

J. Donald Wilson,
Robert M. Stamp,
Louis-Philippe Audet,
**CANADIAN EDUCATION:
A HISTORY.**
Scarborough, Ontario:
Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1970.
528pp. \$9.95.

Canadian Education: A History need not discourage scholars labouring on the definitive history of education in Canada. There is still room for improvement. Even so, the book offers strengths that should enable it to replace the previously accepted *Canadian Education Today: A Symposium* (Katz, 1956) and *The Development of Education in Canada* (Phillips, 1957), to surpass the more limited works like *A Brief History of Canadian Education* (Johnson, 1968) or *Society, Schools and Progress in Canada* (Katz, 1969), and even to obviate some useful but specialized works like *The Politics of Education* (McKinnon, 1960).

The strengths of the Wilson-Stamp-Audet work lie in readability and comprehensiveness. The chapters were selected to cover particular periods or topics of Canadian history, but the individual authors were free to develop their material without stringent guidelines. The result is that any chapter can be read in isolation with a minimum of reference to other chapters or books. The wide-ranging arguments include recent scholarship outside the scope of most works on education.

Although evidently intended for the beginning historian, the writing avoids the condescending witticisms of many of the centennial potboilers, returning instead to more scholarly interpretation and less mere description. The "Suggestions for Further Reading" included with each chapter support this position. Few inconsequential titles are recommended.

Several of the authors manage to redress the imbalance of earlier Canadian histories of education. Audet, for example, lists a number of shortcomings that can be traced far back into Quebec history. Lupul identifies the paternalism of the Anglo-Saxon minority in western Canada. Hamilton outlines the interplay of secular and denominational pressures that give the Maritime provinces their unique traditions. The simple device of a geographic selection of authors permits a single volume to afford significant benefits for the beginning historian.

The shortcomings of the book warrant serious attention, particularly since publication *en français* is apparently contemplated. Occasional lapses in editing or scholarship mar the favourable impression that several chapters create.

The editors were evidently diffident. Although their presence is marked by introductions and frequent, though somewhat obvious cross reference, they neglected the earlier and equally important aspects of their work. There was insufficient planning of what to include, where it should be mentioned, and from what point of view. The result is significant omissions, like provision for the handicapped and private education for adults; important topics given uncritical or superficial treatment, like education of ethnic and racial groups; or double or triple discussions of the same content from similar points of view, particularly during the colonial period chapters.

Scholarship was evidently a casualty of haste in certain areas. Few authors of 1970 would attempt to dispose of Indian education in one or two pages, using data obtained primarily from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. There is barely mention of the Indians' challenge to this Department. Similarly, it is folly to explain the transfer of educational responsibility from the Family Compact to the Legislative Assembly without ample reference

to accompanying developments in Great Britain. Nor was Canadian education between the wars primarily a reflection of what happened in Alberta.

In all, *Canadian Education: A History* fills an obvious void, but with admitted difficulties.

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John E. Coons, William H. Clune, III, Stephen D. Sugarman.
**PRIVATE WEALTH
AND PUBLIC EDUCATION.**
Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard
University Press, 1970.
462pp. \$12.50.

How can public education be financed adequately and equitably? The authors, who are well versed in the economic and legal complexities of this perennial problem, are convinced that private wealth should not and need not determine the quality of America's schools. Instead they propose the power-

equalizing principle. In other words, within each of the fifty states, a system of financing should be established which would result in the local community's choice or effort being the sole determinants of its educational expenditure, regardless of its particular wealth.

Coons, Clune, and Sugarman convincingly demonstrate the necessity and efficacy of their plan. If implemented, their scheme would result in a unique combining of private choice and local initiative or "subsidiarity" on the one hand and "equality of educational opportunity" on the other. Their argument that the establishment of these principles would emanate from the courts is somewhat less convincing and no doubt reflects a natural predilection of lawyers for a predominantly legalistic reform strategy.

My disagreement with the authors' tactics is not intended to detract from the overall merits of the work. This is a potentially significant book, and it deserves to be read by all of those with an interest in the problems and prospects of American education.

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of English

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