Paul Gallagher

Power and Participation in Educational Reform

For educational reform to be successful in the 60's, it was critical that government should play the dominant leadership role. After years of responding to periodic pressures from special interest groups, observed the Parent Commissioners, governments must accept responsibility for establishing policies and priorities and for rebuilding, co-ordinating and managing in the public interest the entire educational system. At the same time, the Parent Commissioners urged leaders to govern in a style which would ensure for all Quebec citizens, through representative organizations, the opportunity to share in the policy-making processes and to be consulted in the management of their educational system.

These two thrusts — aggressive central leadership and participatory operation of a large and complex educational system — require a delicate balance. As a study of power and influence in an educational reform movement, this paper will examine the functional relationships between government and two of many important elements in the participatory apparatus — the school commissions (which traditionally served as the dominant forces in public education), and the Superior Council of Education (which was established by the Legislature to counterbalance excessive centralization and to encourage participation).

the setting — pre-1960

Prior to the 1960's, Quebec education had been characterized by a lack of system. There was a complex array of schools at every level, some public, others private but state-supported,

still others operated directly by departments of the provincial government; in the public sector, Catholic and Protestant schools operated side by side but in isolation one from the other; a bewildering catalogue of legislation pertinent to one or other aspect of education existed in addition to a comprehensive Education Act.

By design, the Legislative Assembly and the Cabinet stood aloof from educational issues — although the Secretary of State traditionally represented "education" in Cabinet, the central management of public education was left to a Superintendent of Public Instruction and to Roman Catholic and Protestant Committees of an inoperative Council of Public Instruction. In practice, the Superintendent of Public Instruction worked exclusively with the Roman Catholic Committee and his nominal subordinate, the Director of Protestant Education, worked with the Protestant Committee for the development of a distinctively Protestant educational sector. This Catholic-Protestant structure was further emphasized by the effective existence of two distinct Departments of Public Instruction, neither giving nor expected to give strong central leadership. Public education had developed the characteristics of a decentralized structure over generations, with the central mechanisms providing little more than a paternal umbrella. Roman Catholic bishops, who formed one-half of the membership of the Roman Catholic Committee, were concerned almost exclusively with the interests of the Church in education; members of the Protestant Committee offered encouragement and assistance from afar, but took pains not to dominate the Protestant schools.

In the private sector and particularly at secondary and post-secondary levels, institutions assumed wide discretionary powers in virtually all spheres including curricula, levels of instruction, and selection of teaching personnel. Annually, they made their presentations to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for financial assistance and received support to the extent that the public coffers and private representations permitted.

Quite apart from the public and private sectors and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, several Departments of governments opened and operated schools to meet specific manpower needs identified by these branches of governments.

The Parent Commissioners, after surveying the state of education in Quebec, understated the reality by referring to a "lack of coordination" in Quebec education.

first government initiatives

The first step toward greater centralization in education was the transferring, in 1961, to the Minister of Youth from the Superintendent of Public Instruction of all prerogatives with respect to the financing of public and private schooling at the elementary and secondary levels. By this single stroke which caused not more than a ripple of response from the population of Quebec in the first heady days of the Lesage era, a process of centralization was begun by the Minister acquiring control of one vital determinant of educational development.

This one action had several major effects. It brought the financing of the largest part of Quebec education under direct scrutiny by an efficiency-oriented Cabinet and methodical Minister; it blunted any initiative the Roman Catholic and Protestant Committees may have wished to take; it started a movement toward reunification of the two distinct units of the Department of Public Instruction by providing the same financial regulations for both units.

By far the more dramatic move by the Lesage government was the establishment — also in 1961 — of a Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education to reexamine the pedagogical and administrative structures as well as the general orientation of Quebec education. The Parent Commission — with an original mandate to complete its study and report in an 18-month period — took 5 years to complete a thorough study culminating in a series of general and specific recommendations which could serve as a blueprint for substantial and comprehensive reform; at the same time, its activities aroused broad concern about educational issues within Quebec and served to focus on education as an arena of vital public importance.

a minister of education

The critical proposal of the first volume of the Parent Report was that there should be a Minister and a Department of Education with responsibilities for the general coordination and management of all aspects of education in Quebec. Against a long-standing tradition of governmental *laisser-aller* and decentralization of education, recommendations of this scope and nature might well have been left to die.

The Lesage government, however, was quick to introduce Bill 60, which differed only slightly from the Parent recommendations. And, immediately, public reaction set in; Bill 60 was about to be blocked by heavy public pressure.

The technique used to diffuse opposition to Bill 60 was in many respects as significant as the Bill itself. Paul Gérin-Lajoie — the then Minister of Youth — embarked on a province-wide tour and wrote *Pourquoi le Bill 60?* in an effort to allay fears and establish public confidence. Gérin-Lajoie held informal face-to-face meetings in school halls and church basements with all segments of the population to provide reassurance that traditional educational values were not going to be disregarded; more important were the more formal but equally persuasive sessions with Church leaders whose response to Bill 60 would clearly be a determining factor in its fate.

The tour and the public discussions not only served to cool off opposition and bring government closer to the people; at the same time, they gave Gérin-Lajoie the opportunity to determine what amendments would be necessary to obtain sufficient public support without having to discard essential features of the proposed legislation. When ecclesiastical authorities signaled no opposition to the Bill provided that it contained a preamble addressing itself to the freedom of choice of individuals in education, Bill 60 was adopted by the Legislature in short order. The Bill had sparked an intense and emotional educational debate but, in the final analysis, the action of aggressive, business-like governmental leadership received sufficient support in the House and throughout the Province.

the superior council of education

To combat any claim that Bill 60 would produce a state-managed educational system insensitive to the interests of the population, the Bill included provisions establishing a Superior Council of Education to serve as a top-level advisory body to the Minister of Education and as a counterbalance to technocratic tendencies on the part of officials of the Department of Education.

The 24 member Superior Council was given significant prerogatives. It had direct access to the Minister, it included in its membership two Associate Deputy Ministers as key re-

source persons, it had its own budget and secretariat. The Superior Council could hold public hearings, it was required to table publicly an annual report on the state and needs of education, and its advice was required prior to the adoption of any regulation (but not law) respecting education. With its Committees for Catholic and Protestant education, and its Commissions for each level of education, the Superior Council was a potentially powerful influence.

The original composition of the Superior Council did much to give prestige to its activities. Chaired by Jean-Marie Martin of Laval University with David Munroe of McGill University and the Parent Commission as vice-president, the Superior Council had representation from every region of the province as well as a balance of membership on confessional and linguistic lines. With dynamic leadership committed to the goals of the Parent Commission, the first members of the Superior Council of Education assumed their role with enthusiasm.

the development of a department of education

Upon the passage of Bill 60 in 1964, Gérin-Lajoie assumed the post of Minister of Education and organized a new Department of Education formed not only of personnel of the previous Department of Youth and Department of Public Instruction but also by recruiting energetic people from universities and industry.

The senior Deputy Minister was Arthur Tremblay who had shortly before authored a government report on technical education in Quebec and had sat as a member of the Parent Commission.

To provide continuity with the "old" education in Quebec, Bill 60 called for the appointment of two associate deputy ministers, each with particular responsibilities for liaison with the Roman Catholic and Protestant Committees of the Superior Council of Education. In short order, Tremblay surrounded himself with able assistant deputy ministers, and directors general for each major branch of the new Department.

With infrequent exception, Gérin-Lajoie quickly played an increasingly less prominent role in the development of public policy in education while Tremblay and his colleagues not only began to manage the educational system from a central position but even served as spokesmen for new educational policy. Within six months of the passage of Bill 60, a forceful Depart-

ment of Education was solidly established while the Minister and Cabinet faded more from public view in matters of education.

The new Department of Education also represented a distinct break with tradition by functioning as a unified body which applied its directives and influence to both Roman Catholic and Protestant sectors and to both French-language and English-language schools.

the school commissions

In the early 60's, no major change was visible with respect to the power and prerogatives of school commissions (boards). Care was taken not to arouse the ire of traditionally powerful local school commissioners in the early stages of reform.

In 1961, the several items of legislation frequently referred to as the *Magna Carta of Education* — raising the age of universal school attendance to 15, providing funds to upgrade the quality of secondary school teaching, legislation enabling school commissions to cooperate for the provision of better and more economical service — did not pose as a threat to local school authorities; in fact they appeared to give school commissions even broader and more pronounced influence.

The Parent Commission deplored the number of school commissions, over 1500 at the time of their study, the variety of legislation under which they operated, and their great differences in territorial responsibilities; but they deferred their recommendations to their final volume which was only to appear in the middle of the decade.

the style of participation

The years 1964-66 saw the introduction of a distinctive method of attempting to balance central leadership with widespread participation; "planning committees" were formed at both provincial and local levels.

Province-wide planning committees were established under the auspices of one or another branch of the Department of Education to deal with sensitive issues such as the reorganization of teacher education and post-secondary education. The normal pattern saw such committees presided over by a senior official of the Department of Education and composed of re-

presentatives of various institutions and *corps intermédiaires* with a stake in the aspect of the system to be "planned". Parents, teachers, university personnel, representatives of socio-economic groups, delegates of religious organizations and citizens at large were consulted in the reformation of education.

This opportunity to participate — indeed the public call for responsibility to participate — was a major factor supporting the new direction in education. Few groups felt left out of the planning process and, when they did, the composition of consultative bodies was commonly modified to assure the broadest possible participation. Opportunity to express views, at the highest levels, was real.

At the same time, planning committees were not particularly effective instruments of reform. Their membership was frequently too large and their meetings too infrequent to gain momentum; terms of reference were debated and redebated without measurable progress on substantive issues; since these bodies usually brought together persons of diverse interests and priorities, and since each member represented an interest which he felt compelled to protect, it was rare that consensus was reached on anything but general principles.

Yet, the Department of Education initiative in soliciting participation successfully sidetracked temptations on the part of power blocs to exert pressure to obtain special considerations. When groups gave any indication of applying pressure to achieve their own goals, they were generally invited to participate on an equal basis with other interested groups — and, with rare exceptions, they opted to participate rather than agitate from without. Provincial teacher associations reached the point of experiencing difficulty in finding candidates for all committees whose work they wished to influence; representation from more remote sectors of the province was frequently added to offset the impact of Montreal or Quebec-based participants; care was taken to ensure the involvement of English-language interests.

Most planning bodies were not mandated to work to a deadline. In fact, because of the practical problems they encountered, some simply passed out of existence before their objectives could be realized.

The planning committees were useful "sounding boards", but they were largely unable to articulate plans.

department of education initiatives

Despite the ineffectiveness of planning committees as designers of reform, reform in many fields was effected through the energy and leadership of an ever-expanding Department of Education whose officials did not mistake participation for decision-making.

Within two months of the establishment of the Department of Education, senior officials — with full and active support of the Minister of Education — launched the regionalization of secondary education. With the aid of a major press conference in the Legislative Buildings at Quebec, all sectors of the province (except Montreal and Quebec) were urged to take advantage of a program to provide new and comprehensive regional secondary schools with the promise of virtually no increase in school taxation and with the iron-clad assurances that existing school commissions would not be threatened.

Operation 55 — a program to create 55 regional school boards (as well as nine regional school boards for the Protestant population) with responsibility for all public secondary education off the Island of Montreal and Quebec City — had been prepared with meticulous care. Suggested limits for each regional territory were mapped out by Department of Education officials, but the population in each region was given opportunity to challenge and modify Department proposals; Department of Education "experts" were made available to every region; regional planning committees came into existence and tabled elaborate reports; Department publications were issued explaining step-by-step how to establish a regional school board and assuring that the greatest portion of the funding of new schools would come from the provincial treasury and from federal sources, provided that regional boards were established quickly enough to take advantage of federal-provincial agreements which were shortly to expire.

Operation 55 was an unqualified success. All 64 boards were established in short order. Regional consultation had been extensive. Local school commissioners were reassured because elementary education remained under their jurisdiction. Department of Education officials had redesigned secondary education in accordance with their pre-determined pattern. A major program of secondary school construction began.

Equally illustrative of Departmental initiative is the manner in which the first Regulation of the Department of Educa-

tion was adopted in May 1965 on the first anniversary of the formation of the Department.

Regulation I was intended to modify substantially the character of elementary and secondary education. Yet, the School Development Planning Committee, whose major preoccupation was the reorganization of elementary and secondary schools, was consulted on issues related to the proposed regulation but did not have opportunity to review or evaluate the text of the regulation in draft form. Members of the Superior Council of Education were dismayed; the Council was consulted by the Deputy Minister prior to the promulgation of the regulation, as required by law, but it was given only two weeks for review and commentary — at the same time as several other bodies were given the same opportunity. Members of the Council voiced their conviction that the Superior Council should have been given the task of reviewing the proposed regulation after it had been assessed by other consultative bodies, and they objected to the timetable which made it impossible to have the proposals reviewed seriously by its Commissions for Elementary and Secondary Education prior to the formal presentation of the Superior Council's own advice on such a critical issue. Despite all, the Council did debate the proposed regulation and forwarded comments and suggestions — but no substantial change was subsequently made.

While the structural changes introduced through Regulation I received widest publicity, the regulation also introduced other subtle but profound changes. It called upon parents to participate in elementary and secondary education, by becoming members of School Consultative Committees; it called upon the school personnel — teachers and principals — to take a more active role in individualizing the character of each school. Both measures weakened the influence of the school commission in policy-making, yet little adverse response from school commissions resulted from the adoption of Regulation I.

participation to disenchantment

The mid-sixties in Quebec education were a period of excitement and high activity. Several factors contributed, however, to decreasing popular enthusiasm for educational reform by 1966. All three volumes of the Parent Report had been tabled, with the last recommendations concerning administrative structures for and financing of public education posing as

a real threat to the traditions of Quebec education. Public pronouncements by the Minister and his senior officials calling for a reduction in the number of school commissions did little to obtain support from influential local school commissioners. The additional costs of the new secondary education began to become visible to the school ratepayers. The unified Department of Education did little to reassure Protestants who feared assimilation and the loss of their traditional freedom to operate their schools quite independently. The frustration of participation without decision-making power became evident.

More than symbolic was the plight of the members of the Superior Council of Education. The Council had gone to work quickly and had promptly seen to the establishment of its component Committees and Commissions. Within a year, the total mechanism was operating smoothly and showed promise of being a truly representative advisory body able to give an informed and dispassionate opinion on most educational issues.

The Council, the Committees, and the Commissions were able to attract top-quality persons to their membership and they set about their ongoing analysis of the state and needs of education with vigor. Two-day meetings were held monthly, sub-committees to study special issues were established, public hearings throughout the province were conducted with consirable local and regional fanfare. Yet the Council faced difficulties from the start. Only the President and Vice-President were able to meet the Minister, and then only briefly and not more than once monthly. The Deputy Minister made only brief and fleeting visits to Council meetings, most frequently to obtain information rather than to act as a resource person. The Associate Deputy Ministers attended meetings regularly but were seldom able to table information requested by the Council membership. Council members feared that they were operating in isolation from the mainstream of reform.

Such practical matters made little difference at the start. The Council produced a competent first annual report totally in support of reform by participation. It studiously avoided sharp criticism and adopted the posture of persuader on behalf of enlightened educational progress.

With time and a feeling of less than full cooperation from the Minister and senior officials of the Department of Education, however, the enthusiasm of Council members waned. At the same time, issues that could set the Council in opposition to Department technocrats arose after the initial period of calm accord. The Council undertook its own study of the

effects of large regional secondary schooling, expressed reservations about the new post-secondary institutions, addressed itself to inadequacies within higher education, called for action in the reform of teacher education, and drew attention to imperfections in the consultative process — all sensitive issues to Department officials.

disenchantment to caution

The election campaigning of 1966 revealed what inroads educational issues had made in the public consciousness over a period of little more than 5 years. The Liberal Party campaigned on its record of solid achievement in virtually every field since 1961 and promised more to come. The Union Nationale Party called for a deceleration of the pace of reform but focused criticism particularly upon educational issues.

The role of the Deputy Minister, Arthur Tremblay, in the reformation of Quebec education came under special attack. Tremblay was portrayed by the Union Nationale as the real instigator of reform, as an opponent of Catholic schooling, and as the person responsible for the computerized tabulation of high school leaving results — a disastrous effort which had led to a massive public outcry with the Department of Education as target. Union Nationale leadership promised that Tremblay would be replaced once they came to power.

The Union Nationale did come to power, but Arthur Tremblay was not replaced. A minor shakeup and reorganization at senior levels of the Department of Education was effected and Tremblay's role became considerably less public, but no redirection of educational priorities resulted. Union Nationale policy was to usher in a period of pause in reform and a backstaging of education while other issues assumed greater public prominence. Some consultative bodies continued to meet, the Department of Education continued to exert a strong centralizing tendency without provoking controversy, and education entered a period of publicly proclaimed consolidation.

Jean-Jacques Bertrand, Gérin-Lajoie's successor as Minister of Education, proceeded cautiously. He gave reassurances to school commissioners that they would be fully consulted in the reorganization of local administrative structures and went out of his way to confirm the importance of the role of the Superior Council of Education. As the mandates of the first members of the Council expired, he renamed most to a second

term of office and replaced others by equally competent and representative appointments. The Superior Council returned to its tasks with renewed spirit.

caution to imposition

What did change in the late sixties were the methods used by various opponents to government and Department of Education centralization. Earlier successes of planning committees in deflating pressure by obtaining participation were infrequently repeated; more and more, large and increasingly militant pressure groups insisted on making their demands outside the mechanisms of representative participation. And the response of the Minister and officials of the Department was to meet pressure with pressure.

The introduction of new formulas for the financing of public education at elementary and secondary levels served as the initial focal point for new approaches to decision-making. The early years of the decade had seen the government sponsor a massive capital expansion program particularly for secondary schools, but, by the late 60's, the problem of coping with sharply rising operating costs presented itself dramatically. In response, the Finance Division of the Department of Education introduced a system for "normalizing" operating costs according to Department-established guidelines. A complicated budgetary and accounting system was imposed upon school commissions which had previously established their own priorities and rates of local taxation. Department of Education officials were now to authorize local rates of taxation, to define what expenses would be "admissible" and thereby fully subsidized by provincial grants, and to insist that local commissions establish a surtax to defray "inadmissible" costs.

The first response of school commissions to new financial regulations was timid as commissioners and their employees struggled to find their way through the maze of budgetary and accounting bureaucracy. Soon, however, the burden of inadmissible expenses and the realization that the Department of Education was controlling local educational priorities through budgetary norms became major sources of disaffection for many school commissioners. Disaffection mounted even more clearly as the new regional boards for secondary education piled up major inadmissible expenses which had to be defrayed by a tax increase imposed by local school commissions

which served by law as the tax collection agencies for regional secondary boards.

This confrontation between centralization of educational power, as represented by the Department of Education, and decentralization, as represented by local school commissions was clearly one-sided. No planning committees were established to ease tensions; no consultation with the Superior Council of Education took place; no major promotional campaign by either interest was launched; participatory management of the school system was set aside as officials of the Department of Education simply imposed their solution to financial problems.

imposition to dominance

A second issue related to the financing of elementary and secondary education again altered the relationships between powers at the provincial level and those at local and regional levels.

The new system of school commission budgeting revealed that the costs of salaries for teachers were the major operating expense facing school commissions, and that, as long as the number of teachers to be employed and their levels of salary were determined locally or regionally, these costs could not be controlled or systematized by the Department of Education. As an extension, then, of school commission budget guidelines came the establishment — applicable throughout the province — of uniform pupil-teacher ratios for each level and type of school and the publication of Department of Education guidelines for school commissions in their negotiations with teachers for new salary schedules. The Department of Education logically noted that salaries of teachers had to conform to centrally-established levels — rather than be the result of open negotiation locally or regionally — since such salaries were to be considered admissible expenses for purposes of school commission financing.

The initial reaction of teacher syndicates to their loss of opportunity to negotiate freely was swift and forceful. Teachers, who heretofore had cultivated the image of serious, not-too-aggressive professionals, went on strike or organized "study sessions" in virtually every part of the province. Months of tension and disruption of the regular activity of schools followed, with no evident way both to get schools back to normal operation and to put an effective brake on school commission operating costs.

The dilemma was one which could not be resolved between teacher organizations — local, regional, or province-wide — and school commissions or their provincial federations. Nor could the Department of Education act on behalf of the provincial government because the issues went well beyond educational concerns. Finally, the Government introduced legislation (Bill 25) to bring about at least a temporary resolution and an embittered return to school normalcy.

Bill 25 was extraordinary in content and precedent setting in realigning the power bases in Quebec public education. It recognized as bargainer for the teachers, or *partie syndicale*, three province-wide associations of teachers none of which had previously taken a front-line role in collective bargaining but had left this task to their local or regional components. Across the bargaining table, Bill 25 put all the school boards of the province together with representatives of the provincial government as the *partie patronale*.

As preparations were made for a new round of negotiating teaching conditions to be applicable throughout the province, it became clear that the school board — government partnership on the employer side of the table was hardly an alliance of equals. Gradually but systematically, government representatives assumed the dominant role, and the impact of the school commission representatives declined. It was not long before many school commissioners came to realize that their traditional responsibility of determining working conditions for their teachers had effectively been withdrawn, initially by Department of Education budgetary guidelines and finally by the government-decreed system of collective bargaining with teachers. By 1969, school commissions had in fact become local or regional administrative units of the Department of Education with almost no powers of any significance.

During this same period, relations between the Superior Council of Education and the Minister of Education and his senior Departmental officials became strained. The Council's public statements became more critical and impatient as it surveyed the state and needs of education. The Council found itself consulted less frequently by the Minister and more in conformity with the letter rather than the spirit of the legislation by which it had been established. Finally, the mandate of the first president of the Council expired and his appointment was not renewed. A new Minister of Education, Jean-Guy Cardinal, appointed Leopold Garant, a much less visible and

less dynamic man, to the presidency; the Superior Council itself soon became a far less prominent force in educational reform.

dominance to stalemate

The replacement of representative participation and consultative planning by increased centralization of educational decision-making by the Government and its Department of Education continued into the 1970's. However as group after group pressed the central authorities to accommodate its own priorities and balked at dominance from Quebec, the pace of reform slackened; Department of Education officials were prepared neither to compromise rational reform by giving in to special interests nor to encourage greater decentralization of basic decision-making. Decisions were simply set aside.

The unified school board issue may serve as but one illustration of decisions deferred. Since 1966 when the Parent Commission recommended that confessional school commissions be replaced by unified bodies established on geographic lines, successive Governments have attempted to translate these recommendations into legislation. A partial reorganization of administrative structures for public schooling off the Island of Montreal — but not unified school commissions — was achieved by legislation in 1972 (Bill 27) but the much more contentious atmosphere on the Island of Montreal itself has militated against major reforms where they seem most necessary.

On three occasions, forms of legislation to reorganize school administration in Montreal have been introduced, debated publicly and passionately, and then found wanting of adequate public support.

In 1968, the Department of Education tried to marshal support for administrative reform in Montreal schools through representative consultation on the issue. A special Commission was established, representation was carefully worked out, a precise mandate was drawn up, deadlines were set in advance.

The technique was unsuccessful. The members were clearly disunited; spokesmen for different blocs were unable or unwilling to give ground; a shortage of time as well as political tensions in the province militated against cohesion within the Commission. Finally, the unprecedented phenomenon of a Commission majority report submerged by a series of min-

ority reports was exposed to the public and to the Department of Education. Even the Chairman, a Department of Education appointee, publicly disavowed the majority position.

Subsequent efforts on the part of Government to modify Montreal's school administrative structures took advantage of other mechanisms but the results were no different. New legislation was drafted within the Department of Education, analyzed and evaluated by the Cabinet, and then tabled in the National Assembly; draft legislation was channeled to the Education Committee of the National Assembly where representations were made by interested parties. Government leaders in Education Committee hearings were no more successful than had senior Department of Education officials been in the past. Power blocs stood their ground; debate was lively but polarized. School administrative structures in Montreal remained as they had been for generations.

conclusions

The 1960's saw genuine and substantial reforms take place in Quebec education, but a balance of central leadership with widespread participation cannot take credit for the advances made. Initially, it was action by a new and dynamic government which launched the reforms against a history of popular lethargy and indifference to educational issues. Initiatives by government were soon replaced by leadership from senior officials of the Department of Education who first gave impetus to broad participatory involvement but then assumed an almost exclusive prerogative in basic policy formulation. With the disintegration of the consultative processes, opposition from key power blocs to the centralizing tendencies of Department of Education officials effectively thwarted further reform of substance but no swing to a more decentralized educational system was in evidence at the beginning of the 1970's.

Throughout the decade, the government and its senior officials exercised not only leadership but control of the direction of Quebec education. In contrast, school commission authority and prerogatives were whittled away gradually but systematically and the Superior Council of Education, a promising creature of the reform movement, served as a useful and constructive consultative mechanism only as long as it did not blunt the thrust of the Minister of Education and his senior officials.

On the one hand, the prospects for greater balance between central leadership and widespread participation do not appear promising. The 1970's have opened with a clear struggle for supremacy between the Government/Department of Education forces and the teacher associations in their alliance with labour interests — but both groups have been strongly centralist in tendency and intent. School boards established under Bill 27 might appear to be influences for decentralization, but their powers are severely limited in comparison to those of the Department of Education. The establishment of regional bureaus of the Department of Education has served more to add another level to the central bureaucracy than to decrease the concentration of power in Quebec. A sense of powerlessness to effect change on a local or regional level, without sanction from the Department of Education, has become widespread.

Yet, the 1970's have seen a gradually more pronounced call for a redirection of attention from educational structures to human dimensions in education. Many see the frictions of the 1960's as inevitable consequences of redesigning an educational system from top to bottom, and they point to the fact the system has now largely been redesigned — and that it is only now possible to make quality of education a preoccupation and priority. Guy Saint-Pierre, who left the post of Minister of Education amidst the Montreal Island school board controversy in 1972, spoke frequently about the need to concentrate on the processes rather than the structures of education. His successor, François Cloutier, has pursued the same course. Should such a redirection be possible despite the struggles between centralist forces, the prospects for greater balance in educational decision making seem considerably brighter.