

Editorial

Looking Forward

It is probably the temptation of every newly appointed editor of any journal or periodical to consider an extensive range of changes that could be made in the format, content, and policy of that publication. To be honest, this editor must admit that such thinking has been indulged in, but reason has over-ruled fantasy, and the decision has been made that in the initial issue only a few graphic changes will be made. It does not seem justifiable to make major changes just for the sake of change. However, in looking to the future, perhaps the most challenging, but elusive, objective for this editor is that of defining to his own satisfaction the nature of the **Journal**: the audience it will address, the issues and concerns it will examine, and its unique contribution among other Canadian journals in the field of education. How can a journal published at an English-speaking university in a primarily French-speaking province express the nature and intricacies of the educational concerns in such a distinct milieu and at the same time, address a wide range of educational issues? This is a starting point for all objectives.

It does not seem appropriate or desirable for the **Journal** to take any political or polemic stance but, as implied earlier, it should reflect the character of its place of origin to some degree, while demonstrating through its content a concern for the broader interests of the educational community. This may be possible through the publication of articles that deal with both the educational issues and interests in a province "not like the others" - one in which concerns of language (especially bilingualism) permeate the society and consequently the educational system - and of educators in other areas of a nation that is one of the world's largest in terms of land mass, if not in population. There must, also, be a consideration of McGill's international visibility and distinct historical background so that the **Journal** will continue to have appeal to educators in other parts of the world. It is

equally important that the diversity of interests of educators in a young nation, which embraces many identifiable ethnic groups with their own cultural heritage be taken into account. The ideas that emanate from educating these individuals must be given room for expression.

Whatever the circumstances already elaborated, it seems important that an effort be made to publish a journal that balances research with educational practice and application, and that gives recognition to theoretical and social issues in Education. Parallel with this scholarly thrust, the **Journal** will maintain its tradition of giving space to poetry and graphic arts to express visibly their importance in the process of Education.

In this issue there is a diversity of content, but the relationship of ideas is not haphazard. Professor Ragsdale's opening article raises some questions about the new roles of teachers in the computer age and alerts us to the limitations of classroom computer application - a subdued skepticism of the laudable claims about computer use; those claims that are made without consideration for the consequent problems. Following closely with his ideas are those of Professor Miller, who raises similar questions about the proper use of word processors and other computer technology in writing-assistance programs.

Bronson's theoretical point of view on the intertwined relationship of reading and writing requires a clear mind to comprehend its depth, and he arouses in us a curiosity about the the complexity of our own personal computer - the brain.

A thought provoking dimension of assisting the non-vocal handicapped through modern technology is expressed by Jim Desson in his fundamental assertion that an augmentative communication system should be employed with the handicapped, not because it will make them productive and useful citizens, but also for moral/psycho-spiritual reasons that recognize their inherent value as human beings.

In the midst of these challenges and theoretical speculations about the future, Professor Barnabé reminds us that the quality of working life must not be neglected, drawing on the practices of business and industry to demonstrate how the optimal utilization of human resources from that sector may be applied in the field of education.

Dr. Cato reacts to Professor Egan's earlier article on some theoretical issues in curriculum development, and, in response, Professor Egan clarifies his position. After reading the original article, the reaction, and the response, most of us will probably still ask ourselves, "Do I understand, or do I just think I understand"?

These articles constitute a theme that mirrors many of the concerns and issues which are paramount in the minds of educators today. In some ways the ideas of the writers for this issue of the **Journal** capture a "time segment" in Education and leave us wondering about the changes in store for us tomorrow.

W.M.T.