

Dr Arthur Samuel Kendall, His Life and Times  
as a Medical Doctor,  
Politician and Citizen of Cape Breton Island,  
1861-1944.

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## Abstract

submitted by: Moira Ross 1st. April 1998

**Dr. Arthur Samuel Kendall, His Life and Times as a Medical Doctor, Politician and Citizen of Cape Breton Island, 1861-1944.**

Dr. Arthur Samuel Kendall was born in Sydney, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia on 25 March 1861 when Sydney was a tranquil market centre and garrison town built on the south-east shore of Sydney harbour. He lived most of his long life in Sydney and he died there in 1944. This thesis applies the biographical study of Kendall's life to the history of Cape Breton in an era which has most often been portrayed in relation to unscrupulous industrialists, militant unions and ambivalent governments.

Beginning in 1893 with the consolidation of ownership and leases in the local coal fields many areas in Cape Breton Island experienced an increase in industry and commerce with the expansion of coal mining and the subsequent establishment of the iron and steel industries. This rapid increase in industry and population not only caused a period of relative prosperity in the industrial area, but also created problems of rural depopulation, disease, overcrowding, hazardous workplaces and industrial unrest. Kendall was active in trying to alleviate many of these social problems as an elected politician, public health official and family doctor.

The study of not only the public areas of Kendall's career, but also the religious, social, cultural, professional and political influences which shaped his ideology and actions provides an insight into Kendall's motivation and his effectiveness as an agent of change. The biographical method, juxtaposed against anecdotal and historical evidence, further combines to enrich the understanding of the history of this period.

The historical significance of Dr. Arthur Samuel Kendall lies in his position as an influential member of the professional middle class, one who had an innate ability to act as a conduit between the working class and the industrialists in order to produce change that would benefit the entire community.

## Acknowledgments.

The research and writing of this thesis was assisted by a collaborative group of friends, mentors, and informants. My route to the Atlantic Canada Studies program at Saint Mary's began with the Heritage Studies Certificate at the University College of Cape Breton, and continued with a Bachelor of Community Studies degree. Throughout my years at UCCB the professors and staff were consistently supportive, as were the faculty and staff at Saint Mary's University. I am particularly grateful to my thesis supervisor, Dr. Colin Howell, who guided me towards realising a more complete manuscript. Always cooperative were the staff of the University libraries at Saint Mary's in Halifax and the University College of Cape Breton in Sydney. The staff at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia and at the UCCB Beaton Institute in Sydney were also consistently helpful. The support and friendship of fellow students in the Atlantic Canada Studies programme and at UCCB demonstrated a true collegial spirit. In the Cape Breton community John Campbell at the Cape Breton Post, Arthur Kendall's nephew John Kendall, and Ron Caplan of Cape Breton's Magazine were among the Sydney residents who shared their knowledge of Kendall with me.

Throughout my university studies I was the recipient of a number of scholarships and fellowships at UCCB and Saint Mary's. These awards assisted me financially; and this form of recognition by various scholarship committees gave me the encouragement and confidence to continue. In a letter informing me that I was the recipient of the 1996 Donald Higgins' Memorial Scholarship at Saint Mary's, Dr. Colin Howell wrote; "I am sure that you will commit yourself to your work in Atlantic Canada Studies in the spirit of dedication and social responsibility that was the hallmark of Donald Higgins' inspiring life." The Higgins' Scholarship and the example of Higgins' life did motivate me to persevere, and his legacy will continue to inspire me. Finally, to my friends and family in Scotland and Nova Scotia, and especially my children and my husband, I give my heartfelt thanks for patience, love and support.

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## Preface

Arthur Samuel Kendall, the subject of this thesis, was born on the 25th. of March 1861 in Sydney, Cape Breton Island, when the community was a small market centre and garrison town. He died there on 18 July 1944. In the years between 1880 and 1929 many districts on Cape Breton Island experienced rapid industrialisation and expansion, a brief interval of optimism and relative economic prosperity, which was ultimately followed by devastating deindustrialisation and depopulation from which the local economy has never fully recovered. Kendall was an active public figure in both politics and health care during this era of development and growth and he lived on to witness its decline.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See J. G. MacKinnon, Old Sydney (Sydney, NS: Old Sydney Society, ed. 1989): Brian Tennyson, ed. Essays in Cape Breton History (Windsor, NS: Lancelot Press, 1973): Robert J. Morgan, ed. More Essays in Cape Breton History (Windsor, NS: Lancelot Press, 1977): Kenneth Donovan, ed. Cape Breton at 200: Historical Essays of the Island's Bicentennial 1785-1985 (Sydney, NS: UCCB Press, 1985): Kenneth Donovan, ed. The Island: New Perspectives in Cape Breton History. 1713-1990. (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1990): Brian Tennyson, ed. Impressions of Cape Breton (Sydney, NS: UCCB Press, 1986): Don MacGillivray and Brian Tennyson, eds. Cape Breton Historical Essays (Sydney, NS: UCCB Press, 1980): Ron Caplan, ed. Cape Breton's Magazine. (Wreck Cove, NS, Cape Breton's Magazine.): Benjamin H. D. Buchloh and Robert Wilkie, eds., Mining Photographs and Other Pictures , 1948-1968: A Selection from the Negative Archives of Shedden Studio Glace Bay (Halifax, NS: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and UCCB Press, 1983) for general histories of this era.

In 1903 the Newspaper Reference Book of Canada described Arthur Samuel Kendall as "a free-trader and a radical" and an earlier almanac referred to him thus: "in politics he is a liberal and a reformer."<sup>2</sup> In their article "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement in the Maritimes, 1899-1916," David Frank and Nolan Reilly discuss the beginning and the extent of the socialist movement in the Maritimes as a part of their challenge to the established view in Canadian historiography of a pervasive Maritime "conservatism."<sup>3</sup> There has been an entrenched conservatism but there has also been a long tradition of radicalism and reform in parts of the Maritimes. Protests such as the escheat movement in Prince Edward Island and the Caraquet Riots of 1875 are early examples of radical reform recorded throughout the history of the region.<sup>4</sup> Among the early proponents of progressive social reform in the Maritimes were a number of middle-class intellectuals in the 1890s who, at the advent of an era of a rapidly expanding industrial economy, were cognisant of the negative effects that unregulated capitalism and poorly planned industrialisation had caused in Britain and the United States.

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<sup>2</sup>The Newspaper Reference Book of Canada (Toronto: The Press Publishing Company Limited, 1903)., Ernest J. Chambers, ed. The Canadian Parliamentary Guide 1909 (Ottawa: The Mortimer Company, 1909).

<sup>3</sup>David Frank and Nolan Reilly, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement in the Maritimes, 1899-1916," Labour/Le Travail No 4 (1978) 85-113.

<sup>4</sup>Francis W. P. Bolger, "The Demise of Quit Rents and Escheat, 1824-1842." Canada's Smallest Province (Canada: The Prince Edward Island Centennial Commission, 1973). 95-114: George Stanley, "The Caraquet Riots of 1875," Atlantic Canada After Confederation. Phillip A. Buckner and David A. Frank, eds. (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1988.) 66-83. see Ernest R. Forbes, Challenging the Regional Stereotype: Essays on 20th. Century Maritimes (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis, 1989).



They were equally concerned about their negative impact on the social welfare of the workers and their families in the Maritimes.<sup>5</sup>

This era of rapid change also demanded the development of new structures and new systems to deal with the stresses on public and social services. Two significant responses to this need were the progressive reform movement and increased professionalisation, especially in public health, medicine, law and urban planning.<sup>6</sup> Neither progressive reform nor professionalisation were homogenous movements, but were rather an assortment of associations which articulated and interpreted the need for social reform in their own way. The most influential of the progressive reform organisations was the Social Gospel movement, an arm of the Christian churches, which portrayed Christ not merely as an icon, but as a social reformer. The doctrine of individual groups within the Social Gospel varied. Both temperance and prohibition were advocated as well as other aspects of social and moral reform. Those who sought an increased professionalisation in medicine were less concerned with direct social reform than they were with the regulation and acceptance of their specialised profession, the recognition of their particular expertise and the implementation of stringent public health enforcement.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>David Frank and Nolan Reilly, 86-87.

<sup>6</sup>see Robert H. Wiebe The Search For Order 1877-1920. New York: Hill and Wang, 1967; Don S. Kirschner, The Paradox of Professionalism: Reform and Public Service in Urban America, 1900-1940. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986); William H. Wilson, The City Beautiful Movement. (Baltimore: University of John Hopkins Press, 1989).

<sup>7</sup>Colin Howell. "Industry, Urbanization and Reform." The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation. eds. Ernest R. Forbes and Del Muise (Toronto: University of

Progressive reform and professionalisation were however interconnected. Many of the middle class professionals were also members of the Christian churches and they embraced the doctrine and influence of the Social Gospel. Arthur Samuel Kendall, like many members of this rising professional middle class, was motivated more by his social conscience than by a desire for personal gain from his profession.<sup>8</sup> At the dawning of the new century Kendall was truly a 'twentieth century man' - a member of the professional middle-class armed with an extensive education and a strong desire for social reform.

This crucial period in Cape Breton Island's history has most often been portrayed in relation to the wealthy and powerful upper-class, to a few unscrupulous industrialists, to militant unions and ambivalent governments. In her book Ferndell, named for the Sydney mansion where she lived as a child, Phyllis Worgan Schneider expresses her opinion that little has been written about the affluent residents who had "wealth and social background," those "whose lives were filled with so much more than work, square dances etc."<sup>9</sup> There are local histories as well as published and

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Toronto Press, 1993) 55-191: Ernest R. Forbes. "Prohibition and the Social Gospel." *Atlantic Canada After Confederation*. eds. Phillip Buckner and David Frank (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1980). 280-305: Richard Allen. The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada, 1914-1928. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971). Colin D. Howell. "Reform and the Monopolistic Impulse: The Professionalization of Medicine in the Maritimes." Acadiensis. 3-21.

<sup>8</sup>Robert Wiebe, 115-117.

<sup>9</sup>Phyllis Worgan Schneider. Ferndell. (Sydney, NS: City Printers, 1979.).

unpublished articles from this period which describe the social life of Sydney's elite, including A. J. B. Johnston's article on Canadian senator and Dominion Steel Company director, John Stewart McLellan, whose opulent estate Petersfield was built on the shores of Sydney Harbour in the rural district of Westmount. Across the harbour in Sydney was the equally imposing residence of Rockaway, the grand home of steel plant manager A. J. Moxham. The building had been transported from Pittsburgh to Sydney where it became known locally as Moxham's Castle. There are numerous accounts of social events at this stately home where Mrs. Moxham always wore white and Miss Moxham always wore black.<sup>10</sup>

Don MacGillivray in his article "Henry Melville Whitney Comes to Cape Breton: The Saga of a Gilded Age Entrepreneur" and David Frank in "The Cape Breton Coal Industry and the Rise and Fall of the British Empire Steel Corporation" relate the events surrounding American industrialist Whitney's establishment of Dominion Coal Company in 1893 as well as the Dominion Iron and Steel Company in 1899. Frank describes the establishment of Dominion Coal as, "a typical episode in corporate carpetbagging."<sup>11</sup> There are also a

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<sup>10</sup> Phyllis Worgan Schneider. Ferndell. :A. J. B. Johnston. " A Vanished Era: The Petersfield Estate of J. S. McLennan, 1900-1942." Cape Breton at 200: Historical Essays of the Island's Bicentennial 1785-1985. ed. Kenneth Donovan (Sydney, NS: UCCB Press, 1985) 85-106: John Stewart McLennan. Louisbourg: From Its Foundation To its Fall 1713-1758 (London: McMillan, 1918).

<sup>11</sup> Don MacGillivray. "Henry Melville Whitney Comes to Cape Breton: The Saga of a Gilded Age Entrepreneur." Acadiensis 9:1, (Autumn 1979) 44-70: David Frank. "The Cape Breton Coal Industry and the Rise and fall of the British Empire Steel Corporation." Atlantic Canada After Confederation. eds. Phillip A. Buckner and David A. Frank. (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press) 204-235: Craig Heron. Working in Steel: The Early Years in Canada, 1883-1935. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988).

number of biographies of Maritime labour leaders who, each in their own way, fought for social justice. Roscoe Fillmore (1887-1968), a New Brunswick radical who travelled throughout the region is the subject of a detailed biography which not only provides a life history of Fillmore, but also notes the radicals who directly affected his life and the literature and experiences which influenced Fillmore's actions. James K. Chapman recounts the life of Henry Harvey Stuart (1873 -1952), a prominent New Brunswick contemporary of Kendall. Stuart was an educator, newspaper editor, politician and tireless social reformer, who founded the first socialist party in New Brunswick in 1902. While in Cape Breton in 1907 he helped to organise a branch of the Socialist Party of Canada in Glace Bay. James Bryson McLachlan was a committed and forceful Cape Breton union leader, and a champion of communism, who was jailed in 1923 for sedition. The fiery speeches and the courageous leadership of McLachlan, Douglas Neil Brodie, Dan McDougall, George MacEachern and scores of other dedicated union activists, entrenched industrial Cape Breton's reputation in Canada as a hotbed of militant union activity.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> David Frank and Nolan Reilly, 85-113: Nicholas Fillmore. Maritime Radical: The Life and Times of Roscoe. (Toronto, ON: Between the Lines, 1992): James K. Chapman. "Henry Harvey Stuart (1873-1952) New Brunswick Reformer." Acadiensis Vol. 5. No 2.(Spring 1976.): David Frank. "Working-Class Politics: The Election of J. B. McLaughlin(sic): Labour Politics in Cape Breton, 1916-1935." The Island: New Perspectives on Cape Breton History. Kenneth Donovan, ed. (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1990): George MacEachern . George MacEachern, An Autobiography: The Story of a Cape Breton Labour Radical. eds. David Frank and Donald MacGillivray. (Fredericton, NB. Acadiensis Press, 1987).

J. B. McLachlan was also the editor and a frequent contributor to the Nova Scotia Miner (1929-1936) and the Maritime Labor Herald (1921-1926). These two newspapers along with the Steelworker and Miner(1933-1950), owned and edited by "colourful Sydney radical" M. A. MacKenzie, served the working class by promoting Labour candidates and reporting news of socialist movements worldwide. They enjoyed a large readership.<sup>13</sup> Radical Sydney poet Dawn Fraser was a frequent contributor to the Maritime Labour Herald and his raw and powerful verses, which had a wide distribution in the 1920s, continue to animate the written histories of the period.<sup>14</sup> Among the popular histories Ted Boutilier's New Waterford Three Generations 1913-1988, Paul MacEwan's Miners and Steelworkers and John Mellor's The Company Store: J. B. McLachlan and the Cape Breton Coal Miners 1900-1925 have each attempted to portray the history of the working class in the industrial area.<sup>15</sup>

Less has been written about those members of the emergent professional middle-class, of which Kendall was a member, in this period of rapid development and serious social problems. Their position in society differed from that of the established upper-class,

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<sup>13</sup>Michael Earle. "Living Wantonly in the Flesh Pots of Egypt: Revisiting Cape Breton's Years of Radical Turmoil." New Maritimes. (November/December 1993).

<sup>14</sup>Dawn Fraser Echoes of Labour's Wars-The Expanded Edition. (Wreck Cove, NS: Breton Books, 1992).

<sup>15</sup>Ted Boutilier. New Waterford Three Generations 1913-1988. (New Waterford, NS: Town of New Waterford, 1988); Paul MacEwan. Miners and Steelworkers. (Toronto: Samuel, Stevens, Hakkert & Co., 1976); John Mellor. The Company Store: J. B. McLachlan and the Cape Breton Coal Miners 1900-1925 (Halifax, NS: Formac, 1984).

the nouveau riche industrialists and the burgeoning working class. It was perhaps their minority position between the polarities of capital and labour that has caused them to receive only occasional mention in histories of the time. It may also be that in their careers as ministers, lawyers and doctors they were dependent on both the upper class and the working classes for their livelihood and would therefore prefer to play a less prominent rôle in the conflicts between capital and labour. Some of Kendall's contemporaries took public stands on the issues of the day. Lawyer, and Mayor of Glace Bay, John C. Douglas refused to recognise a force of Dominion Coal Company 'special constables' during the bitterly fought 1909 strike and instead formed his own force to keep order in the town. During the same strike Father Jim Frazer, a Catholic priest, was transferred from New Aberdeen near Glace Bay to Antigonish because he had housed and fed evicted coal miners and their families on church property.<sup>16</sup> These citizens and a host of others gave themselves in varying degrees to the cause of social reform in industrial Cape Breton.<sup>17</sup> Kendall was not unique. However, his early influences, class, religion, education, his direct involvement in politics, medicine, public health, ecology, farming as well as his personal longevity, identify him as a prominent citizen and justify him as a subject for close biographical study. His life cut across many spheres of influence and he had a remarkable impact on his community.

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<sup>16</sup>Mellor 51-55.

<sup>17</sup> Bryce Stewart. Sydney, Nova Scotia: The Report of a Brief Investigation in the City. Which Indicates the Need of an Intensive Social Survey. (The Board of Temperance and Moral Reform of the Methodist Church and The Board of Social Service and Evangelism of the Presbyterian Church, 1913).

Kendall was a witness to, and often a participant in, many of the events which shaped the history of this period; in his various civic rôles as a life-long citizen of Sydney, and in the public positions he held as a Medical Health officer, family physician, Member of Parliament and as a Member of the Legislature of Nova Scotia. The advent of the industrial era created a demand for improvements in transportation, intensified rural depopulation and caused overcrowding and resultant public health problems, especially in the south-eastern area of Cape Breton Island around the communities of Sydney, Glace Bay and New Waterford. During the growth of the coal and steel industries bitter disputes and ongoing conflict emerged between capital and labour, and among rival unions, resulting in strikes, government and military intervention and extreme deprivation for workers and their families.<sup>18</sup> The confluence of these events and Kendall's career suggest that a biography of Kendall's life would be an appropriate method to investigate and interpret this vital era in Cape Breton's history. Kendall's extensive education and subsequent activism during a period marked by major advances in science and technology, the professionalisation of medicine, and social reform also support the use of the biographical method to examine the effects that larger world movements exerted on Kendall and through him, on the industrial and rural communities of Cape Breton.

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<sup>18</sup>Don MacGillvray. "Military Aid to the Civil Power: The Cape Breton Experience." *Acadiensis* III, 2 (Spring 1994), 45-64.

The use of biography as social history is defended by Richard D. Brown in his book Knowledge is Power, which explores the influence of advances in information diffusion on what he referred to as 'ordinary Americans' between the years 1700-1865. Brown states, "Rather than exploring general social phenomena directly, this study probes the particular." He also informs his readers that social historians have often rejected this method of study as subjective and idiosyncratic but goes on to defend his use of biography:

Yet because tracing personal experience offers such rich possibilities for grasping the ways in which major social trends and events affected behavior and consciousness, I have selected this approach, knowing too, that every other alternative has its limitations. Rather than exploring general social phenomena directly, this study probes the particular.<sup>19</sup>

In 'probing the particular', the anecdotal as well as the officially documented aspects of his career, this biography of Kendall's life is not a limited topical chronology, but rather a study of selected aspects of Kendall's long and varied career which illustrate the effects that local conditions and larger world movements had on his actions as a citizen and leader.

It is therefore the purpose of this thesis to examine the rôle Dr. Arthur Samuel Kendall played in his dual careers as medical doctor and politician, and to investigate his pivotal position between

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<sup>19</sup>Richard D. Brown. Knowledge is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 5. A similar method is used in Alan Taylor. William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic. (New York: Knopf, 1996).



capital and labour. To achieve these objectives it is necessary in the first chapter to provide a brief biographical sketch of his family, and in Chapter two to identify the influences which created Kendall's political and personal ideology as a member of the professional middle class. Chapters three and four will examine aspects of Kendall's career as a medical doctor and a politician, in the context of investigating whether or not Kendall's actions were motivated by a desire both to promote capitalist expansion and to protect the working class from exploitation by industrialists. Chapter five will focus on the 1925 Royal Commission on Coal in Nova Scotia, in particular Kendall's contribution. The transcripts of the proceedings record Kendall's extensive testimony and provide a chronicle of Kendall's observations and analysis of the social and economic effects of industrialization in Cape Breton.

The research for this thesis has involved both primary and secondary sources. Details about Kendall's parents and his early years in Sydney were found in piecemeal fashion in archival documents at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS) and at the Beaton Institute, University College of Cape Breton (UCCB). A taped interview of Kendall's daughter Mrs. Emily Chapman, recorded in 1969, was an extremely useful source of information about the Kendall family. Kendall, unfortunately, did not leave any diaries; however, he did write down some details of his career which are in the Kendall manuscript at PANS.<sup>20</sup> The public events in Kendall's life

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<sup>20</sup>Arthur Samuel Kendall, MG 1, Vol. 526. Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS. (afterwards referred to as Kendall Manuscript, PANS).

are recorded in the Debates and Proceedings of the House of Commons, the Minutes and Reports of Cape Breton County and the Journals of the House of Assembly of Nova Scotia. Kendall was not a frequent contributor to the Maritime Medical Journal or to local newspapers. The Liberal Sydney Record did provide excellent coverage of Kendall's election campaigns after 1900; however, there are very few references to his earlier political campaigns. The histories of the period rarely mention Kendall specifically though they were useful in providing a general context for Kendall's actions. Kendall's testimony at the 1925 Royal Commission on Coal, which is on microfilm at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, provides an excellent insight into Kendall's medical and political career. The incompleteness of the public record of the remainder of Kendall's lengthy career has made it difficult to gauge Kendall's opinion of a number of major events which happened in his later life.

Consequently, Kendall's opinion of the Farmer-Labour movement, the Co-operative Movement, the Depression, the World Wars and many other issues of the day are unknown. Much of the source material about Kendall did not go beyond 1929 when, at age sixty-eight, he retired from his position as Medical Health Officer for Cape Breton County. It could be speculated that after a public career of forty-five years he was content to end his political career in favour of serving the people of Cape Breton County as a family physician.

## Introduction

The Cape Breton newspaper reports in July 1944 focused on the events of World War II. Articles describing battles and troop movements were accompanied by photographs of young Cape Bretoners injured and killed in the war, poignantly illustrating the realities of the conflict. Amidst these reports, in the 22 July, 1944 edition of Steelworker and Miner, Arthur Samuel Kendall's obituary was prominently published in bold print:

### Doctor Kendall

Dr. Kendall is gone. Thousands of the older generations will regret his passing. He was one of God's good men, who spent his life in the service of his fellow men. No matter how far afield the call for medical help came and regardless of the weather, he was always ready to respond. Countless times he faced the biting blast and bucked snow drifts with his horse and sleigh to give succour to those in need. We knew him intimately as well as his aged mother who always "went about doing good." His memory will live long among those who appreciate unselfish service. We extend our sympathy to his good wife.<sup>21</sup>

Dr. Arthur Samuel Kendall, F.R.C.S., former MLA, MP and Medical Health Officer for Cape Breton County had died in Sydney, Nova Scotia at the age of eighty-three. In the Sydney Post-Record the obituary was more formal than the personal tribute printed in the

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<sup>21</sup>Steelworker and Miner Sydney, NS, 22 July, 1944.

Steelworker and Miner. The daily paper outlined Kendall's long career as a doctor and a politician, listed the pall bearers and highlighted the government representatives who attended the funeral. The Government officials and dignitaries included his brother, Nova Scotia's Lieutenant Governor, Henry Ernest Kendall. Both obituaries noted Kendall's career as a physician; however, they did not refer to Doctor Kendall's rôle as a supporter of the working class. Kendall's association with the Cape Breton's coal miners caused him to be known as the "miners friend" and someone "for whom the miners had great affection."<sup>22</sup> Kendall had been predeceased by many contemporaries who remembered him as a "radical" and a "red grit" Perhaps the memories of the strikes in Cape Breton between 1909 and 1929 had been superseded by the events of the economic depression of the 1930's and two World Wars.<sup>23</sup>

Kendall's parents came to Sydney in 1857, long before the era of major industrial expansion. Richard John Uniacke provides a description of Sydney in this earlier period, suggesting:

Sydney at present contains a population of about 700 inhabitants or rather more made up originally of settlers from various parts of the United Kingdom and some from the neighbouring Colonies. It was remarkable some years ago for having, as residents a number of Gentlemen and retired officers of the Army. . . . Some of these have

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<sup>22</sup>MacEwan, 36.

<sup>23</sup>County of Cape Breton 1969 Centennial Booklet (Beaton Institute. Pam 2010, UCCB, Sydney, NS), 15. (afterwards referred to as Centennial Booklet.).

recently gone; but their still remains sufficient to form a small and pleasant society.<sup>24</sup>

Reverend Samuel Kendall, a member of the Plymouth Brethren, emigrated with his wife Emily Long from England to Sydney in 1857. The Plymouth Brethren is a sect of the Baptist church which was founded in Dublin, Ireland in the 1820's and spread in 1830 to Plymouth, England and also to Bristol, Samuel Kendall's birthplace. The Brethren had no formal churches or salaried clergymen and they were known to believe in the literal interpretation of the Bible.<sup>25</sup> In 1866 Samuel Kendall participated in the establishment of a church on Mitchell Island, on the north-west arm of Sydney Harbour, later described as a "meeting house, undenominational and non-sectarian, to be used exclusively as a place for Christian worship."<sup>26</sup> Reverend Samuel Kendall attended meetings at the Baptist Church in Sydney, performed marriages and also held bible study classes in a small meeting house which he built in front of his home at the corner of Charlotte and Pitt Streets in Sydney. Their two children, Arthur Samuel Kendall (1861-1944) and Henry Ernest Kendall (1864-1949), were born in Sydney, and both sons became medical doctors.<sup>27</sup>

Arthur graduated from Sydney Academy in 1877 and began studies

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<sup>24</sup>C. Bruce Fergusson, ed., Uniacke's Sketches of Cape Breton (Halifax, NS: PANS, 1958) 80.

<sup>25</sup>James Hastings, ed., Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962) 843-844.

<sup>26</sup>Elva Jackson. Cape Breton's Jackson Kith and Kin. (Windsor, NS: Lancelot Press, 1971) 81.

<sup>27</sup> Baptist Record Book. (BI Microfiche MF 15). Mildred Howard, ed. Cape Breton Genealogical Society Newsletter. (Sydney, NS: Cape Breton Genealogical Society, 1994) 2: Mrs. Emily Chapman (Arthur Samuel Kendall's daughter) tape recorded interview, 1969. BI, tape 76: (afterwards referred to as Chapman, 1969. Census of Canada, microfilm BI. 1891.

at Mount Allison College, N.B. in 1879, Halifax Medical College in 1881 and Bellevue Hospital in New York in 1882. He was certified as a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons from Guy's Hospital in London, England in 1884 and returned to Sydney to establish a medical practice later that year.<sup>28</sup>

In 1886 Kendall married Mary Crawley, who was from a well established Sydney family and the great grand-daughter of Captain Thomas Crawley, a former Surveyor General of the Colony of Cape Breton Island, who had been a member of the Cape Breton Council before its re-annexation to Nova Scotia in 1820. Captain Crawley owned a 1,800 acre estate in Westmount, on the north side of Sydney Harbour, and built a 33 room house at Point Amelia, where Mary Crawley lived before her marriage. Mary's father was a Baptist minister, the Rev. A. R. R. Crawley, and Mary was born in Burma where her father served as a missionary. Kendall's wife Mary, and his mother Emily, were both active members of the Baptist church in Sydney and were well known for their charitable acts.<sup>29</sup> Arthur was also connected to the family of the wealthy industrialist and influential Canadian Senator John S. McLennan by the marriage of his brother Henry Ernest Kendall to McLennan's daughter, Margaret McLennan.<sup>30</sup> Henry Ernest served with the Canadian Army Medical

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<sup>28</sup>Shirley B. Elliot, ed. The Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia, 1758-1983. (Halifax, Province of Nova Scotia, 1984).

<sup>29</sup>Thomas Crawley, B&G File, BI: Steelworker and Miner Sydney, NS, 22 July, 1944: The Post Record Sydney, NS, 25 Nov. 1951.

<sup>30</sup>John Stewart (J. S). McLennan was born in Montreal and first came to Cape Breton on business relating to a coal mine in 1882. He became Publisher of the Sydney Post in 1904 and a Canadian Senator in 1916.

Corps during W.W.I, was Governor General of Nova Scotia from 1942-1947, and eventually settled in Windsor, Nova Scotia. Unlike his brother, Arthur Samuel remained a lifelong resident of Sydney. Archival records of Henry's branch of the McLennan/Kendall family indicate that they were part of the upper class with interests in collecting antiques and paintings and in the lives and stately homes of their family in Canada, the United States and England. Katherine McLennan, Henry's sister-in-law served as a wartime nurse but it would appear that her work was done in the spirit of patriotic duty and paternalism rather than within the tradition of Arthur Kendall's abiding and outspoken commitment to radical reform.<sup>31</sup> In an interview with this author Arthur Kendall's nephew John stated that there appeared to be a rift between the two sides of the family.<sup>32</sup> He had asked older family members for an explanation; however, they did not provide him with an answer. It could well be that their chosen careers made the two brothers and their families socially distinct and personally distant from each other.

A further indication of Arthur Kendall not being a member of the highest social elite in Sydney is his absence from the local histories written by, or about, Sydney society at the turn of the century. Kendall was a Mason, a member of the Independent Order of Oddfellows and of the "Sydney Club."<sup>33</sup> The latter was a private professional men's club and Kendall served at least one term as its

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<sup>31</sup>Katherine McLennan, Papers, Letters and Sketches, BI: A. J. B. Johnston, 85-106.

<sup>32</sup>Informal conversation with John Kendall, Sydney, NS, 17 January 1997.

<sup>33</sup>The Newspaper Reference Book of Canada, 1903. Cape Breton Directory.

president. The "Wine Book" from the Sydney Club in 1902 indicates that his most frequent companions at the bar were E. J. McKeen, the editor of the Sydney Post, and the partners in the law firm of Hearn and MacDonald , James H. Hearn, barrister and City Recorder, and Finlay MacDonald, City Solicitor of Sydney from 1906-1925 and later a Conservative MP.<sup>34</sup> Kendall was also member of the "Boys of Old Sydney", an informal organisation which held "smokers" at the Board of Trade rooms. Lectures, attended by life long Sydney residents, were held on the history of Sydney and lively discussions took place about local characters and many anecdotes from Sydney's past.<sup>35</sup> This anecdotal evidence serves to indicate that Kendall was a part of a professional middle class in Sydney but not a member of the wealthy and elite upper class, which included many of the investors in the Dominion Iron and Steel Company, such as J. S MacLellan and his associate A. J. Moxham, the American-born first general manager of the Dominion Iron and Steel Company. This is further confirmed in an examination of the records of the Royal Cape Breton Yacht Club, an exclusive social club, whose membership included the new upper class. Henry Ernest Kendall, brother of Arthur, berthed his cutter at the yacht club and served as its Vice-Commodore in 1901. Arthur Kendall was not a member of that particular elite, but preferred the more political and middle class atmosphere of the Sydney Club. <sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Senator William MacDonald papers, MG 12.88, Beaton Institute, UCCB, Sydney, NS. Major A. L. Normandin, ed. The Canadian Parliamentary Guide (Ottawa, ON: Mortimer, 1934) 168-169.

<sup>35</sup>Sydney Record, 15 May 1911, 9.

<sup>36</sup>Royal Cape Breton Yacht Club, Reports, recreation, BI.



## Influences

This chapter will which examine the influences which helped to form Kendall's personal ideology. As a child young Arthur was exposed to both Christian theology and its practical application. Kendall was raised in a Christian home by a father who was a stern fundamentalist. In 1871 Samuel F. Kendall published Remarks on John Nelson Darby's Church Fellowship and Discipline Also, His Heretical Doctrines on the Person of the Saviour Examined and Exposed by Several of his Former Associates and Fellow Laborers, a tract which condemned the actions of the Plymouth Brethren leader John Nelson Derby, who had created a schism within the Brethren.<sup>37</sup> Kendall's mother was a strict adherent of the Baptist faith, who in Kendall's obituary, was remembered for her charitable acts.<sup>38</sup> In Lovell's 1871 directory Rev. Samuel Kendall was listed as being "Plymouth Brethren", the aforementioned sect of the Baptist church, although Arthur Kendall and other family members are consistently recorded as being Baptists.<sup>39</sup> In Canada, Baptist congregations were first formed about 1760, and the longest continuous history of a

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<sup>37</sup>S. F. Kendall. Remarks on John Nelson Darby's Church Fellowship and Discipline Also, His Heretical Doctrines on the Person of the Saviour Examined and Exposed by Several of his Former Associates and Fellow Laborers. (Charlottetown, PEI: George Bremner, 1871).

<sup>38</sup>Steelworker and Miner Sydney, NS, 22 July, 1944.

<sup>39</sup>Lovell's 1871 Directory, BI. This sect was also referred to as the Christian Brethren.

single Baptist church is claimed by a congregation organized in Horton (now Wolfville, Nova Scotia), in 1778. In 1901 the Baptist church had the largest number of members of any Protestant denomination in the Maritimes.<sup>40</sup> A prominent citizen of Sydney, Dr. W. McK. McLeod, described Reverend Samuel F. Kendall thus, "He was truly a faithful witness to his Master, a man whose appearance bespoke his calling and whose personality was a power of good in the community."<sup>41</sup> Kendall's mother Emily Long Kendall was born in London, England and was a supporter of Dr. Barnardo, a social reformer who worked in the slums of London and established orphanages throughout the United Kingdom. Emily Chapman, Arthur's daughter recalls:

That's what started of that Dr. Barnardo, he could have become a very fashionable doctor, and he was going along one night years ago and he heard children's voices in the storm and he found these little street arabs - literally living without any homes -and I remember my Grandmother was from London and she used to subscribe to Dr. Barnardo's book - and magazine - it came regularly - it had a blue cover and there was always dreadful looking children on it. And I had an allowance of 10 cents a week and I always had to give one cent to God - mother was a tither. And any time we were given a little thing Granny would hound us to give a little money for her to send to London off our ten cents. We had hired boys who came out to look after our horses who were Barnardo boys. They sent them to the colonies.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>G. A. Rawlyk. "Fundamentalism, Modernism and the Maritime Baptists in the 1920s and 1930s." Atlantic Canada After Confederation. Buckner and Frank, eds. (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1988.) 307

<sup>41</sup>Dr. W. McK. McLeod. Memoirs. PAM 590, BI, UCCB.

<sup>42</sup>Chapman, 1969.

This seemingly insignificant recollection serves to provide a glimpse of Kendall's personal and religious background. While Baptists traditionally followed the doctrine of separation of church and state, the advent of the social gospel movement brought to many churches the recognition of a need for political action to bring about social reform. The social gospel movement, which began in the mid-19th century, was no doubt a major influence on Kendall's ideology. According to Ernest Forbes, "To those firmly imbued with a reforming vision, traditional methods of teaching and preaching appeared too slow. Legislation and government activity represented the obvious method of implementing large scale reform."<sup>43</sup> The teachings of the social gospel movement were one of the major influences that convinced Kendall to consider becoming a politician and to lobby for social reform.

Kendall lived in an era of rapid change caused by urbanization, industrialisation and the introduction of new technology in medicine, transportation and communications. The new era challenged the existing social structures in Europe and North America, creating a need for major social reforms. Kendall's father, Rev. Samuel Kendall, had lived in England at a time when many of these reforms were being discussed, debated and implemented. These included the English Poor Law, The Ten Hour Bill and The Health of Towns Bills. Subsequent legislation included amendments to the Factories Act, the Truck Act, which allowed wages to be paid to employees in cash, and

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<sup>43</sup> E. R. Forbes, 283-284.

an early anti-pollution statute - the Smoke Abatement Act.<sup>44</sup> It is possible that Rev. Samuel Kendall continued to receive newspapers from Great Britain after he moved to Cape Breton as this was a common means of maintaining communications with the "Old Country". Newspapers were important sources of information, not only of local and world news, but also the platform on which political issues were presented and debated. Lectures at the Sydney's Mechanics' Institute, which were well attended events in the small town, and the books and journals in its reading room may also have introduced Kendall to a wider world.<sup>45</sup> These sources and the issues were likely part of the foundation of young Arthur Kendall's early ideology.

Other important influences in the forming of Kendall's thought included his experiences as a student. Kendall attended Sydney Academy as a youth. The school, founded in 1865, was well known locally and regionally for its high academic standards. Two of Kendall's teachers at Sydney Academy were William T. Pipes who taught between 1870-1872, a future Liberal Premier of Nova Scotia, and Dr. John Stewart, who taught during 1870. Stewart went on to become a medical doctor and an assistant to the inventor of antiseptic surgery Dr. Lister at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh and at King's College Hospital in London.<sup>46</sup> Kendall also received a solid

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<sup>44</sup>Harold Wilson. *A Prime Minister on Prime Ministers*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977.) 61-84.

<sup>45</sup>The Mechanic's Institute was founded in England in the 1820's and was established in Montreal in 1828.

<sup>46</sup>Joseph Lister (1827-1912) founder of modern antiseptic surgery (1865).

foundation in the classics while at Mount Allison, Sackville, New Brunswick and the medical schools he attended in Halifax, and especially in New York and London, England were established and leading institutions in their respective fields.<sup>47</sup> Kendall's formal education was extensive; however, the informal education he received while living outside of Cape Breton Island from 1877-1884 was likewise influential and formative. During the time Kendall was in London he witnessed the negative effects of industrialisation in the overcrowded slums of the city:

He practiced in the slums of London there - that was part of the outpatient plan at Guys- he was under some very distinguished doctors there surgeons of those days. And he fought scarlet fever there in the slums of London during a dreadful epidemic - and he saw so much poverty then that I think that was the beginning of his fight for the Workman's Compensation Act later. He never wanted the dreadful conditions of London slums to get a hold on a new country where it wasn't necessary. England was old and London was old and people had become deep rooted, but he saw people lying dying of scarlet fever on beds of rags, and malnutrition and children sleeping under alley ways, under the eaves of houses.<sup>48</sup>

In these centers he would also have been exposed to a wider spectrum of knowledge and ideas from fellow students, his

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Rickman Goodlee. Lord Lister. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924.)

<sup>47</sup>This information came from an interview of Mrs. Emily Chapman. (Dr. A. S. Kendall's daughter) Tape recorded interview BI. 1969 tape 76. The Newspaper Reference Book of Canada states that Kendall took, ". . . a literary course there of three years' duration." The archive at Mount Allison has confirmed that Kendall was enrolled at Mount Allison but never graduated.

<sup>48</sup>Chapman, 1969.

professors and newspapers. Public lectures, often concerning political issues and social reform, were also popular in this era and were likely attended by a young and inquisitive Arthur Kendall. Kendall's youthful experiences, especially in New York and London forewarned him of the effects of industrialisation. The County of Cape Breton 1979 Centennial Booklet described his service as Medical Health Officer with claims that, "Kendall's social conscience was developed from hard experience in a County that became known as the cradle of unionism in Canada."<sup>49</sup> Kendall's social conscience was most likely formed prior to the era of industrial expansion in Cape Breton County by a strict religious upbringing, by his varied and progressive education and through his extensive travels as a young man from 1878-1884.

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<sup>49</sup>Centennial Booklet, 15.

## The Medical Career of Dr. Arthur Samuel Kendall.

In her thesis The Development of a Permanent Public Health Care System in Industrial Cape Breton 1880 to 1930 Kathleen M. MacKenzie writes of the difficulty of examining the medical history of Cape Breton Island in the absence of records of the Cape Breton Medical Society and the lack of personal or professional records written by Cape Breton doctors. She states that, "It is very difficult to determine what these doctors' social political, and personal views were."<sup>50</sup> Similarly, I have not discovered any diaries or a substantial collection of Kendall's personal papers; however, details of his medical career and philosophy were found in the Debates and Proceedings of the House of Assembly, in Hansard, the Annual Minutes and Reports of Cape Breton County, and other archival documents and newspapers. In this chapter I have also used several long quotes from reports given by Kendall and a tape-recorded interview by his daughter, Mrs. Emily Chapman, which reveal much about Kendall's attitudes to health-care and his arduous career as a family doctor. The use of this evidence, much of which is anecdotal, serves to animate this biography and take it beyond a simple chronology of Kendall's medical career. It is the range of Kendall's

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<sup>50</sup>Kathleen M. MacKenzie The Development of a Permanent Public Health Care System in Industrial Cape Breton 1880-1930. (MA Thesis Saint Mary's University, 1991). 4.

professional activities, especially his early and well publicised career as a politician, that allows a closer study of his medical career and that further justifies the use of biographical method to examine professionalisation and reform.

Kendall began his career as a physician and surgeon in Cape Breton County in 1884. The local coal industry was expanding due to an import duty on coal invoked by the National Policy in 1879. The subsequent formation of the Dominion Coal Company in 1893 by Henry Melville Whitney and the Dominion Iron and Steel Company (DISCO) in 1899 led to the opening of new coal mines in the south-eastern industrial area of Cape Breton County around New Waterford and Glace Bay. Many of these areas were previously uninhabited or had been the site of small fishing villages and farms. Thousands of immigrants from many ethnic groups came to live and work in the Cape Breton coal fields, at the steel plant and in the many other new support industries. This sudden influx of workers created an instant and urgent need for housing, stores, schools, hospitals, churches and other services, and the responsibility of providing these amenities was often assumed by the company, who owned most of the land. Company houses built without sewers or water and with poor ventilation were constructed for the skilled labour force. They were supplemented by 'shacks', dormitories hastily constructed for single working men, which were occupied continuously by successive shifts of workers. These unsanitary conditions often led to disease and the density of the population in the new industrial communities promoted its spread. Conditions in the rural areas were also far from



idyllic. The 'frontland' farms were often prosperous, but in the remote backlands farms were marginal and many families struggled at or below a subsistence level. It was in these company towns and remote farms where Kendall practiced medicine for over fifty years.

Kendall graduated from Guy's Hospital in London in 1884, the same decade in which Lister's antiseptic surgery had gained acceptance, when Koch had developed an inoculation against anthrax and Pasteur had devised a rabies vaccine. The science of eugenics, which claimed that careful population planning through poor breeding was the key to improving society was investigated and promoted by Darwin's cousin Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911), a British anthropologist. Galton was interested in heredity and collected statistics on height, dimensions, strength, and other characteristics of human beings. Eugenics took two forms: positive eugenics, which focussed on ways to increase the breeding potential of 'fit' individuals, and negative eugenics which intended to restrict the breeding of the 'unfit.' As part of this 'scientific approach there was also a movement towards progressive reform in the professional occupations including medicine, law and teaching. Colin Howell in his article "Reform and the Monopolistic Impulse: The Professionalizaion of Medicine in the Maritimes", states "In the long run professionalisation facilitated the transformation of capitalism from its personal form to its modern paternalistic form where 'experts' provide professional services to every segment of society."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Colin Howell. "Reform and the Monopolistic Impulse: The Professionalizaion of Medicine in the Maritimes." (Acadiensis) 3

In Nova Scotia the medical profession was changed drastically by these developments in science, technology and the accompanying increase in the professionalisation of medicine. In the 19th. century doctors did not have the status of professionals in the community, which they eventually began to enjoy at the turn of the century.<sup>52</sup> In the late 18th. century doctors were considered with suspicion. Dr. R MacNeill stated at an 1896 meeting of the Maritime Medical Association, "the people look upon them [doctors] as enemies , whose sole object is to fleece and rob them."<sup>53</sup> The doctors attempted to bring respectability to the medical profession by raising entrance requirements and educational standards at medical schools, introducing a code of ethics and standardising fee structures. They also moved towards having a closer relationship with government as a way to both establish their desired status in society and to lobby for such practices as the recording of vital statistics.<sup>54</sup>

Kendall received his medical education at Halifax Medical College in (1881), Bellevue in New York(1882) and Guy's in London(1882-1884). Bellevue and Guy's were recognised centres of medical excellence, in an era when many new scientific methods and theories were being developed and tested and where the recognition of the elite status of the medical profession was more widely accepted than in Nova Scotia. In 1884 the twenty-three year old

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<sup>52</sup>Robert Wiebe, 116.

<sup>53</sup> Howell, 6.

<sup>54</sup>Howell, 3-21. "An Act to Provide for the Registration of Births and Deaths," was passed in Nova Scotia in 1908.

Kendall returned to Cape Breton to establish his practice. He was already a well educated physician and surgeon who had readily accepted modern discoveries and innovations such as the germ theory and the use of chloroform. Kendall's qualifications contrasted with those doctors who had received a less comprehensive education and who were often excluded from the professional elite.<sup>55</sup>

Medical professionalisation included public health. In his book The Paradox of Professionalism: Reform and Public Service in Urban America, 1900-1940, Don S. Kirschner provides a profile of the "generally well-born Americans" who responded to the need for improved public health;

Refusing to accept refuge in the established argument that personal hardship was necessarily a consequence of personal inadequacies, they insisted instead that the crisis was a matter of environmental pathology that was susceptible to social diagnosis and treatment. Sustained by an unwavering commitment to this theory, these individuals confidently set out to solve the problems of social disorder. By the late 1890s they were clearly identifiable as a salty band of social reformers.<sup>56</sup>

Wiebe describes the development of the public health system as "translating modern medicine into public policy."<sup>57</sup> This more scientific approach to public health was also seen as a way for doctors to expand their monopoly of health care. The doctors lobbied for public health boards which would be led by medical doctors, and

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<sup>55</sup>Howell, 5.

<sup>56</sup>Don S. Kirschner, 1.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Wiebe, 115.

doctors were also hired as Medical Health Officers. In Canada individual public health reformers like Kendall in Cape Breton and Herbert Ames in Montreal, and agencies such as the Board of Temperance and Moral Reform of the Methodist Church of Canada and The Board of Social Service and Evangelism of the Presbyterian Church identified the need to fight urban poverty with improved living conditions.<sup>58</sup> Colin Howell explains the origins of public health in his article "Medical Professionalization and the Social Transformation of the Maritimes, 1850-1950":

The interest in public health matters was an outgrowth of the bacteriological revolution. Although a few sanitarians such as Richard Johnson were miasmatics, believing that disease was a product of foul air, the growing acceptance of the 'germ theory' propelled many doctors into a crusade for pure water and milk, improved sewage systems in the cities and towns of the region, and a campaign for medical inspections in schools.<sup>59</sup>

The first report by a "Health Officer," an appointment created by the 1900 Nova Scotia public Health Act, appears in January 1902 Cape Breton County Minutes and Reports.<sup>60</sup> Health Officer John W. MacLean detailed outbreaks of typhoid, smallpox and diphtheria and suggested that general vaccinations be given for smallpox in order to prevent the

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<sup>58</sup>Herbert Brown Ames. The City Below the Hill. (Toronto: U. of Toronto , 1972) and Bryce Stewart. Sydney, Nova Scotia: The Report of a Brief Investigation in the City, Which Indicates the Need of an Intensive Social Survey. (The Board of Temperance and Moral Reform of the Methodist Church and The Board of Social Service and Evangelism of the Presbyterian Church), 1913.

<sup>59</sup>Colin Howell. "Medical Professionalization and the Social Transformation of the Maritimes, 1850-1950." Journal of Canadian Studies. Vol. 27, No. 1, (1992, Spring).

<sup>60</sup>Cape Breton County Council Minutes and Reports, 1902, 37-38. BI. afterwards cited as CBOC

spread of the disease. The reports each year contain information about contagious diseases, the successful use of anti-toxin and the need for prompt reporting of infectious diseases. Diphtheria anti-toxin was first used in Cape Breton by Dr. Kendall and Dr. A. D. McGillivray in 1895. In his May 1923 report as County Health officer Kendall recalled the years before anti-toxin was available: "Only those of mature years who remember the epidemics in Cape Breton from 1870 to 1895 can realize the value of Roux's great discovery"<sup>61</sup> The positive effects of anti-toxin were obvious; however, the efficient control of smallpox by the administration of anti-toxin had not gained widespread acceptance. Many of the Cape Breton County councilors were skeptical of its use and there was also resistance from the residents of the county as well as evidence of an inability on the part of some doctors to recognise the disease.<sup>62</sup> The more progressive Kendall, however, had witnessed the decrease in fatalities caused by the use of anti-toxin:

In summer of 1887 I lost all six children of Mr. & Mrs. A. McGibbon of Mira Ferry Rd. CB. Co. 15 years later they had raised a 2nd. family of 3. Diphtheria struck them down. One died. Other 2 saved by antitoxin.

April 30. 1895. patients children of Mr. and Mrs. Jos. Lahen. (She died at 2pm having first served her family with dinner - choked to death). Mrs. D. L. McKinnon's family made 18 in all. We had 14 standard doses. Each case showing white patch test etc. got a full dose. 8 got half doses. In 30 hours or less we had the delight to see all sitting up calling for food.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Pierre Paul Emile Roux (1853-1933) French Bacteriologist who worked with Louis Pasteur. *CBCC*, 1923, 51.

<sup>62</sup>MacKenzie. 11-12.

<sup>63</sup>Kendall Manuscript, *PANS*, Vol. 526, 239.

Kendall continued his praise of the discover of antitoxin, highlighting the professional ethics and humanitarian principles that appealed to Kendall and characterized the leaders of the steadily emerging medical profession:

It gives me great joy to mention Roux's name, the Frenchman who gave this great discovery to the world free. He could have demanded and received a fortune, but true to professional ethics he gave his discovery to the world without price-and lived poor.<sup>64</sup>

There were serious smallpox epidemics in Cape Breton from 1903-1904, 1906-1907 and in 1911 and as the medical Health Officer, Dr. Kendall was active in the control of smallpox epidemics in Cape Breton County. Smallpox was highly contagious and in order to control the disease the homes of those infected required disinfection, also those infected and all members of their household had to remain in quarantine. During the epidemic of 1903-1904 Kendall toured Cape Breton County to assess the extent of the epidemic and then made a report to Cape Breton County Council. In the address Kendall provided a brief history of the spread of the disease in North America since 1898 and stressed the need, "for the benefit of those disinclined to admit that we are dealing with smallpox, let me say that not a single case has occurred in persons who have been vaccinated successfully within seven years."<sup>65</sup> Attached to Kendall's

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<sup>64</sup>CBC, 1923, 51.

<sup>65</sup>Address to the Wardens and Councillors of the County of Cape Breton. 21st. Jan., 1904. Kendall Papers. MG1, Vol. 526, 43. PANS.

report is an expense account for visits to smallpox patients throughout Cape Breton County from 15 November 1903 to 20 January 1904:

To professional services in connection with smallpox from November 15th, 1903, to date:

To seven days forced work in getting information and following for vaccination individuals who had been

exposed to smallpox @ \$20 per day	\$1400
forty (40) days @ \$15 per day	\$600.00
eight (8) days special at \$20 per day	<u>\$160.00</u>

\$900.00      66

The epidemic raged throughout Cape Breton Island, so Kendall attended a meeting with the wardens of Inverness, Richmond, Victoria and Cape Breton counties, which resulted in Dr. Alexander Reid, Secretary of the Provincial Health Board, carrying out an inspection of all four counties to confirm that the contagious disease was in fact smallpox. Dr. Reid also empowered the local councils to enforce quarantine regulations, a measure which Kendall wholeheartedly supported:

The apathy of the people in some of the infected districts, and in some cases hostility to preventative measures, are responsible for the large volume of smallpox we have been called to deal with. I am prepared to supply the

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<sup>66</sup>The visits included vaccinating the workers at Irvine's lumber camp at Beaver Cove, disinfecting homes in Louisbourg, and intercepting the Station Agent at McKinnon's Harbour who had returned to work with "smallpox thick upon him." Address to the Warden and Councillors of the County of Cape Breton, 21st. Jan. 1904. Kendall Manuscript, PANS, Vol. 526, 44-48.

Council with cases of flagrant violation of quarantine regulations, if you deem it desirable to prosecute.<sup>67</sup>

On 22 Feb. 1904 Kendall received a telegram from a Dr. Thomas Gibson reporting a breach of quarantine regulations at Irish Cove:

One person in each house disinfected has following systems more or less. Swelled face, lump in throat stench from breath. Glebe and other claim I poisoned them Three quarter teaspoonful formation to half gallon water. Johnston's Aunt is sick what is cause can any relief be given. Got message from Reid Friday, sent him following message today, "According to your message and in order to impress occupants of Glebe and public to keep quarantine on account of threats made, I flagged Chapel and Glebe on Saturday morning. Local board interviewed later demanded explanation. My answer proved satisfactory from all but two, who made threats that they would get crowd tomorrow Sunday by [??] they would put down flag and have mass in spite of Reid or any one else. Those present at service mostly from eastern sections. They, with Rev. McPherson have carried out threats, Impossible to keep quarantine on unless strong posse of constables are sent to my assistance. Feeling running high between law abiding and law defying factions.<sup>68</sup>

Although it was more difficult to impose quarantine regulations in remote rural areas, there was resistance to quarantine in both the country and the towns. To a family quarantine meant the stigma of the yellow flag, your name published on a list of those infected, virtual house arrest and no income. Fumigation involved washing

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<sup>67</sup>"Address to the Warden and Councillors of the County of Cape Breton, 21st. Jan., 1904." Kendall Manuscript, PANS, Vol. 526, 43.

<sup>68</sup>Telegram from Thomas Gibson, 22 Feb., 1904. Kendall Manuscript, PANS, Vol. 526, 52-58. PANS.



walls with carbolic and water, the burning of all bedding and mattresses and baths in carbolic or bichloric acid. The loss of income due to quarantine and the cost of replacing bedding and fumigating the home would have imposed severe financial hardship on many households and explains part of the resistance to quarantine regulations. Many others could not understand the reasons for such stringent quarantine regulations, considering quarantine an over-reaction to the smallpox epidemic and a breach of individual freedom.<sup>69</sup>

By the end of his career as County Medical Health officer Kendall had witnessed and had encouraged and implemented major improvements in the health care system, including vaccinations, the development of a cleaner water supply and the establishment of a new asylum. Kendall's long service to the medical profession in various capacities allowed these gradual advancements in social conditions to meet his visionary objectives. In 1922 Kendall noted the following general advances in social conditions:

In Europe and America new agencies for the betterment of the masses have been formed, and their expending(sic) operations have reached us in Cape Breton. The activities of the Victorian Order, Red Cross, and social service nurses are a welcome addition to the churches and philanthropic institutions.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>MacKenzie, 14-27.

<sup>70</sup>CBC 1922, 45.

Cape Breton County now had the services of the Victorian Order of Nurses and the Red Cross as well as a public Health Nurse, Miss Florence Kerr, who in 1926 examined 3647 pupils in 124 schools.<sup>71</sup> There remained the need for a senior citizen's home which Kendall foresaw as necessary to continue the progress of public health reform, but which was not realised during his career. In 1921 Kendall made an impassioned plea to Cape Breton County Council:

As we all know the outlying rural districts are steadily being depopulated. The young and vigorous will not live the farm life in Cape Breton. The old are left at home in many cases without support. The suffering of poverty have taken hold on many of the poor old people. Their houses are rotting down over them and they are without the necessaries of life, to say nothing of comforts which their exertions in earlier life entitled them to.<sup>72</sup>

It appears that although Kendall was a staunch proponent of improved public health care, he was not significantly influenced by the current theory of scientific management which was espoused by some of his prominent contemporaries. In the belief of many who adhered to this social theory the widespread application of the main tenets of scientific management would:

. . . . rid society of the "degenerative" influences of crime, insanity, gender conflict and class antagonism and to replace competitive individualism with a blend of social co-operation and technical expertise."<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>CBCC 1926, 60-61.

<sup>72</sup>CBCC 1921, 11.

<sup>73</sup>Colin Howell "Medical Science and Social Criticism: Alexander Peter Reid and the Ideological Origins of the Welfare State in Canada." Canadian Health Care and the State. (Canada: McGill Queen's, 1992), 10.

Dr. Alexander Peter Reid was a contemporary of Dr. Kendall's, and both were members of the first Provincial Board of Health which strived for public health reform.<sup>74</sup> Reid was superintendent of the Nova Scotia Hospital, (Mount Hope Asylum) from 1878-1894, and a proponent of scientific management and the somatic theory which, "suggested that derangement originated in lesions of the brain or spinal cord." Successful application of the somatic theory would, "liberate society from insanity," and would " ... have served a social purpose: the cured would return to the workaday world normal and well adjusted."<sup>75</sup> A connection between physical disorders and mental illness could not be scientifically proven and this was one of the reasons why Reid had to be content with providing custodial care. Kendall's appointment as physician began at the Riverside Asylum in Sydney in 1899, and continued at its replacement, the Cape Breton Hospital, from 1906-1926. Kendall's position at the Cape Breton asylums differed from Reid's at Mount Hope, as Kendall was only an occasional visitor to the hospital and was not responsible for the operation of the facility. It would appear that, unlike Dr. Reid, Kendall's approach was not a rigorously scientific one. He categorised the asylum inmates as " . . . mischievous," "wanderer", "troublemaker", and other unscientific terms, and appeared to view them with compassion and benevolence. His annual reports to the Cape Breton County Council are full of concern for the comfort of the patients and he requested improvements to their recreation facilities,

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<sup>74</sup>"Debates and Proceedings of the House of Assembly 1907." 414 Microfilm UCCB

<sup>75</sup>Howell, 21.

accommodation and diet. Before 1889 the insane in Cape Breton were held in appalling conditions in the local jail.<sup>76</sup> The Riverside Asylum was constructed in 1889 as a result of proposals which had been submitted to the Provincial Government by Dr. Alexander Reid. During these years there were major changes in the care and treatment of the mentally ill and Kendall was influential in initiating these modern methods of treatment at the Cape Breton Hospital. Again the Minutes and Reports of Cape Breton County Council give an excellent account of Kendall's concern for his patients. His remarks are at once sensitive and practical, unlike many other physicians reports which are mainly statistical accounts of patients and staff and reports on the condition of the buildings and grounds. The earliest report given by Dr. Kendall in his capacity as physician for the County Asylum to the Cape Breton Council is found in the Minutes and Reports of 1894, though he may have held this position at an earlier date.<sup>77</sup> The annual reports reflect the changes that were occurring as Cape Breton's population grew. Early reports comment on the good quality of the food, though there was a request for more milk and butter and the need of improved clothing for the patients. Kendall was also concerned about the poor condition of the building and repeatedly requested better plumbing and heating for the building as well as more adequate accommodation for the patients, especially for the "sick and for the separation of the violent and feeble classes."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Terry MacLean. Asylum: A History of the Cape Breton Hospital, 1906-1995. (Sydney, NS: Cape Breton Hospital Health Services, 1996), 23.

<sup>77</sup>CBCC 1894, 17.

<sup>78</sup>CBCC 1897.

In 1903 a controversy erupted over Kendall's hiring of three of the asylum inmates to work on his own farm. Dr. Kendall was requested to appear before council where he explained that he paid his workers \$1.50 per day and took full responsibility for them while they were outside of the asylum.<sup>79</sup> The commissioner stated that the patients had been hired without their knowledge; however, the keeper of the asylum, Alexander McRae, declared in his annual statement that, "The best donation of all was a new waggon [sic] given by two of the patients, who earned it by working for Dr. A. S. Kendall."<sup>80</sup> In his 1923 report Kendall made the following request:

I also wish to bring your attention to the fact that many of the patients have no teeth, beyond some encumbering stumps, and that they cannot chew meat. This disadvantage under which the patients suffer can be largely overcome by grinding their meat. Remember the patients are not allowed table knives. To operate a meat grinder it should be attached to an electric motor.<sup>81</sup>

Kendall also realised the therapeutic benefit of music and made what may have well been considered an extravagant request by the County Council:

Mr. John Menzies, dealer in musical instruments, recently presented the hospital with a gramophone. Many of the insane, who are separated from the enjoyments of life, take as great pleasure in music as do people outside

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<sup>79</sup>CBCC 1903, 9-45.

<sup>80</sup>CBCC 1903, 44.

<sup>81</sup>CBCC Jan, 1923, 43.

hospital walls. May I suggest that a small sum of money be appropriated yearly for the purchase of records<sup>82</sup>

Kendall's last report as Cape Breton Hospital physician was delivered in 1926. He reflected on the conditions that had prevailed in 1885:

It was just forty-one years ago since I first appeared before your predecessors and called their attention to the inhuman conditions that prevailed in the treatment of the so-called harmless insane in this County forty-one years ago - and the horrors of which I write were province-wide. . . . . There was no female attendant; patients kept or failed to keep the fires going ; food and drink were passed through a hole in the door; the only sanitary convenience was a wooden bucket or tub - often knocked over. <sup>83</sup>

Kendall was not content to reflect only on the history of the Cape Breton Hospital; he concluded his report by recommending that a census be made of mental institutions to determine whether or not there was a need to establish a special facility for 'defective youth'. Kendall considered that these children belonged neither in orphanages nor with adults in psychiatric hospitals.

Kendall's appointment as physician to the County Asylum also included serving as the physician for the county jail. Kendall appeared to be less tolerant and benevolent to those who found

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<sup>82</sup>CBOC May, 1923, 50-51.

<sup>83</sup>CBOC 1926, 40.

themselves in the Cape Breton County Jail. His 1900 report remarked that:

The jail has been more liberally patronized than usual. This has been especially the case since the inception of the iron works, and although we do not want to see anyone suffering from illness while serving a term of confinement in jail, we have on more than one occasion asked ourselves the question, whether we are bound to give strict attention to persons suffering in jail from the effects of alcohol or from wounds received while drunk and disorderly.<sup>84</sup>

Dr. Arthur Samuel Kendall was also a general practitioner known as the "Country Doctor."<sup>85</sup> Kendall's exploits as a pioneering physician have become legendary in arts of Cape Breton Island. Dr. Kendall, Dr. MacPherson of North Sydney and Dr. McGillivray of Sydney are recorded as being the first doctors in Cape Breton Island to perform amputations and minor surgery.<sup>86</sup> One account tells of Dr. Arthur Kendall performing an amputation on a kitchen table when the only anesthetic he had was a bottle of strong rum. Kendall's practice included all of Cape Breton County, an area of 1200 square miles. In the early years of his practice Kendall travelled to his patient's homes by horse and buggy in summer and by sleigh in the winter, in a busy and widespread practice described in the following account of events typical of the doctor's professional service:

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<sup>84</sup>CBC 1900, 33-34.

<sup>85</sup>Mabel Beaton Scrapbook 15A, BI

<sup>86</sup>M. D. Morrison. "Early Medical Practice in Cape Breton." Reports Medical Care. BI

He really needed to be in two or three places at once because we lived in the middle of downtown Sydney and we'd get word from someone say out at the head of Grand Mira or Louisbourg or somewhere like that was in great need - and he'd be up perhaps at Eskasoni. And we'd begin telephoning - and at that time there was a telegraph station out there on the road [in Sydney]- so the hired man would go to one place, and my brother to another, my mother sit at the home telephone and I would go into a neighbour's house and we'd all begin telephoning. Now each one had one person we had to beat on till we got that person. The hired man would telephone someone near the Bars coming across from the Northside, I would probably get Father MacKenzie and he'd send his hired man out to sit on the gatepost to watch for the doctor. And then someone else would call Mrs. MacNeil at East Bay - she had an inn. We had a farm seven miles from Sydney so the farmer's wife had to be alerted and quite often we would corral my father somewhere on his way home from Eskasoni. If we didn't it would be bad because he would come all the way into Sydney, seven extra miles, with horse and buggy, over roads that weren't too good, sometimes very bad. Whereas if we could catch him at Mrs. MacNeil's, or Father MacKenzie's, he could cut across the mountain to the head of Grand Mira. That was an every day occurrence, we just fell into step from long training. On a confinement he would be gone for days at a time.<sup>87</sup>

Kendall's work as a country doctor, his extensive travelling and long hours were no doubt physically exhausting. The responsibility of tending to rural patients, who were sometimes poor and malnourished, without the support of a hospital or other health care facilities, also took an emotional toll:

I remember one very sad time. He always drove very good horses - we had an awful investment in horses -

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<sup>87</sup>Chapman, 1969.



because it was the only way to get round And this time he came home and the next morning someone came in and they said, "Ariadne is dead - she's lying dead in her shafts in her stall." She was a beautiful little mare. And he practically killed her getting to this woman - so he didn't say a word. Sometime later, mother was with him, and mother told me afterwards He said, "We're passing the house." - The children looked deplorable - a little boy running around with pants made out of coat sleeves - and they looked awful. And he went in the house and he came out, sad looking, and he said, " Mary, you know when I killed Ariadne. I was trying to save those children's mother. She bled to death."<sup>88</sup>

Another example of the arduous conditions that Dr. Kendall endured in his rural practice occurred towards the end of his career:

I remember Dr. Hare telling me about one of the last big cases my father must have been on. He went to a woman who they referred to as a bleeder, and he found that she was about to deliver, and he called into a couple of doctors and he said, "Go to C. Moores' and get all the powerful flashlights, any thing to make light." And they came out. And he had the place scrubbed up by himself like a surgery or operating room and they saved the woman's life. But the other doctors went home. My father had a hired driver then, he was paying out of his own pocket. This woman was poorer than a church mouse, and he stayed there for three days - because she was apt to hemorrhage again. That was when he was a very old man. <sup>89</sup>

Kendall further recounted a trip during a February snowstorm to Gabarus when he was 'young and ambitious.' The journey took twenty-six hours by sleigh and he was storm bound for two weeks

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<sup>88</sup>Chapman, 1969.

<sup>89</sup>Chapman, 1969.

during which time he attended his patient who was a wealthy fisherman and miller. Kendall billed the patient for \$80; however, the patient sent him only \$30 and refused to pay the balance.<sup>90</sup> There were many other instances when doctors of this era were not paid for their services. John Kendall, a nephew of Arthur, recounted the following story:

My Uncle drove a very old and dilapidated car. One day a group of young boys were making fun of his car. My uncle told them, "If your parents had paid me for bringing you into this world I may have been able to afford a new car."<sup>91</sup>

Kendall's medical career did not only include being a family physician, Medical health officer and physician for Jails and Asylums. He also reported in his testimony to the 1925 Duncan Commission to being a 'company doctor' (a physician retained by the coal company for the miners and paid for by a compulsory 'check-off' from the miner's pay). For a brief period early in his career, he had also served as a doctor for the Relief Board of the Halifax Explosion; examining survivors of the explosion, assessing their level of disability and recommending treatment. Kendall's high standing in the medical profession was recognised by election to terms as resident of both the Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Medical societies and in his receipt of a fifty year in from the Cape Breton Medical Society.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Mabel Beaton Scrapbook 15A, Beaton Institute, UCCB, Sydney, NS.

<sup>91</sup>Informal conversation with John Kendall, Sydney, NS, 17 January 1997. Miss Eleanor Huntington of Sydney told a similar version of this story.

<sup>92</sup>1925 Duncan. Microfilm reel 3897 PANS, Kendall Manuscript, PANS, Vol. 526.

As Medical Health Officer for Cape Breton County Kendall introduced vaccinations and enforced quarantine regulations to improve public health. He was unable for many years to convince the town and county councils or the coal companies to substantially improve the conditions of homes, the water supply, roads and sewage treatment in the company towns.<sup>93</sup> A determined Kendall embraced modern medicine and applied it in situations where the equipment and facilities were far from ideal. Kendall also had the vision to see the need for mental care facilities for children and a tuberculosis sanatorium and home for seniors in Cape Breton. His own ability to provide adequate medical care in his private practice was hampered by the logistics of travelling long distances between calls on poor roads, by the poverty of his patients and by the ignorance and skepticism of modern medical practices which Kendall and few others knew could ultimately contain epidemics and prevent disease.

The absence of universal health care was probably the greatest impediment to Kendall's successful treatment, as many of his patients could not afford to pay for Kendall's house calls, prescriptions or hospital care. On many occasions Kendall provided free medical care and provided prescriptions and inoculations at his own cost. Kendall's fees for public appointments helped to compensate for the lack of income derived from private practice; however, the expenses of operating his practice prevented him from ever becoming wealthy. In Nova Scotia it was not until the implementation of medicare that the

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<sup>93</sup>There are still areas in industrial Cape Breton where these problems prevail.

standardisation and payment of fees was realised, a longtime goal of the emerging medical profession in which Kendall worked.

Dr. Arthur Samuel Kendall is aptly described in the County of Cape Breton 1979 Centennial Booklet as "A country doctor with a sophisticated background, and a politician whose social thought was far ahead of his time, Kendall made a lasting mark on the County of his birth." The searching tribute continues, "His eccentricities obviously never detracted from the faith of his patients. In a day when people 'swore by' their doctor, it's said they swore doubly by Dr. Kendall."<sup>94</sup>

Kendall's early career as medical doctor was concurrent with the emergence of the progressive reform movement and the professionalisation of medicine. The new respectability and acceptance of the medical profession and the accompanying advances in medical science allowed Kendall to work effectively throughout his career as a public health official and family doctor. His affinity with the working class in the coal mining districts and with the rural poor as well as his compassion for the mentally ill prompted him to not only provide them with exceptional medical care but also to lobby for social reforms, which would ease the deplorable conditions in which many of his patients lived. His desire for social reform also motivated Kendall as a politician to lobby for old-age pensions, a shorter work week and a workmen's compensation act.

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<sup>94</sup>Centennial Booklet, 16.

## The Political Career of Dr. Arthur Samuel Kendall.

Kendall's decision to pursue a political career was the result of his family background, his education and his formative experiences as a young man. His mother and father had dedicated their lives to social reform by preaching the gospel and performing acts of charity in their hometown, and by raising money for missionary societies abroad. Kendall extended this family tradition of genteel public service and social reform in the fields of medicine and politics. This chapter will examine and chronicle his political career in the context of the many social and economic changes that were occurring in the industrial cities in which he lived and studied and which were transforming the very nature of his native Cape Breton Island.

It was noted in the introductory chapter that Kendall had witnessed the negative effects of industrialisation and rural depopulation while in London and New York. As a young man in Sydney he came to realise that new legislation and political action was necessary to effect the large-scale and urgent changes required to meet the demands of an emerging industrial society in eastern and central Canada. When the vigorous and recently graduated Dr. Arthur Samuel Kendall returned to Cape Breton from London England in 1884, the Cape Breton coal industry was entering a period of expansion. The south-eastern seaboard of Cape Breton Island had the richest coal deposits on

the east coast of North America. Commercial coal mining had begun in 1677 when Nicolas Denys was awarded the mineral rights on Cape Breton Island, and coal mining continued on a small scale until an increase in demand occurred in the 1850's. The increase was encouraged by the 1854 Reciprocity Treaty with the United States, reinforced by the outbreak of the American Civil War and continued until 1867 when import duties were re-established.<sup>95</sup> The National Policy in 1879 imposed an import duty on coal which revitalised the coal industry in Cape Breton; however, unlike other areas of the Maritimes, Cape Breton did not experience an increase in secondary manufacturing in the 1880's. Sydney's social and economic landscape had scarcely changed during Kendall's absence and had remained a small administrative centre and market town.

Kendall however had been changed by his travels and his education. He had left Sydney as a high school graduate in 1876 and returned in 1884 as an idealistic reformer whose social concern had been further developed by his experiences in New York and London. Kendall was only twenty-seven years old and newly married, when he was elected to Sydney's town council in 1888. He had chosen to work for social change within established political systems where his professional background and social contacts were accepted as assets. There are no records of Kendall's rôle as a councillor; however, his success in observing and implementing minor change, coincident with the advent of large scale capitalist investment in Cape Breton Island,

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<sup>95</sup>David Frank, "The Cape Breton Coal Industry and the Rise and Fall of the British Empire Steel Corporation." Atlantic Canada After Confederation Buckner and Frank, eds (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1988) p 209.

may have compelled him to continue his political career, initially as a supporter of Provincial and Federal Liberal candidates, and ultimately as a Liberal candidate.

The era of major industrial expansion began in Cape Breton when American industrialist Henry Melville Whitney founded the Dominion Coal Company in 1893.<sup>96</sup> The provincial government gave Whitney a 99 year lease on as yet ungranted coal leases in exchange for a royalty of 12.5¢ per ton, which would accrue to the Provincial Government . Historian David Frank states, "The financial arrangements indicate that the formation of Dominion Coal was a typical episode in an age of corporate carpet bagging," - a process aided and abetted by an acquiescent Provincial Government in Nova Scotia and by coal mine operators who were anxious to take advantage of an increase in new markets.<sup>97</sup> Liberal Premier W. S. Fielding declared that the coal industry would expand as Whitney achieved "what nature intended . . . the shipment of coal to the United States."<sup>98</sup> The Dominion Coal Company opened a number of new mines and closed others which were considered unprofitable. Kendall was a keen observer and a cautious supporter of Whitney's enterprise. He did not oppose the expansion of the coal industry but from the outset of his political career he

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<sup>96</sup>T. W. Acheson. "The National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes 1880-1910" Atlantic Canada After Confederation . Buckner and Frank, eds. (Fredericton, NB: 1988) 166-189.

Donald MacGillivray. "Henry Melville Whitney Comes to Cape Breton."

<sup>97</sup>David Frank, "The Cape Breton Coal Industry and the Rise and Fall of the British Empire Steel Corporation." A. Buckner and David Frank, eds. Atlantic Canada After Confederation." (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1988), 212.

<sup>98</sup>David Frank, 212.

consistently put the best interests of the working class ahead of the financial ambitions of the owners and shareholders of the coal mines.

Kendall supported Liberal candidate George H. Murray in the 1896 by-election against Conservative Sir Charles Tupper.<sup>99</sup> Tupper, previously High Commissioner in London, had become leader of the Conservative party in 1896 after Sir Mackenzie Bowell had agreed to move to the Senate. David McKeen, member of parliament for Cape Breton, also received a senate appointment allowing Tupper to successfully contest the by-election in January 1896 against Liberal candidate, and future Nova Scotia premier, George H. Murray.<sup>100</sup> A General Election was called for 23 June 1896 and Kendall contested the riding of Cape Breton, running unsuccessfully as a Liberal candidate with Joseph MacPherson against Conservative Prime Minister Sir Charles Tupper and former MLA and Executive Council member, Hector McDougall, who had been elected the MP for Cape Breton in the 1884 by-election.<sup>101</sup> The Manitoba school question and the contentious Remedial Bill that followed were the main election issues in 1896. The Privy Council declared that the Federal Government had the authority to legislate the establishment of schools for the Catholic minority in the Province of Manitoba. The Manitoba Provincial Government opposed the establishment of sectarian schools while the Quebec Members of

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<sup>99</sup>The reference to Kendall being a town councillor in Sydney is found in Elliott, 103, however, no other references to Kendall's being a town councillor have been found. "Incidents in the Political Life of A. S. Kendall." Kendall Manuscript, PANS, Vol. 526, 245.

<sup>100</sup>Vincent Durant. War Horse of Cumberland County. (Hantsport, Nova Scotia: Lancelot Press, 1985).

<sup>101</sup>Elliott. 130.



Parliament supported the bill.<sup>102</sup> The Catholic Church in Nova Scotia publicly and wholeheartedly supported the sectarian Remedial Bill.

John Cameron, Bishop of the Diocese of Antigonish in Nova Scotia stated:

It is the plain and conscientious duty of every Catholic elector to vote for the Conservative candidate; and this declaration no Catholic in this diocese, be he priest or layman has a right to dispute.<sup>103</sup>

Tupper, perhaps because of the large number of Catholic voters in the riding influenced by their church, defeated Kendall, a Protestant, and returned to the House with a majority of 817 votes; however, the Liberal party had a majority in the House of Commons and Sir Wilfred Laurier became Prime Minister.

Kendall's next political campaign was in the Nova Scotia Provincial election of 1897 where he ran with fellow Liberal, Alexander Johnston, a Catholic, who was the manager of the Bridgeport Cooperative Store and managing editor of the Sydney Daily Record.<sup>104</sup> Kendall and Johnston defeated the Conservative's leader and his running mate, both future senators, Dr. William McKay and John MacCormack.<sup>105</sup> Kendall took his seat in the Provincial House of Assembly on 27 January 1898. As an MLA Kendall consistently proposed and supported legislation which would

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<sup>102</sup>J. W. Longley. Sir Charles Tupper. (Toronto: Makers of Canada, 1916).

<sup>103</sup>J Murray Beck Politics of Nova Scotia Politics of Nova Scotia. Volume II. 1896-1988. (Tantallon, NS: Four East Publications, 1988).

<sup>104</sup>Elliott. 103. Alexander Johnston (1867-1951) was an MLA 1897-1900, MP 1904-1908 and Federal Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries 1910-1932.

<sup>105</sup>Kendall Manuscript, PANS, Vol. 526, 235.

encourage industrial expansion in Cape Breton, while he also supported legislation which would improve the living and employment conditions of the working class. He was not an ordinary, parochial politician.

It was during 1898 that Kendall went to London to observe the passage through the House of Commons of the Workmen's Compensation Act for Injuries. He returned with one thousand copies of the guide to the new and innovative British Workmen's Compensation Act, which was passed in May, 1898. These copies of the act were distributed to coal miners and railway workers in Nova Scotia. Perhaps to explain his actions Kendall notes in his papers that they, "Proved to be the yeast in the dough which started Sir William Meredith on his great act."<sup>106</sup>

The establishment of the Dominion Iron and Steel Company (DISCO) in 1899 produced major and intensified mining expansion with the opening of a number of new coal mines in the south-eastern industrial area of Cape Breton County around New Waterford and Glace Bay. Kendall was already a wary supporter of industrial development. Although he welcomed the establishment of the steel plant in Sydney he strenuously objected to the motion made by the rate payers of Sydney, passed in 1898, to grant the steel company a lifetime property

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<sup>106</sup>Sir William Ralph Meredith was appointed a Royal Commissioner by the Ontario government to study workmen's compensation in 1914. The act Meredith drafted, the first of its kind in Canada, was passed in the Ontario legislature on 1 Jan., 1915, followed later that year by Nova Scotia. It was also during his visit to England that Kendall attended the funeral of former British Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone who died on 19 May 1898. Kendall was Nova Scotia's representative at the funeral in Westminster Abbey and the black glove with which he touched Gladstone's coffin is preserved in the Public Archives in Halifax.

tax exemption. Kendall, an MLA at the time, was successful in having the exemption limited to thirty years after which time the City of Sydney would collect an estimated \$250,000 each year in taxes from the steel plant.<sup>107</sup> Kendall's actions were extremely unpopular in Sydney where residents were anxious to attract the steel industry, and poised to enjoy what they perceived as an accompanying era of prosperity for the town. Residents shunned Dr. Kendall in the street because he fought the DISCO exemption from taxation in perpetuity.<sup>108</sup> The issue was also raised in future election campaigns in which his political opponents falsely accused him of supporting the tax exemption. During DISCO's initial formation Kendall also successfully lobbied against the establishment of a company store at Sydney. This action angered Whitney, who had projected that the profits from the company store would pay the interest on the loans he had taken to launch the company.<sup>109</sup> Kendall also represented the rights of property owners by supporting their claims for fairer compensation for their land which had been expropriated for the steel plant expansion in 1900. Kendall maintained a moderating rôle as a self appointed watchdog of capitalist investment and industrial expansion, and its overall effects on Cape Breton.

The Debates and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly contain numerous speeches which Kendall made regarding the Cape Breton economy. At the opening of the second session in 1899 Kendall was

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<sup>107</sup>Sydney Record. 2 June 1911

<sup>108</sup>Kendall Manuscript, PANS, Vol. 526, 235.

<sup>109</sup>Debates and Proceedings

called to second and comment upon the address given by Lieutenant Governor Malachy Bowes Daly. Kendall's speech illustrates his interests in both agriculture and industry:

I maintain that there are to-day two important questions before this legislature, one, the road question, and the other the fact that the population engaged in farming and fishing are leaving these industries to add to our already overcrowded towns. We see a number of farms in rich bottom lands, but unfortunately the great mass of the farming population has not come into such inheritance, but is on the dry uplands of low productive power. Such farms are being deserted wholesale.<sup>110</sup>

Kendall suggested that in order to halt rural depopulation the exhausted backland fields should be sown with mammoth red clover, a method which had been successfully used in Great Britain, Europe and the United States.<sup>111</sup> Kendall then shifted the focus of his speech to industry in Cape Breton.

It was my privilege to be returned to this parliament because I entertain strong views on the necessity of labour legislation. When I see degrading conditions brought about by the greed and avarice of capitalists in connection with great industrial works and realise that the men usually meet their employers with consideration, it seems only due to the workmen of the country that they should enjoy the sympathy of their public men and it gives me pleasure to learn that certain measures to meet the workmen's wishes will receive strong support in this house. Our mining population are not the riff-raff of the earth. I am ashamed to feel compelled to make this statement, but entirely too many persons are prejudiced against the miners.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup>Debates and Proceedings, 7

<sup>111</sup>Debates and Proceedings, 7.

<sup>112</sup>Debates and Proceedings, 10

Kendall also proposed that a system of cold storage for the fisheries be implemented in Nova Scotia, a method which had been successfully used in the shipping of produce from Western Canada to Great Britain. The purpose of cold storage stations along the coast of Nova Scotia was twofold: firstly it would help to provide for the storage of bait for the summer fishery when bait was scarce, and secondly, it would allow for the storage of fish for export. During the previous year Kendall had taken a lobster packed in ice to England where he demonstrated the viability of exporting seafood from Nova Scotia to Great Britain.<sup>113</sup> Kendall's request in the Provincial Legislature for a system of cold storage was not favoured by the Nova Scotia Liberals:

A few minutes before the session opened Hon. Premier Murray came round to my desk, took me back of Speaker's chair and implored me not to introduce this matter which was one the Dominion Government should deal with. I told him as I was not in the Dominion government. I proposed to take advantage of my position here and have this subject considered here. <sup>114</sup>

Kendall, undaunted, continued to pursue his quest for the establishment of cold storage facilities. On 19 April 1899 he sent a copy of a report prepared by a Nova Scotia Legislature committee formed to consider the cold storage issue to the federal Minister of Marine and Fisheries Sir L. H. Davies:

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<sup>113</sup>Chapman, 1969.

<sup>114</sup>Kendall Manuscript, PANS, Vol. 526, 38.

The need of bringing within the reach of fishermen the means of developing to the utmost the fishing industry of Nova Scotia is urgent. . . . It was asserted that bank schooners frequently lose from four to six weeks out of a season of five months, on account of having to leave the banks to hunt around the coast for bait, and that this loss would be reduced by two thirds if the schooners were provided which would be supplied with certainty at bait supply depots.<sup>115</sup>

The presentation to the Minister of Fisheries also included letters of support from fish dealers from Lower L'Ardoise, Halifax, Clark's Harbour and Guysboro County.<sup>116</sup> Kendall was eventually successful in having the cold storage system implemented and was appointed the inspector for the programme, which ultimately proved to be economically viable.<sup>117</sup>

Kendall and his running mate Johnston resigned from the Provincial Legislature to contest the Federal election of 1900. The election campaign was reported in Sydney's two daily newspapers: the Sydney Post and the Sydney Daily Record. The Post supported the Conservative cause while the Record supported the Liberals. Both newspapers were blatantly partisan and had no compunction about printing biased and sometimes factually inaccurate reports of the election campaign. The election campaign began on 1 November, 1900 at a nomination meeting at the Rosslyn Rink in Sydney. The Liberal candidates nominated for Cape Breton County were Dr. Arthur Kendall

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<sup>115</sup>The Origin of Cold Storage for Maritime Fisheries. PAM 1162 Beaton Institute UCCB, Sydney, NS. 3-5.

<sup>116</sup>The Origin of Cold Storage for Maritime Fisheries, 5-10.

<sup>117</sup>The Origin of Cold Storage for Maritime Fisheries, 11-13.

and Alex Johnston and the Conservative nominees were Sir Charles Tupper, who was not present, and Hector F. MacDougall.<sup>118</sup> The Sydney Daily Record reported the success of the Liberal candidates at the meeting:

Johnston's made one of the best speeches ever heard on a platform. His remarks were clear, forcible and eloquent. From the start he had his audience with him, and cheers and applause continually punctuated his statements. Dr. Kendall closed the meeting with a speech that brought the audience to its feet time and again.<sup>119</sup>

The Sydney Daily Record dedicated much of its copy to furthering the Liberal cause during the eight days of the election campaign. One typical advertisement headlined "How to Mark the Ballot," showed an election ballot form with a prominent X beside the names of Kendall and Johnston, while another proclaimed, "Vote for Kendall and Johnston the Candidates of Liberal and Progressive Reform."<sup>120</sup> Letters to the editor and editorials, also heavily biased towards the Liberal candidates, were published and often reprinted in subsequent editions.

The favourable editorials and the Liberal candidates themselves appealed for the vote of the fishermen, coal miners and farmers of Cape Breton. Kendall's success with the Cold Storage programme which had established warehouses in Gabarus in Neil's Harbour was used to sway the fishermen's vote. Both of the candidates and the Liberal press attacked the Conservative senator and director of Dominion Coal, David

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<sup>118</sup>The Sydney Daily Record, 19 November, 1900.

<sup>119</sup>The Sydney Daily Record, 1 November, 1900.

<sup>120</sup>The Sydney Daily Record, 5 November, 1900.

McKeen who stated "Cape Breton miners would be inestimably better off, if we did not send a ton of coal to the United States." <sup>121</sup> The Sydney Daily Record in a column addressed to, "The Workingmen and the Citizens Generally," warned that if coal was not shipped to the United States the result could be the closing of the railway and the coal piers at Louisbourg.<sup>122</sup>

The election campaigns were often lively and full of humour. Stump speeches, spontaneous addresses, were a highlight of the election campaign:

The old Sydney Hotel had spacious verandahs overlooking [the] harbor that were sometimes used for political stump speeches. Crowds would gather on the wide, and then little travelled, Esplanade below. Once when Dr. Kendall was campaigning against Tupper a devoted follower of Sir Charles was in the audience. He had driven up from Low Point in his light little wagon. His horse was tall, lean, well kept of a pale gold color with a creamy white mane (probably with a strain of Royal Gold horses of Spain in 15th Century). The old man had trained his horse as a pet. Every time Dr. K. drove home some point the old fellow would offset it by shouting "Hurray for Tupper!" The horse had been trained at the word Tupper to leap almost out of the shafts and standing on his hind legs to paw the air with his fore legs.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup>David McKeen, Conservative MP Cape Breton, 1887-1896 appointed senator 1896.

<sup>122</sup>The Sydney Daily Record, 5 November, 1900.

<sup>123</sup>Kendall Manuscript, PANS, Vol. 526, 245.



The newspapers also took part in the lighter-side of the campaign by publishing the following request to give Sir Charles Tupper a respite from politics:

Sir Charles Tupper is an aged gentleman, and has travelled far and worked hard for the last two months. Would it not be a worthy act of charity on the part of the electors to give the weary old baronet a five year rest in a cool, shady bower? Moral: Vote for Kendall and Johnston.<sup>124</sup>

In the 1900 election the Conservatives gained a number of seats in Ontario that had previously been held by the Liberals and also lost seats in Western Canada and the Maritimes. Kendall became a part of this trend by ousting Sir Charles Tupper, giving him his first defeat in thirteen elections. Kendall had campaigned vigorously throughout the riding while Sir Charles Tupper spent most of his time campaigning for the Conservative's in Ontario, spending less than one week in his own riding.

As a newly elected Member of Parliament, from a small province, Kendall addressed the House less often than he had as a member of the Provincial Legislature. On 5 August 1904 he gave a lengthy speech in support of the Alien Labour Act, a bill which was intended to restrict the immigration of workers into Canada. Kendall not only commented on the Alien Labour Act, which he supported, but also took the

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<sup>124</sup>The Sydney Daily Record, 3 November, 1900.

opportunity to speak in favour of political and social reform, in a prescient commentary on the social responsibilities of government:

I may say that the government as a great employer of labour in this country, should be a model employer, and that as far as possible the principle of a fair minimum wage , shorter hours, compensation for injury and death, and old age pensions should be provided for.<sup>125</sup>

Kendall continued his speech by discussing the Labour party in Canada. Two Labour candidates had been elected to the House: Ralph Smith from Nanaimo and A. W. Puttee of Winnipeg. Kendall's opinion was that 'labouring men' should convince candidates from the two dominant political parties to adopt 'a moderate labour platform.' A Member of Parliament would be free to vote along party lines on all issues with the exception of labour-related bills. In these instances 'labour members' from both parties would cast their vote in favour of legislation that would be of benefit to the working class. Kendall foresaw this arrangement as an interim measure, lasting for the next ten or fifteen years, until the labour movement could grow stronger in Canada and field a number of their own candidates who could be successfully elected.<sup>126</sup>

In 1904 Kendall lost his seat in the House of Commons due to a redistribution which created two new ridings: Cape Breton and Cape Breton North and Victoria, which each sent only one representative to Ottawa.<sup>127</sup> In the 1904 General Election Kendall's former running mate

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<sup>125</sup>Speech of A. S. Kendall, The Alien Labour Act, 1904. BI, , MG 12,13.

<sup>126</sup>Speech of A. S. Kendall, The Alien Labour Act, 1904.

<sup>127</sup>There had previously been two candidates elected from Cape Breton and one from Victoria County.

Alex Johnson won the Cape Breton seat. Daniel D. MacKenzie, a Liberal MLA for Cape Breton County resigned to successfully contest the new riding of Cape Breton North and Victoria. Kendall ran in MacKenzie's former seat and was elected in the Provincial by-election of 1904, and re-elected in the election of 1906.<sup>128</sup>

An entry in Kendall's own memoirs reveals that he was lured to run in the 1906 election by Premier George Murray who promised him a seat in the Senate:

In 1906 dissolution came - the House dissolved. Within an hour after dissolution of the Provincial House Murray said "Another election Kendall and then a seat in the Senate". Any man who says or said that Murray did not say as above is or was liar. (I say this). Honourable Robert MacGregor said the same. So did Ambrose Comeau (Digby County), who was appointed Senator at that time. Just before Comeau got the Senatorship the Montreal Herald carried on front page pictures of Comeau and Kendall as the selected two for the vacancies. This stunt arranged to deceive Kendall?<sup>129</sup>

As an MLA Kendall consistently pushed for legislation that would be in the best interest of the working class, giving Kendall the reputation of being the "social conscience of the Liberal party." Kendall also promoted a more comprehensive version of the Workmen's Compensation Act, The Workmen's Compensation for Injuries Act 1897.

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<sup>128</sup>"Incidents in the Political Life of A. S. Kendall." Kendall Manuscript, PANS, Vol. 526, 245.

<sup>129</sup>"Incidents in the Political Life of A. S. Kendall."

The acts had been passed in Britain, leading Kendall to argue " if they worked in old conservative Britain, they would do so in Nova Scotia.<sup>130</sup> Kendall also actively and successfully advocated a bill which prohibited companies from deducting more than 10% for employee's back debts, and an act which prevented companies from making deductions from employees pay cheques in order to pay company doctors.<sup>131</sup> In the 1908 session of the House of Assembly the Government appointed a Royal Commission to determine the effect which an eight-hour work day would have on industries <sup>132</sup> The "Eight Hour Bill" which Kendall had promoted was not supported by all workers. A group of train drivers petitioned to oppose the bill. The men were paid by the hour, so working fewer hours each day would result in a reduction of their income.<sup>133</sup> Kendall, always a supporter of public health reform, also recommended an inquiry to study the connection between tuberculosis, inadequate ventilation and unsanitary milk supplies.<sup>134</sup>

During the 1909-1910 coal miner's strike Kendall demonstrated his loyalty to the cause of the Cape Breton coal miners. By 1909 many of the coal miners in Cape Breton had received no increase in pay since 1905, and rising inflation had caused most to experience a net decrease.<sup>135</sup> The Provincial Workmen's Association had become known as a "company union" and was considered by some to be ineffectual in

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<sup>130</sup>A version of The Workmen's Compensation Act for Injuries had also been passed in British Columbia. J Murray Beck. Politics of Nova Scotia, Volume II, 1896-1988. (Tantallon, NS: Four East Publications, 1988), 35.

<sup>131</sup>The Newspaper Reference Book of Canada, 178.

<sup>132</sup>J. Murray Beck. Politics of Nova Scotia, Volume II 1896-1988 , 36.

<sup>133</sup>Kendall Manuscript, PANS.

<sup>134</sup>J. Murray Beck. Politics of Nova Scotia, Volume II 1896-1988, 36.

<sup>135</sup>MacEwan, 23.

representing its members needs. Many miners had left the PWA to join the United Mine Workers of America. The UMW was not recognised by the company, which soon initiated a policy of discrimination against UMW members. Deputy Minister of Labour, F. A. Acland sent the following report to Minister of Labour MacKenzie King:

The prevailing mood (of the UMW men) so far as could be gathered from casual conversations with groups of them, was one of grim determination to persist in the demand for recognition. The company was roundly denounced for breaches of faith and unfair treatment of the men, and the Provincial Workmen's Association was stated to be too weak to enforce the demands of the men.<sup>136</sup>

The strike started on 6 July in the coalfields of industrial Cape Breton and continued for nine months. Premier Murray resisted the pleas of the Conservatives who demanded that the Government attempt to negotiate with the miners to return to work. Murray insisted, "no government was big enough or strong enough to tell the miners they must go back to work."<sup>137</sup> Kendall broke party ranks by requesting that a Royal Commission investigate the strike and he further demanded that legislation be drafted to protect workers from discrimination for union activity.<sup>138</sup> One source claims that Kendall's maverick behaviour in supporting the UMW in the 1909 strike and his siding with the Conservatives in their demands for a commission of inquiry cost Kendall the Liberal party nomination in the 1911 Provincial election.<sup>139</sup> Kendall did run for re-election in 1911;

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<sup>136</sup>MacEwan, 23-24.

<sup>137</sup>J. Murray Beck. Politics of Nova Scotia, Volume II 1896-1988, 42.

<sup>138</sup>MacEwan, 36.

<sup>139</sup>MacEwan, 10.

however, his disloyalty to his party may have cost him the support of Liberal voters. At a rally in Sydney, Premier George S. Murray appeared to apologise for Kendall's behaviour, " I know Dr. Kendall well. I know that he is a bit radical, and somewhat embarrassing to governments at times, but I know that he has a good honest heart beneath his shirt."<sup>140</sup> Kendall was defeated by Conservative lawyer John C. Douglas, who as the Mayor of Glace Bay, had opposed the presence of troops during the 1909-1910 strike.<sup>141</sup> Kendall, despite his political and social activism over the years, including his most recent support of the UMW, had been deposed by a younger candidate who lived in Glace Bay and was perhaps more representative of the moderate members of the working class.

Kendall's career as an elected politician reveals his resolute commitment to labour legislation and social reform, but as an elected politician he also lobbied for the construction and improvement of the harbours, railways, roads, ferries and bridges that were necessary to establish modern and flourishing fishing, agricultural, resource and manufacturing industries. After his defeat in the 1911 Provincial election he continued to press for reform in his rôle as a public health official for Cape Breton County. Kendall also provided testimony at the 1925 Duncan Commission, where his extensive knowledge of Cape Breton's industrial development and labour history became evident.

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<sup>140</sup>The Sydney Daily Record, 3 November, 1900.

<sup>141</sup> MacEwan, 33. Results of the 14 June 1911 Election. John C. Douglas (C) 6031. R. H. Butts (C) 6019, A. S. Kendall (L) 5690, W. Carroll (L) 5360.

## Kendall and the 1925 Royal Commission on Coal in Nova Scotia.

Arthur Kendall had gained much of his political knowledge and professional experience prior to returning to Cape Breton in 1884, and he was already well aware of the most negative aspects of industrialisation by the time he began to witness the advent of Cape Breton's major industrial expansion. Previous chapters have outlined Kendall's prominence in Cape Breton, Ottawa and Halifax during the first two decades of the century. It was probably because of this extensive experience as a politician and his reputation as a public health official that Kendall was asked to testify before the Duncan Royal Commission in 1925. Kendall's extensive testimony before the commission provides not only an insight into social and economic conditions prevailing in Industrial Cape Breton in 1925, but also an historical retrospective of industrial development and concomitant social problems since Kendall began his medical career in 1884.

The "Royal Commission on the Coal Industry in Nova Scotia" was formed mainly as a result of a settlement negotiated by Premier Rhodes on 20 July 1925 with BESCO and the United Mine Workers to end a series of strikes which began in 1922. The commission was to investigate employment conditions and wages

in the coal mines, production costs, the capitalisation of companies and the potential for expanding exports of coke.<sup>142</sup> The Chairman of the commission was Sir Andrew Rae Duncan, a Scottish lawyer who had received many public appointments, including membership of a number of inquiries regarding industry, and had served as the British Coal Controller and as a member of the Labour Section, Permanent Court of Justice, League of Nations.<sup>143</sup> The commissioners were lawyer Major Hugh Cronyn, who had been president of a large insurance company and a former Liberal Member of Parliament, and Rev Hugh P. MacPherson, then current president-rector of Saint Francis Xavier University.<sup>144</sup> J. W MacLeod of the Local UMW and other union officials represented the 'Miners and Mine Laborers' while Roy M. Wolvin, President of BESCO together with other BESCO officials represented 'certain Coal and Steel Interests.'<sup>145</sup>

The commission began its preliminary work at the Sydney Court House on 3 November 1925 with an organisational meeting and then spent the next two days visiting the coal mines and coal towns in south-eastern Cape Breton while examining the maps and plans of the coal fields.<sup>146</sup> The first day of testimony was on 11 Nov. 1925 and for the next four days coal miners were called to the stand to

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<sup>142</sup>Report of the Royal Commission respecting the Coal Mines of the Province of Nova Scotia 1925 (Halifax: King's Printer, 1926), 3-4. (afterwards referred to as Duncan Report, 1925.)

<sup>143</sup>Sydney Post, 31 December, 1925.

<sup>144</sup>Sydney Post, 31 December, 1925.

<sup>145</sup>Duncan Report, 1925, title page.

<sup>146</sup>Sydney Post, 31 Dec. 1925.



give evidence. During their testimony each witness was questioned or asked to give a statement to the commission. Both the union and company representatives were also allowed to question the witnesses. The proceedings and all of the testimony of the inquiry were prominently reported on a daily basis on the front page of the Conservative Sydney Post. The frank testimony of the miners detailed dangerous working conditions in the mines, labour unrest, low rates of pay, poor housing and sanitary conditions and the accompanying hardship and poverty endured by miners and their families.<sup>147</sup>

On 16 November, after four days of testimony had been heard, an article appeared in the Sydney Post, entitled "The Press and the Coal Probe." The article began:

Representatives of certain interests show a desire, perhaps not unnatural, but certainly unwarranted and absurd, to prevent the featuring, not to say the publication, of aspects of the evidence being taken before the Royal Commission on the coal industry. Newspaper reports of such an inquiry should be neither garbled nor biased, but there is not any reason, either in accepted practice or in the public interest, why they should not be as complete and comprehensive as careful reportorial work can make them.<sup>148</sup>

The tone of the article insinuates that it was the management of BESCO who were uncomfortable with the publication of the testimony given to the commission. The inquiry had provided the

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<sup>147</sup>Sydney Post, 31 Dec. 1925.

<sup>148</sup>Sydney Post, 16 November 1925.

miners a unique and formal opportunity to tell their stories of hardship under oath and to have them widely publicised in the popular press. This may have been a rare occurrence as the miners' grievances were more likely to make headlines during strikes and demonstrations when the focus was most often on damage to property and on the actions of militant union leaders. The forum provided by the commission allowed the miners to calmly provide a grim picture of the harsh realities of the daily lives of mining families, a picture which could only evoke the public's sympathy.<sup>149</sup> It was therefore in the interests of BESCO, who were intent on lowering wages and keeping other operating costs to a minimum, to suppress the public testimony of the miners. The move on 16 November to have only an edited version of the testimony published occurred a few days prior to Arthur Samuel Kendall and union leaders such as J. B. McLachlan taking the stand.<sup>150</sup> The testimony of the inquiry continued to be published; however, in its next edition the Post preceded its report by tersely stating, "The following statement covering the evidence taken at yesterday afternoon's hearing was handed to the Post last night." The reports were now provided by the Royal Commission and lacked the detailed testimony which was contained in prior accounts.<sup>151</sup> Despite the selective nature of these accounts the revelations about poor working conditions

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<sup>149</sup>Sydney Post, 13 November, 1925.

<sup>150</sup>Sydney Post, 16 November, 1925.

<sup>151</sup>Sydney Post, 17 November, 1925.

could not be suppressed because of the inquiry's general terms of reference.

Part of the inquiry's mandate was to investigate:

The social and domestic conditions under which mine workers live and whether it is practicable to improve such conditions and if so to what extent and in what manner and direction.<sup>152</sup>

Dr. Arthur Samuel Kendall began his testimony on Thursday 19 November, 1925 by addressing the issue of living conditions.<sup>153</sup> While he was on the stand both Chairman Duncan and Commissioner Cronyn persistently questioned Kendall on the standard of living conditions in the mining towns, especially the state of company homes, the water supply and sanitation. Kendall spoke of the differing conditions in the various areas, giving details of the availability and quality of water and potential sources of clean water supplies. He described the water supply at Reserve Mines ". . . as anything but a good one, that is the natural water supply. Good water is got by horse and cart and is distributed in bucketfuls to the residences." He also noted that, "in one section known as Belgian Town, two wells supply twenty to twenty-five families."<sup>154</sup> When asked about the health risks for those living in homes which were built on lots with poor drainage Kendall replied; "It is conducive to

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<sup>152</sup> Sir Andrew Rae Duncan. In the Matter of a Royal Commission To Inquire Into the Coal Mines of the Province of Nova Scotia Proceedings, 1925. PANS Microfilm, 1241. (afterwards referred to as Duncan.)

<sup>153</sup> Duncan, 1241.

<sup>154</sup> Duncan, 1236

tuberculosis, to typhoid fever, and to rheumatic fever, probably to influenza."<sup>155</sup> Regarding the company houses Kendall answered that a few of the older homes, some of which were fifty-five years old, were in fair condition while others required to be expanded and modernised. He further stated that some of the newer houses should be 'wiped out.' Asked to explain why the one room 'shacks' which he described should be demolished he replied:

Oh, well, they were carelessly built. They are close to the ground and they are too small. They were built long before BESCO took hold, in the days of the Boom, when there was a rush on, and largely for a floating population at the time.<sup>156</sup>

At the request of Chairman Duncan, Kendall gave his opinion on who should be responsible for what he described as 'a big problem':

My view is that a solution is to be found, and that the Provincial Government, and the Coal Company and the Municipality, all three, should enter into a compact to better conditions around the collieries.<sup>157</sup>

At the end of Kendall's extensive testimony J. W. McLeod, President of District 26, UMW, was asked if he wished to ask any questions. McLeod had no questions. Kendall had ably and candidly presented the causes and conditions of the inadequate housing in the mining districts and McLeod was doubtless satisfied by Kendall's comprehensive statements. He did suggest

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<sup>155</sup> Duncan, 1236.

<sup>156</sup> Duncan, 1238.

<sup>157</sup> Duncan, 1925, 1239.

to the commission that Dr. Kendall, who he described as, ". . . a Parliamentary Representative in Halifax and Ottawa from this County and [who] has been a public man for many years, be invited to return as a witness to have the historical setting of a good many things set out."<sup>158</sup> The official report of the hearing published the next day in the Sydney Post contained a synopsis of Kendall's testimony; however, it omitted any references Kendall made to the diseases and epidemics caused by poor living conditions.<sup>159</sup>

On the morning of 20 November 1925 Dr. Kendall returned to the stand. He began his testimony by presenting the commission with a pamphlet regarding the Workman's Compensation Act in Nova Scotia. The Chairman presumed that Kendall had returned to the stand to continue his report on social conditions; however, Kendall explained that he understood that he was asked:

... to run over the history of Dominion Coal, say from 1893 down to date, or rather some outstanding features in connection with that Companies life, and also that of Dominion Steel. And also to show why it is that the mentality of the people in Cape Breton and Nova Scotia has become so hostile to Dominion Coal and Dominion Steel.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup>Duncan, 1245.

<sup>159</sup>Sydney Post, 20 November, 1925.

<sup>160</sup>Duncan, 1362.

Kendall began by explaining that the coal industry in Cape Breton, prior to 1860 was not particularly viable economically as, "conditions of mining and transportation and marketing were such that all the hopes that were entertained in the beginning by promoters were disappointed."<sup>161</sup> He continued by informing the commission of the origins of company stores in Cape Breton which began in the Sydney Mines area beginning in the 1830's when the General Mining Association (GMA) had opened stores which sold staples such as flour, meal and molasses, ostensibly to protect miners from price gouging by local private merchants.<sup>162</sup> The nature of the company stores owned by the Dominion Coal Company appeared to be less paternalistic, and more predatory, than those of the GMA. Kendall testified that a miner in debt to a Dominion Coal Company store would be charged \$2 to \$4 more for a barrel of pork than a man whose account was up to date.<sup>163</sup>

Kendall continued his testimony with an account of the establishment of The Dominion Iron and Steel Company (DISCO), which was founded by Henry Whitney in 1899. At its inception Kendall, an MLA at the time, successfully lobbied against a company store at DISCO and had the lifetime property tax exemption granted to DISCO rescinded in favour of a limit of only thirty years.<sup>164</sup> Kendall also represented the rights of Sydney property owners by supporting their claims for fairer

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<sup>161</sup>Duncan, 1362.

<sup>162</sup>Duncan, 1363

<sup>163</sup>Duncan, 1364.

<sup>164</sup>Duncan, 1410-1411.

compensation for land that had been expropriated for the steel plant. Kendall's testimony provides a motive as to why Whitney opened the steel plant in Sydney:

He purchased them [coal mines] and equipped them with railways and so on, with the idea that he was going to send a large amount of his coal into the New England States , provided that the Democrats came into power. If they did, he expected that the duty on coal would be entirely removed.<sup>165</sup>

That is what brought Mr. Whitney here. However, the Democrats only reduced the duty down to 40 cents, and then they raised it to 60 or 75, I forget which, and Mr. Whitney's hopes went down. Later he had to inaugurate the Dominion Steel Company in order to sell his own coal to himself.<sup>166</sup>

This statement indicates that the coal industry in Cape Breton was experiencing difficulty in finding markets for their products, during a time of increased industrial production, when it could be assumed that there would be a large demand for coal. In fact Cape Breton's coal exports to New England never met the expectations of then Premier W. S. Fielding or of the coal industry.<sup>167</sup> The market for coal that could be provided by the steel plant was seen as one major solution.

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<sup>165</sup> This happened in 1897.

<sup>166</sup> Duncan 1362.

<sup>167</sup> "Shipments of Coal from Nova Scotia and Destinations, 1913-1925." Report of the Royal Commission Respecting the Coal Mines of Nova Scotia, 1925. (Halifax, NS: Kings Printer, 1926.), "A".

Kendall then related an incident which occurred in 1907. The Provincial Workmen's Association, the union representing the miners at that time, planned to file a grievance with the Lemieux Industrial Disputes Act, as the Dominion Coal Company had announced there would be a reduction in the total pay-roll of \$100,000. Kendall was asked by the PWA to represent them at the hearing, not because of his expertise in the coal industry, but because of his integrity. When the PWA requested Kendall to be their spokesman they stated, " we want you there because we think you cannot be bought."<sup>168</sup> It appeared that Kendall's favourable representation of the miners at the hearing was considered a threat to DISCO. Shortly before the conciliation board was due to convene, Kendall was asked to meet a friend of his at the Halifax Hotel.<sup>169</sup> The friend offered Kendall a lucrative contract for the assaying of timber in New Brunswick and Quebec, to be carried out at the same time as the Lemieux hearings were taking place.<sup>170</sup> Kendall declined to accept his offer and told the Duncan Commission; "He did not expect me to fall for it. He knew me too well, but he was sent. Now I said, the people who put me where I am will never reproach me nor my children with having disappointed them."<sup>171</sup>

Kendall's testimony reveals not only his personal integrity, but also the sense of responsibility he felt as a spokesperson for the working

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<sup>168</sup>Duncan, 1365, Duncan, 1421: Sydney Post, 11 Jan 1926, 1925: Duncan Report, 41-46.

1925 Duncan Report, 44.

<sup>169</sup>Duncan, 1365

<sup>170</sup>Duncan, 1365

<sup>171</sup>Duncan, 1365



class. Kendall concluded by recounting the outcome of the conciliation which resolved not to cut the pay-roll by the planned \$100,000 and in fact raised the pay-roll by \$74,000.<sup>172</sup> He used the example of the Lemieux hearings to "show you why it is that a number of the people of this Country have no faith in the management."<sup>173</sup>

Kendall had once more provided a lengthy account of the uneasy relationship between capital and labour in Cape Breton; however, the commission requested that he return that evening to conclude his chronicle of the history of the steel and coal industry. He continued his account with further details of the combined effects which tariffs and reduced freight rates had on the steel and coal industries of Cape Breton. At the conclusion of Kendall's testimony the president of Local 1062 UMW, J. W. McLeod returned to the issue of the 30 year tax exemption enjoyed by the steel company, an exemption which was originally granted in perpetuity. Kendall replied that it had come into effect in the spring of 1899 and would end in 1929. Roy Wolvin, president of BESCO, when invited to question Dr. Kendall replied, "I have no question."<sup>174</sup> Sir Andrew Rae Duncan completed the session by thanking Kendall, "I think you have made your statement so exhaustively, Dr. Kendall, that few questions arise out of it. We

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<sup>172</sup>Duncan, 1367.

<sup>173</sup>Duncan, 1367

<sup>174</sup>Duncan, 1421.

are very much obliged to you indeed for this clear historical statement."<sup>175</sup>

There was no report of Kendall's exhaustive testimony and his "clear historical statement" printed in the pages of the conservative Sydney Post on 20 November 1925, or on any future date. It is difficult to determine whether or not Kendall's testimony, most of which was critical of the operation of DOSCO, DISCO and BESCO and sympathetic to the worker's struggle, was deliberately withheld by the commission. It could be argued that Kendall's testimony was withheld as he was very highly regarded in Cape Breton County as a former politician, senior public official, physician and a native born Cape Bretoner from a prominent family. His articulate, and damning, evidence could have influenced public opinion to support the claims of the coal miners rather than those of the steel company. Any such swaying of public opinion in the miners' favour would have had little bearing on the results of the Duncan Commission; however, it would have made it more difficult for BESCO to use draconian measures during strikes, and less easy for BESCO to publicly justify reductions in wages and hours worked.

Duncan Commission testimony was provided by mine officials, mine workers and union leaders; however, Kendall's eloquent and detailed testimony, often framed in a historical context, was no doubt an invaluable contribution to the inquiry's

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<sup>175</sup>Duncan, 1421.

evidence. Kendall's depth of knowledge of the growth of the coal and steel industries and his intimate and profound understanding of the industry gained from his own experience as a 'public man', and as a spokesperson of the workers, probably made a considerable impact on the commissioners. It also reinforced his earlier efforts to secure legislation which would protect and benefit the miners and their families. His views underlined his concern for the working and living conditions of the miners. His informed, consistent and articulate testimony to the 1925 Duncan Commission was the culmination of a distinguished career as a politician and public health official.

The results of the Duncan Commission were released on 9 January, 1926. In the previous month a number of stores had been looted and burned in the coal mining towns. It is possible that the desperate miners were unwilling to wait for the results of a commission while many of them went without work and existed on relief and charity. The headline in the Sydney Post read:

Commission Recommends 10 Per Cent Cut For  
Mineworkers and Abolition of Besco Police.  
Lengthy Coal Inquiry Report Submitted-Relation Between  
Company and Miners Declared Unsatisfactory.  
Company Must Recognise U.M.W Recommend Abolition of  
"Check-Off."<sup>176</sup>

The President of BESCO, Roy Wolvin "did not wish to comment as yet" and "No member of the government who could comment on

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<sup>176</sup>Sydney Post 11 Jan., 1926.

the findings of the Duncan Coal Commission was accessible."<sup>177</sup> The report was printed in its entirety in the Sydney Post; unaccompanied, significantly, by any sign of editorial comment.

Among the report's recommendations were that the company stores not be re-opened (many had been burned in June 1925), the check-off system only be used to deduct items directly related to the miners' employment and deductions for employee benefits and that the company houses should be sold to the miners at 40% to 60% of appraised value.<sup>178</sup> The Provincial Government appointed commission also chastised the Provincial Government for allowing poor sanitation, low attendance levels at schools and generally sub-standard living conditions to prevail and stated that, ". . . . the general conditions in which miners and their families have to live are not such as they are entitled to expect." The commission report further questioned the wisdom of having private police forces owned and controlled by the company.<sup>179</sup> The report also suggested that the Provincial Government and the municipal and town authorities work together to improve, ". . . the roads, the sanitary conditions, and amenities generally of the mining communities."<sup>180</sup> The commission further stated that they were ". . . struck with the absence of community spirit and community enterprise

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<sup>177</sup>Sydney Post 11 Jan., 1926.

<sup>178</sup>Duncan Report, 41-46.

<sup>179</sup>Duncan Report, 44.

<sup>180</sup>Duncan Report, 44.

generally.<sup>181</sup> This observation was an indication that the company's control over the workers, their families and almost every aspect of their lives had subjugated the mining families into a state of apathy, hopelessness and virtual slavery. The immense impact of Dr. Kendall's persuasive testimony is evident in the findings of the commission and throughout the recommendations made in its report.

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<sup>181</sup>Duncan Report, 44.

## Conclusion

Dr. Arthur Samuel Kendall is an example of a social reformer who used his rôle as a medical doctor and as a politician to seek and to implement improvements in the working conditions, industrial slums, the schools, rural areas, asylums and jails of Cape Breton County. His early education in New York and London had no doubt made him aware of the power of capitalism over labour and the attempted subjugation of the working class. Kendall combined his foresight with the benefit of many years of experience as a physician and politician to educate those who had the capacity to legislate change. While an MP Kendall was "conspicuous in his endeavour to secure better recognition for the wage earner," as he supported social reforms including family assistance, workmen's compensation and mothers' allowances.<sup>182</sup> His spheres of political influence included the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, the Cape Breton County Council and the 1925 Duncan Royal Commission.

The 1925 Royal Commission serves as an example of the effectiveness of Kendall's dual rôle as a representative of the miners and as a former politician who was a well-respected member of the professional middle-class. His social standing and his profession placed him in a unique position to act as a conduit between the working class and the owners of the steel plant and the coal mines.

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<sup>182</sup> Centennial Booklet, 15.

The tremendous impact that the testimony of a highly qualified medical doctor and former MP would have on his societal peers confirms Kendall's pivotal position between capital and labour. Kendall could cross class lines to mediate improvements for the workers while continuing to support the economic development of Cape Breton within capitalism, without sacrificing the best interests of labour.

Kendall's professional rôles were as a doctor and a politician; however he was also the father of three children, Laura McLeod (1894-1910), Ralph (1899-1975) and Emily (1895-1980). The years he spent as an elected politician and medical doctor caused him to spend much time away from his family. His daughter Emily recalled the conflict between his medical and political careers and family life:

Dreadfully, dreadfully. That's a tragedy. Politics should be a career I think, statesmanship and the like. You can't serve two Gods. Every politician has a broken family, unless, perhaps, a man and his wife can go up to Ottawa.<sup>183</sup>

There was a masculine orientation to work and politics in the industrial communities of Cape Breton, and Kendall's early career reflected this affinity of male pursuits. The clubs and societies he belonged to in Sydney, as was common in these times, excluded women, and there is no mention of women's issues in his political speeches. The impact of his demanding careers in medicine and politics no doubt effected his family negatively. Kendall did not

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<sup>183</sup>Chapman, 1969.

become wealthy financially, either from his political career or from his medical practice. He often referred to himself as not being a wealthy man and family members have confirmed that Arthur Kendall was not rich.<sup>184</sup> Kendall's wife Mary was a devout Baptist, who taught Sunday School and was involved in numerous charitable efforts. Mrs. Kendall's beliefs did not allow her to attend theater or similar forms of entertainment, though she did enjoy the annual visit of the Jubilee Singers, a choir formed after the American civil war to raise funds for, "Negro schools." She did not enjoy the comfortable middle-class lifestyle that could have been expected by the wife of a well established medical practitioner and politician and the effect on his family was typically negative:

The poverty was galling. It was destructive it was so terrible. We often didn't have a cent in the house. Mother paid the help Friday night, where the money came from I'm as yet, after all these years, to find out. She had no life at all. Except , complete slavery. She was a very strict Baptist and she was very dedicated, and she would have loved to have been able to give a tea for her missionary meeting, she never gave one in her life. Never could give a tea. We never knew what it was to entertain the way other people did until I was grown up and I could swing it.<sup>185</sup>

There was also no money in the household to pay for the education of Kendall's daughter, Emily. She graduated from grade eight and obtained a scholarship at Mac's Business School in Sydney where she

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<sup>184</sup> Informal interview with John Kendall, nephew of Arthur Kendall, Sydney, Nova Scotia, February, 1997. Chapman, 1969.

<sup>185</sup>Mrs. Emily Chapman (Dr A. S. Kendall's daughter) Tape recorded interview Beaton Institute. tape 76.



learned shorthand and typewriting in exchange for teaching English. After graduation she worked as a secretary at a warehouse in Sydney and continued to work three days each week while enrolled at Dalhousie University [c.1908], an endeavour considered unusual in its time: "Girls didn't do that in those days - it was outrageous rather."<sup>186</sup> It is not recorded whether or not Emily's pursuit of higher education was a result of the need to establish a career in order to supplement the family income or if it was simply a quest for knowledge. Her need to work while at university would indicate that she was paying for her own education; however, there is no record of her parents either supporting, or disapproving of, her decision to attend Dalhousie. Though Kendall was a political radical and a social reformer on many issues there are no declarations of his support for temperance or the suffrage movements, causes which were commonly championed by women. It would appear that Kendall's position was very much in the mainstream of a male dominated society.<sup>187</sup>

Kendall did not appear to care unduly about personal wealth or physical appearance. The County of Cape Breton 1979 Centennial Booklet contains a photograph of an elderly Arthur Kendall, unassuming and kindly, wearing a cloth cap and a tattered fur coat that is strapped around his chest and waist with two stout leather

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<sup>186</sup>Chapman, 1969: Obituary, Mrs. Emily (Kendall) Chapman. Cape Breton Post, 8 November, 1980.

<sup>187</sup>See Steven Penfold's article. "Have You No Manhood in You?": Gender and Class in the Cape Breton Coal Towns, 1920-1926." Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis . Vol. XXIII, No. 2. (Spring, 1994) 21-44, for a discussion of gender and class amongst the working-class in Cape Breton.

belts - displaying an obvious, "unconcern for his sartorial condition."<sup>188</sup>

On 18 July 1944 Kendall's death was announced in the Sydney Post-Record:

Dr. A. S. Kendall, Widely Known Physician Dies. Widely known and greatly beloved physician, Dr. Arthur S. Kendall, 83, died this morning at his residence, 166 Union Street., following a brief illness. Although retired for the last dozen years he was the oldest living physician in Cape Breton and one of the oldest in Nova Scotia.

A letter of sympathy sent to his wife by the Cape Breton South Federal Liberal Party expressed more than customary respect.

On behalf of the Liberal Party, I wish to express our sense of loss in the death of so outstanding a party man as your late husband. His contribution, not only to the liberal party, but to the county as a whole, was a shining example of self-sacrifice to the public welfare. No other man ever gave so much and asked so little. His career will remain an inspiration for others to emulate.<sup>189</sup>

Dr. Arthur Samuel Kendall is remembered in the County of Cape Breton 1979 Centennial Booklet as "A country doctor with a sophisticated background, and a politician whose social thought was far ahead of his time. Kendall made a lasting mark on the County of his birth."<sup>190</sup> The newspaper and centennial booklet accounts fail to

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<sup>188</sup>Centennial Booklet, 16.

<sup>189</sup>Kendall Manuscript PANS, Vol 526, 217.

<sup>190</sup>Centennial Booklet, 16.

mention Kendall's service to the working class of Cape Breton Island, service which earned him the accolades of "miners' friend" and "maverick." As a politician, medical doctor and spokesman for the working class Kendall was unquestionably an agent of change, one who epitomised the rôle of a progressive and self-sacrificing social reformer.

The historical significance of Kendall is rooted in his capacity to extend his influence as a medical professional into social and political action. He was a product of his times, an educated adherent of the era's movements for progressive social reform in Europe and North America and a tempering influence on the industrialization and transformation of his local community. It was in his community that Kendall was most effective as a crusading politician, dedicated public health official and as a family doctor whose folksy ways endeared him to his patients. Kendall's outstanding quality was perhaps his ability to transcend the needs of these disparate groups in order to bring about the changes which would benefit the entire community.

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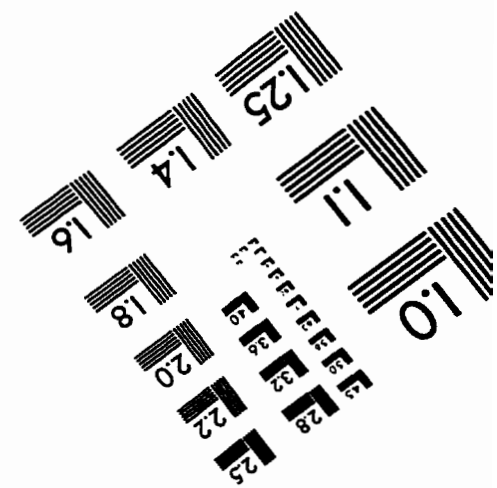
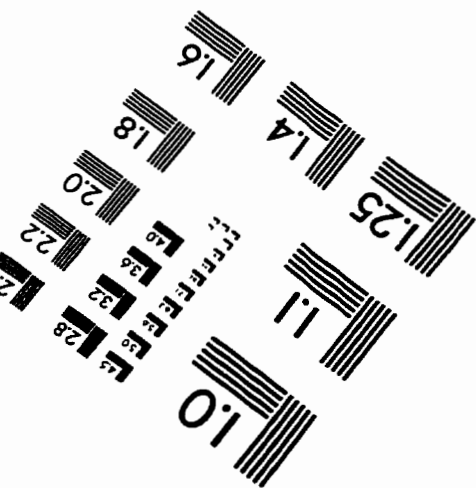
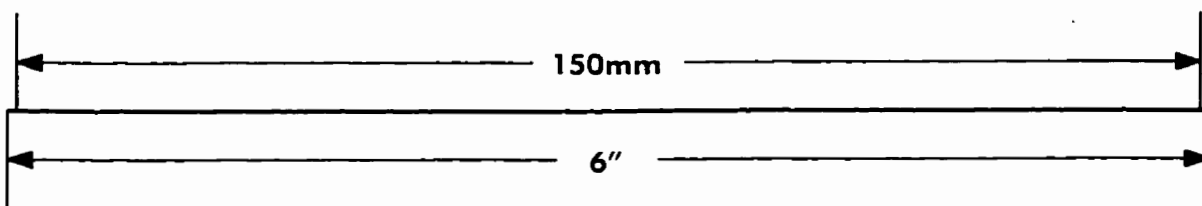
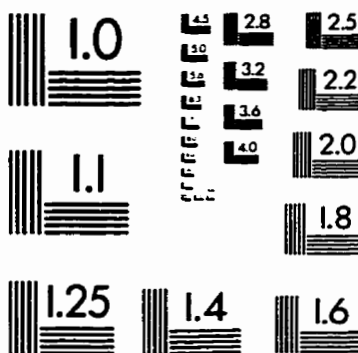
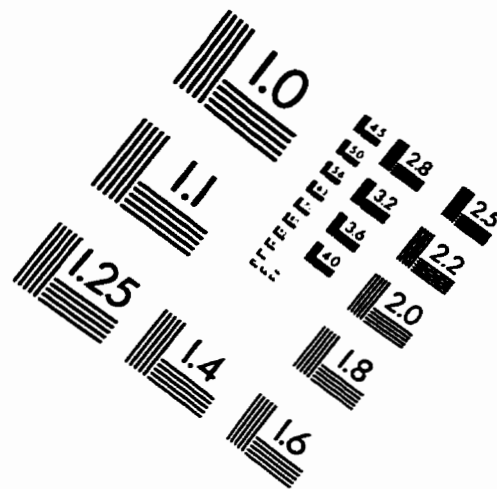
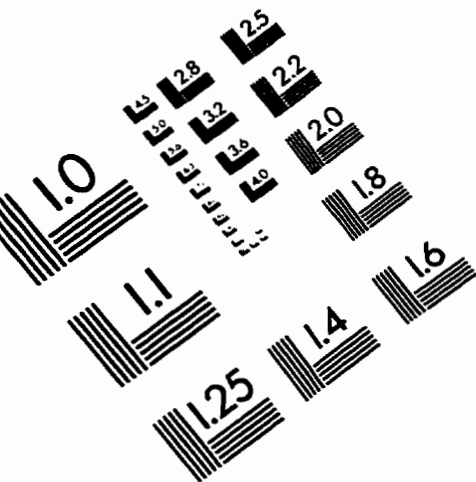
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