

sidered by traditional histories. The author's vocabulary is new, instructive, and in many ways illuminating. Most of her findings, however, are consistent with arguments long since developed by more traditional historical writing.

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E. Brian Titley, ed. *Canadian Education: Educational Themes and Contemporary Issues*. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1990. Pp. 216. \$18.95 paper.

This collection of essays concerned with both historical and contemporary themes in Canadian public education was designed primarily for students enrolled in teacher-preparation programmes. Viewed from this perspective the book is eminently successful. The authors eschew new or original interpretations but, in many cases, offer refreshing insights into many problems which continue to face teachers. All the essays are well written and avoid using jargon or invoking murky abstractions. One advantage for students is that most of the authors state their themes very early and clearly.

The historical roots of Canada's public education systems are recalled by Robert Carney in "Going to School in Upper Canada." Not surprisingly

he locates the principal source of this development in the Ryersonian era of the colony's life. Observers from other regions might object to this limited view. Virtually no account is given of the different responses made in Quebec or Newfoundland to the demand for state control of education. Carney surveys the well-trodden account of Ontario's design, describing how this system acquired its particular features, especially its highly centralized system of administration. His account builds on two decades of scholarly work although some of his generalizations have been challenged in monographs recently published.

In "Religion, Culture and Power: The School Question in Manitoba," Brian Titley bravely tackles this hoary topic. His opening sentence sets the stage for a well-crafted essay. "The Manitoba school question is a mess—a wearisome, convoluted mess that brings together in odious confusion those two persistent wrinkles in Canadian history, language and religion" (p. 45). In rehashing the confusing details of this wretched episode Titley clearly indicates the impact of these two wrinkles on the growth of Manitoba's school system and the education of students of various minority groups. It is an excellent performance and may well stand as one of the best descriptions of this question ever written.

The second section of the book contains three essays that try to analyse and assess the impact of Progressivism in Canadian education. First, Eamonn Callan in "John Dewey and the Two Faces of Progressive Education" attempts to distil a clear definition of

Progressivism from Dewey's turgid prose. Adopting an unusual stance, Callan boldly states that Dewey's work was primarily a defense of corporate capitalism and not an attempt to reform society. He claims that the intention of progressive education was to produce workers who would adapt to the industrial system, not try to transform it. This conservative interpretation is a different approach to Progressivism than is usually given and could confuse students who have probably been told that Dewey's followers were trying to achieve a different task. To be fair, Callan does offer a challenging view of Dewey's ideas that corrects many of the criticisms levelled against the founding father's work.

Robert Patterson, the foremost authority on Progressivism's role in Canadian education, traces the impact it had on Canadian schools before 1940. Relying heavily on official pronouncements and conference reports, he argues that Progressivism was largely integrated into department of education curriculum documents by this date. Does this mean that Progressivism became the standard fare in classrooms? No! For as he observes, many teachers never really understood the underlying concepts of Deweyism. This deficiency, coupled with teachers' innate conservatism, largely defeated any hopes the movement ever had of total success. Patterson's approach is largely a "top-down" one. It might have been useful to describe how some schools or teachers actually tried to implement these ideas. Too often in discussing attempted reforms the problems faced by the classroom

teacher on a daily basis are neglected. Insights from "old hands" might be helpful for novices.

What happened to Progressivism after the Second World War? Brian Titley and Kas Mazurek take up its fate during the bland decade of the fifties and its revival in the flashy sixties and early seventies in their essay, "Back to the Basics? Forward to Fundamentals?" They correctly attribute its resurrection to the impact of the economic and social forces of this era and not to a conspiracy hatched by a group of wild-eyed radicals who had captured the educational citadel. The best part of this piece is its trenchant critique of the "back to basics" movement. They label this trend for what it was, "an artificial contrivance—a phoney crisis deliberately fomented for unworthy ends" (p. 12). Students would be well advised to study this commentary very closely.

The essays in the final section deal with three important dilemmas facing contemporary educators. Kas Mazurek and Nick Kach in "Multiculturalism, Society and Education" begin their discussion with a fair-minded but quite devastating critique of multicultural education, underscoring the incredible lack of precision in the various definitions of this concept. Introduced as a cultural ideal to help foster national unity, multiculturalism has moved on (or declined) to become a battleground between the various ethnic groups and the francophones for control of scarce resources. Some of its critics (not the least being the late René Levesque) regard multiculturalism as a means of containing the demands of the francophones while

others view it as a deliberate technique to mask many of the injustices in Canadian society. The noble vision has degenerated into a nasty political squabble. Still these authors endorse the original intention and argue that schools have a definite role to play in realizing it. Yet some readers might come away with a feeling that multiculturalism has been a disaster—and an expensive one at that.

In his essay, "Equality of Opportunity: Reality or Myth?," Jon Young takes another look at the old liberal dogma of equality of opportunity. Trotting out the evidence of numerous studies, he convincingly shows that this policy simply has not been successful. Policymakers have gone at it the wrong way. What is needed are reforms that will bring about a greater degree of equality of condition. What chance has this approach in these days of triumphant neo-conservatism? Probably, not very much!

In the last piece, "Education and the Future of Work," Don Dawson discusses the intimate relationship many commentators claim exists between schooling and the world of work. Dawson agrees that a link did exist in

the industrial era but he senses that a divorce is appearing in the post-industrial world. What can schools do to help students prepare for employment in this vastly changing environment? Giving all adolescents a general education rather than streaming them into technical, commercial, or vocational programmes lies at the heart of his remedy. What is a general education? How does this prepare youths for the world of work? These are questions Dawson unfortunately does not answer. Yet, the arguments and the evidence he uses should force prospective teachers to think seriously about the purpose of education and their role in training citizens for a future society.

In fact, current education students may well find many of the conclusions offered in these last essays very disturbing. Many of them run counter to popular mythology. Hopefully, this entire collection will force students to re-evaluate the connections between school and society.

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