1866.

32 CA, CO 574, Innes to Col Sec, 1 February 1848.

33 “Memorial of Albert Nicholas Rowan”, 28 May 1856, AISC- 1857, *Appendix to Report of Select Committee*, pp. 15-16.

34 CA, CO 676, Innes to Col Sec, 7 April 1856.

35 E Bull, “Ratray and black: Two Scottish schoolmasters”, *Familia* XXVII, 3, 1990, p. 30; CA, CO 540, Innes to Col Sec, 1 July 1845.

as making good progress in both English and Dutch.³⁶ When Rowan took over, the school had, however, only elementary pupils and had lost impetus as an exhausted Hugo performed dual duties as teacher and clerk to the Resident Magistrate of Worcester.³⁷ In effect Johanna Meiring, a senior pupil and from 1855, a pupil-teacher, appears to have kept the school functioning while Hugo's replacement was being arranged.³⁸

The rented school building on High Street [between Baring and Stockenström Streets] was dilapidated, filthy and inadequately furnished.³⁹ It also became very over-crowded as the number of pupils grew to 140 within the year. Rowan moved briskly to render his school efficient and equal to its standing as a respectable institution. As he wrote in 1861:⁴⁰

Let us make our school-buildings superior to our prisons, both as to the external appearance and internal arrangements. Let us provide them with proper furniture and appliances, and above all, with an efficient staff of teachers. In short, let us make the education afforded in the Government schools worth having...

The archival record contains extensive and somewhat tortuous correspondence between Rowan and Innes, his immediate superior, as well as with the local Civil Commissioner, about the practicalities of improving the schoolroom and providing adequate staff. It reveals a gradual sanctioning of extensions to the schoolroom and the continued appointment of Miss Meiring.⁴¹ Both Rowan and Innes saw this as desirable in light of the high proportion of female pupils in the school.⁴² It is evident that Rowan came to regard the teaching of young children and girls as the work of female teachers and his early innovative division of an assistant teacher's salary between three male pupil-teachers reduced, to some extent, the "drudgery" on the head teacher of working with large numbers of elementary pupils.⁴³ This enabled him to play the role he clearly saw as his priority: devoting "more time to the improvement of [my] more advanced pupils".⁴⁴ The many bureaucratic hitches characteristic of the

36 CA, 1/WOC/19/122, "Report of School Commission" on examinations 5 April 1842, 24 June 1842, 11 October 1844.

37 JR Innes, Select Committee on Education, 12 May 1857, *Report of the Select Committee on Education*, p. 32.

38 CA, CO 695, Innes to Col Sec, 26 February 1857; AN Rowan to Col Sec, 16 September 1857.

39 RG Grebe, *Worcester Suid-Afrika* (BA Hons research report, University unnamed), p. 95. Located in Worcester Museum.

40 AN Rowan, "Teachers' Answers", G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, Appendix II, p. 35.

41 CA, CO 695, JR Innes to Col Sec, 25 August 1857.

42 JR Innes to Select Committee on Education, 12 May 1857, A1SC-1857. *Report of Select Committee*, p. 30.

43 CA, SGE 1/2, Rowan to Innes, 3 June 1857.

44 AN Rowan, "Teachers' Answers", G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, Appendix II, p. 34.

understaffed administration of the Established System resulted, however, in numerous letters of complaint - resonant with a sense of abandonment - from Rowan.⁴⁵

All indications are that Rowan then turned to the community for assistance, for he was prepared to take matters into his own hands rather than become incapacitated by the system's limitations. In 1861 he commented:⁴⁶

By rendering my school as efficient as circumstances permit – by sparing neither my time, purse, nor person – by consulting the principal inhabitants of this place about the best means of improving my school, and calling in their assistance when I required funds to carry out my plans – my school has never suffered much from the establishment of private schools.

Thus we find at Worcester a teacher who managed to work with the “principal inhabitants” of the community in a way that was unparalleled by many of his contemporaries. As will be demonstrated below in the discussion of local resistance to the 1860 school inspection, these influential residents were to be found in the consistory of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), the Divisional Council and Worcester Municipality. As sometime Dutch Reformed deacon in Worcester, Albert Rowan would become an insider with access to the resources of the dominant church that the Scottish teachers at Graaff-Reinet and Wynberg, for example, lacked.⁴⁷ In so doing, he established Worcester Government School as “the” educational institution in the town for its white population – including those poor enough to be in need of free education.⁴⁸

Central performances of the identity of the government teacher at Worcester

There are certain central concerns to which Rowan returned repeatedly in his correspondence and which demonstrate his preoccupation with his personal survival and that of his educational project. His subjectivity provides a lens through which matters of teacher status and identity in mid-nineteenth Cape society more broadly may be viewed.

45 CA, SGE 1/2, Rowan to Innes, 13 September 1856, 12 October 1856, 15 October 1857 for example.

46 G.24-763, *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, Appendix II, AN Rowan, “Teachers’ Answers”, p. 34.

47 CA, CO 4150, Memorials received by the Superintendent-General of Education, A-B, 1868, “Memorial of Barnard van Biljoen”, 22 July 1868.

48 JR Innes, Select Committee, 12 May 1857, A1SC-1857, *Report of the Select Committee*, p. 28.

The government teacher seeks financial recognition

The intensity of Rowan's writing about his inadequate salary and the link he made between financial recognition and justice is instructive. At peril was his respectable status as a well-educated first-class teacher and, in struggling "to maintain his family on the small pittance he receive[d] from Government," so was that of an honourable family man.⁴⁹ This was a predicament that is expressed repeatedly in the correspondence of Cape government teachers in general.⁵⁰

The context of much of Rowan's discontent was the inattention of a distant and harassed SGE; evidence that regularity in state affairs and governmentality was problematic. Colonial Secretary Rawson was harsh in his criticism of Innes's inability to manage both his paperwork and sustain an extensive programme of school inspections. Innes, who suffered severely when exposed to the sun, was alone expected to traverse the Colony in extremely unreliable hired transport on these tours of inspection. He abandoned tours of the western districts in 1856⁵¹ while rewriting his 1855-1856 report, then took seriously ill and attempted unsuccessfully to resign in 1857.⁵²

Rowan's repeated requests for Innes to attend to his salary seemed to fall on deaf ears and the Colonial Secretary was drawn into dealing directly with matters that lay in the SGE's province. What outraged Rowan most in his early years at Worcester was the perceived lack of support from Innes in re-establishing the Worcester salary at £130 per annum (along with the £30 house rent) as originally attached to the post, yet increasing the salary of his junior colleague at Colesberg. The Worcester teacher's salary had been reduced to £100 per annum because of Hugo's youth and inexperience.⁵³ On 28 May 1856, soon after his appointment, Rowan addressed a memorial to Governor Sir George Grey.⁵⁴

49 "Memorial of Albert N Rowan", January 1857, A1SC-1857, *Appendix to Report of Select Committee*, p. 20.

50 For example CA, SGE 1/4, J Rait to SGE, 1 February 1856; CA, CO 594, Rait to President and Members of the Local School Commission, Colesberg, 12 March 1852; CA, CO 695, "Memorial of John McNaughton", 28 April 1857.

51 CA, CO 676, Innes to Col Sec, 11 September 1856; Jervis to Col Sec, 15 October, 1856.

52 CA, CO 676, Rawson's margin comments, 4 December 1856, on Innes to Acting Col Sec, 28 November 1856.

53 JR Innes to Col Sec, 20 May 1856, A1SC-1857, *Appendix to Report of Select Committee*, pp. 14-15; CA, CO 676, Rowan to Innes, 20 May 1856, 28 May 1856, 23 June 1856. CA, CO 695, "Tabular Statement, connected with Government Schools" shows that, in December 1856, the best paid first-class government teachers earned £200 a month and £30-40 in house rent. The next tier earned £150 a month and £30 in house rent.

54 "Memorial of Albert Nicholas Rowan", 28 May 1856, A1SC-1857, *Appendix to Report of Select Committee*, pp. 15-16.

Your memorialist, feeling himself aggrieved by this mode of procedure on the part of the Superintendent-General of Education [...] has thought proper, notwithstanding the refusal of the Superintendent-General of Education to give him a "recommendation", to make a direct appeal to Your Excellency, from whose known impartiality he expects that justice which has been denied to him by his superior.

It took the parliamentary review of salaries in 1857 for matters to be rectified, by which time Rowan had submitted two further memorials to the governor (10 December 1856 and 15 January 1857) and a lengthy disputatious letter to the Colonial Secretary.⁵⁵ These were significant appeals to higher authority by a public servant who was seeking recognition, respect, and just reward for fulfilling his duties and obligations with unwearied zeal and wholly satisfactory results.

1857 marks the beginning of a period of uncertainty in colonial education history and of disappointment for SGE Innes, as commitment to the government school system began to wane. In that year, a short-lived "Bill for Promoting Education in the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope" called for expansion of aided schools and an end to "free" government schools; also for the replacement of the office of SGE with a Central Board of Education under the "ex officio" leadership of the Colonial Secretary.⁵⁶

A parliamentary Select Committee on Education, chaired by John Fairbairn, was set up in 1857 to investigate the first-class schools. It ultimately recommended the continuation of the Established System of government schooling as it stood. Rowan's school of 130 pupils and salary of £100 (plus £30 house rent) was explicitly noted as evidence of the strain on government teachers of large numbers of pupils, inadequate assistance and poor salaries.⁵⁷ It prompted Fairbairn to proclaim: "I speak with all respect of the Government, - I think they are acting oppressively towards this class of men."⁵⁸ The tardy implementation of improved teacher remuneration reinforced the above view.⁵⁹ As a result, Rowan's agitation for a better salary and for promotion are recurring themes in his correspondence until significant reforms were made to educational funding under Innes's successor, Langham Dale, from the 1860s.

55 Rowan to Col Sec, 23 June 1856, in response to Col Sec to Rowan, 10 June 1856, A1SC-1857. *Appendix to Report of Select Committee*, pp. 16-19.

56 WL Nell, "James Rose Innes as educationist" (D Ed thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1973), pp. 423-430.

57 A1SC-1857, *Report of the Select Committee on Education*, p. 29.

58 A1SC-1857, *Report of the Select Committee on Education*, p. 33.

59 CA, CO 720, Copy of Memorandum on salaries, 15 August 1857, attached to Rowan to Col Sec, 11 August 1858; J McNaughton to Col Sec, 18 June 1859.

The government teacher's reputation is dealt a blow: 1858 tour report

The second stimulus to a flurry of correspondence from Rowan was linked to the first – a perceived lack of recognition of his efforts by his SGE, most strongly symbolised by being ignored in Innes's 1858 *Report of the Superintendent-General of Education on a Tour of Inspection of the Schools in the Western Divisions of the Colony*.⁶⁰ This lack of recognition as teacher caused a shift in Rowan's professional identity as he considered a complete change of career to fulltime land surveyor.

After repeated delays in intended tours of inspection, Innes had finally set off in late 1857, ending in Worcester early in 1858.⁶¹ In April 1858 Innes's *Report* was presented to Parliament. When a report on the tour was included in the *Cape Argus* newspaper in the same month, Albert Rowan was able to read about the state of education through his SGE's eyes. Rowan was "very much hurt and surprised to find that, while honourable mention is made of the mission schools here, not a word is said about the Govt School under my charge".⁶² He was correct, for the sum of what Innes wrote was:⁶³

As on all former occasions, the result of the inspection of the mission school at Worcester was highly satisfactory. This institution, ... I recommend to be put on the same footing [as Stellenbosch] by receiving the maximum grant, namely, seventy-five pounds; ... I also recommend that the infant department be supplied with a complete set of apparatus, and that some mark of approbation be conferred on the female, in charge of the department, for her devotedness and untiring exertions for the progress of her school for many years.

For Rowan being omitted from the tour report was seen as undeserved neglect. It indicated to those who did not support government schools that the SGE thought so little of his school that it was not considered "worthy of a place in his report", let alone a silver watch as was awarded to the mission teacher.⁶⁴ It was surely in his mind that a first-class school which prepared children to study physical science, Latin, Greek and mathematics counted for more than the orderly religious education and grounding in arithmetic,

60 G.29-'58, CGH, *Report of the Superintendent-General of Education on a Tour of Inspection of the Schools in the Western Divisions of the Colony*.

61 G.29-'58, *Report on Tour of Inspection*, p. 5.

62 CA, SGE 1/2, Rowan to Innes, 16 April 1858.

63 G.29-'58, *Report on Tour of Inspection*, p. 6.

64 CA, CO 720, Innes to Col Sec, 7 July 1858.

Geography, writing and reading of the local mission school.⁶⁵ The omission appeared to negate his very being and he demanded the “common justice” of an explanation. There was a material concern in his letters, too. Having earlier attempted to improve his income by offering “an evening class for private pupils”, he was now taking in boarders. Favourable mention in a published report might have attracted more of these. Lack of mention signified official disfavour; “I can assure you that these trifling incidents in a country where the people cannot judge for themselves in matters of education often tell very much on the career of any school”.⁶⁶

Innes appears not to have responded to Rowan, and it is unclear why he failed to mention the Worcester government teacher in his tour report, which is both lucid and detailed. With proposed reforms to the education system, it was a time of a heated public debate over control of public education. In defending and extending the Established System, Innes had much on his ailing mind. Whatever the reason for the SGE’s omission, it was enough to persuade Rowan that there was no future for an ambitious and exhausted young man in education.

The teacher seeks another pursuit⁶⁷

Chairman [Select Committee on Education]: I see the opinion expressed, that the Government has several hard-worked, underpaid public servants: do you think teachers come under that head? Innes: The teachers themselves, to a considerable extent thought so; for they have left their charges and entered into other pursuits of life.

In one of the founding memoranda of the Established System, Sir John Herschel had emphasized the importance of obtaining knowledgeable teachers through offering them good salaries and prospects of promotion.⁶⁸ While always retaining the self-image of a “Herschel teacher”, Rowan gave up on achieving the concomitant status and financial security. On 29 April 1858, deflated at having had no response from Innes, Rowan wrote the first of many letters directly to the Colonial Secretary requesting to be transferred “to

65 G.20-70, CGH, *Report of the Superintendent-General of Education for the year 1869*; CA, CO 767 L Dale, “Report of recent tour of Inspection”, 12 May 1860.

66 CA, SGE 1/2 Rowan to Innes, 16 April and 15 June 1858.

67 A1SC-1857, *Report of the Select Committee on Education*, p. 33.

68 Sir John Herschel to Colonial Secretary, 17 February 1838, WT Ferguson and RFM Immelman, (comps.), *Sir John Herschel and education at the Cape, 1834-1840* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 14-25.

another situation”. The “uncertainty enveloping the future of the Educational Establishment and the little prospect of advancement in it” led him to believe that he would do better to “quit an Establishment which holds out no encouragement whatever to a young man”.⁶⁹ He turned instead to that most colonial of occupations, fulltime land surveying. Having, with Innes’s knowledge, qualified as a land surveyor, he aspired to a post in the Land Surveyor General’s Department. The Colonial Secretary appears verbally to have promised him some surveying work⁷⁰ and it was a time, in mid-July 1858, when the village of Rawsonville was being laid out in the Goudini Valley across the Breede River from Worcester.⁷¹

Rowan had already begun to use his Saturdays and vacations to carry out “small” surveys in Worcester and surrounding areas. Eventually his work included subdivision of farms around Worcester and Goudini, of residential plots in the larger town, and work for the Worcester municipality.⁷² Rowan was also responsible for the plans for “the village of Rawsonville & Commonage”. As he measured farmers’ and townsmen’s land and received briefs from municipal councillors, Rowan was drawing on a network of social connections in this work, as in building his school.⁷³

In a narrative of teaching as a “burden on the physique”, one in which the body becomes the site of oppressive overwork,⁷⁴ he presented his outdoor labours as being restorative in contrast. It was work, he argued, that did not interfere with his school duties.⁷⁵ His school was given six hours of hard work every day, besides which surveying “afforded me relaxation [and] brought me in some profit”. This was in contrast to his school duties which were “laborious and anxious”, and which:⁷⁶

69 CA, CO 720, Rowan to Col Sec, 29 April 1858.

70 CA, CO 775, Rowan to Acting Col Sec [Richard Southey], 18 February 1861.

71 WR Laubscher, *Eeublad* (Hoerskool Goudini, 1958); AP Smit, *Genade genoeg vir Goudini* (Kerkrad, 1979).

72 CA, 3/WOC/1/1/1/3, Minutes of Worcester Municipality, 6 Mei 1857 and 2 May 1860. Names appearing as members of the Worcester municipality, awarding work, include Jan Meiring and JG de Wet. See also f. 106.

73 CA, CO 775, Rowan to Acting Col Sec, 29 March 1861. Locals using Rowan’s services include P de Wet, J de Wet, Thomas Heatlie, Messrs Jordaan, Stoffberg, Keyter and Jardine. See also f. 106.

74 EM Collingham, *Imperial bodies: The physical experience of the Raj, c.1800-1947* (Cambridge, Polity, 2001) pp.124 & 142, writes of the “burden on the physique” of bureaucrats of the Raj. The toll of their work on Innes and on Colesberg teacher, Rait, is presented in a common discourse of the body. CA, CO 695, Innes to Col Sec, 17 March 1857; CA, SGE 1/4, Rait to Innes, 18 April 1855.

75 CA, CO 775, Margin notes on Rowan to Acting Col Sec, 18 February, 29 March, 7 May and 16 July 1861. Rowan was informed by the Examiner of Diagrams in the Surveyor General’s Office that, as he was a public functionary, he was not permitted to work as a government surveyor and his plans could not be approved. Eventually Governor Sir George Grey permitted any civil servant qualified as a surveyor to work as such provided it did not interfere with his other public duties.

76 CA, CO 775, Rowan to Acting Col Sec, 7 May 1861.

... in so hot a climate as this, [are] already gradually undermining my constitution and ere long may cast me as a useless wreck upon society unfit for anything else but to drag out the miserable years of a premature age.

When Rawson did respond, it was to reject the loss of a valuable teacher to another government department. Despite the unhappy rebuttal, Rowan expressed gratitude for the personal attention and wrote:⁷⁷

Believe me Sir it is a mistaken idea to suppose, that if the other departments of the Public Service were made accessible to the Govt Teacher, he would, all other things being equal become dissatisfied with his situation and seek every pretext for leaving it. – It is only when they find their energies giving way that they cast their eyes for another situation in which the strain upon the mental faculties is much less, and the chances of improving their circumstances speedier and more certain.

The government teacher resists arbitrary surveillance: The 1860 special inspection

Innes' resignation was finally accepted in late 1859.⁷⁸ In November, Langham Dale, formerly professor of classics and English at the South African College, was appointed as the Cape Colony's second SGE.⁷⁹ He was a man not only more efficient than Innes, and more willing to act decisively to support the teachers, but also a man who was unconvinced of the essential vision of the Established System of Government Schools. He thus moved to end it. His superintendency was marked by a full retreat from free, state managed education to gender-segregated aided schooling. During Dale's early tenure, Rowan's school stood out as a beacon of efficiency – but not before an intense spat over a special inspection had occurred.

On assuming office, Dale requested eminent men with some knowledge of education – many of them local clergymen - to carry out a once-off special inspection of the Established schools.⁸⁰ In the case of Worcester, the elderly Scottish-born Dutch Reformed minister, Henry Sutherland⁸¹ had withdrawn from public affairs. The inspection was therefore to be carried out by the relative newcomer, English Church minister John Maynard.⁸² Time being short, Dale

77 CA, CO 720, Rowan to Col Sec, 11 August 1858.

78 CA, CO 741, Innes to Col Sec, 31 October 1859.

79 J Murray, (ed.), *Mrs Dale's Diary* (Cape Town, Balkema, 1966), p. 10.

80 CA, CO 767, Dale to Col Sec, 5 January, 1860.

81 *Dictionary of South African biography, II* (Pretoria, HSRC, 1972), pp. 723-724.

82 CA, CO 767, Dale to Col Sec, 9 January, 1860.

failed to inform the teachers in advance of the limited data-gathering nature of the inspections,⁸³ leaving them to learn from the inspectors that they were intending to visit the schools. This precipitated a new crisis for Rowan and offers an instructive view of the connection between the small world of the schoolroom and wider society.

Rowan's initial optimism at the appointment of Dale turned to dismay. He professed himself to be "crushed" and government schooling to be doomed by "the interference of Episcopalian clergy".⁸⁴ What he objected to was the "irregular way in which the appointment has been made" and that of "the clergyman of any particular religious denomination to the exclusion of other". "This," said Rowan, "was far from prudent in a place where so few belong to the Episcopalian religion." In the same letter, he warned: "The public mind here is strongly agitated - You have caused the worst of feelings - religious jealousy".⁸⁵

Rowan's increasingly emotional reaction to the prospect of a once-off inspection was out of proportion to the nature of the intended visit. He used words like "offensive" and "repulsive" to describe the act of inspection. It was a "blow" to his school, the sure cause of the "downfall of all his hopes" and his "usefulness as a teacher [there was] completely gone". Surprise, grief and loss were all associated with the intended action.⁸⁶ In a familiar pattern of appeal to the highest authority, he either wrote to the Colonial Secretary or made sure that Rawson received copies of his letters to the SGE. Rowan again appealed to be removed from his teaching position.⁸⁷

Dale was flummoxed by the outcry, pointing out to his superiors that his choice of inspectors in Worcester was limited.⁸⁸ But at the heart of the furore seems to be Rowan's fear that he would sacrifice hard-won support from the Dutch Reformed leaders and the wider church membership for a somewhat alien educational dispensation. Both Hermann Giliomee and Robert Ross stress that the Cape Dutch urban elite to a large extent accommodated British colonial rule by separating their public identities as British subjects from their

83 Dale designed a return based on but omitting many items from one used in Scotland. G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, Dale, 22 October 1861, "Evidence Taken Before the Education Commission", p. 47.

84 CA, SGE 1/2, Rowan to Dale, 18 and 20 December 1859.

85 CA, CO 767, Rowan to SGE, 2 January 1860.

86 CA, CO 767, Rowan to SGE, copied to Col Sec, 2 January 1860; Rowan to Col Sec, 27 January 1860.

87 CA, CO 767, Rowan to Col Sec, 9 January 1860.

88 CA, CO 767, SGE to Col Sec, 5 January 1860; 9 January 1860.

private ones as Dutch-speakers and members of the DRC.⁸⁹ Under British rule, the DRC remained an established, subsidized church along with the small Anglican Church. The campaign leading to representative government in 1853 had seen Cape Dutch leaders “downplaying cultural differences” while appealing “to the common rights all British subjects shared”.⁹⁰ While facility in English was a necessary qualification for public office, at Worcester Dutch members of the community held most such positions when Rowan was government teacher. Despite this, the looming figure of Church of England Bishop, Robert Gray, and Maynard’s identity as one of his priests, appear to have evoked local sensitivities to the raised profile of Englishness, in church and education.

According to Philip le Feuvre, Gray’s arrival in 1848, “his authorization and title, ‘Bishop of Cape Town’”, caused the DRC hierarchy concern about the consequences of a close relationship between the Church of England and the highest echelons of colonial government. This was especially as Gray “could not refrain from giving expression to that superiority which he felt belonged to England and her church”.⁹¹ The Established System, with its prioritization of the English language and liberal and classical curriculum, had hitherto been presented largely by Scottish Presbyterian teachers (or pupils of such) and superintended by a Scottish Presbyterian SGE, James Rose Innes. That the new SGE was English and a devout Anglican churchman⁹² may not have been common cause in Worcester. The energetic efforts of Bishop Robert Gray to establish stable Church of England congregations and schools throughout the Colony was, much of the money for which was raised in Britain.⁹³

At the time of the proposed Bill for Promoting Education (1857) there was significant agitation in both the English and Dutch press that it favoured the expansion of Anglican schools, and that the Bishop of Cape Town was behind it. Fairbairn argued that its proposed positioning of the Colonial Secretary as head of the Board of Education would give to a government official, powers that parliament should hold. For many, Rawson was, to boot, an official who was in the thrall of an Anglo-Catholic bishop with considerable influence at

89 H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2003), pp. 195-198; R Ross, *Status and respectability in the Cape Colony 1750-1870: A tragedy of manners* (Cambridge, CUP, 1999), pp. 48-69.

90 H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, p. 198.

91 P le Feuvre, “Cultural and theological factors affecting the relationship between the Nederduitse-Gereformeerde Kerk and the Anglican Church (of the Province of South Africa) in the Cape Colony, 1806-1910” (Ph.D thesis, University of Cape Town, 1980), pp. 77-78.

92 J Murray, (ed.), *Mrs Dale’s Diary* (Cape Town, Balkema, 1966), p. 60.

93 T Gutsche, *The Bishop’s Lady* (Cape Town, Howard Timmins, 1970).

the highest levels.⁹⁴

An editorial in *De Zuid Afrikaan* on 19 March 1857 expressed sentiments that would have been understood at Worcester where similar perceptions endured through to the 1860s:⁹⁵

Our alarms may appear groundless, but we think we can show reason for them. Hitherto the people had had to compete with a Government system which was under a Superintendent General who is a Presbyterian, a system which nominally at least admitted the necessity of teaching the Dutch language along with English ... If this Bill is allowed to pass, we shall have an Episcopal Superintendent, an Ordinance which does not so much as mention the Dutch language as part of the education of our colonial youth and ... an unlimited money from sources at home, that are always accessible to Governors and Bishops ... In short, pass this Bill, and you give the Government the monopoly of Education, which is virtually the same as giving it to the Episcopal Church.

Evidence of the bishop's progress stood in town after town, as the construction of "authentically English" church buildings designed by Sophy Gray proceeded. 1859 was the year in which the construction of Worcester's St James, the Great Church off Market Square, was finally completed.⁹⁶ The appointment of Maynard, rector of St James, as inspector of the government school was regarded by certain Worcester residents as a mark of "the intention of the Govt to throw the Schools into the hands of the Bishop and his clergy".⁹⁷

Up to this point, Rowan had been confident that the ordinary quarterly public examinations of his school were persuasive performances for the Worcester public of the benefits of government education. An interest in education (beyond the basic literacy needed for DRC membership) was finally being awakened, and:⁹⁸

I had already taken advantage of it at the last examination by impressing upon the minds of the parents and others who were present the necessity of assisting the Government in promoting education among them, when alas for human hopes and aspirations, the appointment of Mr. Maynard as Inspector became known.

94 P le Feuvre, "Cultural and theological factors", pp. 61-62; WL Nell, "Innes as educationist", p. 425. Gray's connection with the Oxford Movement within the Church of England, which returned in some ways to Catholic roots and rituals, had not gone unnoticed. "Oxford Movement", *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6, 2008 (available at <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1.Oxfordmo.html>), as accessed 20 December 2010. The Bishop fitted easily into upper class circles, and Gutsche, *Bishop's Lady*, pp. 69 & 142, notes his close friendships with Col Sec Montagu and Governor George Grey, as well as his access to colonial office information.

95 WL Nell, "Innes as Educationist" (D Ed thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1973), p. 426.

96 D Martin, *The Bishop's Churches* (Cape Town, Struik, 2005), p. 43.

97 CA, CO 767, Rowan to SGE, 2 January 1860.

98 CA, CO 767, Rowan to SGE, 2 January 1860.

The reaction of the Worcester local authorities and evidence of support for Rowan in this matter would demonstrate both the extent to which the local Dutch residents “were” coming to regard the school as their own; and that the right to manage it was part of a greater issue of control of public space. The mid-1850s was a time when colonists were beginning to acquire a more powerful political voice – important at Worcester, when the influential clerical voice of the local dominee was silent. Rowan, in fact, argued that his personal objection to the inspection was largely based on its irregularity in terms of the law. Since 1855 Divisional Councils had had supervisory responsibility for government schools and, at Worcester, it was “both able and willing to give whatever information the Government may desire about the state of the school here”. Instead, Rowan lamented, “the ‘passing by’ of the Divisional Council, the legitimate channel... would give great offence to that body, and cause them to withdraw their support from the school”.

His apprehension appears to have had foundation, with the passing of a resolution at a special meeting of the Divisional Council on 9 January 1860, forwarded to government on 23 January, which stated:⁹⁹

... that the Council protest against the appointment of any particular individual as Inspector of the Government School, which the Council consider as an infringement of the rights and duties vested in them by virtue of an Act of Parliament.

With similar accusations from Rowan’s mentor, Humphrey McLachlan at Stellenbosch, that the SGE was acting “ultra vires”, introducing “a new element of supervision”, and “an arbitrary regime”,¹⁰⁰ Rawson informed Dr Dale that he had better undertake the inspection of the Worcester and Stellenbosch schools himself.¹⁰¹ This he duly did.¹⁰² A few weeks later, however, Rawson received another missive from Rowan – indicating that tensions in Worcester were not over.¹⁰³ It had become a public matter of defending the honour and reputation of both Rowan and Maynard. The teacher reported that on 6 March 1860, the *Argus* had published a letter from Mr. Sharpe, a Worcester

99 CA, CO 767, Office of Divisional Council, Worcester, 23 January 1860, enclosed with Rowan to Col Sec, 28 January 1860; Members of Worcester Divisional Council to Superintendent-General of Education, 23 January 1860, attached to SGE to Col Sec, 28 January 1860. Its signatories were D and W de Vos, PDJ van der Byl and JC Rabe.

100 CA, CO 741, H McLachlan to Revd J Murray, 17 December 1859. It is worth noting that McLachlan had applied for the post of SGE at the time Dale was appointed, so that personal ire cannot be discounted in the opposition to Dale’s first attempt at inspection. CA, CO 741, McLachlan to 5 November 1859.

101 CA, CO 767, margin note, Rawson to SGE, 31 January 1860, on SGE to Col Sec, 28 January.

102 CA, CO 767, SGE to Col Sec, 11 February 1860.

103 CA, CO 767, Rowan to Col Sec, 13 March 1860.

municipal commissioner and a member of Maynard's church.¹⁰⁴ Presenting Maynard's position, it basically accused Rowan of unbecoming conduct, affecting his "character as a teacher very seriously."¹⁰⁵ It stated that, with no instruction from government by 25 January to abandon his inspection, Maynard had attempted to proceed with this duty, despite Rowan's plea that he should postpone it. Maynard, feeling he had done all he could to carry out his charge, would have given up at this point:

And Mr Rowan, if he had possessed the proper feelings of a man, he would have let the matter drop. But instead of that, and after the receipt of my letter, he told all the children that if I came to the School on Monday they were to go out at one door while he went out at another.

Rowan denied, firstly, having instructed the children to abscond and, secondly, having in any way been part of the public rejection of Maynard as inspector. In a demonstration of the support he could muster, Rowan referred to Dale's attention "a declaration made by the parents of the children attending my school". This read:

We, the undersigned inhabitants of Worcester, declare, that to the best of our knowledge and belief, Mr. A.N. Rowan, the Govt Teacher here, took no part, nor did he excite any one to take part in the late proceedings of the public of Worcester against the appointment of Mr. Maynard as special inspector of his school. – Those of us who have children attending his school have never heard them say that Mr Rowan either requested or advised or much less ordered them to quit the school should Mr Maynard visit in his capacity of inspector.

An examination of the list of thirty-four signatories confirms the social network behind the government teacher. Forming part of it were J. Tulleken and members of the Meiring, de Vos and de Wet families who are recorded elsewhere as DRC leaders, and serving variously on the municipality and Divisional Council.¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile, the Colonial Secretary had wearied of the whole affair and, replying on 13 March on behalf of the governor, had the last

¹⁰⁴ CA, 3/WOC/1/1/1/3, Minutes of the Worcester Municipality, 20 June 1860, show him to be a municipal councillor involved in plans for the visit of Governor Grey and Prince Albert to the town; CA, SGE 1/29, Letters Received by the Superintendent-General of Education from the Western Districts, 1873, J. Maynard to Dale, 3 April 1873.

¹⁰⁵ CA, CO 767, Rowan to Col Sec, 13 March 1860 and attached copies, Rowan to SGE, 13 March 1860; Declaration, 8 March 1860.

¹⁰⁶ *The Cape of Good Hope Almanac and Annual Register* for 1852, p. 199, lists Messrs JD Hugo, D de Vos & JP Jordaan Js, as Elders; JP van Heerden, W de Vos, JG van H Tulleken, JG de Wet as deacons. W and D de Vos both signed the Divisional Council protest of 23 January 1860 mentioned above. JG de Wet was a municipal councillor in 1856, as was JWH Meiring CA, 3/WOC/1/1/1/3, Minutes of the Worcester Municipality, August 1856-August 1871.

word on the matter. He reminded the agitated teacher that:¹⁰⁷

... it is only necessary to disprove charges which the Govt call upon him to answer... He greatly regrets that the late excitement has been kept up by a newspaper correspondence, in which he has taken a share without due reflection either as to the impropriety of such proceeding, or as to the tone and language of his letter. H.E. hopes that the matter may now drop as the correspondence which has already passed furnishes only cause for regret at the part taken by the several individuals concerned in it.

As a postscript, there is evidence that Rowan and his supporters hoped to move beyond this impasse. A careful selection was made of members of all local churches for the school commission of a later Dutch Reformed Church school.¹⁰⁸ John Maynard, presumably son of Revd Maynard, became Rowan's assistant teacher in 1862.¹⁰⁹ Worcester, after the "excitement" in the early months of 1860, saw a realignment of church and educational state that provided for Rowan a context in which his school could eventually flourish. Nevertheless, events relating to Revd Maynard's supervision of the government school in the final months of its existence would show lingering denominational and associated group sensitivities and injury to reputations.

The Dale administration – adjusting the Established System, 1860-1873

Determined to establish for himself the state of colonial education, Langham Dale embarked in March 1860 upon an extensive "tour of Inspection of the Schools, in the South-Western divisions of the Colony". From discussions with government teachers, Civil Commissioners and the like, Dale came to the conclusion that significant changes needed to be made to an expensive but ultimately ineffectual system of government education.¹¹⁰ The context of the next decade of Rowan's work at Worcester – a time of educational transition – was thus the review of the system of Established schools by the Watermeyer Commission, sitting through 1861 and 1862. Its recommendations, made law in 1865, began to be implemented from 1863, including the significant

107 CA, CO 767, RWR 28/3 on Rowan to Col Sec, 13 March 1860. Sir George Grey was absent from the Cape from August 1859 to July 1860, having been recalled to Britain. This left Rawson effectively in charge of government although Lieut-Gen Wynyard acted as governor, *Dictionary of South African Biography II* (Pretoria, HSRC, 1972), p. 571.

108 CA, SGE 1/9, JG van H Tulleken to Dale, 18 July 1861.

109 CA, CO 791, Office of SGE to Col Sec, 20 May 1862.

110 CA, CO 767, Dale to Col Sec, 2 May 1860; Dale to Acting Col Sec, 12 October 1860; Dale, 16 October 1861, in "Minutes of Evidence", G.24-'63. *Report of Watermeyer Commission*, p. 34.

resolution that existing government schools would be closed as their teachers retired or died.¹¹¹

The teacher heads a 'family' of schools, 1860-1872

Rowan's work is notable as, with Dale's encouragement and a financial partnership with the DRC, he continued to grow the government school in Worcester while his colleagues in the other government schools were seeing their establishments gradually close. This was until 1872 when he accepted a position as one of the Colony's first two Deputy Inspectors of Schools.¹¹² Attention was paid at the Worcester Government School to practical matters of playgrounds and sanitation.¹¹³ An important change to funding in government schools came – in the case of Worcester from 1 October 1861 – with the introduction of fees of 2/6 to 5/6 per month for all but the poorest pupils.¹¹⁴ These were used primarily to supplement teacher salaries.¹¹⁵ When Dale's subsequent tours of inspection included Worcester, it was to describe the Government School as “admirably conducted”, and the Worcester Rhenish Mission Schools as an exemplary model for reaching poorer members of society. The most significant aspect of Dale's superintendency seems, however, to have been the encouragement of organizational change.

Dale had returned from a year in England in 1858¹¹⁶ with a new model for Cape schools in mind – one which would replace that of the single teacher in one classroom. He was of the view that “every established school should be conducted by a head-master, aided by an efficient under-master, and where there are girls, by a mistress also”. There should also be an infant department under a mistress – “the whole series of schools forming one Government institution under the general control of the head-master”. In mixed schools, pupils could meet in class for common studies, but separately for instruction in “those branches which belong exclusively to girls, and in needlework, &c”.¹¹⁷ In this phase of his career, Albert Rowan embraced this “family” model of

111 Act No. 13 of 1865: Act for Regulating the Mode of Appropriating Grants from the Public Revenue in aid of General Education, p. 2. Copy in CA, CO 887, 1868.

112 CA, SGE 17/2, Schedule of the Establishment of the Superintendent-General of Education, 1863-1875.

113 CA, SGE 1/9, Rowan to Dale, 1 November 1861, 19 November 1861.

114 CA, SGE 1/9, Rowan to Dale, 29 August 1861.

115 CA, CO 775, Dale to Acting Col Sec, 24 August 1861.

116 JI Janse van Rensburg, “Die lewe en werk van Sir Langham Dale, 1859-1872” (DEd thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1943), p. 64.

117 G.15-'60, CGH, *Report on Public Education for the Year 1859*, p. 6.

a cluster of schools, taking on the identity of a bureaucratic but “fatherly” headmaster.¹¹⁸ It was a model of schooling that was gradually implemented in Worcester with the assistance of the local Dutch Reformed Church under their new minister, the Revd Andrew Murray jnr.

Born at Graaff-Reinet but educated in Scotland and the Netherlands, Murray came to Worcester in 1860, after twelve years as colonial chaplain to the Dutch population in Transorangia.¹¹⁹ He thus became Rowan’s dominee. Giliomee presents Murray, who became moderator of the DRC in 1862, as a promoting a denominationally inclusive pietism, English as the necessary medium of education, and being a “staunch supporter of the Empire as the foundation of order and liberty in South Africa”.¹²⁰ He and his English-speaking Anglican wife, Emma Rutherford, were both convinced of the improving value of education.¹²¹ In the 1870s, influenced by moves in American evangelical women’s education, he would establish the Huguenot Seminary in nearby Wellington. This was explicitly designed to provide secondary schooling and teacher training for pious Dutch-speaking women; an education of the “head, heart and hand” that would equip them with a good academic training and mould their Christian character for service in society.¹²²

It is likely that the education of Dutch-speaking girls beyond the levels of basic domesticity was already on Murray’s mind. He was probably influential in the offer by his church to assist Rowan with a one-year grant of £100 “to secure the services of a Female Teacher” to improve the Girls’ Department in his school.¹²³ This meant that by 1862, Rowan led a government school of three divisions with Miss Mills, a qualified woman teacher, in charge of the girls,¹²⁴ the continued services of a female assistant to look after younger children¹²⁵ and John Maynard, replacing two monitors, to assist in the “Boys Department”.¹²⁶

118 D Jones, “The genealogy of the urban schoolteacher,” SJ Ball, (ed.), *Foucault and education: Disciplines and knowledge* (London & New York, Routledge, 1990), p. 65.

119 *Dictionary of South African Biography I* (Pretoria, NCSR, 1968), pp. 574-583.

120 H Giliomee, *The Afrikaners...*, pp. 205-210.

121 Her family were Anglican, humanitarian liberals and supporters of John Philip and the “missionary party”. Murray (ed.), *Mrs Dale’s Diary*, pp. 126-127. Murray had been involved in recruiting Dutch and Scottish teachers for Transorangia as well as in setting up Grey College in Bloemfontein in 1859. J Murray (ed.), *Young Mrs Murray Goes to Bloemfontein* (Cape Town, Balkema, 1954), pp. 101, 116, 134.

122 SE Duff, *Head, heart and hand: The Huguenot Seminary and College and the construction of middle class Afrikaner femininity, 1873-1910* (MA, University of Stellenbosch, 2006).

123 CA, CO 767, SGE to Acting Col Sec, 31 October 1860, enclosing A Murray Jr to Rowan, 13 August 1860.

124 CA, CO 775, SGE to Acting Col Sec, 14 August 1861.

125 CA, CO 767, SGE to Col Sec, 11 February 1860.

126 CA, CO 791, Office of SGE to Col Sec, 11 April, 20 May 1862; SGE to Acting Col Sec, 15 January 1862.

The next stage of educational provision under Rowan's management saw a clearer gender separation in schooling and came in July 1863. In line with the recommendations of the Watermeyer Commission, and with an over-full government school, Rowan obtained the support of his SGE for the opening of an aided elementary Girls' and Infants' School in Worcester. This was placed under his management, but "strictly subsidiary to the Government School". The government provided an annual grant of £50 towards the new enterprise, while the Dutch Reformed Church again provided assistance by placing "at his disposal a newly built & well-furnished Schoolroom, on the Square" and promising £50 from local inhabitants to pay for the school mistress.¹²⁷

The final phase of expansion came when the lease of the existing government school building expired in 1867. In losing his lease to a new board of local inhabitants, the former lessor regarded Albert Rowan as the architect of his misfortune. It was the teacher Mr. Rowan, he asserted, "who is also a deacon of the Dutch Reformed Church at Worcester [and] has induced the church wardens to build another schoolroom".¹²⁸ Despite these protestations, the Colonial Secretary approved the construction of two new school rooms (see Image 2) and, from July 1868, entered into a five-year lease for all buildings of the Worcester Government School on the central square. Dale's argument was that they would allow for better regulation of pupils.¹²⁹

The present buildings offer accommodation only to the boys, the girls and infants occupy suitable school rooms on the Square, hitherto gratuitously allowed by the Proprietors, but the Head Govt Teacher can exercise no proper supervision over these divided schools, and as the inhabitants came forward and proposed to erect two commodious school rooms for the boys, adjoining those of the girls and infants on the Square, the offer was accepted, with the view of securing a settled tenure of the whole suite of school rooms, and concentrating the Schools under the eye of the Head-Teacher.

In undertaking this construction by private residents, probably all local Dutch Reformed Church members,¹³⁰ the way was being paved for a smooth transition to aided schooling in Undenominational Public Schools (UPSs), as provided for in Act 13 of 1865, when the Worcester Government School ceased to exist:¹³¹

127 CA, CO 809, SGE to Col Sec, 11 July 1863.

128 CA, CO 4150, "Memorial of Barnard van Biljoen", attached to SGE to Col Sec, 6 March 1868.

129 CA, CO 4150 "Report", SGE, 6 March 1868.

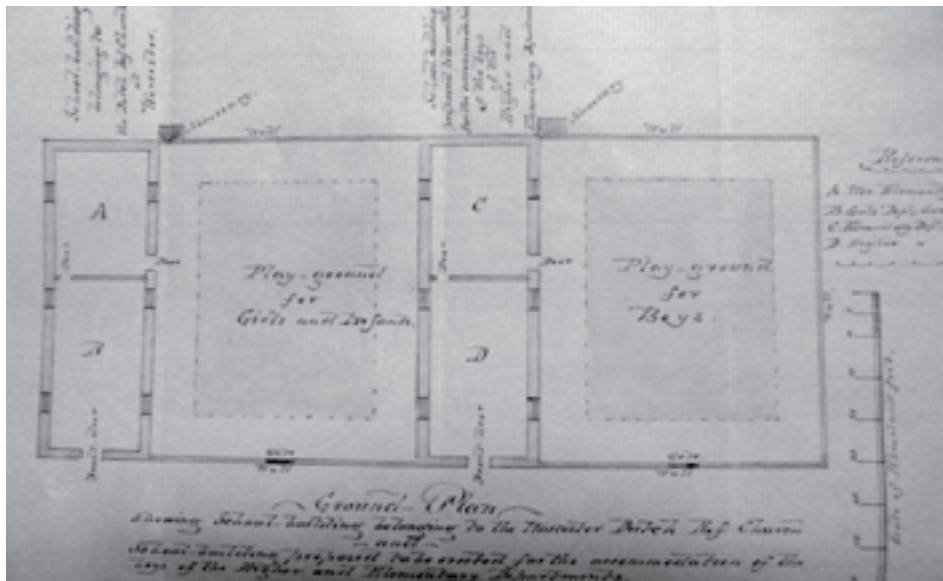
130 CA, SGE 1/19, 1868. Rowan to SGE, 14 December 1868.

131 CA, CO 870, SGE to Col Sec, 26 June 1867.

The object to be secured by this plan is the concentration of the whole Establishment in one commodious Institution, which, when the Established School is discontinued in the course of time, would be to a great extent a guarantee for the permanent maintenance of the series of schools on the Aided system.

Absent in this period, are Rowan's outraged letters. Instead his correspondence deals calmly with administrative matters, while he shows pride in the promotion of a number of his pupil-teachers to positions as teachers.¹³² Dale noted that Rowan was "very generous" in taking less than his due from the school fees so as to secure the income of his assistants.¹³³ He reported that in 1871, Rowan had 110 pupils – 27 of whom studied Latin, 4 Greek, 39 "Elements of Physical Science" and 11 geometry and algebra. In the elementary classes, all the pupils read English and took music, while only 64 read Dutch and 33 (girls) learnt to sew.¹³⁴

Image 2: Plan of Worcester Dutch Reformed Church school building and planned additions for the boys' higher and elementary departments. A: Elementary School; B: Girls' Department; C: Elementary Department; D: Higher Department



Source: CA: SGE 1/19, Rowan to SGE, 14 January 1868.

132 CA, SGE 1/19, Rowan : Certificate on JS Joubert to SGE, 26 December 1868. J.Preiss appointed to French Hoek Public School;

133 CA, SGE 1/21, Dale, 4 January 1870 on Rowan to SGE, 31 December 1869.

134 G.4-'72, CGH, *Report of the Superintendent-General of Education for the year 1871*, pp. 5, 12.

In 1872, in his application for promotion to the new position of Deputy Inspector, Rowan wrote that he felt qualified for this by his “twenty-seven years of faithful service, my experience and qualifications as teacher” as well as his interest in developing education wherever he served. Rowan was surely aware of Dale’s view that an anomaly existed where the “Dutch-speaking Colonial farmers” neglected their children’s education while the missions provided so much better for their future employees, “the children of the laboring poor”.¹³⁵ He advanced his usefulness by saying:¹³⁶

Besides my acquaintance with the Dutch language, my Colonial sympathies and the extensive connection I have formed through my old pupils, several of whom are engaged as ministers of religion and teachers in various parts of the Western Province might be of service in promoting the spread of education among the agricultural population of that Province.

Rowan’s promotion to Deputy Inspector of Schools in October 1872 was an affirmation by government and the SGE of his ability, zeal and status that must surely have pleased him.

The English church minister presides over the government school for its final three months

In terms of the Education Act of 1865, the departure of the government teacher meant the closing of the government school. Responsibility for public schooling would shift to the town’s inhabitants, 60 of whom met, with Dale in attendance, at a public meeting on 7 December 1872, and resolved:¹³⁷

There be in the Town of Worcester a first-class Udenominational Public school for girls, to come into operation from 1st January 1873, and a first-class Udenominational School for boys, to be begun on 1st July 1873, when the temporary arrangements for the continuance of the Established School will cease.

The new aided, fee-paying Girls’ UPS was placed under Mrs. Louisa Adelaide Hugo whose lower (£50 pa) subsidy as a woman teacher was taken for granted.¹³⁸ The school’s clumsy nomenclature reflected government desire to avoid the very denominational conflict evident in Worcester. A policy

135 G.1-71, *CGH, Report of the Superintendent-General of Education for the year 1870*, pp. 5-6.

136 CA, SGE 1/27, Rowan to SGE, 5 August 1872.

137 G.3-73, *CGH, Report of the Superintendent-General of Education for the year 1872*. Appendix I: Western Districts: Notes of Inspections by the Superintendent-General – 1872, p. xiii.

138 CA, SGE 1/29, 1873, UP Girls’ School Worcester FORM of GUARANTEE.

was to be followed of strictly secular tuition in school hours.¹³⁹ Rowan's promotion meant that he was absent from Worcester during the final months of the establishment in which he had laboured for sixteen years. While the leading citizens of Worcester were deciding who would accept the heavier financial responsibility incumbent upon the managers of an aided first-class UPS for boys,¹⁴⁰ Rowan's assistant held the fort. Then, from March 1873,¹⁴¹ Revd John Maynard undertook to supervise the school in its final months.¹⁴² The unpopular former inspector took his duties very seriously but it is evident that old wounds had not healed. When he attempted to discipline the few remaining pupils in the school, they absconded and it took the intervention of Revd William Murray, successor to his older brother as minister at Worcester, to persuade some to return.¹⁴³ Maynard's interpretation of events was:¹⁴⁴

When I took them over I must candidly say I never heard or read or found during many years of experience such an unruly vicious & demoralized set of boys in all my life. It is quite evident that a lot of them have conspired for the purpose of interrupting the work of the school in every conceivable way ... I am thoroughly convinced that there is in my own case as a Clergyman of the Church of England some religious persecution handed down from the time to which I need not allude to you...

Dale reassured the distressed cleric that he attributed the low attendance to the forthcoming change of management.¹⁴⁵ With government making an equal contribution of £175 pa, the local managers signed the guarantees by June 1873. They also provided house rent for their chosen teacher, Revd Geo. Y Jeffreys, who came to Worcester with experience of the new system of aided schooling at the Paarl First-Class UPS.¹⁴⁶ In addition, £50 pa was guaranteed to Christian Frederic Pieterse who continued as assistant teacher¹⁴⁷ under similar conditions.¹⁴⁸ The era of the Worcester Government School thus came

139 In an Undenominational Public School, the managers could arrange for religious instruction to be given outside of regular school hours, but pupils could not be forced to attend this. Act No. 13 of 1865.

140 CA, SGE 1/29, W Murray to Dale, 2 June 1873, Maynard to Dale, 3 April 1873.

141 CA, SGE 13/1; 17/2.

142 CA, SGE 13/1; 17/2.

143 CA, SGE 1/29, Maynard to Dale, 3 April, 28 May and 3 June, 1873. William Murray was also later involved in setting up schools for the blind and deaf in Worcester. H Murray, "The Andrew Murray Family Register", (Unpublished pamphlet, 1981), p. 10.

144 CA, SGE 1/29, Maynard to Dale, 28 May 1873.

145 CA, SGE 1/29, Margin note, LD, 31 May 1873, on Maynard to Dale, 28 March 1873.

146 CA, SGE 1/19, 1868. Secretary of School Commission, Paarl, to SGE, 20 May 1868.

147 CA, CO 953, SGE to Col Sec, 9 October 1872, notes the appointment as assistant teacher of Mr Christian Frederic Pieterse.

148 CA, SGE 1/29, FORMS OF GUARANTEE, Assistant Teacher and TEACHER. Managers for the Boys' UPS were J Meiring RM, JD Hugo, H Barclay, G Greeff, J Jordaan, JHP Bosman and William Murray.

to an end on 30 June 1873, and management of public schooling in the town came to rest in the hands of a local committee. This had been joined at the last minute by Mr Henry Barclay who was, said Revd William Murray, “certainly an acquisition because he belongs to the English Church else the whole Committee would belong to the Dutch Church”.¹⁴⁹

Conclusion

The Worcester teacher spoke often of his role in promoting a very English form of education in, by implication, a very Dutch town. He seems to have seen himself as a capable broker of good scholarship – as did many other first-class government teachers of the Established System. All would have joined him in believing themselves to be expending their very substance in the best interests of “people [who] cannot judge for themselves in matters of education”.¹⁵⁰ Rowan had acquired the discourses of the liberal, self-confident, British government teacher.

Where Rowan differed from most other first-class government teachers, was in being able to straddle two worlds; the parochial and the colonial. He was able to draw on his identity as a Reformed churchman on the one hand, and interact confidently with government leaders on the other. This became particularly important for the survival of government schooling in Worcester where there was evident sensitivity to a more assertive Anglican and Anglicist educational presence represented by Bishop Gray’s initiatives. The furore around Revd Maynard’s inspection occurred when there was a leadership vacuum in the Dutch Reformed Church; one that had been ended by the contingent arrival of a more cosmopolitan dominee. Under the Revd Andrew Murray jnr the town’s Dutch Reformed elite was again willing to cooperate in the project of government education even as it became secular and exclusively English in medium.¹⁵¹

The state was able to retreat when the colonial residents, churches and missionary society between them were willing to take on its educational

149 CA, SGE 1/29, W Murray to Dale, 2 June 1873.

150 CA, SGE 1/2, Rowan to Innes, 16 April and 15 June 1858.

151 Under Act No 13 of 1865, in any aided UPS, “the instruction during ordinary school hours shall be given through the medium of the English language”. Only in Third Class, rural schools, was this modified to, “The instruction during ordinary school hours shall, as far as practicable, be given through the medium of the English language, within twelve months after the first establishment of the school”.

(improving, regulating) role. The Rhenish Mission Schools, with an annual grant of £75, continued to plough a steady educational furrow for the greater part of Worcester's residents. The relatively smooth transition from free government schooling to aided public schooling in a complete suite of purpose-built schoolrooms would be seen by Rowan, in partnership with the Dutch Reformed Church, as his legacy to the white residents of the town.