

collection of quotations from this same body of documents. The treatment by theme minimizes the significance of changes over time and in light of the significant rise in corporate concentration during the period, combined with the creation of two distinct capital markets in French and English Canada during these years, this abstraction from history is to say the least disconcerting. If history is the explanation of change over time, then this study does not significantly advance our understanding of the history of the French-Canadian businessmen or their community. The people who are ostensibly the subject of this study are notable by their absence. The analysis of the membership and nature of the *Chambre de commerce* is in this regard woefully inadequate.

In all fairness, however, this is not a study in business history, let alone a critical evaluation of the nature of capitalist development in Montréal during these years. The purpose of the book is to show that there was a significant liberal world-view in the city at the time and that it was articulated in a coherent manner by the business press. Here, too, one can raise objections, this time however from within the perspective of the author. This study posits that possessive individualism is the basis for liberalism; therefore, if one finds statements consistent with a unified hierarchical value system based on possessive individualism, then one has found a liberal discourse. The problem is simple enough. The concept of possessive individualism, at least as defined by its author C.B. MacPherson, is not the exclusive preroga-

tive of liberal ideology. In his classic study, MacPherson argued that all seventeenth-century British political theorists, from Hobbes to the Levellers, shared this perception. Liberal theorists, like Locke, built on possessive individualism, as did all his non-liberal opponents, because, at least according to MacPherson, it is the only definition of man that is consistent with the functioning of a market economy. In short, possessive individualism is the basis of bourgeois philosophy, not just the liberal variant. Few would disagree that the *Chambre de commerce* and its affiliated newspapers maintained a bourgeois discourse; one would hardly expect them to be campaigning for either feudalism or socialism.

Fernande Roy concludes her critique of the existing literature by saying that in order to understand liberalism what was needed was a study that used a rigorously defined problematic, which reflected the specific historical context of Québec at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. I agree with her; we still need such a study.

Robert Sweeny  
Memorial University of Newfoundland

**Roy Lowe.** *Education in the Post-War Years: A Social History.* London and New York: Routledge, 1988. \$77.00.

“Social history” is a somewhat imprecise term, and the imprecision is

not lessened when education is the topic. Approaches can range from that associated with Trevelyan—history with the politics left out and educational developments added—to that of the “history from below” school, which focuses on the classroom experiences of pupils and teachers. Roy Lowe, in his study of English education in the twenty years following the second world war, follows neither but opts for a close analysis of social, economic, and demographic trends and the way in which they influenced or determined educational policy and practice. Lowe argues convincingly that despite the structural changes in English society and the unprecedented expansion of the educational system between 1945 and 1964, “power, prestige and wealth remained unequally distributed,” and that the school system developed in ways which confirmed “the deep social cleavages” characteristic of English society.

The increase in population, the rising birthrate, the growth of a home-owning middle and lower-middle class, the construction of new towns, suburbs, and overspill areas, combined with favourable terms of trade, increased production, and virtual full employment, were the context for a policy of educational expansion pursued by both Labour and Conservative governments. But despite more universities and more schools of all kinds, the heritage of the past was not fundamentally disturbed. The liberal-humane ethos of Oxford and Cambridge remained supreme, permeating the new universities and the grammar schools, and the new secondary modern schools, inferior in staff-

ing and facilities, remained the preserve of working-class children; the new “comprehensive” schools—similar to the Canadian high schools—had to fit into a system wherein educational provision had long mirrored social stratification.

The 1944 Education Act, which provided the blueprint for the post-war educational structure, had as its centrepiece the concept of secondary education for all—but not in one single type of school but in three—grammar, technical, and secondary modern—on the assumption (inherited from psychologists of the 1930s) that there existed three types of pupil: academic, technical, and practical. Many politicians and educators genuinely believed that this provision would provide for all children an education suited to their age, ability, and aptitude. The independent sector—comprising the so-called “public schools” was, however, left untouched.

The crux of Lowe’s argument is that the post-war educational settlement, embodying improvements in the primary sector, a vast increase in the number of secondary schools, and the construction of a number of new universities, was less a democratic revolution than an expansion contained within the existing class structure. He demonstrates that the opening up of secondary, university, and further education to greater numbers, though a welcome social benefit, should not be construed as an advance to a classless society.

This is particularly evident in Lowe’s treatment of the growth of a new type of school, the “comprehensive”—an “all-in” institution similar

to the Canadian high school. He argues that the growth and function of these schools was determined by the spread of suburbia, in which many were built. Ostensibly catering for all children regardless of ability or social origin, the comprehensives, Lowe suggests, in fact became a mechanism for sifting pupils from different social backgrounds; the children of upwardly-mobile, lower-middle-class parents filled the academic streams, and those of the working-class the non-academic streams. In this way the schools confirmed life-chances rather than changed them. The advance of comprehensive education was thus distorted by having to take place "within, and as part of, a deeply divided educational system rather than as its replacement." Similarly, the new universities, despite aping Oxbridge's liberal-humanist ethos, never achieved parity of esteem with the old universities, and remained largely the preserve of provincial grammar school students. Oxford and Cambridge continued to absorb the bulk of their intake from the largely upper-class public schools.

A brief review cannot do justice to the clarity and intricacy of Lowe's argument; deftly blending economic and demographic data with statements from governments, political parties, public bodies, and the educational press, he has written a forceful narrative which is a pleasure to read. My one reserve is that he sometimes veers towards economic and demographic determinism in his depiction of educational expansion. Was the growth of comprehensive schools, for instance, "predetermined" by the increase in

numbers of upwardly-mobile suburbanites? Or was it largely due to the hard-fought political battles by the labour movement (whose ideal of secondary education for all went back to the nineteenth century) and progressive teachers and educationists? On the whole, however, Lowe is correct in showing how the deeply ingrained educational heritage of elite education, and the solidly based class structure, proved resistant to the democratisation of the educational system in a period of expansion. Histories of education too often present educational progress as occurring in a social vacuum; this book is a model of how to integrate the growth of schooling with socio-economic developments. Canadian educators and teachers may be surprised at the extent to which educational provision in England is conditioned by social stratification, but this may be one of the best reasons for including *Education in the Post-War Years* in bibliographies of courses in the history and sociology of education.

Phillip McCann

Memorial University of Newfoundland

Lee Stewart. *"It's Up to You": Women at UBC in the Early Years*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990. Pp. 176, illus. Cloth \$29.95, paper \$19.95.