

# “Doing the Best I Can”: The Taking of the 1861 New Brunswick Census\*

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The Census returns, as taken of late years in many countries, possess great interest. They afford much useful information, dispel many erroneous ideas, and form the basis of most important legislation. In these Provinces accuracy has never yet been attained, and even in the returns of this year there are many items which are far from correct.

Timothy ANGLIN.<sup>1</sup>

Sir

I have forth with maild the severl Schedules that ihave filed up  
there being no nomanufactuers in country places it leves the Schedules con-  
taining such not filed...

Sir ihave done the best icould and if there is any erer found it has been Done  
for the want of knowing better

And ihope you will excuse me

And by doing

Iremain your humble Servant

John MURPHY.<sup>2</sup>

Only comparatively recently have historians begun exploiting the rich resources of nineteenth-century censuses, particularly in their manuscript form. As with any historical source, it has been imperative to determine the accuracy and validity of census information before basing conclusions on it; and several articles and appendices have been written by quantitative historians to this end.<sup>3</sup> Yet none has discussed the actual process of setting up, taking, and compiling a census, or given much attention to rural enumerations.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the statistical examinations of reliability conducted to date have shown little appreciation for the nineteenth-century context from which the censuses emerged, the motives and aims that pro-

\*I would like to thank Prof. William A. Spray of Saint Thomas University for initially drawing my attention to the 1861 Census Letters.

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<sup>1</sup> *Morning Freeman* (Saint John), 20 February, 1861. Anglin was editor.

<sup>2</sup> John Murphy to Provincial Secretary (hereafter PS), 8 October, 1861, “RLE Unsorted, 1861 Census Papers,” Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (hereafter PANB). All letters cited are from this source.

<sup>3</sup> A possible exception to both these criticisms is David P. GAGAN, “Enumerator’s Instructions for the Census of Canada 1851 and 1861,” *Histoire sociale — Social History*, VII, no. 14 (1974), pp. 353-65. See also E. J. TOKER, “How a Census is Taken,” *Canadian Magazine of Politics, Science, Art and Literature*, XVI (1900-1), pp. 429-33, for a useful insight into the taking of the *Third Census of Canada* (1891), by a member of the 1891 census staff; for British censuses, Michael DRAKE, “The Census, 1801-1891,” in E. A. WRIGLEY, ed., *Nineteenth Century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data* (Cambridge, Eng., 1972), pp. 7-46.

<sup>4</sup> New Brunswick, *Acts of the General Assembly* (Fredericton, 1860), 23 Victoria Cap. XLIX (pp. 70-2).

duced these documents, and the innumerable practical obstacles strewn in the path of such undertakings. Through a description of the 1861 New Brunswick enumeration, this paper will hopefully compensate for these shortcomings and contribute toward a greater understanding of the value of one of history's new tools. Most historians would concur with Timothy Anglin's assessment of the value of censuses, while holding his reservations as to their precise accuracy. The enumerator for Petersville, District 2, Queens County, John Murphy, claimed to have done the best he could. What of the other 159 enumerators, and the administrators and compilers? More important, how good was their best?

On April 9, 1860, the legislature of New Brunswick established "An act to provide for taking a Census."<sup>5</sup> As Caption 49, 23 Victoria, this legislation embodied the following stipulations:

1. The Governor in Council shall appoint in each and every Parish of every County such and so many persons, to be styled Enumerators, for taking the Census, as he may deem advisable, and may divide large and populous Parishes into Districts and appoint an Enumerator to each District.
2. Every Enumerator shall at the time and in the manner prescribed by the Governor in Council, take the account of the number of persons who shall be actually found at the time of the taking such account, or to which it shall relate, in the Parish or District for which he may be appointed, together prescribed by the Governor in Council.
3. The Governor in Council shall appoint, the time, and prescribe the mode of taking the said Census, and make such rules and regulations to guide and govern the Enumerators in their enquiries, and generally to carry out the object and provisions of this Act; and shall specify the various enquiries to be instituted by the Enumerators, and cause a Schedule of such enquiries, methodically arranged, to be published in the Royal Gazette at least two months before such time.
4. The Provincial Secretary shall furnish every Enumerator with a sufficient number of copies of the said Schedule and the necessary forms and instructions required for taking the said Census.
5. Every Enumerator shall at the time so specified proceed to take the said Census, and an account in writing of the various particulars contained in the aforementioned Schedule, adopting such mode of procedure as, consistent with his instructions, will enable him with the greatest expedition and correctness to obtain the information required, and shall prepare therefrom answers to the said questions, in the form required by his instructions, and sign the same, attest thereto, and make return to the Provincial Secretary.
6. Every Enumerator is hereby authorized to ask any question prescribed in the said Schedule of any person within the Parish or District for which he is appointed, to enable him to make the said enquiry, and correctly to ascertain the result; and every person refusing to answer, or wilfully giving a false answer to any such question shall, for every refusal or false answer, pay not more than five pounds, in the discretion of the Justice before whom complaint shall be made.
7. The Governor in Council shall appoint one or more persons to digest the said Return, and shall cause an Abstract thereof to be laid before the Legislative Council and House of Assembly at the next Session of The Legislature after the completion of such Abstract.

<sup>5</sup> For example, see John B. SHARPLESS, and Ray M. SHORTRIDGE, "Biased Underenumeration in Census Manuscripts," *Journal of Urban History*, 1 (1975), pp. 409-39; D. S. CROSS and J. G. DUDLEY, "Comparative Study of Street Directories and Census Returns for 1871," *Urban History Review*, 3 (November 1972), pp. 12-6.

8. Every Enumerator shall transmit to the office of the Provincial Secretary an Account, duly attested, of the number of days he has been actually employed in taking the Census, with every other information necessary, to enable the Governor in Council to test the correctness of the Account; and he shall be allowed at the rate of ten shillings for every day he is so employed, to be paid by Warrant of the Governor in Council on the Treasury.
9. For the purposes of this Act the Cities of Saint John and Fredericton shall be deemed Parishes and the Towns of Woodstock and Moncton respectively shall each be deemed a District of their respective Parishes.
10. In this Act, 'Census' shall mean the taking an account of the Population and such other enquiries relative thereto, or relative to the Agricultural, Mechanical, Lumbering, or other resources, or such other Statistics as the Governor in Council shall prescribe.
11. This Act shall come into operation and be in force the first day of January which will be in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty one.

The act proclaimed rather generally *what* was to be done, but said nothing as to *how* it should be done. This intentional vagueness, personified by Section 10, was to be the cause of much confusion. Without a long-established, well-trained bureaucracy to handle the census-taking operation, the informal attitude of the government was understandable. Yet this state of affairs made it all the more necessary that specific and minute details should have been established as guidelines for the inexperienced and often unintelligent clerks and enumerators who were to become involved in the extremely complex task of taking a census. Supplied with inadequate legislation, Provincial Secretary Samuel Leonard Tilley and his staff were placed in charge of the entire enumeration process.

Like the initial act, the remainder of the setting-up phase—the publishing of schedules of enquiry and rules and regulations (Section 3), the appointment of enumerators to appropriate geographical divisions (Section 1), and the furnishing of supplies (Section 4)—was characterized by informality. It was also marked by politics and patronage. Unfortunately no copy of the rules and regulations has survived, but after deliberations in the Provincial Secretary's office schedules were published in *The Royal Gazette* on February 27 (Appendix A). It is impossible to say exactly how the form of these schedules was determined. Certain categories (such as religious profession and questions on births, deaths, and marriages) suggest the influence of the British system, but the *modus operandi* in New Brunswick was much closer to the U.S. Model.<sup>6</sup> In Britain, schedules were left at every house, filled in by respondents, and collected at a later date by the enumerators. In the U.S. and in New Brunswick, census takers were required to call at each house and personally record the answers to their questions.<sup>7</sup> Like the U.S. and in contrast to Great Britain, New Brunswick employed a *de jure* rather than *de facto* system of enumeration. Despite these similarities, differences did exist between the New Brunswick schedule format and those of either the U.S. or Great Britain: New Brunswick did not include questions on real and personal estate, and instead incorporated a column for racial origin. With previous enumerations in 1824, 1834, 1841 and 1851,

<sup>6</sup> TOKER, p. 429.

<sup>7</sup> For the method of enumeration in the Canadas, see GAGAN, p. 355, In.

the province had developed a distinct enquiry format. Even these rather highly detailed schedules, however, contained numerous ambiguities and over-simplifications that inevitably resulted in misinterpretation.

The motives behind this and other nineteenth-century North American censuses also provided an inherent source of misrepresentation. Most census questions were specifically designed to furnish the government of a young and underdeveloped province with a certain kind of information, namely propaganda. “Number of inhabitants” and “births and deaths in preceding year” on Schedule I, “inhabited houses,” “other buildings,” “houses building” and columns 5 through 16 on Schedule II, “hands employed,” “improved and unimproved acreage,” “cash value of farms” and details of agricultural production on Schedule III, and all of Schedules IV, V, and VI were especially exemplary. As the annual reports of the Emigration Officer and of the recruiting agents sent to Great Britain testify, New Brunswick was intent on attracting immigrants.<sup>8</sup> The province wanted to be able to boast how much it had grown during the previous decade, how many hands might be employed, and how many fine buildings and manufactories were springing up as evidence of the wealth and progress enjoyed by all.

The operations of defining census districts and appointing enumerators were carried out concurrently. The first application for employment as enumerator was recorded in the minutes of the Governor in Council on September 11, 1860.<sup>9</sup> Between this date and the 27th of July 1861, 37 more persons applied.<sup>10</sup> The fact that 160 men were eventually hired, however, suggests that the unsolicited letter of application was not the only avenue of enquiry. As it was, the majority of the enumerators (at least 116) were appointed on the recommendations of their local M.L.A.s. Not formally stated in the 1860 act, this method was a carry-over from the 1851 census.<sup>11</sup> A letter from George Ryan, M.L.A. for Kings County, to Tilley indicated that about the beginning of July the Secretary’s office had begun seeking recommendations for appointments from local politicians.<sup>12</sup> The delay between the end of the legislative stage in February and the soliciting of enumerators in July was undoubtedly caused by preoccupation throughout the province with June elections. The Provincial Secretary’s office could not begin asking for recommendations from M.L.A.s until it knew which Members would be in office at enumeration time in August.

<sup>8</sup> See particularly NEW BRUNSWICK, *Journal of the House of Assembly (1858)* (Fredericton, 1858), pp. 88-93; *Journal of the House of Assembly (1863)* (Fredericton, 1863), Appendix 11.

<sup>9</sup> John Campbell to canvass Durham, Restigouche, PANB, “Executive Council Minute Books, Vol. 8,” 11 September, 1860, No. 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, and 11 September, 1860, No. 43; 4 January, 1861, Nos. 46-9, 53, 59; 16 April, 1861, Nos. 9, 13, 90, 105, 114, 117, 129, 135, 152, 155, 160, 161, 168; 1 July, 1861, Nos. 58, 93-8, 102-10; 27 July, 1861, No. 7.

<sup>11</sup> See NEW BRUNSWICK, *Acts of the General Assembly* (Fredericton, 1848), 11 Victoria Cap. XXVII (pp. 121-3).

<sup>12</sup> See 14n.

The postponing of appointments until July also provided a pleasant bonus for grassroots party members — to the victors the spoils!<sup>13</sup>

M.L.A.s such as Ryan who knew their localities well seem to have frequently determined the size of census districts and the number of enumerators required.

Yours of the 2nd inst is this moment to hand and in conforming to your request I beg leave to respectfully recommend for Enumerators the following persons... Those three parishes for which I have recommended two enumerators each are pretty large ones and can see no difficulty in two persons performing the duties as they can so arrange matters as not to lap on each others territory...<sup>14</sup>

John Farris, an M.L.A. for Queens County, was more poignant in his proposals to the Provincial Secretary: "I wish to inform you the men that I want appointed to take the census of the county... [T]hese are the men that I want appointed and Please appoint the same..."<sup>15</sup>

A pattern of patronage is discernable in both recommendations. In 1827 George Ryan married Miriam, daughter of Samuel Freeze, and hardly coincidentally the enumerators designated to the parishes of Norton and Sussex were Samuel Freeze and S. Nelson Freeze. In Queens, Farris, a Waterborough man, appointed his brother-in-law George C. McLean canvasser for that parish. Similar recommendations for relatives and friends came from M.L.A.s in most counties.<sup>16</sup> Probably the most fascinating application with regard to the importance of personal contacts and political affiliation was that of Thomas Leonard of Havelock, Kings. On February 19, 1861, Leonard wrote to his local M.L.A., E. A. Vail, "soliciting Your interest in endeavoring to obtain for me the Situation of Census taker,..."<sup>17</sup> He also asked an influential relative, Thomas Beer, to write to Vail. Six days later Leonard carried his appeal directly to Tilley with an obsequious representation mentioning family friendships and petty business connections.<sup>18</sup> However, after all of Leonard's attempts in February to win friends and influence people, the job of census taker for Havelock went to William Baskin, a nominee of George Ryan, in July. In the June elections Ryan had been returned as a Tilley supporter, while Vail and a third M.L.

<sup>13</sup> The 1861 elections were particularly bitter as several of the members of the government, including Tilley, had been accused of land scandals. James HANNAY, *The Life and Times of Sir Leonard Tilley* (Saint John, 1897), pp. 230-1. The campaign was arduous and the victory sweet, as announced by the *New Brunswick Courier* (Saint John), 8 June 1861:

#### LIBERALISM TRIUMPHANT!

The battle has been fought — a glorious triumph has been achieved against the opposing forces of all the powers of darkness!

Their own rank and file deserved to be well rewarded. They were in no humour to make concessions to a defeated opposition.

<sup>14</sup> George Ryan to PS, 4 July, 1861.

<sup>15</sup> John Farris to PS, 17 July, 1861.

<sup>16</sup> Biographical information from James C. and Horace B. GRAVES, "New Brunswick Political Biography," unpublished manuscript, PANB, Vol. VI, p. 69 and Vol. VIII, p. 20.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Leonard to Edwin A. Vail, 19 February, 1861.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Leonard to PS, 15 February, 1861.

A. for Kings, W. B. Scovil, had been elected as opposition candidates. Unwittingly, in approaching Vail, Leonard had curried favour with the wrong man. Above all, appointments were informal, personal, and usually intra-party in nature. Several recommendations were made through brief memos or telegrams to Tilley. For example, Peter Mitchell, a member of the executive council, wired from Newcastle, Northumberland, on July 10, "Make Edward R. Whitney enumerator Northesk, P. Mitchell."<sup>19</sup> In York and Saint John Counties, recommendations and appointments were apparently made by word of mouth.

When the applying, recommending, and administrative decision making were complete, formal employment offers accompanied by oaths were sent from the Provincial Secretary's office to prospective enumerators. Where local M.L.A.s had suggested district boundary changes, statements of the precise areas to be enumerated were also included. The prospective canvassers replied by accepting or declining the offers, and if accepting by signing and returning the enclosed "Oath A". Unfortunately, the process did not always run smoothly. In Kent County M.L.A. Francis McPhelim failed to recommend an enumerator for the parish of Huskisson. A subsequent letter to Tilley explained, "It is said that there are no Inhabitants in *Huskisson*."<sup>20</sup> John Gregory, the clerk in the Secretary's office assigned to deal with census correspondence, then wrote to Stephen Briggs, the appointed census taker for the adjacent parish of Harcourt, and ordered him to enumerate Huskisson as well. On September 24, over a month after enumeration was supposed to have commenced, Briggs respectfully replied that he had no interest whatsoever in enumerating a wasteland devoid of people.<sup>21</sup> Briggs was ultimately paid \$18 for enumerating Harcourt and Huskisson, so we may assume that he eventually succumbed.<sup>22</sup>

The problem of enumerator appointment was particularly evident in Saint Stephen-Milltown, Charlotte County. Initially, J. Hay and W. T. Rose were recommended by M.L.A. Arthur H. Gillmor to enumerate the upper (Milltown) and lower (Saint Stephen) districts, respectively. However, when the formal offer arrived from Fredericton, Hay declined the post. An apparent solution was embodied in a letter from the Provincial Secretary's office to Rose:

I am directed by the Provincial Secretary to state to you that if you can act for that [Milltown] district as well as for the one to which you have accepted the office is before you for acceptance. To save time I enclose a blank oath of office...<sup>23</sup>

In the meantime, Hay's resignation provoked a response from two of Charlotte County's other three M.L.A.s, George Grimmer and James Stevens. On September 6 they telegraphed from Calais, Maine, suggesting Robert

<sup>19</sup> Peter Mitchell to PS (telegram), 10 July, 1861.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in John Gregory (for PS) to Stephen Briggs, 30 July, 1861.

<sup>21</sup> Stephen Briggs to PS, 24 September, 1861.

<sup>22</sup> See "Memorandum of Census Returns," p. 5, in PANB, "RLE Unsorted, 1861 Census Papers." See also John McMillan to PS, 15 July 1861.

<sup>23</sup> PS to W. T. Rose, 2 September, 1861.

Clarke for enumerator.<sup>24</sup> Tilley in turn wired Rose inquiring if he had taken the oath and commenced enumerating the Milltown district. When Rose concisely replied, "No," the matter was finally resolved and on September 10 Robert Clarke was sent notice of his appointment.

A further possible source of pre-enumeration error was suggested in a Sussex, Kings, letter where two census takers had divided the parish between themselves.

We the Enumerators for the Parish of Sussex in the County of Kings consent to the following division of said Parish.

Commencing at the mouth of The Trout Creek so called and following said Creek to Bridge near Sussex Upper Corner, thence on post road to Cougles Hotel then following Dutch valley road to the Parish line at McMannus's on the Shepody road.

S. Nelson Freeze to take the Eastern and Jas. T. Dysart the Western division of said line.<sup>25</sup>

This practice was also followed in the parishes of New Bandon, Berrisford, and Caraquet, Gloucester County.<sup>26</sup> Such decisions over boundaries did not necessarily result in inaccuracy or delay the beginnings of enumeration, but they certainly must have added to the confusion in the Provincial secretary's office as August 15, the designated starting day, drew ever nearer.

Throughout the first two weeks of August, letters of acceptance from enumerators came streaming into Tilley's office, and a master list of districts and enumerators was assembled.<sup>27</sup> Like Archibald C. Plumer, most enumerators seemed appreciative of their appointments and were ready to begin work.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, operations in some instances were already falling behind schedule. This was in part due to a policy in the Secretary's office of withholding schedules and rules and regulations from enumerators until their acceptances and signed oaths had been received. It was September 3 before a decision was reached on an enumerator for Upper Queensbury, a parish only fifteen or twenty miles upriver from Fredericton.<sup>29</sup> The schedules for James Robinson of Lancaster, Saint John County, were sent to the neighbouring parish of Musquash where they lay in the post office from August 6 to September 4. On September 16 William Young, enumerator for Saint Davids parish, Charlotte, informed the Secretary's office that although his schedules had arrived, copies of Number III had been omit-

<sup>24</sup> G. S. Grimmer to PS (telegram), 6 September, 1861.

<sup>25</sup> S. Nelson Freeze and James to Dysart to PS, 10 August, 1861.

<sup>26</sup> A. Darcy to PS, 8 August, 1861; Jeremiah Sweeney to James Chalmers to PS, 6 August, 1861; Juste Ache and Pascal Landry to PS, 5 August, 1861. See also Matthew Corbett (Simonds, Carleton) to PS, 12 August, 1861. While the leaving of boundary divisions to enumerators may have resulted in error, as hinted at by Gagan, p. 356, it is clear that New Brunswick census-takers received assistance from both the Provincial Secretary's office and from local government officials. See PS to Thomas R. Dunphy, 4 September, 1861; R. Sands, Claudius Hamilton and Thomas Bowes (Simonds, Saint John Co.) to PS, 10 August, 1861; and above, 14n.

<sup>27</sup> "Memorandum of Census Returns."

<sup>28</sup> A. C. Plumer to PS, 12 August, 1861.

<sup>29</sup> G. Ingraham to PS, 3 September, 1861.

ted. Three days later Neil Stewart of Colborn, Restigouche, discovered that "blanks of schedule III viz Agriculture were entirely neglected" in his supplies. On the same day George Little of Richibucto complained he had not received any schedules at all.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to possible inaccuracies resulting from delays due to administrative slowness, indecision, and "human error" that occurred in the setting-up process, complications arose with the beginning of actual enumeration. These problems fall into two main categories. The first group concerns the abilities and interpretations of enumerators and respondents; and owing to administrative vagueness the performance of census takers became the most crucial element in the entire operation. Of the 99 enumerators who could be traced in the surviving schedules, 54 were farmers (Table 1). Another 14 combined farming with a second pursuit. A slight bias is unfortunately created by the absence of schedules for Saint John City, the only totally urban area in the province; but, although the omission deprives us of an interesting rural-urban contrast, it should not distort the overall picture. The fact that so many enumerators in an almost-totally rural province were farmers is hardly surprising. Furthermore a considerable number of the farmers were highly respected and prominent men in their communities. Three gave their occupations as "farmer and J.P.," while the Baptist minister, besides having a wife and family of eight, provided lodgings for the parish's two school teachers. As well as farmers there were several enumerators representing traditional craft occupations such as blacksmith, carpenter, and tanner. The clockmaker and J.P., clerks, school teachers, merchants, postmaster, and collector of taxes indicate the presence of a professional element. In contrast, only one enumerator, Arthur Flagg of Campobello Island, gave his regular occupation as labourer.

Like occupations, places of birth of enumerators varied, but again with a bias toward more "acceptable" origins. 57 of the 99 enumerators discovered were born in New Brunswick, and two others in Nova Scotia. 16 were Scots, 14 Irish, and 8 English. One was born in the U.S., and another did not indicate his birthplace. Both religions and ages of enumerators indicated a diversity in social backgrounds. While 27 Baptists were selected, so were 21 Presbyterians, 18 Anglicans, 12 Methodists, 3 Congregationalists, and 16 Roman Catholics.<sup>31</sup> Although the average age of an enumerator was 44.5 years, 11 were in their 20s and 15 over 60. The fact that 27 were in their 40s, 26 in their 30s, and 19 in their 50s suggests a slight over-representation of youth in a job frequently requiring arduous travel.

As a natural consequence of such diversity, the standards of competence among enumerators varied considerably. At the lower end of the scale were John Murphy cited above and John Bell of Upham, Kings (n50), whose letters indicate something less than a perfect mastery of the three Rs. In contrast, Levite Theriault, census taker for Saint Basil, Victoria,

<sup>30</sup> James Robinson to PS, 5 September, 1861; William Young to PS, 16 September, 1861; Niel Stewart to PS, 19 September, 1861; George Little to PS, 19 September, 1861.

<sup>31</sup> Two enumerators did not specify their religions and one did not give his age.

Table 1

## OCCUPATION OF ENUMERATORS.

Baptist minister .....	1	Farmer & trader .....	1
Blacksmith .....	1	Filer .....	1
Carpenter .....	1	Joiner .....	1
Clerk .....	2	Labourer .....	1
Clerk & tax collector .....	1	Lumberer .....	1
Clock/watchmaker & JP .....	1	Lumber surveyor .....	2
Enumerator .....	2	Merchant .....	3
Farmer .....	54	Postmaster .....	1
Farmer & carpenter .....	2	Schoolmaster .....	4
Farmer & JP .....	3	Tanner .....	1
Farmer & lighthouse kpr .....	1	Tavernkeeper .....	1
Farmer & lumberer .....	5	Trader .....	2
Farmer & merchant .....	3	No occupation/retired .....	1
Farmer & millman .....	1		
Farmer & tailor .....	1	TOTAL .....	99

Source: N.B. Census, 1861, manuscript schedules, reels P120-P131, PANB.

was to become an M.L.A. seven years later. He was the son of a land and mill owner, and received an education at the College de la Pocatière in Quebec. As well as becoming a farmer in Saint Basil, he subsequently held posts as Secretary of the Victoria Agricultural Society, Justice of the Peace, Registrar of Deeds and Wills for Madawaska County, and member of the Provincial Board of Agriculture. An M.L.A. between 1868 and 1894, Theriault served on the New Brunswick Executive Council during 1871-2.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, James Olive, enumerator for Guys and Albert Wards in Saint John, had been mayor of that city in 1853 and 1854,<sup>33</sup> while two of Fredericton's five wards were canvassed by William Estey, a lumber surveyor by occupation and a member of a prominent business family. We can be sure that among the other 155 enumerators who fell between these extremes varying levels of aptitude were evident. It has been suggested that local politicians in mid-nineteenth-century New Brunswick were often the "best gentlemen available."<sup>34</sup> From the sincerity embodied in John Murphy's letter,<sup>35</sup> one might qualify this view and argue that the census enumerators were the best "party men" available. In Saint John City, Fredericton, and the other towns of the province such a criterion might have produced highly competent enumerators, but in the back settlements of Queens, Charlotte, and Restigouche education was not a prerequisite to being the best party man.

Several of the enquiries received by the Provincial Secretary's office during the census-taking period permit a more detailed assessment of the

<sup>32</sup> Graves, XI, Madawaska, p. 35.

<sup>33</sup> "List of Administrators," in PANB unpublished manuscript inventory, not paginated.

<sup>34</sup> Raymond G. Watson, "Local Government in a New Brunswick County; Kings County, 1784-1850" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Univ. of New Brunswick, 1969), p. 181.

<sup>35</sup> See also similar expressions by John Kenneally (71n) and Walter McLaughlin (63n).

levels of aptitude of the various canvassers. At least three wrote to inform the head office that they had not been supplied with copies of Schedule VI.<sup>36</sup> In each case John Gregory hastened to reply that Schedule VI was printed on the reverse side of Schedule V. In contrast, the enquiry of Thomas Bowes (Simmons, District 2, Saint John County) regarding slaughtered pork revealed considerable intelligence and perceptiveness:

[F]or my information in making up the census returns if you would be kind enough to state to me whether it is the quantity to be slaughtered the fall of 1861 — or what I find will have been slaughtered on the 15th of August last, or what has been slaughtered in the fall of 1860, as any of my instructions does not enlighten me on this point.<sup>37</sup>

Far from being facile, John Browne's query (Bathurst North, Gloucester) of September 23 as to "what appellation should be given those keeping shop whether shopkeepers or merchants" was one that has plagued recent social and economic historians.<sup>38</sup> In addition to enumerators who wrote inept or incisive questions were those who did not write. Presumably they understood everything, left out what they could not comprehend, or completed the schedules incorrectly.

Accuracy was not only dependent on enumerator ability, but also on the consistency with which the administrators and canvassers interpreted the initial legislation for the census. The problem of classification and the definition of categories on census schedules was evident in the enquiries of Bowes and Browne. A letter of October 5 from Roderick McLean expressed confusion over the "hands employed" column on Schedule II (Agriculture): "Whether it means Hired Laborer or all belonging to the Family able to work."<sup>39</sup> The decision and reply came from John Gregory:

As to "Hands Employed" your return will be satisfactory if you insert numbers that will represent the number of males and females that could do the work if steadily/continuously employed, excluding the farmer himself. Thus a farmer may have a wife and 3 or 4 Sons and as many daughters and one hired man yet the whole work performed by them in reference to the farm may be only equal to that of the farmer himself and 2 males and one female.<sup>40</sup>

It is hardly surprising that such equivocal replies instigated further queries, such as that of James Lake (Kars, Kings):

In answer to yours of the 18th I have to say that in many instances, I found much difficulty for I found families with small farms for instance one man his wife and 5 girls. I in this case have been guided by my own judgement. I always as *nearly as possible* gave an *estimated* value of female labour, what I considered as actually employed, but in many cases this was a difficulty and in some case I found more butter &c made by the wife of an individual

<sup>36</sup> John Pond (Ludlow, Northumberland) to PS, 5 September, 1861; John S. Colpitts (Salisbury, Westmorland) to PS, 12 August, 1861; Joseph Mercer (Saint John City) to PS, 10 August, 1861.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Bowes to PS, 19 September, 1861.

<sup>38</sup> John Browne to PS, 23 September, 1861.

<sup>39</sup> Roderick McLean to PS, 5 October, 1861.

<sup>40</sup> PS to Roderick McLean, 8 October, 1861. See also PS to Jonas Clarkson, 7 September 1861.

farmer than in some houses where 3 or 4 women were employed but all where numbers of female labour came in question *I calculated to the best of my ability* to get the average value of those actually employed, in the family.<sup>41</sup>

The columns on Schedule III entitled "value of farm" and "value of machinery and implements" necessitated similar exercises in guesswork.

A final classification difficulty encountered by New Brunswick census takers in 1861 was prompted by the widespread system of part-time lumbering-farming, fishing-farming, and anything-farming employed throughout the Maritime region during the nineteenth century. In September George Clowes wrote from Northampton, Carleton, requesting "some information as to whether Farmers that are Lumberers are to be returned as Farmer and Lumbers [*sic*]." <sup>42</sup> The reply from the Provincial Secretary's office to this and similar enquiries was to enter such persons as "farmers and lumberers." Presumably they intended to worry about the problem at some later date when the completed schedules were returned to Fredericton. Nevertheless, this discrepancy between theory and practice in occupational classification continued to concern enumerators in many parts of the province. On the North Shore, James Scott of Pokemouch observed:

a number of the settlers are beginners and can hardly be styled farmers. And can be designated by no other name. You will perceive in schedule No. 1 there is 80 families of White people.... and in schedule No. 3. 77 families this deviation from No. 1 is owing to 3 families names in No. 1 being so very destitute of every sort of farm produce that I could not put them in the list of farmers altho occupying land they live chiefly by hunting and spearing.<sup>43</sup>

Inaccuracies must also have arisen when respondents were unable or unwilling to answer questions correctly. From a letter of October 5, it appeared Arthur Flagg was having difficulties in Campobello,<sup>44</sup> while Roderick McLean complained from Victoria County, "[I]t is almost impossible to do any thing with the people for they suppose or think it is to raise their taxes.... I have done my best under the circumstances as I said before the people are afraid on acc/t of taxes."<sup>45</sup> With civil war raging in the neighbouring republic during the summer of 1861, the fear of respondents may not have been totally unfounded. No one enjoyed being assessed for taxes, and in McLean's case being an English-speaking Scots

<sup>41</sup> James Lake to PS, 30 September, 1861. Emphasis mine.

<sup>42</sup> George Clowes to PS, 16 September, 1861.

<sup>43</sup> James Scott to PS, 13 September, 1861. See also a note, E.D.W.B. Phillips to PS, received 19 October, 1861, on the back of an unused Schedule VI: "You will observe by these returns that there are more farmers than Houses, the reason of which is that quite a number have lately come and have taken 100 acres land each, but have not yet built any houses or barns, but live in temporary Camps. I have considered it proper to return those people as farmers with 100 acres land each without any houses. I have made the strictest enquiries into the names, ages, religious profession &c., also of... the Amount of grains of each kind raised"; and New Brunswick Census, 1861, manuscript schedules for Campobello, Charlotte, last page, reel P120 at PANB, and Blissfield, Northumberland, p. 27, reel P123.

<sup>44</sup> Roderick McLean to PS, 5 October, 1861.

<sup>45</sup> New Brunswick Census, 1861, manuscript schedules for Campobello, Charlotte, last page, reel P120, PANB.

protestant enumerating a largely French-speaking catholic parish must have at times aggravated the situation. Eventually McLean became infuriated with his respondents' lack of cooperation and sued two persons for ten dollars under Section 6 of the Census Act.<sup>46</sup> McLean's example of taking legal action was, however, the only such instance represented in the letters, and one may safely assume that in other parishes responders would not have been inclined or even capable of deceiving local enumerators who were in possession of most pertinent information before solicitation.

Integrally connected with inaccuracies caused by enumerator or respondent deficiencies, but worthy of a second major category, were problems encountered during enumeration which resulted in the delay of returns. A common inquiry of census takers was expressed by the canvasser for Florenceville, S. B. Appleby: “What time do you expect me to make my returns. Must I be confined to the printed instructions which say the census must be taken to represent that state of the country as it existed on the 15th of the month [August]?”<sup>47</sup> The act providing for the 1851 census had stipulated the exact date on which enumeration should begin, so there could be no uncertainty in that year.<sup>48</sup> But the 1861 act contained no reference to a starting date, other than it should be set by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. The only instruction given to the enumerators was a clause (referred to by Appleby) in the rules and regulations stating that the census should be taken “with the least possible delay” and should “represent the state of the country as it existed on the 15th of August.”<sup>49</sup> The census was supposed to assess the condition of New Brunswick on this precise day. Any protraction of enumeration beyond the 15th increased the risk of inaccuracy or misrepresentation in the returns. Even though the canvass was intended to be on a *de jure* basis (that is, the enumerator would gather information as to the condition of the province on August 15, even if he canvassed on December 15), the evidence indicates that many enumerators were not as aware as Appleby of the essential nature of this regulation.<sup>50</sup> John Bell wrote nonchalantly from Upham, Kings, on August 31, “sir i reseived yoir note on 24 likewise a blank form of oath wich i have perfected i have reseived th blank forms & othe douchments from my brother i shoud like to know

<sup>46</sup> Roderick McLean to PS, 5 October, 1861.

<sup>47</sup> S. B. Appleby to PS, 26 August, 1861.

<sup>48</sup> New Brunswick, *Acts of the General Assembly* (Fredericton, 1849), 12 Victoria Cap. XLVIII (p. 200).

<sup>49</sup> PS to D. A. Munro, 2 September, 1861.

<sup>50</sup> See David Munro (M.L.A. Carleton) to PS, 29 August, 1861. Munro informed Gregory “Several of the Enumerators have asked me this week if there is any specified time by which their Census Returns are to be made. Some of them say they can scarcely make any correct Returns until after the Grain is cut, and consequently wish to have all September to work in or longer.” From another letter, John Gregory to [?], it is clear that Gregory, the clerk responsible for directing enumerators, was not aware of the vital importance of the *de jure* principle. He wrote, “I beg to inform you that the expression in the Rules and Regulations is the 15th Day of August or as near to that date as the efficient execution of the duty will permit... You will act correctly if you proceed forthwith...and take the population as you find it,” 29 August, 1861.

i there is any stated time for the returns to be made." In Chatham, Edward Lobban tried the British *de facto* method of leaving schedules at certain houses for the inhabitants to complete. He soon discovered his system unsatisfactory because respondents "only spoil them and I find the only plan is going from House to house."<sup>51</sup> Such enumerators undoubtedly assessed conditions as they appeared on the actual day of canvassing, a situation hardly surprising given Section 2 of the Census Act. Even if some enumerators did adhere to the rules and regulations and conduct a strictly *de jure* canvass, the chance of any man remembering exactly the condition of his family and farm on August 15 was remote if the enumerator arrived on December or January 15.

The peculiar case of Norton, Kings, provides an example of the "essential viciousness of protracted enumerations"<sup>52</sup> among even persistent, stationary elements of society. Records clearly show that Samuel Freeze was appointed enumerator for that parish,<sup>53</sup> and his returns were duly received in Fredericton on January 7, 1861, with the accompanying Oath B signed and witnessed December 31, 1861. Mysteriously, returns also survive for the "Parish of Norton, District-North Side of Kennebecassis River," enumerated by Abraham B. Smith. Although the receipt of Smith's returns was not dated, his Oath B was signed and witnessed on January 28, 1861, indicating that his enumeration was completed about a month after Freeze's. Freeze was recorded in both his own and Smith's returns, and during the month between the two canvasses one of Freeze's sons gained a year, from 3 to 4. Freeze changed his occupation from tavern keeper to innkeeper and farmer, and his religion from Episcopal to Free Baptist. At the first enumeration the Freeze family maintained one servant, Matilda Hoggins, and two labourers, Richard Bigelow and John Golding. By the time Smith called, Emily Driscoll had replaced Matilda as servant, and John Golding had departed. On both occasions the Agriculture Schedule recorded Freeze as having 200 acres of land. However, Freeze's enumeration showed 30 acres of improved and 170 acres of unimproved land, with a value of \$2,000. Smith's returns gave 40 acres improved, 160 acres unimproved, and a value of \$2,400. Not only does this case illustrate the possible inaccuracies arising from delays, it also provides insight into the administrative inexperience and confusion characterizing much of the census-taking process.

In addition to the unreliability of persisters' memories and migration factors were changes over time occurring within the other constituents of population growth (births and deaths) which in this newly-developing region were probably high.<sup>54</sup> One enumerator, Henry A. Sormany (Shippe-

<sup>51</sup> Edward Lobban to PS, 16 October, 1861.

<sup>52</sup> See U.S. Census Office, *Ninth Census* (1870), I (Washington, 1872), pp. xxi-xxii.

<sup>53</sup> "Memorandum of Census Returns," p. 6. Abraham B. Smith is not recorded under Kings County enumerators on this page.

<sup>54</sup> The average family size of the 96 enumerators found in the schedules who were living with their families was 6.33 (mean size of nuclear family including head of household).

gan North, Gloucester) included a six-hour-old daughter in the enumeration of his family. We may justifiably wonder whether the child was born on August 15 or at some time during the following 52 days Sormany took to complete his returns. On the schedule requiring information on births and deaths during the preceding year, the susceptibility to inaccuracy may well have been great if the enumeration was protracted. In a two-month-long canvass, families giving birth to children could leave a parish and be missed by an enumerator. Other families could simultaneously enter the community with children born during the previous year at their prior residences. In these cases, did the enumerator ignore in-migrant births or did he include them *estimating* that they balanced the out-migrant births? In the local village, such discrepancies may not have been great, but when multiplied by 160 the error must have been significant.

Delays of various descriptions frequently occurred in the census-taking process that were unquestionably the cause of such inaccuracies in the end product. Because of financial considerations, enumerators were initially underprovided with blank schedules by the Provincial Secretary's office. An order form enclosed in all packages clearly indicated that the office expected enumerators to use their initial supply and then ask for only as many schedules as they needed. More of the surviving letters pertaining to the 1861 New Brunswick census are concerned with this one factor, the requisitioning of “refill” schedules, than anything else. In the larger centres of population the problem was especially acute. At least two telegrams were sent from John Kenneally, enumerator for Kings Ward, Saint John City, in an attempt to procure more schedules before the existing supply ran out and brought a halt to enumeration.<sup>55</sup> It is distinctly possible that many enumerators, especially in the more rural areas, were not as time conscious or as diligent as Kenneally. Occasionally the Secretary's office made clerical errors as they had done in the distribution of the initial supplies. John S. Colpitts wrote indignantly from Salisbury, Westmorland, “I am surprised to find on opening the Enclosed parcel of papers to find you again have sent Schedule II instead of Schedule III as ordered. Please be particular next time.... Another mistake like the one noted above will materially delay the Returns from me.”<sup>56</sup>

Individual idiosyncratic misfortunes among enumerators created further demands for additional schedules. On September 9, William Baskin wrote from Havelock,

When I first started out to take the census I thought that I could keep the sheets clean but I soon found my [illegible] in going in to poor houses and Spreading them on tables that was Sometimes not very clean or dry the Soon became bloted and must and when I come home I have to take them off on Clean Sheets and on that account I will want about 50 or Sixty Sheets of Schedule no 2....<sup>57</sup>

On September 20 Samuel Fox of Southampton, York, requested four additional sheets of Schedule III (Agriculture), because “I wish to recopy

<sup>55</sup> John Kenneally to PS (telegrams), 21 August and 4 September, 1861.

<sup>56</sup> John S. Colpitts to PS, 30 September, 1861.

<sup>57</sup> William Baskin to PS, 9 September, 1861.

after I get through the parish as there is great importance attached to agriculture I wish to be very particular in making my Return..."<sup>58</sup> As for George Clowes of Northampton, Carleton, we shall never know what became of his refills. A week earlier he had written to Secretary Tilley acknowledging receipt of extra schedules, but "a misfortune has deprived me of them for use and If you wish the returns to be made out on paper prepared for that purpose you will particularly oblige by forwarding [more]."<sup>59</sup>

Distances and physical conditions prolonged enumerations. While requisitioning more schedules at the beginning of October, C. J. Bailey of Northfield, Sunbury, explained his returns would have been completed earlier "but I had along ways to travel from one end to the [other] of the Parish is Some 30 miles the way the road goes at pheasant."<sup>60</sup> As some of the enumerations were still taking place in December and January, travel must have become laborious especially in back settlements where roads may have been inadequate. James Scott described his area, Inkerman, District 1, Gloucester, as "quite destitute of roads" and with a population "thinly scattered over a wide area."<sup>61</sup> In two particular cases, the elements and physical environment of mid-nineteenth-century New Brunswick brought illness to census takers, which greatly delayed their enumerations. On November 25, William Malone (Petersville, Queens) attributed his apparent tardiness to attacks of asthma caused by the cold and dampness of the season.<sup>62</sup> A more distressing story was related by Walter McLaughlan, a lighthouse keeper and canvasser for the island of Grand Manan, in a letter of December 28.

Sir, When I received the Census Documents, myself and Family, were down sick with Diptheria from which I did not recover untill the second week in November. Three of my Peoples Died with this dreadful disease, and this with my Sickness delayed me in my work...

I began work on the 20th November and have worked dilligently untill this day, making in all twenty-eight days. I was oblinded to hire a man and Boat five days to go on the outer Islands, where there is a large number of Inhabitants. I have traveled over an area of seventy five Square Miles, and part of the Ground twice over, for the reason that some of the principle fishermen were away from home.... I can assure Your Honor, I have done my best to get through this work in time, and I hope the Government will be satisfied.<sup>63</sup>

The completed returns began flowing gradually into the Provincial Secretary's office, accompanied by Oath B, and the "digesting" phase began. The precise dates of receipt give a more exact idea of the total delay involved throughout the province. The first and only return during August was received from John Mitchell of Blissfield, Northumberland, on the 30th. Completed schedules arrived from four more districts during the first week of September. In all 23 returns were in by the end of the

<sup>58</sup> Samuel Fox to PS, 20 September, 1861.

<sup>59</sup> George Clowes to PS, 13 September, 1861.

<sup>60</sup> C. J. Bailey to PS, 7 October, 1861.

<sup>61</sup> James Scott to PS, 13 September, 1861.

<sup>62</sup> William Malone to PS, 25 November, 1861.

<sup>63</sup> Walter McLaughlin to PS, 28 December, 1861.

month. By October the flow had become fast and furious. Enumerators from 61 districts sent their results that month and another 43 in November. By mid-December only stragglers remained, although completed schedules from 8 districts were not received until January 1862. Many of the latest returns were from back settlements. James Fowler of Blackville, Northumberland, and S. T. Powell of Weldford, Kent, did not get their schedules to the Secretary's office until January 22. The last returns, those of William Fountain of West Isles, Charlotte, came in the following day, a mere five months and eight days after the all-important date of August 15, 1861.<sup>64</sup> If any pattern can be discerned from the returns it is that the more rural and under-developed a district, the later the completed schedules arrived in Fredericton. This explains the late receipt of returns from parishes such as West Isles (Jan. 23) and Campobello (Dec. 23). In these large, inaccessible districts where population was widely scattered, returns may have been delayed by a lack of initiative on the part of enumerators. Although the average length of enumerations in counties like Charlotte and Northumberland and to a lesser extent Kings was no longer than many others, census takers in these counties were particularly delinquent in returning their completed schedules. James Flowers (Blackville, Northumberland) sent a warrant to the Treasury for only 31 days work, yet it took him until January 22 to complete his canvass. Enumerations in towns and cities may have taken more days, but due to the full-time attention devoted to the task their returns were more prompt. It took W. L. Prince 78.5 days to enumerate Moncton, but his schedules arrived in Fredericton by October 28.

Table 2.  
AVERAGE LENGTH OF ENUMERATION, BY COUNTY.

Albert.....	.31 days	Queens .....	.24 days
Carleton .....	.21 "	Restigouche .....	.26 "
Charlotte .....	.27 "	Saint John .....	.42 "
Gloucester .....	.26 "	Sunbury .....	.30 "
Kent .....	.42 "	Victoria .....	.35 "
Kings .....	.46 "	Westmorland .....	.63 "
Northumberland .....	.34 "	York .....	.18 "

Source: Treasury Warrants in N.B., *Journals of the House of Assembly*, 1861 and 1862. Calculations based on Section 8 of Census Act which stipulated that enumerators should receive 10 shillings or \$2.00 (provincial) for each 8-hour day of canvassing.

Time, like interpretation, indicates that the most important factor in the whole process of enumeration was the individual census taker. While one of the last enumerations to be received was from Blackville, a geographically large rural district, the schedules from the adjacent and similar parish of Blissfield were the very first results to be returned. The tardiness of the returns from Weldford, Kent, may be explained not by difficult physical conditions in the parish, but by the fact that the enumerator, S. T. Powell, lived in Richibucto and no doubt had to commute each day. Returns from three wards in Saint John City were received as

<sup>64</sup> "Census Enumerators Returns Received," in PANB, "RLE Unsorted, 1861 Census Papers," not paginated.

early as September 2, but results from the other six wards were not sent until October 15 and 18. Completed schedules for the five wards in Fredericton were delivered to the Provincial Secretary's office on October 29 and November 9. Although enumerations in urban areas tended to be less protracted than those in exclusively rural and undeveloped areas, possibly owing to closer supervision, differences as great as two months could occur in the completed enumerations in different parts of Saint John City.

On receipt at the Secretary's office, returns were handed to the appointed compilers, Charles A. Everett and James S. Beek. The former was responsible for the compilation of information from the southern, the latter for that from the northern counties. There can be no question of the capabilities of either man. Everett, the head compiler, was a dynamic young Saint John businessman.<sup>65</sup> In 1862 he was only 33 years old, but already co-partner in a large importing and wholesaling company that dealt in furs and hats. Beek, at 47, was mayor of Fredericton. Until 1856 he had been a merchant in the city, from which he retired to embark on a political career. As well as mayor, Beek was a city alderman and J.P. during his career. In the provincial government he held posts as judge of the court of common pleas, legislative librarian, and auditor general.<sup>66</sup> Everett acted as chairman on a provincial board of assessors between 1857 and 1864, was a member of the Executive Committee of the first School Board in Saint John in 1871 before becoming the second chairman of that Board, and was elected to the House of Commons in 1885. Both men had heads for figures. An obituary described Everett as "a master of finance," and referring to Beek's performance as auditor general a biographical sketch of 1881 noted, "His annual report... makes a volume between 300 and 400 pages, and is prepared with a good deal of care. Whatever Mr. Beek does, he seems determined to do well..."

Despite such proficiency, a pattern of friendship if not patronage emerged regarding their appointments, similar to those of the enumerators. Like their employer Provincial Secretary Tilley, who also had a natural aptitude for figures, Everett and Beek were staunch and outspoken members of the New Brunswick temperance crusade. Everett was a leader of the temperance movement in the Maritimes and had been "a most active member from the time of its introduction" in the province. He was a member of both the Grand and National Divisions of the Sons of Temperance. For over twenty years, either Everett or his father served as Grand Treasurer for the Gurney Division No. 5 (Saint John City). In 1856 Charles had been elected Grand Worthy Patriarch and subsequently became a Grand Worthy Instructor. According to his biography, Mr. Beek also had "been very active in trying to suppress the use of intoxicating liquors,... being a prohibitionist out-and-out, and...president of the provincial lodge of the United Temperance Association..." It might also be added that

<sup>65</sup> All information on Everett, unless otherwise stated, from *Saint John Globe*, 17 May, 1909.

<sup>66</sup> All information on Beek from *The Canadian Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery of Eminent and Self-Made Men. Quebec and Maritime Provinces Volume* (Chicago, 1881), pp. 608-9.

Everett's and Tilley's mothers, Frances E. and Sarah Ann Peters, were sisters.<sup>67</sup>

Yet in the nineteenth century, such practices were commonly accepted and the greatest shortcomings lay not in the abilities of the compilers, but in those of the enumerators. Everett and Beek could only do as well as the census takers and the returns allowed. On October 1, after receiving some of the initial completed schedules, Everett wrote from his office in Saint John to Gregory in Fredericton, “The Enumerators have not all done their work well, and I fear that it will be impossible to make up all the items desired with any degree of accuracy.”<sup>68</sup> A week later he reiterated these sentiments after being sent other supposedly complete schedules.<sup>69</sup> Beek was more incisive in his criticism of certain enumerators, such as “Mr. James Robertson, Enumerator for Woodstock, Carleton County [whose returns] are So Very incorrect and deficient, that I find it impossible to glean from them the information required by the government.”<sup>70</sup> In the following four pages Beek accused Robertson of omitting household number, relationship to head of household, sex, rank or occupation, and religion on Schedule I. On Schedule II, “no resident families are given and no uninhabited Houses — one Grist Mill — 2 Carding Machines and one Fulling Mill, with other manufactories, are all placed on the same sheet under the head of Saw Mills.” Matters did not improve. On Schedule III information was entered under wrong headings or omitted. To add injury to insult, Robertson's indifference was reflected in the excessive “doodling” across his returned schedules. Beek concluded “The above is only a small sample of what occurs in the whole return, but to describe all the errors, deficiencies and omissions would involve a large amount of labor.”

While Robertson's returns were exceptionally poor, many of the schedules were incomplete. The examples of John Pond (Ludlow, Northumberland) and John Fountain (West Isles, Charlotte), who completed full and correct returns and in some instances provided more information than was required, were exceptions to the rule. Still, the efforts of the majority of the census takers were sincere, as voiced by John Kenneally when he forwarded his schedules from Saint John:

[A]s to the Population, I entertain, little or no doubt as to the returns being as near the truth as it would be possible to obtain them, but with regard to the manufactures, the people engaged in them were either unable or unwilling to form an accurate estimate and consequently, these returns may not be considered a very close approximation, I have, however, satisfied myself by doing the best I could under the circumstances.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> J. K. JOHNSON, ed., *The Canadian Directory of Parliament, 1867-1967* (Ottawa, 1968), pp. 193 and 572. The posts of both head and deputy compiler proved to be most remunerative. Everett eventually received \$971.33 and Beek \$783.10 for their part-time labours over a seven-month period. NEW BRUNSWICK, *Journal of House of Assembly*, “Report on Public Accounts” for 1862 and 1863.

<sup>68</sup> Charles A. Everett to PS, 1 October, 1861.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 October, 1861.

<sup>70</sup> James S. Beek to Robert Fulton, 14 November, 1861.

<sup>71</sup> John Kenneally to PS, 17 October 1861. Interestingly, Kenneally was secretary of the Saint Malachi's Total Abstinence Society in Saint John. *Hutchinson's Saint John*

Such honest endeavours, unfortunately, did not alter the fact that if only two or three parishes failed to provide information in any category, the aggregate compilations for the province would incur some degree of error.

Strenuous salvage operations were undertaken by the Provincial Secretary's office in an attempt to fill some of the Gaps. Gregory wrote to at least eight enumerators asking for additional information. Charles McLaughlin (Perth, Victoria) had "not filled in the Column 'Rank or occupation' as thoroughly as desired."<sup>72</sup> He was also questioned on the small number of "hands employed" in the agriculture schedules. A similar complaint was lodged against James White (Shippegan South, Gloucester): "The occupation of all males over 16 ought to be stated. If not at school we know that as a general fact they follow the occupation of their fathers, but the Digester can scarcely take such a fact as a sure basis of calculation."<sup>73</sup> White was also faulted for using only the classifications Catholic and Protestant in the column headed "religious profession" on Schedule I. Finally, "The building return [was] scarcely sufft" and "In the agriculture Returns [he] left blank the columns for 'Hands employed.'" A common source of error or omission was "dwelling size" on Schedule II.<sup>74</sup> This particular inadequacy was so widespread that the final printed census eliminated dwelling size altogether, listing only the total inhabited and uninhabited houses. Inadequate returns necessitated other compromises by the compilers. Adjustments had to be made in tables on religion, occupations, and ethnic origin. With regard to religious affiliation, the digestors explained that

owing to misconception on the part of a large number of Enumerators it became necessary in the abstract to include the Baptists and Free Christian Baptists in one body, and the adherents of the Church of Scotland, Free Presbyterian, and Presbyterian Church of New Brunswick in another body.<sup>75</sup>

Although several enumerators bothered to make a distinction between English- and French-speaking inhabitants, most did not. The compilers surmounted this problem by ignoring it, and no information on origins was included in the printed census, just place of birth data. The broad categories of Professional, Trade and Commerce, Agricultural, Mechanics and Handicrafts, Mariners and Fishermen, Miners, Miscellaneous, and Labourers were adopted for the compilations on occupations. But in districts where part-time employment was widely prosecuted considerable difficulties must still have arisen. In which category were farmers-and-fishermen or farmers-and-lumbermen placed? Compiler bias and enumerator misrepresentation must have skewed the ultimate decisions; and because

*Directory for 1863-64...* (Saint John, 1863), p. 335. This source showed Everett to be on the Executive Committee of the Saint John Total Abstinence Society (p. 335) and both Everett and Tilley to be Grand Worthy Patriarchs and Representatives to the Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance (p. 338).

<sup>72</sup> John Gregory (for PS) to Charles McLaughlin, 19 October, 1861.

<sup>73</sup> John Gregory (for PS) to James White, 18 October, 1861.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> NEW BRUNSWICK, *Journal of the House of Assembly*, "Census of the Province of New Brunswick, 1861" (Fredericton, 1862), Compilers' Report, p. 4.

the province was anxious to boast an increase in the stable, settled elements of its population, the digestors probably placed doubtful cases in the agricultural category, especially when "farmer" preceded "fisherman" or "lumberman" on the schedules.<sup>76</sup> Thus New Brunswick was able to claim an increase of 88.16% in the numbers of persons employed in agriculture between 1851 and 1861 — no more, no less!<sup>77</sup>

On March 14, 1862, the completed census was laid before the provincial legislature.<sup>78</sup> After all the compromises, a highly detailed abstract giving parish-by-parish aggregates of all information remained. The tables were preceded by a "Compilers Report," submitted by Everett and Beek. It concluded:

It is without doubt, extremely difficult to devise such forms of Schedule as will tend to procure accurate accounts of the several matters which it may be considered advisable to embrace in the Census Returns, & we feel that we have reason to regret the many imperfections in the present Abstracts arising from that cause. The accompanying Tables are, in our estimation, a very considerable improvement on the Returns of 1851, as many matters of general interest have been added. We trust that the experience gained in the preparing of the present document may lead to a better system in the collecting of similar statistics at some future period.<sup>79</sup>

Despite the obvious inconsistencies and inaccuracies arising from political propaganda motives, patronage, informality, enumerator incompetency and respondent distrust, or just plain administrative inadequacy when confronted with such an enormous operation, the 1861 census was a remarkable achievement. A monument to bureaucratic determination in a frontier region, it provides one of very few insights into the lives of the plain people of the past. As an indicator of social and economic conditions in mid-nineteenth-century New Brunswick, it is the most comprehensive source existing. There can be little doubt that the 1861 census was a considerable improvement over its predecessors, and the fact that enumerators were paid by the day (Section 8), and not by the number of names taken as in the U.S., discouraged the padding of schedules with false information. In contrast, it was not until the *Third Census of Canada* (1891) that a concerted effort was made to eliminate the inclusions of non-resident family members who would previously have been enumerated at home, their supposedly permanent address, in a strict *de jure* canvass.<sup>80</sup> There appears to have been a direct relation between quality and the passing of time in nineteenth-century censuses, but they all were very much part-time operations conducted by largely inexperienced personnel. It was 1910 in the U.S. and 1931 in Canada before enumerations were placed under the control of government bureaus designed specifically for that purpose. Perhaps the most consistent feature

<sup>76</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 155 and Compilers' Report, p. 6 for overt evidence of this attitude.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>78</sup> NEW BRUNSWICK, *Journal of the House of Assembly, 1862* (Fredericton, 1862), Appendix, pp. 1-167.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, Compilers' Report, p. 8.

<sup>80</sup> *Acadian* (Wolfville, N.S.), 4 September, 1891.

of the 1861 New Brunswick and other contemporary censuses was their lack of consistency. Before historians begin making sophisticated statistical computations, they would be wise to place the data in its nineteenth-century context and realize that though the vast majority of those involved were earnestly "doing the best I can," by twentieth-century standards that was not very good.

### Appendix A

#### SCHEDULE OF ENQUIRIES

To be instituted by the Enumerators under the Act 23 Victoria, Chapter 49, intituled [sic] "An Act to provide for taking a Census," passed 9th April 1860.

##### I. Population.

1. Number.
2. Names of Inhabitants.
3. Sex.
4. Relationship to head of family.
5. Age.
6. Race and where born.
7. Rank or Occupation.
8. Religious Profession.
9. Children at School within the year.
10. Sick and Infirm.
11. Deaf and Dumb.
12. Blind.
13. Lunatic or Idiotic.
14. Births in preceding year.
15. Deaths in preceding year.
16. Marriages in preceding year.

##### II. Buildings.

1. Inhabited Houses,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number.} \\ \text{Resident} \\ \text{families} \end{array} \right.$
2. Houses Building.
3. Uninhabited Houses.
4. Stores, Barns, and other Buildings.
5. Places of Worship,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number} \\ \text{Denom.} \end{array} \right.$
6. Public Institutions.
7. School Houses.
8. Saw Mills,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number.} \\ \text{Hands employed.} \\ \text{Motive power.} \end{array} \right.$
9. Grist Mills,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number.} \\ \text{Hands employed.} \\ \text{Motive power.} \end{array} \right.$
10. Oat Mills,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number.} \\ \text{Hands employed.} \\ \text{Motive power.} \end{array} \right.$
11. Tanneries,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number.} \\ \text{Hands employed.} \\ \text{Motive power.} \end{array} \right.$
12. Foundries,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number.} \\ \text{Hands employed.} \\ \text{Motive power.} \end{array} \right.$

13. Weaving & Carding Estabs.  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number.} \\ \text{Hands employed.} \\ \text{Motive power.} \\ \text{Hand looms.} \end{array} \right.$

14. Breweries,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number.} \\ \text{Gallons produced.} \\ \text{Number.} \end{array} \right.$

15. Distilleries, Gallons produced.

16. Other Factories,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number.} \\ \text{Hands empl.} \\ \text{Motive pow.} \end{array} \right.$

##### III. Agriculture.

1. Farmer's Names.
2. No. Hands employed,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Male.} \\ \text{Female.} \end{array} \right.$
3. Acres of Land owned or occupied,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Improved.} \\ \text{Unimproved.} \end{array} \right.$
4. Cash value of  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Farm.} \\ \text{Implem'ts \& Mach.} \end{array} \right.$   
*Cattle, viz: —*

1. Horses.
2. Milch Cows.
3. Working Oxen.
4. Other neat Cattle.
5. Sheep.
6. Swine.

##### *Produce, viz: —*

1. Pork, slaughtered, pounds.
2. Butter, pounds.
3. Cheese, pounds.
4. Honey, pounds.
5. Bees' Wax, pounds.
6. Wool, pounds.
7. Hay,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Tons.} \\ \text{Acres.} \end{array} \right.$
8. Wheat,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Bushels.} \\ \text{Acres} \end{array} \right.$
9. Barley,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Bushels.} \\ \text{Acres.} \end{array} \right.$
10. Oats,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Busheld.} \\ \text{Acres.} \end{array} \right.$
11. Buckwheat,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Bushels.} \\ \text{Acres.} \end{array} \right.$
12. Indian Corn,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Bushels.} \\ \text{Acres.} \end{array} \right.$
13. Rye,  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Bushels.} \\ \text{Acres.} \end{array} \right.$

14. Beans, bushels.
  15. Peas, bushels.
  16. Timothy, bushels.
  17. Clover Seed, pounds.
  18. Turnip Seed, pounds.
  19. Turnips, { Bushels.  
Acres.
  20. Potatoes, { Bushels.  
Acres.
  21. Carrots, { Bushels.  
Acres.
  22. Mangelwurzel, { Bushels.  
Acres.
  23. Flax, Scrutched, pounds.
  24. Maple Sugar, pounds.
  25. {Cloth and other { Cash  
Home Manufactures, { Value
- IV. Manufactures.
    1. Name of Manufacture.
    2. Hands employed.  
Value of, —
    3. Leather.
    4. Saddlery.
    5. Boots and Shoes.
    6. Candles.
    7. Soap.
    8. Wooden Ware,  
not Cabinet Work.
9. Chairs & Cabinet Work.
  10. Hats.
  11. Iron Castings.
  12. Machinery.
  13. Oils, { Value.  
Crude, gallons.  
Refined, gallons.
  14. Other Manufactures.
- V. Minerals.
    1. Name of Master Miner.
    2. Hands employed.
    3. Coals, raised, tons.
    4. Iron, smelted, tons.
    5. Lime, casks.
    6. Grindstones, number.
    7. Building stone, tons.
    8. Gypsum, { Lump, tons.  
Ground, tons.  
Ground, barrels.  
Calcined, barrels.
    9. Other Minerals, tons,
- VI. Fisheries.
    1. Names of Head Fisherman.
    2. Hands employed.
    3. Kind of fish.
    4. Quantity.
    5. Value.

Source: *The Royal Gazette* (Fredericton, N.B.), 27 Feb. 1861, pp. 41-2.