

# Editorial

## Looking back, looking forward

At the turn of the last century McGill was favored by the arrival of a new principal, William Peterson, a native of Scotland, later to become Sir William Peterson. In the year 1995, McGill will be observing the 100th anniversary of Peterson's appointment. In anticipation of that event, Prof. Reginald Edwards has developed a detailed study of Peterson's education in Scotland, Germany, and England as a means of giving some insight into his intellectual depth and the nature of his character. This careful study of Peterson has been conducted with such detail that we cannot help but be overwhelmed by the monumental volume of information that Edwards has presented. The paper goes beyond Peterson himself and describes the university environment of Peterson's student days, the genealogy of his family, and the professional colleagues he cultivated both as a student and as a university principal.

The next two papers in this volume deal with issues that are related to cultural and personal identity. Prof. Talbani recounts Quebec's history of pursuing the policy of intercultural education with the goal of integrating minorities into the francophone culture. This account is followed by commentary on the impact this policy has had on the atmosphere of schools. Prof. Martineau approaches identity from another perspective, that is, of teaching history in such a way that students learn the value of it in terms of their *personal lives* and an understanding of society as a whole. Martineau concludes his paper with a discussion of how the study of history can help in developing attitudes that are basic to life in a democratic society.

Prof. Aline Giroux addresses a topic of current concern to educators everywhere — the empowerment of teachers. While Prof. Giroux raises several theoretical issues relative to the adequacy of power, her concluding question is one of considerable importance and interest to those teachers who have begun to feel the cultural loss of a sense of moral authority. While

some may equate moral authority with respect, it would seem from what is written here that "moral authority" embodies more than the conventional meaning of respect.

"Stories of Women Who Don't Write" is a summary of Prof. Julia L. Ellis' study of the journal entries of a group of elementary teachers who described their experiences of language development and writing. The stories of the women in this study clearly point out their feelings of disability with language, disempowerment, and the conditions that led to these feelings. Briefly, the paper provides an insight about the politics of literacy and whether writing is particularly a "women's problem".

Critical thinking and how best to teach it in the classroom is the subject of the paper by Professors Court and Francis. Their field-based research on this topic demonstrates some of the commonalities of thinking held by teachers who promote critical thinking in the classroom and the theoretical work on the subject, as found in the literature.

Professor Kelebay asks, "Is the practicum practical?" His viewpoint that there is an exaggerated emphasis on student teaching in higher education is defended by linking the influence of the thinking of John Dewey *et al.* with some current opinions that field experience is generally more useful than theory in the formative education of teachers.

We trust that this issue of the *Journal* will be not only informative but challenging as well.

W. M. T.