

en évidence par ces historiens étant ignorés. Des oublis notables caractérisent aussi les pages consacrées aux années 1976-1989, années dites de "consolidation." Par exemple, l'auteur passe sous silence les nombreuses remises en question du système scolaire québécois, qu'il s'agisse, entre autres, de l'enseignement secondaire général et professionnel ou du statut des commissions scolaires.

L'ouvrage s'avère également fort décevant au niveau de la présentation. Comment expliquer que l'auteur, assisté, de surcroît, d'un ordinateur, n'ait pas jugé bon d'ajouter un index ou, à tout le moins, un plan détaillé à son livre? Ces omissions et l'absence de subdivisions à l'intérieur des chapitres rendent la lecture de l'ouvrage souvent très difficile. Enfin, la pauvreté de la langue complique aussi la tâche du lecteur. La révision du texte à l'aide du dictionnaire électronique a heureusement permis la suppression des fautes d'orthographe. Cette révision n'a cependant pas éliminé les fautes de grammaire et de syntaxe dont le texte fourmille. Une ponctuation déficiente, des temps et des accords de verbes incorrects constituent les erreurs les plus flagrantes, sans parler des clichés beaucoup trop nombreux. L'ordinateur personnel Macintosh et les récents logiciels de traitement de textes sont de merveilleux outils. Ils ne sauraient toutefois suppléer à la méconnaissance de la langue et à l'absence d'une révision faite par un éditeur sérieux.

Cette faiblesse langagière, jointe à l'ignorance des auteurs cités plus haut, nous incitent à déconseiller

l'achat de ce volume. La clientèle universitaire et le public cultivé auquel, manifestement, ce bref résumé s'adresse principalement, tireront davantage profit des grandes synthèses existantes et de la récente production en l'histoire de l'éducation au Québec.

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**Norman Henchey and Donald Burgess.** *Between Past and Future: Quebec Education in Transition.* Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1987. 294 pp., \$21.95, paper.

A description and analysis of contemporary developments in Quebec education is the stuff of *Between Past and Future* by Norman Henchey and Donald Burgess. The authors are eminently qualified to report on recent trends in education. Both are long-time professors of education at McGill University, having lectured and written on the topic. Moreover, their perspective is not confined to the theoretical and rarefied air of the university. Both have been active in the larger educational community, including service on provincial government committees.

The time frame of the book is the twenty-five year period from 1960 to the middle of the 1980s; its chapter organization is thematic. To the credit of the authors, the reader is not parachuted into the period without some preparation. The first two chapters—an introduction to Quebec society and an overview of the

province's educational past—equip the reader with a social and educational road map so that he can follow the direction of current educational developments. Subsequent chapters deal with the administration and organization of elementary, secondary, and higher education, adult education, teacher education, and school finance. The last two chapters of the book, clearly the most impressive of the lot, focus on policy issues rooted in the past and those giving evidence of emerging in the near future. A glossary of key terms, selected laws and regulations, up-to-date bibliography, and an index effectively round out the work.

The book is a welcome addition to the educational literature of Quebec since it fills an important gap, there being no work that comprehensively treats educational developments since 1960. Its usefulness also resides in the ability of the authors to make sense of the complicated and inscrutable world of Quebec society and education. We do not need Meech Lake politicians to remind us that Quebec is a "distinct society." The phenomenon of a dominant francophone population and a small but vibrant anglophone one with its own network of institutions gives Quebec its cultural uniqueness. Nowhere is this uniqueness more striking than in education. For those looking at Quebec education from the outside, the view can be bewildering at the very least, what with learning appearing to suffer from a split personality. School boards and schools are divided along religious (Catholic and Protestant) and language (French and English) lines.

The decision of the authors to launch their discussion around 1960 is historically relevant. The decade of the 1960s is recognized as a watershed in Quebec history, marking the province's break with the past and its rendezvous with the future. The period saw the displacement of a society anchored in conservatism and confessionalism by one oriented to change and modernism. The shift from a traditional to a modern state within the decade is popularly known as the Quiet Revolution since rapid and far-reaching reforms were effected without the accompanying broken heads.

Of all institutions of provincial life, none was more profoundly affected by the reformist tendencies of the Quiet Revolution than education. Before the decade was out the education system had been completely overhauled. In short, a traditional, elitist, church-dominated school system was supplanted by a popular, democratic, and largely state-directed one. And although the pace and depth of school reform slowed in the following decades, the spirit of reform has continued up to the present.

The commitment of the province to reform learning at every level was signalled by the creation in 1961 of a royal commission on education, popularly known as the Parent Commission. Composed of prominent citizens, the commission was given the mandate of reporting on all aspects of education in the province. Five years and five volumes later the commission completed its work, recommending along the way a revamping of the school system in line with the needs of

a society evolving towards modernity. Unlike other royal commission reports, that of the Parent Commission was not quietly shelved; in fact it became the inspiration and blueprint for massive changes in education.

Responding to a recommendation of the Parent Commission, the government established a Ministry of Education in 1964, signifying the replacement of the church by the state in education and the attempt to bring a measure of coherence and co-ordination to learning across the province. Other reforms were to follow in the decade, mostly of a structural and institutional nature. Secondary and post-secondary education were reorganized and expanded. New high schools were fashioned along comprehensive lines and classical colleges and other post-secondary institutions were supplanted by new two and three-year colleges known as CEGEPs. At the same time, the period saw the establishment of the University of Quebec, a public university system with branch campuses around the province. Teacher education underwent major changes. The more than one hundred normal schools were suppressed and teacher preparation became the responsibility of the universities. The central purpose of the great school reform of the 1960s was to make education more accessible to more youngsters by removing economic barriers and redesigning school structures. To that end it succeeded.

The decade of the 1970s was characterized by educational developments of a different order, arising out of the politics of linguistic

nationalism. In the fear that French language and culture were at increased risk, the Quebec government passed legislation aimed at strengthening the French language in all sectors of provincial life. Education was an integral part of the legislation. The education clauses of the Charter of the French Language or Bill 101 of 1977 were intended to expand the French-language community by steering immigrants, francophones, and others into French-language schools. This was achieved by restricting admission to English schools to children whose parents had educational roots in Quebec. The decline in English school enrolments since the late 1970s may in large part be attributed to the impact of Bill 101.

Two educational issues have preoccupied reformers in the 1980s: curriculum revision and school board reorganization. It had become clear by the late 1970s that all was not right with the work of the schools, as reflected by public dissatisfaction with the quality of education offered in the elementary and secondary schools. A recurring refrain was that the products of the education system were ill-prepared to cope with the challenges of a changing world. Too many youngsters were leaving school without having mastered the basic subjects and were lacking the tools for learning how to learn. In response to a loss of public confidence in the school, the Quebec Cabinet adopted the *régimes pédagogiques* in 1981, a series of regulations at the centre of which was a new curriculum for the province's elementary and secondary schools. In brief, the *régimes* provided

that all youngsters follow a common, largely academic program, with little provision being made for elective courses. The new curriculum subscribed to the "back to basics" philosophy of education.

The 1980s also witnessed attempts to restructure school boards along dual language (French and English) lines in the belief that the division of boards along Catholic and Protestant lines was anachronistic, no longer reflecting the social reality of present-day Quebec. However, attempts to modernize school board structures floundered on political and constitutional grounds.

*Between Past and Future* is not without flaws. One problem is not that the authors fail to meet their objective of producing a broad and comprehensive treatment of contemporary education in Quebec, but that they succeed only too well. Their attention to detail, as reflected by the abundance of statistical data, figures, lists, graphs, and the like, is at once impressive and smothering. At times the work more closely resembles a government report than an academic essay, making it difficult for the reader to separate the important from the trivial. One wonders where the editor was in the production of the book.

Despite the completeness of the work, one can always find evidence of neglected areas. For example, one would have wished for a more systematic treatment of private education—perhaps even a chapter—if only because Quebec boasts the largest and most dynamic private school network in Canada, involving almost ten per cent of the province's

school-age population. Also missing is a discussion of the educational impact of France on Quebec over the last several decades. Thanks to a France-Quebec rapprochement in the 1960s, the two governments have worked closely together in education. It has been suggested elsewhere that Quebec's penchant for educational centralization is in part traceable to the influence of France's bureaucratic model.

On balance, however, *Between Past and Future* is a quality piece of work, showing evidence of having been carefully researched. The authors have something to say and they say it well, though their obsession for facts and figures sometimes gets in the way. Still, better to err on the side of thoroughness than on the side of neglect. In any case, the book is required reading for an understanding of Quebec education since 1960 and the social forces impinging upon it.

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**Michael R. Welton, ed. *Knowledge for the People: The Struggle for Adult Learning in English-Speaking Canada 1828-1973*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Press, 1987. 187 pp., illus., \$24.00, paper.**

This volume is not a history of adult education for the period indicated in the title, as might be assumed. It is rather a series of nine essays, each on an aspect of the subject. It is a stimulating series of papers, generally