

and by the occasional reference to such terms as "petrol," "sweet shop," "head teacher" and "nought," there is much to recommend their use by Canadian educators. With their guided discovery approach and emphasis on environment and the more practical aspects of mathematics, these books could serve as valuable supplementary material to present programmes and might well be adopted as texts for certain units.

Shirley McNicol
Faculty of Education



John Farrell. *The Creative Teacher of Language*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill of Canada, 1965, 408 pp., \$4.75.

It is seldom that one comes across a handbook in methodology which presents a satisfying coverage of the topic. John Farrell M.A., an Associate Professor of English at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, has produced not simply a blue-print, but a whole houseful of ideas for teachers of English. Most texts of this nature tend either towards some special emphasis, neglecting other areas of the subject, or else toward a generality which leaves the callow student-teacher crying again, "Why don't you give us something we can use in the classroom?" Professor Farrell declares in his preface that his ". . . is a practical book. It is full of the concrete detail that young teachers need." He goes on to say that the "book will provide a middle course between the completely freewheeling creative classroom that all of us want, and the completely mechanical performance of unimaginative tasks for which most of us settle."

Farrell seems to be a "middle of the course" man himself, for he balances his belief that "Creativity is the bone and marrow of the child," with a wealth of eminently practical suggestions on how, as H. G. Wells puts it, to teach children "to laugh and reach out their hands amid the stars." But when it comes to the ubiquitous problems of mechanics, or organizing a composition Farrell recognizes that discipline at the beginning leads to surer craftsmanship later on. Pupils should learn by direct experience rather than by telling, he contends. "The spelling, the grammar, the punctuation, vocabulary-building all become important but adjuncts of the prime business at hand, writing." The skillful correlation of language skills with the creative writing program, Farrell has named the *Omnibus* approach, since each lesson is designed to do far more than teach only one skill. However, he warns of the practical difficulties for teachers either too wedded to the traditional compartmentalizing of the language arts, or lacking in ability to organize so eclectic a program.

There certainly is nothing radical about Farrell's pedagogy, but one is impressed always by his versatility of approach to each lesson. Over and over, he suggests the particular responsibility of the English teacher, not simply as someone who is teaching certain skills, but more important by far, as someone who "creates students who themselves create." "The teacher of language," says Farrell, "must have this sense of mission, because language is the mother of all other disciplines" (p. 2). Farrell incorporates in his program a total view of language, from the more utilitarian problems of Building a Usable Vocabulary, The Writing of Paragraphs and How to Judge Student Writing, to Drama in the Classroom and Teaching the Creative Student. Each chapter ends with a series of good, tough exercises for the student-teacher and at the end of the book is an ample list of resource books on the language arts.

Farrell feels that as early as grade one, children, under the guidance of an enthusiastic and imaginative teacher, can be introduced to the tools of mechanics (a good picture dictionary, for example), and can be helped to an awareness of good sentence structure and accurate word meaning. His chief emphasis, however, lies always on what he says is an indefinable x-factor in the teacher, a generative force which makes the difference between success or failure in the classroom. One might challenge his insistence on mechanics and careful rewriting in primary school. He does not suggest any purpose for the careful correcting and rewriting which he seems to feel are an essential part of the primary language program. Many responsible teachers would disagree with the practice of copying and recopying, which might easily be the suffocation of all interest in creative expression for ever after.

Adopting the now familiar Ashton-Warner technique of alternating dialogue and exposition with illustration to dramatize his points, Farrell uses two teachers as central figures in his book — Miss O'Flanagan with eyes which she squinches knowingly at you and "eyebrows which arch in an inverted V," and Mr. McCorkell, "a rather large, somewhat rumped man." Though this device seems a little artificial at times, it does permit Professor Farrell to develop his theme of language teaching at both primary and senior elementary levels. It is a pity that at times he descends almost to cuteness in his attempt to achieve lightness of tone, and despite a determined effort to strike the popular note, he has a jaunty way of flashing his big words as a small boy flaunts his first profanity. Useful as this book is, I hope that in his next edition, Farrell will restrain his penchant for illustration a little more rigorously and get on with what is otherwise an extremely valuable manual for student-teachers.

Mary Bews
Faculty of Education