

Reviews

ses that national or provincial policies are unable to deal with small pockets of poverty such as these, it makes no attempt to suggest how these problems might be solved.

A strong point of the series as a whole is the attention that has been paid to the illustrations in the case studies. Langman's in particular has a series of stunning and evocative photographs. In addition, historical, land-use capacity, and topographical maps, aerial photographs, illustrations, diagrams and newspaper cuttings add considerably to the attractiveness of all the texts. Nearly all of the illustrative materials are accompanied by questions and lists of subjects for debate that should enliven classroom discussions. My only disappointment here is that most of the reference material cited in the case studies is not more accessible.

Two criticisms of the series can be raised: while the resource book stands well on its own, it is not integrated with the case studies; secondly, none of the case studies deals with urban poverty. In numerical terms, most of the poor in Canada live in cities, and some of the greatest disparities in this country exist within its cities. The series might well have considered including one book on this very important area. Despite this limitation, the books are readable, topical and useful. It is to be hoped that they will be used extensively in the classroom, for they provide a fund of ideas, concepts and information on a subject that should concern all Canadians.

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Robert M. Stamp.
ABOUT SCHOOLS: WHAT EVERY
CANADIAN PARENT SHOULD
KNOW.

Don Mills, Ontario:
New Press, 1975.
177 pp. \$6.95.

Mark W. Novak.
LIVING AND LEARNING
IN THE FREE SCHOOL.

Toronto:
McClelland and Stewart, 1975.
137 pp. \$3.95.

As schools tend to be the mirror of society, educational literature tends to be the mirror of educational theory and practice in a society. The risk involved in accepting this premise is that we are then inclined to view the literature, theory and practice of education in Canada with a certain dismay. In content, our educational literature is preoccupied with borrowed themes: moral development à la Lawrence Kohlberg, values clarification, intercultural education, community schools, educational alternatives, M.B.O. ("management-by-objectives" for the uninitiated), competency-based programs, accountability. We read *Phi Delta Kappan*, allow for the cultural lag of crossing the 49th parallel, and murmur the mantra of Canadian education, "Me too." In form, our educational literature is dominated by three genres: the articles, many of which are very provocative, found in assorted periodicals; the anthology, a synthetic book for an instant market; and the report, a form of Proclamation - by - Royal Commission which has been the major source of our educational enlightenment and inspiration.

Amid this fragmentation, commercialism, and paternalism, it is refreshing to find *entire* books written by *single* authors, and the works of Stamp and Novak make contributions that are useful, contrasting and, in a sense, unusual.

Both of the books deal with three interrelated themes of what may

Canada. The most useful part of his contribution is a survey of the general policies and programs that have been devised to reduce regional disparities. This is one of the most helpful short summaries that I have read and Krueger manages to disentangle the web of programs that various governments have woven over the years.

R. Irving contributes a chapter on poverty in Canada. He discusses the difficulty of defining the term and recognises the distinctions between urban and rural poverty. C. Vincent provides two approaches to the study of regional disparities and poverty to be used in the classroom. The first is a game in which the players act out the roles of families in different parts of the country. While not having had the opportunity to play the game, this reviewer suspects that it would not really enhance students' perspectives on regional aspects of poverty since it assumes equal satisfaction goals (colour t.v., camping holiday, final downpayment on a house) for Newfoundland, Ontario, and Saskatchewan families! This would appear to ignore the important fact that individual expectations vary so much across the country. The second project, which should be much more useful, is a map work assignment with a set of questions.

The three other books in the "Regional Patterns" series are regarded as case studies, each focusing upon the problem in a different part of the country and highlighting different solutions. "Regional Development in Northeast New Brunswick" by R. R. Krueger and J. Koegler examines the problems and prospects of a region where poverty is acute. The text shows how historical factors, the English/French cultural split, and an economy controlled by outsiders have produced a situation that is difficult to change. An outline of a simulation is provided whereby students assume the roles of different groups, fishermen, farmers, mining companies, and forestry companies. This appears to be a most useful game and should

lead to an understanding of the problems of overcoming disparities. The final part of the book details the various government schemes that have been devised over the years to alleviate regional problems.

Patricia Sheehan's study of social change in the Alberta foothills is quite different. It documents an A.R.D.A. project in Census District 14 centered on Edison, Alberta. Again we find a region with considerable natural resources but where technology has brought about significant shifts in employment opportunities. In this region, A.R.D.A. developed a community-based approach, creating Advisory Councils, through which local people could have an input into development schemes. The projects themselves were relatively modest: a tourist park or community improvement schemes such as well drilling, job re-training and farm re-adjustment. All involved local counselling: "If people are to participate in local change, it is essential that they understand what is happening to them." This is an approach to regional development that has all too frequently been ignored. Unfortunately there has been no follow-up. The A.R.D.A. project in C.D. 14 was undertaken in the early 1960's while data on the tourist developments are for 1964. It would have been most useful to have had an evaluation of the project ten years later.

Langman's book provides a useful reminder that poverty is not confined to the periphery, that areas of hardship occur in the heartland of Canada. On the limestone plains of southern Ontario, the physical environment has produced conditions that are inhospitable to farming. Langman makes the point that rural poverty here is independent of geographical location, date of settlement, origin, or motive of settlers, and is due to the shallowness of the soil. Therein lies a weakness of the work. While providing an interesting description of the limestone plains, the book tends to be very limited in its scope and becomes repetitive. Though it recogni-

loosely be called the politics of education: the relationship between school and community, the strategy of providing educational alternatives, and the role of parents in educational decision-making. While these themes are by no means peculiar to Canada, the two books are Canadian in their focus and content and, in the case of Stamp, in the population to which it is directed.

Robert Stamp's *About Schools* is a popular book in that it is written for parents. From the introduction to the conclusion, Stamp makes it very clear that education should be everybody's business and it should especially be the business of parents. Parents should become more involved in the policies and practices of schools in ways somewhat more substantial than through periodic summonses to Meet-the-Teacher nights and the traditional good works of Home-and-School Associations. Parents have certain rights in education: to be recognized as partners in their children's learning, to be treated courteously, to have access to information, to contribute to school policy, and to have mechanisms for choice among teachers and schools. Stamp describes a variety of ways in which meaning may be given to these rights of parents: through different patterns of school-community relationships, through direct involvement in the life of the school, and through access to existing alternative schools or through the creation of new ones. Stamp's book is essentially rhetorical in purpose, urging parents to become more involved in education and concomitantly urging the professionals to be supportive of this involvement. The major rhetorical device is the use of a large number of examples and testimonials to illustrate that greater parent participation can and does work in Canada.

A contrasting approach to these themes is presented in Mark Novak's *Living and Learning in the Free School*. This is an academic book, a sociological case study of the origins and development of a "free school" within the public school

system of a Toronto suburb. But it is far more than a description of a school. Although the book is not divided this way, it is possible to identify three fairly equal components: theory, description, and interpretation. The theoretical sections provide a disciplined yet far-ranging analysis of the method of participant-observer, of the concepts of freedom, community, and, indeed, education. These analyses draw as much from philosophy as they do from the classical conception of social science. The descriptive part shows how parents, students, and teachers came together to form an alternative school as a vaguely negative reaction to the prevailing system, how gradually the concepts of "community," "social order," and "structure" began to emerge in more clearly defined form, and how the experience moved from an early romanticism to a later pragmatism. The interpretative sections attempt to bring together the theory and the practice, to stand apart from the phenomena being experienced and to impose the theoretical models upon the realities in order to understand what was happening beneath the surface.

I must say that I am impressed by each of these books, obviously for different reasons, and I have learned a good deal from them. Yet I wonder, and the source of my wonder is related to the two titles. Robert Stamp is an academic with a well-deserved reputation as a scholar in the history of Canadian education. His book is entitled *About Schools: What Every Canadian Parent Should Know*. I wonder why Robert Stamp brought the worst of his discipline with him when he decided to write as a parent to parents and left the best behind. Why adopt the style of *Homemaker's Digest* just because he is writing to parents? Why rely so heavily on quotations and sources, many breathtaking in their banality, when he could have provided more provocative discussion of the crucial issues involved in the interface of parent and educational system: the conflict between the school's roles of

responsiveness to community pressure and leadership for community aspirations, the tension between public participation and professional competence in the development of educational policy, the dangers of educational alternatives as the penultimate cop-out of a disintegrating culture? In short, I wonder why there is not more Stamp and less *Calgary Herald*? I wonder, too, about Stamp's concept of *every Canadian*. In a chapter titled "Parents' Associations Are Alive and Well," Stamp enthusiastically proclaims: "Across the country the reformation is taking place." He then goes on to cite examples from Ontario and Alberta. This is typical of the concept of Canada which comes through in his book. Now it is possible that, with few exceptions, everything in education is a wasteland east of the Ontario-Quebec border, but the promise of Stamp's title and the relevance of his advice would have been better served had he spread his illustrations a little more evenly across the country.

Then I wonder about the title *Living and Learning in the Free School*. The title, and the tone of the Preface, lead us to expect that we will find out something about *how* people live and *what* they learn in a "free school." Although Novak's theoretical analysis is stimulating (perhaps because of this), he holds onto the tail of his theory and rides into the sunset, leaving behind in the dust the children of ASPE, the alternative school, as well as those readers who wonder, reflecting on Novak's theory, just who those children were? Where did they come from? How did they *feel* about this alternative school? What did they learn? What were the teachers trying to do, and how did *they* feel? Who exactly were those parents? So powerful is Novak's theoretical analysis that his case study of the alternative school becomes almost trivial, peopled by marionettes dancing to the string of his phenomenology. It is in this sense that Stamp and Novak make unusual contributions to the literature of Canadian educa-

tion: Stamp, the academic, preaches to the parents; Novak, the sociologist theorizes his subjects almost out of existence.

But still I am touched (yes, that is the word) with what Stamp and Novak have tried to do. They have, as authors, "laid their hands" on their subject matter, allowing their personal concern with the issues to show through and avoiding the safer course of keeping their objects of study "at arm's length." Both Stamp and Novak have shown compassion in their books, and, in this, I, for one, am prepared to honor them.

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Barbara Stanford, ed.
**PEACEMAKING: A GUIDE TO
CONFLICT RESOLUTION FOR
INDIVIDUALS AND NATIONS.**
New York: Bantam, 1976.
500 pp. \$1.95.

A meticulous effort of organization by Barbara Stanford shapes this large manual on peacekeeping into a readable and useful volume. The scope of the materials is amazingly wide, ranging from the individual in marriage and child-raising to the efforts of the United Nations. There are the expected statements by Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez and the more unlikely essays of Barry Goldwater and William Carlos Williams. In editing the fifty or so items, Stanford has organized short workable units on various aspects of conflict resolution, aggression, dehumanization, use of force, and reorganization of society. The concluding section provides suggestions to encourage the reader to translate thought into action.

It is this emphasis on action that makes the book a personal document