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by J.G. Althouse — 1944

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CANADIAN EDUCATION BEFORE THE WAR

ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL.—Under the Canadian Constitution, education is the responsibility of the provincial governments. There is no single, national school system; each of the provinces grapples with the problem in its own way. Yet the similarities among the provincial school systems are more striking than the differences. In every province education is administered by a Minister of the Crown, advised and aided by a group of employed experts. The chief of these is usually styled deputy minister or superintendent of education. In every province except the smallest (Prince Edward Island), the provincial contribution to educational budgets is much less than the amount derived from local taxes on real property; in all provinces the degree of provincial control of education is high, especially over such items as the training and certification of teachers, curricula, standards, and supervision. Every province requires school attendance to the age of fourteen, some to the age of sixteen. Although junior high schools or intermediate schools are found in many urban centers, the usual pattern is the familiar 8-4 arrangement. Quebec has a seven-year elementary school and two of the provinces have five-year secondary schools.

FEDERAL PARTICIPATION.—The educational responsibility of the Dominion Government is restricted to the schooling of persons not directly under the jurisdiction of any province, for example, in the Yukon Territory. The Federal Government shows its interest in national education mainly in the provision of subsidies for specific types of training; striking examples were the federal grants for the teaching of agriculture in 1913 and for vocational education in 1919. These subsidies were accompanied by a minimum of federal control. In the Dominion-provincial youth-training programs of the depression days the direction and control of the training were largely provincial.

CURRICULUM REVISION.—When war was declared in September, 1939, the Canadian provinces had just completed a decade of curriculum revision. The western provinces took the lead in introducing activity programs of a progressive type; everywhere the trend was in the same direction. There was a general reduction of emphasis on external examinations and on the more formal aspects of traditional education. English, the social studies, and health received more attention than in the past, and greater stress was laid upon practical instruction suited to local and individual needs. The usual difficulties were encountered in the adaptation of teacher training and of supervision to the new ideas, in the extremes to which enthusiasm sometimes ran, and in the honest apprehensions of those who feared the rise of a self-centered and self-indulgent generation.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY.—Increased concern for the individual pupil led inevitably to growing resentment at manifest inequalities of educational opportunity. These existed as between province and province and as between community and community within the same province. Similar remedies were sought everywhere, but with varying degrees of success. The enlargement of the local unit of school administration was eagerly sought in British Columbia, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Alberta, but only in the last-named was legislation passed to organize

the whole province into large school divisions. The use of provincial grants for equalization was a common device; the Ontario formula, though complicated, proved to be especially effective. Notable strides towards greater equality were taken in the county units adopted in the Maritimes, the cooperation of the Protestant Boards of School Commissioners on the Island of Montreal, and the township school areas of Ontario.

TEACHERS.—Teaching became a popular occupation during the depression years. This afforded an opportunity of raising the standards of training and the requirements for certificates. At the same time, the teachers' organizations began to win back, with great pains, some of the reductions and arrears of salaries which had occurred in the earlier years of the depression, especially in the prairie provinces where drought crippled all local enterprises.

It is not extravagant to say that the outbreak of war found the schools of Canada more vigorous, more enterprising, and more sanguine than they had ever been before. There were sharp differences of opinion about the most desirable line of further development, but there was no doubt at all that further development was assured.

EFFECTS OF THE WAR

STUDIES AND STUDENTS.—Canada has been at war for over five years. Out of a total population of about eleven millions, more than six hundred thousand are on active service. War production has largely superseded civilian industry and a good deal more than half of the nation's income is spent in furtherance of the war effort. It is pertinent to inquire what effect this preoccupation with a grim struggle for survival has had upon education.

It is clear that there has been a remarkable access of faith in the importance of education. Modern warfare demands exact knowledge and highly specialized skill; the Empire Air Training Scheme alone has created a profound interest in the study of mathematics and physics. War industry requires precise skill; intensive trade training has been given great impetus. The exaltation of the practical is obvious, but in Canada it has not proceeded so far as to close the cultural courses in the universities. Canadian universities still enroll students, both men and women, in all faculties. Male students of military age, whose progress in their studies is satisfactory, still receive deferment of their military call-up until the end of the current academic year. Satisfactory students in all the science courses are encouraged to remain until the completion of their courses; senior students in the clinical years of medicine and dentistry are inducted into the active forces and, in uniform, complete their training. Their courses are accelerated by the omission or drastic shortening of vacations.

EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP.—Along with the emphasis on useful training for definite modes of immediate service to the country, another movement may be detected—a tendency to stress training for the responsibilities of citizenship. Cadet corps in the secondary schools and defense training programs may seem to give this training a military bias, but the trend is much more significant than this interpretation might suggest. It is nothing less than a national swing away from concern over the individual and his rights to concern over the individual's ability and willingness to serve his country.

FEDERAL PARTICIPATION.—The question of federal intervention in education is again a live issue. Through at least three of its departments, the Dominion Government is indeed carrying on educational programs in every province. The Department of National Defence finds it necessary to provide general education courses as a prerequisite to various types of military training. The Department of Labour is sending thousands of adults back to school to fit them for entry into war industry. These "war emergency training programs" utilize the school buildings, equipment, and even the staffs of provincially-provided schools, but the organization and direction of the

programs is primarily a federal affair. Indeed, the Vocational Training Co-ordination Act of 1942 empowers the Dominion Government to set up and maintain schools "to fit persons for employment for any purpose contributing to the conservation or development of the natural resources vested in the Crown in the right of Canada." The Department of Pensions and National Health is already completing the interrupted education of those demobilized from the active forces. Clearly the present national emergency has led the Dominion Government into much more active participation in education than it ever exhibited before. This encourages some to hope that federal interest in education may venture to assume still more responsibility, at least for the support of adequate programs. It leads others to fear that there may be an invasion of the rights guaranteed the provinces by the British North America Act.

WAR SERVICES AND THE SCHOOLS.—In the schools the effect of the war is obvious. Reference has been made to the teaching of citizenship. It is likely that a visitor from the United States would think that very little stress is put upon patriotic exercises. Truth to tell, the Canadian people are notably inarticulate about their love of country; their deeds must speak for them. Actual participation in Red Cross work, salvage campaigns, the purchase of Victory Bonds, and similar activities is vigorous and enthusiastic. In the senior grades enrollments have shrunk annually, as the needs of war industry have led to the generous granting of work permits to children over fourteen years of age. The school year has been curtailed, both in the spring and in the autumn, to permit school children to give sorely-needed help on the farms. Appropriate reductions in the prescribed school courses have been authorized.

SCHOOLS AND TRANSIENT POPULATION.—The mushroom growth of new communities around war industries has created new and serious problems of providing schooling for a large and probably transient school population. One outcome of these problems is the consideration of a less expensive type of school building, substantial enough to meet the requirements of health and teaching conditions, yet not so durable as to outlast its probable usefulness. Many existing Canadian schools have indeed outlasted the limited requirements of the age in which they were built.

SCHOOL BUILDING.—Since the war began, few new schools have been erected. The promising trend towards equipping existing schools for broader and more practical programs has been interrupted, for money and materials alike have been needed for war purposes. It is significant that the only substantial addition to university buildings in Canada in the war period is that of the fine new science laboratories at the University of Montreal.

TEACHER SHORTAGE.—There is a general shortage of teachers. While the plight of Canadian schools is not nearly as bad as that reported from several States of the United States, some schools in every province have been closed because of the lack of teachers. Accelerated training courses and the return to the schoolroom of many married women who once were teachers have saved the situation. In some instances revised and modern school programs are handicapped because these returning teachers were trained before the revised courses were established. Partly for this reason, and partly because of the grim reality of the need of recognizing obligations in a state at war, there is clear evidence of a reaction against the more radical trends of recent years in curriculum and in teaching method.

In the general exodus from the teaching profession the departure of the very persons most likely to be needed now has been marked. Male teachers of military age have been, and still are, subject to the call-up; in many cases their induction has been deferred until the end of the school year, but in many other cases the school boards concerned were reluctant to appear to ask for their teachers consideration not given to others of similar age and eligibility, and the teachers themselves have been equally reluctant to request such consideration. Voluntary enlistment has

been encouraged by provincial departments of education and by local school boards. School teachers have been recruited not only for the active services but also for war industry, for meteorology, and for other branches of a rapidly-expanding civil service. In the summer of 1943, however, teachers were "frozen" in their profession (but not in the jobs which they then held) by National Selective Service. From the high schools, teachers of mathematics, science, home economics, shopwork, and agriculture have been drawn away for emergency service elsewhere. Almost no replacements for these are reaching the training colleges, for the university graduates in these courses are usually diverted, immediately upon graduation, into other branches of the national war effort. This has happened precisely at the moment at which the importance of these subjects in the schools is emphasized by the requirements of the armed forces and the demands of war industry.

GUIDANCE.—The effective personnel work of the active forces is affecting school practice. Guidance has become a matter of greatly increased interest in Canadian education. Several cities have appointed directors of guidance within the past few years, and courses in the philosophy and technique of guidance are eagerly attended.

THE UNIVERSITIES.—The Canadian universities have put their resources at the disposal of the Government for war training and war research. In addition to the military training required of all male students, special courses are offered to selected enlisted personnel in the Navy, Army and Air Forces. University staffs are, of course, depleted by heavy demands for aid in administrative, research, and technical branches of the public service. Extensive research for war purposes is being carried on at every university; most of this work is strictly confidential, but the full story of the contribution of Canadian universities to the success of the United Nations will be highly creditable, and indeed almost romantic.

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

PLANNING AGENCIES.—Plans for post-war education in Canada are many. They emanate from different sources and are often conflicting. The Dominion Government, through its Departments of Labour and Pensions and National Health, has laid extensive plans for post-war reconstruction. In these education plays a large part. Each province has a special committee or commission busy in the same field. And voluntary agencies abound; new ones spring up everywhere; all study educational conditions and offer advice. One of these agencies, the Canada and Newfoundland Education Association (C.N.E.A.), serves as a clearing-house for ideas among the officials of the provincial departments of education and other leading educationists. This association was invited by the Advisory Committee of Reconstruction of the Dominion Department: of Pensions and National Health to report on the most urgent educational needs of Canada. With the cooperation of other dominion-wide educational organizations, the Association appointed a Survey Committee, which submitted its report in April, 1943.[2] This is the first comprehensive piece of planning for post-war reconstruction in Canadian education; no doubt other similar suggestions will follow. The following points are suggested by the Canada and Newfoundland Education Association *Survey Report* and appear to be in line with general opinion in the Dominion.

AIMS OF EDUCATION.—The post-war school must arouse and maintain the interest, attention, and energy of the pupil. It must direct his energy to the useful service of society. This means that the voluntary assumption of responsibility, the development of initiative, and a cooperative attitude are prime objectives in education. Concern with the welfare of the individual has not been lessened, but the importance of bringing the individual to realize his role in society has been recognized.

ADMINISTRATION: CENTRAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES.—As already indicated, the place of the

Dominion Government in education is under review. It seems inevitable that, in the interests of equalized educational opportunity, federal aid shall be sought. It seems equally inevitable that there will be bitter opposition to any marked increase in the degree of federal control to accompany such aid.

The rapid elimination of very small local school areas is urged in every proposed plan of reconstruction. Until this is accomplished, very little improvement in rural education is possible. A kindred common suggestion is that there should be a marked increase in the provincial contribution to local school budgets and a corresponding reduction of the burden of school taxation on real property.

HEALTH EDUCATION.—Health education is put first in the recommendations of the C.N.E.A. *Survey Report.* The extension of the best present practice with respect to medical and dental clinical service, follow-up care, and immunization must be accompanied by similar provision of a nutritional program and of positive instruction looking to the maintenance of good health rather than to the mere treatment of unhealthy conditions after they occur. Not the least important feature of this reform is the improvement of the sanitation, ventilation, lighting, heating, and seating of the schools. Mental health, as well as physical well-being, is a school objective.

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION.—Since so many mothers are employed in war industry, preschool education has become a current practical problem. One province has amended its school laws to permit local school boards to provide public education for children as young as three years of age. The Dominion Government is cooperating with the provinces to establish day nurseries for the children of working mothers, and there is little disposition to regard these steps as only temporary measures.

PRIMARY EDUCATION.—Post-war plans in primary education call for an extension of activity programs with precautions to insure the learning of the facts and skills necessary for further learning. The retention of the best in recent progressive trends seems to depend upon the ability of school administrators and supervisors to define school aims clearly and to encourage able teachers to seek their own best means of attaining those aims.

POSTPRIMARY EDUCATION.—Here the most obvious need is for further diversification of opportunity and for organized guidance to enable the pupil to find the course best fitted to his needs and abilities.

The academic or general high school seems likely to continue to predominate, but there are clear indications that it must offer a wider range of practical subjects than it does now. One strong suggestion is that the total number of subjects to be carried by a student at any one time be reduced.

In vocational education, the main problem is that of reducing costs so that this type of training may be extended to many communities which do not now think that they can afford it. Two developments are being studied with interest. The “intermediate schools” of home economics in Quebec illustrate an effort to adapt vocational education to community needs, and the “war emergency training program” suggests the possibility of appending short, intensive trade training to a modified general course. Still another suggestion in this field is the establishment of polytechnical institutes, to train foremen, shop managers, and junior executives for industry.

PREPARATION OF TEACHERS.—The most urgent problem is that of securing suitable candidates. Under present conditions teaching can compete with other professional occupations only in times of general unemployment. More adequate remuneration, greater security of tenure, and freer consultation of teachers on questions of educational policy are necessary to raise the status of

teachers to a level which would be attractive to the best of the young people leaving the high schools and the universities.

HIGHER EDUCATION.—Higher education has fared better in Canada than in some other countries during this war. None the less, the place of the arts faculty is under close scrutiny, especially in its relation to the professional schools.[3] Entrance requirements, too, will come under review. The universities will be asked to train or retrain tens of thousands of young people demobilized from the active forces (Order-in-Council P. C. 7633), and this experience may easily modify university opinion about the essential prerequisites for a university course and about the content of the university courses. Every reconstruction suggestion so far submitted implies the loosening of the universities' control of secondary school curricula.

The provision of some kind of further education to follow high school but not necessarily (or even generally) to lead to the university is a frequent suggestion. This type of institution could easily be linked with vigorous adult education movements, such as that long identified with the extension department of St. Francis Xavier University.[4]

EDUCATION FOR NATIONALISM.—Education for nationalism is inseparable from a struggle like the one in which we are now engaged. It assumes various forms: defense training programs, school cadets, training for citizenship. Present indications are that this type of training will persist after the war; there is a pronounced feeling that one of the causes of the war has been the failure of the democracies to inculcate sturdy, enthusiastic citizenship. It is significant that, in making citizenship a major school study, many are stressing the need of *international* understanding. This helps to account for the popularity of such movements as that for Canadian-Soviet friendship. It is not too much to say that Canadian education aims at producing a vigorous citizen, able and willing to take his share of responsibility for the welfare of his country, of the British Commonwealth of which his country is a member, and of the world in which his country must do its share for civilization and humanity.

CANADA AND NEWFOUNDLAND EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SURVEY COMMITTEE [5]
In order that further progress may be made in education at the end of the war, the Survey Committee offers the following recommendations:

Health:

1. An exhaustive survey should be made at once to ascertain the areas and schools in which health conditions are unsatisfactory.
2. Close co-operative relationships should be established between local school authorities and public health boards.
3. All schools should be provided with adequate medical, dental, nursing and immunization services.
4. Means should be found to ensure the treatment of diagnosed remedial conditions in school children.
5. Special grants should be made to school boards that employ teachers specially trained to give instruction in health.
6. School lunches should be provided to correct diet deficiencies where they exist.
7. Nutrition should be integrated with the general health programme of the school.

Problems of Administration:

8. The number of inspectors and supervisors should be increased, and many helping teachers

should be employed to assist and inspire the classroom teachers, and particularly beginners.
9. Larger units of administration should be set up in order to give greater opportunities for education to children in rural communities.
10. As soon as possible after the conclusion of hostilities, building programmes should be undertaken to supply new buildings where necessary and enlarge and renovate those that need such attention.
11. Unhygienic conditions should be eliminated from all schools and sanitary facilities should be installed.
12. Pupils living at a distance from the school should be provided with transportation, or with living accommodation in hostels or boarding-houses.
13. An equalization fund should be established to aid the weaker school districts to offer better educational facilities.
14. The school leaving age for full time attendance should be placed at sixteen years, and part time attendance should be required of pupils until the age of eighteen.

Educational Personnel:

15. The salaries paid to teachers should be increased until the median salary throughout the Dominion becomes $1,321.
16. The number of men teachers should be increased until they reach forty per cent of the total.

Curricula:

17. In schools where more than one curriculum is offered, transfers from one course to another should be made easy, so that pupils will not lose time needlessly, and that all may benefit from enriched curricula.
18. Composite high schools should be located in advantageous locations so that rural children may benefit from diversified curricula such as the college preparatory, commercial, agricultural, industrial and home economics.
19. Transportation facilities or subsistence allowances should be provided for pupils who live at a distance from the schools they attend.
20. Road departments should co-operate by maintaining in good condition roads that lead to central schools.
21. Universities, normal schools, technical schools, agricultural colleges and other institutions of higher learning should accept for admission students who have completed any provincial high school curriculum.
22. One thousand two hundred and fifty additional teachers should be employed to provide further facilities for diversified curricula. The cost will approximate $2,500,000 per annum.
23. One thousand five hundred additional teachers should be engaged to give satisfactory guidance to pupils. The cost will approximate $3,000,000 per annum.
24. Five thousand special classes should be provided for exceptional children that all may have the opportunity to advance at their right pace. The cost will approximate $10,000,000.
25. A system of scholarships should be set up that gifted children may continue their education. The amount of money immediately needed for this purpose will be $3,000,000 per annum.
26. One hundred and fifty junior colleges or advanced secondary schools should be set up to care for students in centres where universities and other facilities for higher education are not available. The cost will approximate $4,500,000 per annum and a capital expenditure of $15,000,000.
27. These junior colleges or advanced secondary schools should be used to provide education for pupils who will stay in school until they are eighteen, nineteen or more years of age. A 10-4, 7-7 or other plan should be instituted in each province, according to its needs.
28. A special survey of war buildings and equipment should be made by the departments of

education in order to provide good educational facilities for returned men and women.
29. Special educational facilities should be set up for returned men and women to enable them to make a living.
30. For entrance to higher institutions the criterion for these persons should be their ability to perform the work required.
31. Teachers should be demobilized at an early date after hostilities close, so that they may be ready to train men and women as they are discharged.
32. Central and classroom libraries should be set up to care for the expanding reading needs of pupils. The cost will approximate $1,000,000 per annum for an initial period of seven years—a total of $7,000,000.
33. Full use should be made of the newer tools of education such as the film and the radio.

Adult Education:

34. The Canadian Association for Adult Education should be extended continued support in its work.
35. Provincial departments of education and local school boards should be encouraged to co-operate further in schemes of adult education.
36. Short courses for training leaders and counsellors familiar with local conditions should be established by the co-operation of university extension departments and the provincial departments of education.
37. An annual fund of $150,000 should be made available to encourage local community plans for adult education.
38. Library service should be extended over the whole Dominion. Not less than $1,000,000 per annum is required for this purpose.

Voluntary Agencies:

39. The voluntary agencies should be encouraged to continue their educational work to the end that the public may retain their interest in the schools and be aware of the activities that take place there.

Financial Support:

40. Measures should be taken to free school boards from capital expenditures so that their annual revenues may be devoted to the main items of teachers' salaries, equipment and maintenance. This would solve one of the most vexatious school problems.
41. School monies should be secured from all sources where the present-day wealth of the people is found and not only from levies on real property.
42. Fees, wherever levied, should be abolished from the elementary and secondary schools.
43. The practice of apportioning legislative grants according to need should be continued and extended.
44. Present annual expenditures for education should be doubled.
45. In addition to the present yearly school expenditures of $146,832,642 throughout the Dominion, an additional annual expenditure of $144,000,000 and an additional capital sum of $59,260,000, a total of $203,260,000 should be secured to make the moderate advances outlined in the report. Though all the money named may not be available at once, the sooner it is forthcoming the sooner the reforms recommended can become effective.

ENDNOTES

[1] Articles on education in Canada were included in the *Educational Yearbook, 1924,* pp. 59 ff.;

1932, pp. 41 ff.; *1935,* pp. 83 ff.; *1936,* pp. 119 ff.; *1938,* pp. 69 ff.; *1940,* pp. 51 ff.; and *1943,* pp. 21 ff.

[2] For the Recommendations of the Survey Committee, *see* pp. 47 ff.

[3] See *Educational Yearbook, 1943,* pp. 21 ff.

[4] See *Educational Yearbook, 1940,* pp. 81 ff.

[5] Quoted by permission from the *Report of the Survey Committee* of the Canada and Newfoundland Education Association.