entirely devoted to the struggle of the Jewish community to obtain equal access to public education in Montreal at the beginning of this century. Other than quoting Mordecai Richler on growing up Jewish in Montreal in the 1930s, missing is any discussion of what young people themselves thought about these battles, and how they experienced schooling in Protestant institutions before and after reform. In this respect *Children of the Canadian Mosaic* contrasts unfavourably with *The Forces Which Shaped Them*. The earlier work, despite an explicit focus on school provision, used adult statements about childhood experiences to great effect. For example, writing in a era before much research on First Nations' schooling, Professor Ashworth quoted George Manual's comments on his experiences of residential schooling. Similarly, her chapter on Doukhobors was careful to present statements from Doukhobor parents and children about their experiences or their perceptions of schooling, in some cases making use of original oral history interviews as well as archival sources. Yet, except for the Richler example discussed above, it is precisely such statements that are absent from *Children of the Canadian Mosaic*. Rather than the voices of children themselves or adult remembrances of childhood experiences, only official views of children's conditions and needs emerge from the text.

The premise that guides the selection of the vignettes that make up the book is also disturbing. Missing are any accounts of what might be called "children of the mainstream." For example, Quebecois children are only discussed in the chapter on New France. Except for child immigrants from Britain during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, English Canadian children are also invisible. This introductory work may consequently leave its readers with a sense that "The Mosaic" is only made up of racial and ethnic others.

*Children of the Canadian Mosaic* further ignores the common experiences of childhood—work, loss of family members, rites of passage, adult misunderstanding. Rather than establishing the likenesses as well as differences that underlie the experiences of children from all ethnic backgrounds, it leaves readers with no basis for assessing the significance of the experiences it does discuss. Were they representative of that particular time and place or were they shaped by particular ethnic assumptions? Indeed one has little basis for understanding how the children's ethnicity made their experiences unique. By not making historical comparisons, this book by default accepts an unstated contrast with a romanticized and "normalized" childhood today.

This failure to establish likenesses as well as differences is not a mere quibble for a book of this nature. For many readers, it will be the only book they read on the topic. One would consequently hope that whatever its other strengths and weaknesses, it would live up to its declared intention of incorporating children of diverse ethnic backgrounds into Canada's his-

tory. Instead it ends up contributing to their marginalization.

Timothy J. Stanley
University of British Columbia

**George Emery. *Facts of Life: The Social Construction of Vital Statistics, Ontario, 1869 - 1952*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993. Pp. xv, 243. $39.95 cloth.**

George Emery's *Facts of Life* is the first work in over sixty years to consider systematically the development of civil registration and vital statistics in Canada. While the book focuses particularly upon Ontario's vital statistics, Emery draws comparisons with death classifications in Quebec and other provinces. Besides, for much of his period, Ontario was part of a national registration system.

Emery's first concern is to detail the evolution of Ontario's vital statistical resources and to evaluate their quality and completeness. Through a case study of death registration in Ingersoll, he suggests a method for the revision of defective mortality statistics. He discusses the effects of changing social policies on birth registrations, investigates the effects of changing definitions of infant death and stillbirth on returns, and, in the case of maternal deaths, examines the determinations of causes of death used by physicians and government statisticians. Finally, he probes the problem of residence allocation in the vital statistical enterprise.

As the subtitle of the work suggests, Emery also attends to the relations among social and bureaucratic organization, political projects, and vital statistics as a body of official knowledge. In this regard, his work is clearly situated in an anti-positivist historical methodology, and on a number of occasions it evidences an appreciation of the reflexive character of official knowledge. Thus, for example, the centralization of medical services in urban hospitals is seen to shape the reporting of places of birth and death, and to lead to bureaucratic conventions of administrative re-allocation. Again, in a slightly different vein, pro-natalist and pro-nativist interests are held to have encouraged complete reportings of mother's parity on birth registrations but not on death certificates, and to have heightened the interest of officials in reducing maternal and infant mortality more generally. Emery asserts that the generation of statistical information is a matter of state power and of state formation, a proposition, however, which is not pursued systematically in the book.

Despite careful attempts at idiot-proofing, some of Emery's methodological arguments are hard going for the non-demographer, harder still for readers like me who are prone to confuse SPSS with SPCA. So why should sociologists and historians of education pay attention to a book on the history of vital statistics? For solid historical and theoretical reasons.

The public educational project was itself a leading part of the nineteenth-century statistical movement,

This is a useful book offering an example of the benefits to be gained from good regional history.

J. Donald Wilson
University of British Columbia

**Mary Ashworth. *Children of the Canadian Mosaic: A Brief History to 1950*. Toronto: OISE Press, 1993. Pp. 159. $26.85 Can. paper.**

In her introduction to *Children of the Canadian Mosaic*, Mary Ashworth notes that "Canada has never been a childless nation, though some history books might leave that impression." Yet the disjunction between the presence of young people in Canada's past and their invisibility in our written history runs throughout this book.

*Children of the Canadian Mosaic* does not claim to be an exhaustive survey of childhood in Canadian history. Rather, it presents the experiences of certain groups through what Ashworth calls "vignettes along the line of time." Intended for the non-historian, it is attractively packaged and written in a lively style that is always sympathetic to the children who are caught in the midst of adult contrivances. No doubt it will find much use in high schools and in the introductory university courses for which it is designed.

Yet the work is disappointing, especially to those readers who are familiar with Professor Ashworth's pioneering study of the educational histories of minority children in British Columbia, *The Forces Which Shaped Them*. Like the earlier work, *Children of the Canadian Mosaic* includes chapters on First Nations people, Chinese, Japanese, and Doukhobors living in British Columbia. New chapters discuss the children of New France and the children of the fur trade, black children, Jewish children, Ukrainian children, street children, and "home children." First Nations' experiences are discussed in separate chapters, one on the time of European contact and one on residential schools.

As might be expected in a work examining the experiences of several ethnic groups at different points in time, many chapters in *Children of the Canadian Mosaic* depend heavily upon secondary sources. Not surprisingly, therefore, the resulting accounts are uneven in their effectiveness in capturing childhood experiences. While in many instances this unevenness can be traced to the field as a whole, the secondary research that Professor Ashworth draws upon is often highly selective. For example, her chapter on Japanese schooling cites nothing published later than 1976. However disturbing this may be to the specialist, insofar as she is presenting "vignettes" rather than a survey, this selectivity need not be crippling to the work as a whole. More serious are the flaws in its organizing assumptions.

Most chapters are not about children at all. Instead, they are really discussions of adult efforts at reform and institutional provision for children. The chapter on Jewish children, for example, is almost