

## SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE AIMS AND PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION IN CANADA

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. . . There is a lingering image of Canada as a rural society, a lingering image which is frequently reinforced by the official symbolism in Canada, as found on postage stamps and the backs of money notes. All have pictures and engravings of forests, streams, Canada geese, and other such outdoor scenes. These symbols tend to be misleading because Canada is basically now an industrialized and urbanized society, and must cope with the problems of this type of society. In 1961, only one-tenth of Canadians lived on farms, and one striking measure of urbanization is that one-half of the people lived within the seventeen metropolitan areas including Montreal, with its 2.1 million, and Toronto, with its 1.8 million. Two-thirds of the population of Canada live within the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, and three-quarters of all post-war immigrants have gone to those provinces. There is thus a trend to urbanization and metropolitan growth, and this is certainly a condition of life which educational systems must give thought to.

The trend to urbanization and metropolitan growth is a reflection of the changing economic structure of Canada, and this changing economic structure can be measured in a variety of ways. First of all, it can be measured by the shift out of primary to tertiary level economic activity, the shift from goods-producing to service-producing activities, and the shift from the less skilled to the more highly skilled occupations. All of these shifts, of course, have important implications for the educational system . . .

The general process of occupational up-grading has been characteristic of all industrial societies. It has been less characteristic of Canada for reasons which I will outline in a moment. But I think one of the most important things to remember in looking at the demands in educational systems in emerging and developing industrial societies is the degree of education and training which must be given to those in social classes who have formerly had low levels of education, segments of society in which the evaluation of education has been relatively low. And unless this problem is successfully solved, industrial societies are not likely to develop to their potential, and they are also likely to lose out in the competitive processes. Thus to some extent one can regard present-day, or twentieth-century industrial competition between societies as really a test of educational systems, as much as anything.

If a society, as it is becoming industrialized, fails to up-grade

its labour force in the way in which I have suggested, there is an alternative open to it, and that is to go and get the skills some place else; and this is what Canada has done, to a greater extent. I think it is quite fair to say that the high level of industrialization which Canada enjoys today rests not only on the importation of foreign capital, but on the importation from outside of skills and professions which Canadian educational systems have failed to produce themselves. This, I think, reflects a low evaluation of education in Canadian society — a point which I'll return to in a moment.

There are two trends in the Canadian social structure which I want to mention, along with their implications for education. One is the changing ethnic and religious composition of the society and another is the changing female participation in the labour force. Now, to take the first, the great emphasis in Canada on ethnic differentiation has created religio-ethnic sub-cultures. These sub-cultures contain different attitudes to education and different educational experiences.

It is very easy to show how different ethnic groups have had different educational experience by taking census data in terms of years of schooling. Moreover, there is a close association between ethnic affiliation and occupational level. This is what the vertical mosaic is, in that there is an over-representation of the British in the higher level occupations and an under-representation of all other ethnicities. In 1961, the British became Canada's largest minority group with 44 per cent of the population. At the same time they made up 58 per cent of those over 65, but only 41 per cent of those under 15. By contrast, the French made up only 21 per cent of those 65 and over, but 33 per cent of those under 15. Thus, considering the under 15's, the British are only 8 percentage points more than the French. But in 1961 the French had only 64 per cent of the 5-24 year-old age group in school, while the British had 72 per cent. The fact that the French and other non-British ethnicities have been educationally deprived has a serious implication for the future labour force of an increasingly industrialized Canada. I'm not going to go into a discussion of why that is so. One can only hope that the revolutionary recommendations — I suppose they *are* revolutionary recommendations — of the Parent Commission will have the effect of preparing Quebec society for an industrial labour force.

Changes similar to the shift in the ethnic composition of the younger age group can also be seen in the religious composition of Canada. While only one-third of those over 65 were Catholic in 1961, just over one-half of those under 15 were Catholic in 1961. Thus Canada is destined to become less British and more Catholic, judging by the population about to go to school or at present in school. Here, too, I think there are implications, from the point of view of the general deprivation that Catholic education has experienced in Canadian jurisdictions, where there have been separate school systems operating with much less money than public school

systems. If Canadians value separateness in educational systems, they must realize that it will cost much more to have two high quality systems.

In the past, Canada has managed to get along as an industrial society by training a relatively small group of urban middle-class British and an even smaller group of middle-class French, through the classical college system, to supply the level of skill which is necessary and to supply the elite decision-making hierarchy for the kind of society that Canada has been. But also, as I said, we would not have reached our present level without heavy importation of professions and skills, the large majority of such skills and professions having been imported from Great Britain, thus reinforcing and continuing this relationship between occupation and ethnicity. Between 1953 and 1963, 80,000 highly skilled and professional workers came to Canada from outside North America. A large number came from the United States too, incidentally. For example, of all physicians and surgeons working in Canada in 1961, 20 per cent had immigrated in the previous 5 years, as had 25 per cent of the engineers and 34 per cent of the architects.

It seems to me that what has happened in Canada is that we have failed in the past to invest nearly enough in educational facilities and in educational plants. We have failed to transmit positive values about education to those classes which did not formerly have a high level of education. When one realizes, for example, that over half of the parental generation in this country has no more than Grade 8 education, one sees something of the tremendous job of transmitting educational values to the younger generation. It seems to me that if the labour force demands of the future are to be met, it is necessary for state educational systems and public policy to break down the familial and cultural resistances to education.

I have recently come across an interesting illustration of this low evaluation of education in Canada that I have been speaking about. I am involved, with some of my colleagues, in a study of occupational evaluation, which involved asking a national sample of the adult population a variety of questions. One of the questions we asked was: "How much schooling do you think most young men need these days to get along well in the world?" The reason we asked the question in this way was because it was a question that was asked in identical form in the United States in a similar study in 1947. Now, in Canada, in 1965 and 1966, 41 per cent of the Canadian adult population indicated that some level of university education was necessary in order to get on well in the world. In the United States, in 1947, almost 20 years earlier, 54 per cent specified that some university or other type of further education was necessary. It is interesting in Canada to separate Protestants and Catholics in their responses to this question. Of the Protestants, almost 47 per cent indicated that some level of university education was necessary to getting along well in the world, while for Catholics the proportion was 35 per cent. This is simply an indica-

tion of the generally low evaluation of education, and the goals of education (in terms of university or college education being a necessary end of educational experience) in Canada, as compared with the United States.

On the question of changing female participation in the labour force I will not say much, except to note that I think it significant that something like one-third of all women of working age are now in the labour force. There has been a very great increase in the number of married women working, and in the proportion of women who return to the labour force after their childbearing years have been completed, or partially completed. In terms of labour force demands the important thing is to keep aware of the requirements of the labour force. The function of an educational system is to provide a trained labour force, and women, of course, represent half the potential (or almost half the potential, in terms of the years which they can spend in the labour force). I think both educational systems and social values may have to change in regard to the traditional division of labour between men and women. Occupations tend to have gender. Therefore, we have to re-examine the tradition of assigning certain tasks to women and others to men, and of excluding women from a whole range of possible occupations.

One of the future problems for the female labour force is the fact that many of the occupations which women are now in will likely disappear with automated office procedures and automated vending machinery and processes. The very large number of women who are employed in these occupations will obviously be reduced. I think, also, that it is necessary to look at the way in which women are educated, perhaps more beyond the secondary level, than at the secondary level. But even so, one thing has been striking about the education of girls; and that is that there is a much greater direct relation between their education and the jobs they do than has been the case for boys. In the future this congruence may not exist between the education of girls and their occupational choices. Thus it becomes increasingly apparent, and this is what I have been arguing, that one of the failures of the Canadian experiment has been in the provision of education, and in the inculcation of positive values about education. A few years ago, this observation would have brought many objections. Now, along with the appropriate statistics, it has become a central theme in the speeches of federal cabinet ministers, and a major factor in the strategy of the war on poverty.

This evidence is clear enough. By any measure, Canadian educational systems are seriously inadequate for this great industrial development of the post Second World War period . . .

There is, I suppose, some increasing awareness of the importance of tertiary level education. Politicians talk about it a lot, and there is a great deal of discussion about it in the press, but they have done mighty little about it, in terms of the scale upon which investments are required in tertiary level education and the

research which goes along with it. It is this slowness of educational policies to emerge from the political system that leads me to assert the low evaluation of education in Canadian culture. It seems to me that the need to train youngsters and to keep them in school long enough to get to university, is one of the principal tasks facing Canadian educational systems. Students must be kept in the educational streams for much longer than they have been in the past. How is this to be done? I think this is perhaps the most important problem facing Canada today, considering the international competition that there is for skills. Canada, as I am sure you know, is a net importer of skills and professions, despite all you hear about the brain drain. Obviously, we must invest much more in educational facilities, in research, and in teacher training.

One of the problems that occurs to me is the misuse of teachers, or the tendency not to fully utilize the skills and the training of teachers, by having them do all sorts of things which are not related to their principal task of teaching — all the clerical and custodial roles which they perform in the schools. We would get much more out of teachers if we kept them to their professional roles. I think teachers should give some consideration to the organization of their work and to the need for paraprofessional occupations in teaching. Subprofessional groups are needed, such as teachers' aides, or teachers' assistants. Most other professions have tiers of occupations behind them. Dentists have dental hygienists and dental assistants and dental technicians. There are graduate nurses and registered nurses and nurses' aides. This tiering of occupations behind a profession enables the profession to get on with its particular work; thus I think that if teachers gave some thought to the organization of their work in terms of these back-up or paraprofessional jobs, it would relieve the teacher from many of these roles. For example, teacher says, "Well, I'm on garbage duty this week," which means that he or she has to look after the canteen or wherever it is that students take their bag lunches, and perform activities which in no way enhance the teacher's status in the school, quite apart from the fact that they take the teacher away from the prime activities of learning and class preparation. Teachers' aides could also be a great help in the preparation of material for scientific classes and so on. These are just some thoughts on how to maximize the use of teachers as a human resource.

Our major problem, as I have already suggested, is to transmit positive values to the social classes that formerly have not benefited from education; and here, I think, it is necessary to consider the teacher's role in transmitting educational values, since I suggested that the family had failed and probably will fail in the future in this task. It seems to me that it is possible that teachers might have a much greater exposure to social sciences, which might make them alert to this phenomenon, this problem of transmitting educational values. I think teachers have often thought

of education as something which people can have if they work hard enough, or that they can proceed up to the level of being educated Brahmins, if they take the opportunities that are available to them. However, I think that the task is more one of positively searching out talent, of encouraging and not discouraging. Teachers often speak about "weeding out" people who for some reason should not be there, or whom they think should not be there. Teachers have to think much more of encouraging and keeping in, rather than of operating on the principle that large numbers of students are contaminating the chosen few who really should be educated. This is the elitist notion that we operated with in the past.

There are two possible ways of alerting a teacher to this problem. One is, as I suggested, greater exposure to social science in order to bring about awareness of these problems. But another one which occurs to me, and perhaps the better one, is the creating of a new occupation, which might be called an educational social worker. We have medical social workers, psychiatric social workers, and it seems to me that there would be some point in staffing schools with social workers specifically trained in ensuring that the hostile attitudes to education that are embedded in some of our subcultures are overcome by direct therapy, by going into the homes and encouraging students to stay in the educational stream. At least this second alternative would leave the teacher free to teach, and get on with her own work, rather than having to contact parents about children who have not turned up for days, and so on. However this problem of educating the lower classes is solved, we must put much more of our resources into it than we have at present.

I might conclude by saying that if one of the values of Canadian society is to progress into higher levels of industrialization, it is very important to transmit and to reinforce positive values about education which will keep people in the educational stream through to the tertiary level of education. Moreover, it is necessary to create and reinforce the mobility aspirations of Canadian young people, to inculcate values by which they will want to be better off, by which they will want to progress up the occupational ladder. I think that these mobility aspirations have generally been absent in Canadian society. In part, it means becoming more like the middle class, in the sense that some writers have spoken about the anxiety-laden climb of the middle class child to acquire an education, to postpone gratification, and to stay in the educational stream. It is these values which must be transmitted much lower in the class structure than formerly. We have for too long accepted social barriers which have prevented the acquisition of education and which have tended to reduce the mobility aspirations in Canadian society.