

## Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

Ronald Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas: Canadian Educational Policy in Historical Perspective*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994. Pp. 350. Can\$19.95 paper, Can\$50.00 cloth.

This is something of a blockbuster—a lengthy, detailed and comprehensive study of Canadian education covering the last century and a half. The book, 350 pages in length, is thoroughly researched—bibliography and notes run to 53 pages and include pretty well all the secondary material of the period; in addition, there are eleven tables, many covering a hundred years, on all aspects of federal and provincial educational finance. Manzer eschews a province-by-province survey in favour of generalizations about Canada as a whole, and attempts to impose order on the fragmented and fractious raw material of educational history by offering a schematic version of development based upon an historical series of educational projects. The book, however, is less a history than a policy study, and despite the title, the political ideas are overwhelmingly those of liberalism; conservative and socialist or social democratic ideas receive only a few mentions in passing.

Manzer sets out his liberal credentials (based on classical Anglo-French theory) early in the book. A key feature of his methodology is the highlighting of different strands of liberal thought: political liberalism, with the democratic political system as its focus of public policy; economic liberalism, with its stress on the importance of the capitalist market economy; and ethical liberalism, dedicated to the self-development of the individual. Although Manzer concentrates much of his policy analysis on the organization of provincial political authority, the relationship of central to local educational authorities, and interactions between central political authorities and organized educational interests such as provincial associations of teachers and trustees, he interweaves these themes with an historical schema based on his analysis of liberalism. He posits a succession of four separate (though overlapping) liberal educational projects. First, in the mid-nineteenth century, the foundation of public, civically oriented Canadian education based on the tenets of political liberalism, and forming an essential element of a new political nationality. Second, the project of economic liberalism, serving the requirements of industrial expansion of the later nineteenth century. This required the division of education into general, vocational, and academic groupings, mainly operative in the larger cities. In the early twentieth century multilateral schools offered “segmental equality”—that is, the schools replicated in their organization the occupational class structure of the industrial economy.

Economic liberalism was overlaid by ethical liberalism, the heyday of which latter began in the 1960s and became the paradigm for policy making in all provinces. Characterized by "person-regarding" programmes and methods, and aiming at the physical, intellectual, and emotional development of the individual, the ethical liberal project embraced comprehensive schooling with non-denominational religion and linguistic choice, policy interdependence in the administrative hierarchy, and openly debated cost provision.

Having delineated these manifestations of liberal policy, Manzer then adds a fourth—technological liberalism. From his description of the policy—the scientific-technological core curriculum, life-long learning, evaluation by international standards, and so forth, with the object of making Canada competitive in the global economy—this is clearly what is generally known as the corporate agenda of the New Right. But Manzer, presumably for the sake of symmetry, insists in including these policy proposals under the liberal rubric, while admitting they are not simply a revisionist version of the former liberalism but a "distinctive educational project."

This is a simplified version of Manzer's complex and detailed argument. Along the way he offers excellent surveys of two perennial problems of Canadian education—the role of the churches and the question of language policy—finding, as with the issue of governance, that Québec and Newfoundland form, and have formed, exceptions to the general rule in other provinces.

Yet, despite the undoubted riches to be found in the volume, I had reservations about the book as a whole. First, Canada is treated in virtual isolation. There is an almost complete lack of comparative perspective, although the inclusion of even a few relevant policy issues in the U.S.A. and Britain (neither of which appear in the index) would have greatly illuminated the argument. Canada's economic ties to the United States, for instance, have some relevance to the adoption of New Right policies during the last fifteen years or so—a connection that Lester Pearson pointed out in another context some time ago.

Second, although the book is essentially a policy study, there is little concern with how and why policies are formed: policies evolve, events happen, projects arise; conflicts and struggles over educational issues, though plentiful in the period covered, are absent from the narrative. Manzer apparently prefers the wisdom of Burke (history broadening down from precedent to precedent) to that of Engels (out of the conflict of innumerable wills arose something that nobody willed). This even-tenored development is compounded by a flat style, and a virtual absence of quotation, illustrative anecdote, or biographical sketch. The text is, in fact, hard going; but the

persistent reader will find scholarship, originality, and plenty to argue with therein.

Phillip McCann  
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Jean Hamelin. *Histoire de l'Université Laval: les péripéties d'une idée*. Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1995. Pp. 341.

D'où vient l'idée d'une université? Ou est-ce que ce n'est plutôt, comme le suggère Jean Hamelin, une idée qui se fait et se refait "au fil [des ans et] des événements"? On parle donc des péripéties d'une idée.

Sortir des archives poussiéreuses l'histoire d'une université et la rendre vivante et dynamique, c'est l'oeuvre de l'historien lavallois de renom, Jean Hamelin, dans *l'Histoire de l'Université Laval: les péripéties d'une idée*. On voit en tâtant et en analysant ce bijou que Hamelin s'est acquitté de sa tâche avec flair et avec élégance.

Fondée en 1852, et inaugurée en 1854, première université francophone des Amériques, l'Université Laval, institution humaine reflétant les péripéties idéelles de la société d'où elle est née, a évidemment toute une histoire à raconter. Celle-ci se raconte d'ailleurs dans le discours narratif, dans l'histoire événementielle, dans le récit humain—style discuté et adopté consciemment par Hamelin, qui lui permet de mieux cerner non pas seulement l'évolution d'une institution à vocation intellectuelle mais aussi la contribution humaine de ceux qui l'ont vécue et l'ont influencée.

Historien de marque, Hamelin a bien su faire joindre les deux bouts inextricablement reliés—le monde universitaire des idées et la société d'où elle jaillit. Il nous fait voir, par exemple, qu'à la façon d'Ortega y Gasset, l'Université Laval, si elle était une personne, aurait pu proclamer dès sa fondation: "Yo soy yo y mis circunstancias." Du côté des francophones, on a vu qu'au début, il fallait contrer les manigances d'une bourgeoisie anglophone montante qui retenait, avec la complicité du gouverneur britannique, Metcalfe, les leviers de contrôle du gouvernement "durhamien" du Canada-Uni des années 1840, laquelle coalition voulait supprimer le français par la voie assimilatrice du système d'éducation à tous ses paliers. En 1843, il se mijotait au parlement de Kingston des amendements des chartes du King's College (Toronto) et du McGill College (Montréal) ainsi que l'idée de la création d'une University of Upper Canada. Garantir par l'intermédiaire de l'éducation tertiaire un leadership exclusivement de langue anglaise des deux Canadas, c'était garantir la disparition du français comme langue du développement