



*the B.C. teacher*

NOVEMBER 1973

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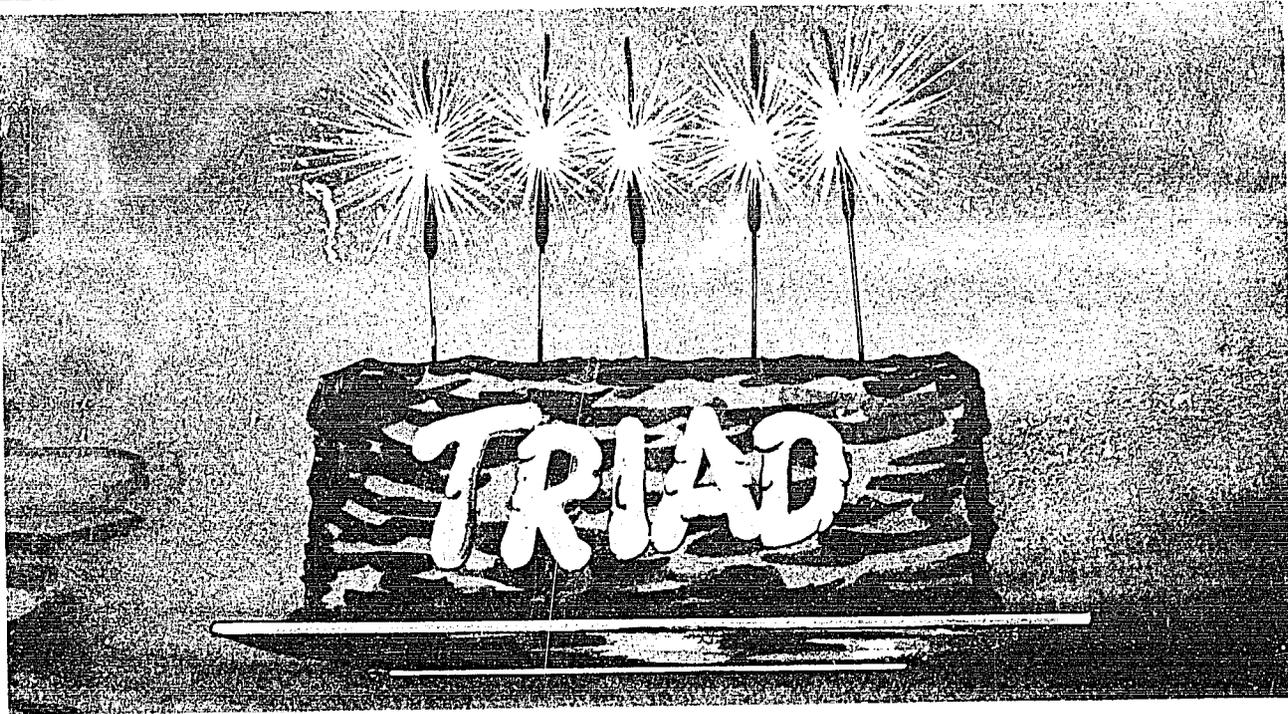
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NOVEMBER 1973

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Most of us recognize fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*) when we see it growing wild; but do we ever see it quite this way? Photograph by courtesy of MacMillan Bloedel Ltd.

## PHOTO CREDITS

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# From our readers

## Project Overseas— A Wonderful Experience

I would like to thank the BCTF most sincerely for its part in making it possible for me to be a member of Project Overseas 1973.

It was a wonderful experience, one of the richest experiences of my teaching career. Not only will that experience affect my educational concerns, but it has also added greater depth and another dimension to life.

The success of our stay in Addis Ababa can be attributed to many things, two of which I would like to specify. First, our leader, Neil Noecker, was most efficient and diplomatic in the total situation. Second, our team consisted of concerned dedicated teachers who worked hard and played hard.

Our teaching responsibilities were challenging and not without frustration, but very rewarding.

I am proud to be a member of the B.C. Teachers' Federation and the Canadian Teachers' Federation because they care about our counterparts in developing countries. I hope we continue to care and to share. There is great need and we have been blessed.

The tone or the pulse for Project Overseas '73 was set at the Orientation Program in Ottawa, where we heard challenging and inspiring messages. I was proud of our Federation in that we had the second largest group, a group

of 12. Six of those 12 went to Ethiopia. We won all arguments, educational, political, you name it!  
Chilliwack Kay McKinnon

## A Belated Compliment

May I take this belated, but ageless, opportunity to compliment you for publishing Eric Kelly's article 'A Plea for Common Sense' in your issue of November 1971.

His treatment of the word 'relevant' is most timely; and useful to those of us who do not think as clearly or express ourselves as cogently as he.

To me, Mr. Kelly has written not just a superior article but an important document. I am most grateful that someone of us with talent has finally come forward and shown courage, concern and compassion for our young people.

Vancouver Newton Grimmer

## Do You Teach Immigrant Children?

I am beginning a study of the education of non-English-speaking immigrant children in Canada. I shall be traveling across Canada during the next year meeting people and visiting various programs for New Canadian children.

Many classroom teachers not directly connected with specific programs to teach English as a second language are nonetheless concerned and interested. May I through your magazine, invite any teachers who would like to comment on either the problems surrounding the education of immigrant children or on the programs currently in operation, together with their own suggestions for improvement or change, to write to me at the Faculty of Education, University of B.C., Vancouver 8.

I shall welcome all comments and ideas.

Vancouver Mary Ashworth

## *We Shall Miss These Teachers*

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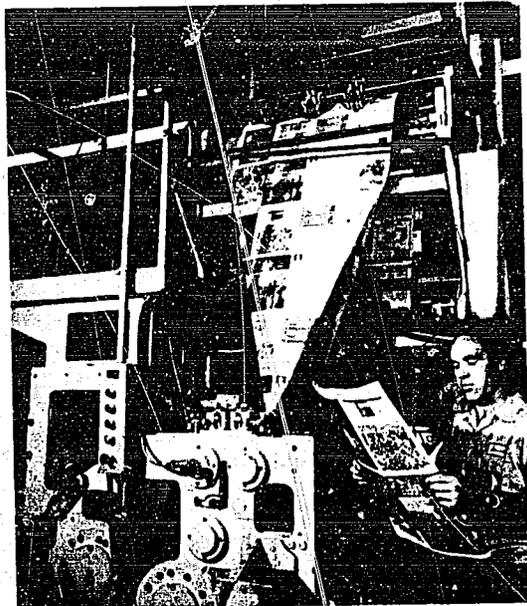
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# THE FIRST YEAR IN REVIEW

and a look at the future.

**The Minister of Education looks at her first year in office, and lists factors she believes will contribute to further changes in education.**

HON. EILEEN DAILY

Just over a year ago I assumed the portfolio of Minister of Education. During that year several changes have been made that I hope have improved and will continue to improve education in our province.

Three major concerns underlined the new developments in education. The first was to increase the humanization of the education system. A second concern was to increase the capacity of our system to respond to the changing needs in education. The third was to facilitate a more integrated and coordinated approach to the provision of essential services, particularly to children.

One of my first acts as Minister was to arrange for the release of special funds to school boards that were suffering almost critical situations, with very heavy class loads per teacher. This situation had come about because of very restrictive financial policies placed on boards in the previous year.

The B.C. TEACHER



I don't for one moment suggest that our situation with reference to class sizes and pupil-teacher ratios is now satisfactory, but I believe that the action 14 months ago showed that it was the government's policy to alleviate these very serious situations.

That action also reinforced the government's policy that heavy class loads are not desirable. There is an obvious relationship between smaller class sizes and quality education. It should be noted that there is also a distinct relationship between the instructional style displayed by the individual teacher and quality learning.

I also initiated very early in my first year a number of meetings with the B.C. School Trustees Association and the BCTF. I started off with joint meetings with both groups and took the opportunity to fill them in on planned possible changes in legislation that would affect both groups, and this is a policy I have continued this year.

This does not mean, of course, that the bodies are privy to the actual legislation the government is presenting, but surely before government brings in new legislation the bodies that are to be affected most by that legislation should be consulted.

During the spring session of the Legislature this year, I introduced legislation that made the provision of kindergarten services mandatory. It is not necessary to discuss for the readers of this magazine the rationale, importance and desirability of a wide-spread kindergarten program. Suffice it to say that kindergartens are now recognized as an integral part of the B.C. school system. Attendance is voluntary, but the service must be provided. The new kindergarten program stresses, among other things, the importance of early recognition and remedy of learning difficulties.

Last February I introduced in the Legislature changes in our regulations

of the Public Schools Act that would abolish the use of corporal punishment in the schools. In introducing this legislation to the House, I stressed the point that I could not preside over or condone a system in which physical violence was used. If we intend to humanize our school system, the methods used in that system must also be humane.

I would not be honest if I did not admit that this announcement has certainly not passed by without a considerable amount of discussion and controversy. I find that more people are coming to accept this regulation, and I am happy to say that teachers are also beginning to accept it. However, I found it almost incredible that people suggested to me that utter chaos and disorder would follow the removal of the strap.

I have also been most concerned with the number of teachers who have written to me and said: 'All right, you



removed the strap, but what do we do now?' The very fact that these teachers are asking me what to do points out that there must be some weakness or gaps in the teacher-training programs.

The area that is apparently being most neglected is that which helps the teacher recognize the individual differences of each child and the need to treat children in accordance with those differences. It is quite obvious that teachers who ask these questions are not prepared, and have not been given a background to prepare them for coping with the great variance of behavior of children in the classroom.

I am the first to admit that there are children in classrooms who cannot be handled by the regular classroom teachers. These are children who need outside assistance and other resources to determine the cause of their behavior and learning problems. This is an area in which I feel government, not the teacher, should assume responsibility.

To make this assistance available the government last year established a 'Children's Committee,' a Ministers' committee made up of the Ministers of Health, Human Resources and Education. Its purpose is to integrate services to children.

Important as education is to the whole future development of the child, education alone is not the determining factor in the child's future. What happens to the child in his/her home, what kind of environment the home provides, in what income bracket that child is living — are all determining factors in the child's progress and success.

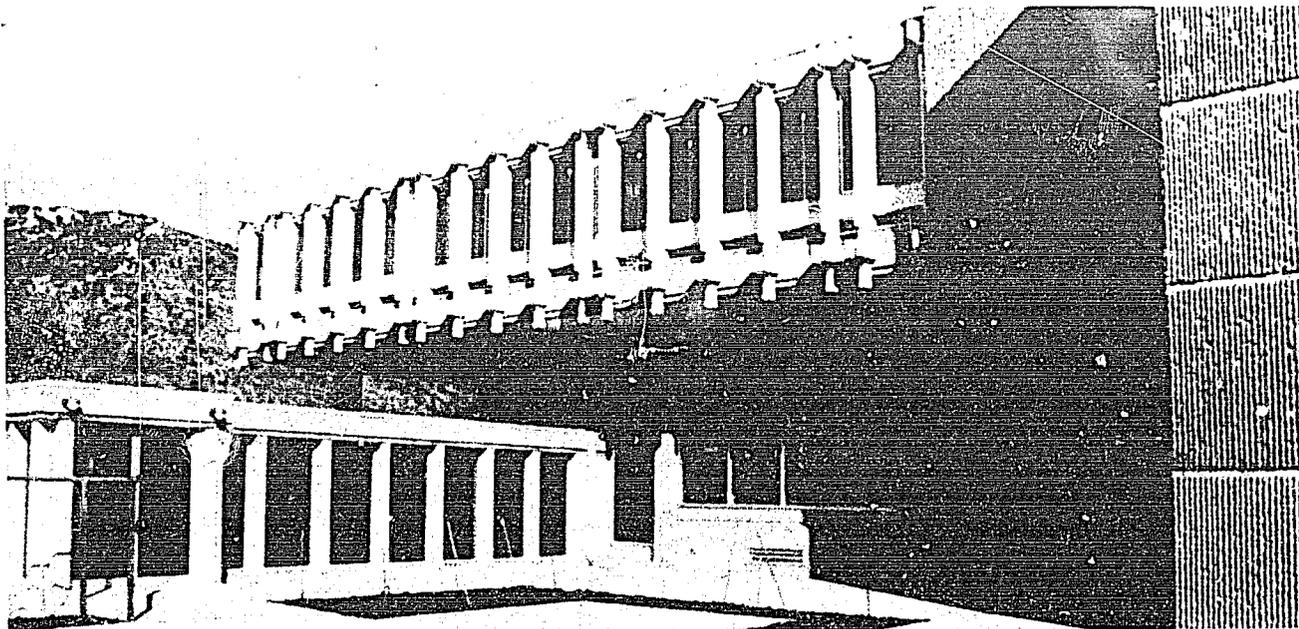
The influence of the teacher remains, however, a very strong factor in the personality development of children and, of course, their ability to achieve.

When I am speaking to young student teachers I always say, 'If you don't like kids, don't go into teaching.' Somehow there must be a way of weeding out, very stringently, those young people who basically do not like children. They should not be allowed in our classrooms.

We have brought about changes in the organization of our secondary school curriculum that place at the school level the authority and responsibility for programming. We have also made provision for locally developed courses with provincial approval. Over 100 such courses have been developed and approved.

I am very pleased to see, and I have tried to encourage, the development of courses in political education, courses that have been sadly lacking in this province. This, of course, does not involve partisan political teaching. The

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Community colleges, among them Selkirk College, are making a substantial social impact. They served over 100,000 people last year.

purpose of the courses is to ensure that our voting-age graduate has been given a proper background in the political area and basic understanding of the different political structures in his/her own province and country.

This coming year we shall be abolishing regular Departmental examinations for secondary school graduation purposes. We are substituting an increased program of survey testing and accreditation for our secondary schools.

I believe very strongly that the abolition of these examinations can do nothing but improve the quality of teaching and give the individual teacher an opportunity to be more flexible, innovative and original in the teaching process.

We have also encouraged new policies with reference to family life education programs, which were really being done in an 'under-the-table,' cover-up situation before I took office. These studies have the objective of assisting young people to acquire what we hope will be a helpful understanding and knowledge of themselves and their relationships with others. Any secondary school curriculum today that neglects family life education is, in my opinion, woefully inadequate.

It happens to be my philosophy that the Department of Education should give broad guidelines to teachers and to school boards. The edicts and regulations imposed by a Department of Education should be minimal.

I believe it is most important to maintain the independence of school boards, which should reflect the needs of the community. I also believe we

must maintain the independence of the teacher.

However, I believe that when it comes to the financing of schools, the approval of school sites, new schools, new institutions of higher learning, etc., a Minister must have definite policy, not just broad guidelines. To that end the Department has made a major change in the provision for financing the capital requirements of the public school system.

Prior to this year, school boards were limited to planning one year ahead for their building needs. During that year they had to: (1) obtain Departmental approval of their requirements, (2) obtain the necessary funding authority from their own electors, and (3) undertake the planning and construction of the buildings.

During the past year, we sent out Departmental teams to assist boards to plan and arrange the funding for their anticipated needs for *three* years. This will commit school boards to avoiding expensive short-term solutions to immediate problems by planning facilities that are compatible with longer-range developments.

Each year, beginning next February, the Departmental survey team will review the implementation of the three-year plan to assist boards in making any adjustments that are necessary because of changed circumstances.

We are also in the process of changing the school building regulations to facilitate modern design and construction methods, and to eliminate the rigidities that have created difficulties

in providing for various sizes of instructional groupings.

Also included is the provision for gymnasiums in elementary schools with 75 or fewer pupils.

In conjunction with the size of schools we have been taking a critical look at the trend toward amalgamation and consolidation, where the result would be the construction of unduly large elementary and secondary schools and the transportation of pupils over long distances. It may well be that the smaller school close to its immediate community has educational and other values of more importance than the expensive curriculum offerings and facilities provided by a larger school. For example, our new policy strongly recommends that no elementary school should exceed an enrollment of 600 pupils.

I should like now to discuss briefly our community colleges.

The community college movement began in B.C. about 10 years ago. As we examine the developments that have taken place during that decade, it is obvious that community colleges represent a significant departure from the traditional educational enterprise with which we are all familiar.

They are indeed a new social phenomenon, exemplifying a popular, democratized movement arising out of local community desire to open up post-secondary educational opportunities to all citizens. With their open-door admission policies, and their comprehensive curricula, they address themselves to the needs of *all* citizens in the communities they serve, and they

change significantly the very quality of life in those communities.

It is clear that they are making a very substantial social impact. Last year, for example, well over 100,000 people were directly served by the community colleges in B.C. Of these, some 32,000 were enrolled in technical/vocational or career programs, 12,000 in academic transfer programs, over 15,000 in preparatory programs, and over 46,000 in continuing education and community service programs.

These figures indicate that community colleges are not predominantly academic institutions. Although many students are being given the opportunity to study first- and second-year university courses in their home centers, many more are enrolling in technical/vocational and other career-type programs. It seems to me even more important that more than 15,000 students registered last year in preparatory courses, showing that the colleges represent a re-entry route into the education system for people who would otherwise continue to lack the necessary qualifications for further vocational, technical or academic training.

#### Colleges Have Done Well

To date, most of our colleges have been operating in temporary or makeshift quarters. They have been very resourceful in using whatever community facilities are practical or possible for them to use. (Research carried out by our Division of Post-secondary Education identified over 400 of these now in use by the nine colleges.)

Given the fact that they have been housed in less than adequate quarters, the accomplishments of the colleges to date are truly remarkable. I believe, however, that their further development will be seriously retarded if we do not move now to provide them with permanent core-campus facilities, which are essential if they are to fulfill their mission.

I therefore announced recently the start of a capital development program that will provide as quickly as possible the essential educational facilities required by each college over the next five years.

Included will be provision for the acquisition of sites, buildings and equipment, the development of community college facilities to serve the large Fraser Valley area, the expansion of present college regions and the development of delivery systems so that post-secondary educational opportunities can be made available to every part of this province.

I believe that the involvement of the

community in education is essential if we are going to develop education according to the needs of our citizens. It is to this end that I have appointed a Commissioner on Education and established a Commission on Education in this province.

There have been many fine commission reports emanating from other provinces in Canada that are very interesting and significant documents. How-

ever, we felt that in B.C. at this time we did not want just one general, formal structured investigation of education. We wanted to create a 'living' Commission on Education. I appointed John Bremer as the Chief Commissioner on Education. Mr. Bremer's chief objective is to be a catalyst educator, to cause public discussion at every level of education in this province. He has set up two advisory commissions.



*As children grow, the public school system will have to provide far more choices and options than those now available to them. These new programs will create new space demands.*

One of the areas that has been identified to date is the need for a look at the internal and external governance of our universities, and a special technical task force is now in the process of preparing recommendations to me on a revised University Act for the province. This particular group will be involving the public and the universities in the preparation of these recommendations.

Very shortly a similar group will examine new legislation for a new Community College Act. At the present time community colleges are governed by the Public Schools Act.

The whole area of the public schools is also being examined this fall. The school boards of the province will be asked to set up public meetings throughout their communities with parents and students to discuss the present curriculum and how it is or is not meeting the needs of our students in secondary schools.

We are hoping that following these discussions recommendations will be presented to the advisory commissions, which in turn will report to me, through the Commissioner, possible recommended changes in the secondary school curriculum and perhaps in the whole structure of the secondary school as it now exists. The commissions have set up a student task force to examine the need and the involvement of students in the structure of our schools.

Following what is hoped will be the creation of a new public philosophy and direction for education in the province, we shall be examining the need for a new formula for financing education, which will no doubt be essential if we are to achieve new educational objectives.

I am the first one to admit, as Minister, that it is most difficult to get a consensus on any public philosophy for education. However, I feel it is essential that the public (the citizens of the province, of all ages) should have an opportunity to provide some input into the direction in which education should go before government imposes new directions upon it.

In other words, it is essential, especially in the area of education, that parents in particular be aware of the rationale and need for change before change is brought about. The problems of education today and for the future are far too complicated and involve far too many interests and forces ever to be solved by a single authority, be it the government or the profession.

To conclude this article I should like

to discuss briefly some of the future demands on education and to list for your consideration some factors I believe may play a part in changing the education system in which your children and grandchildren may function in the remaining three decades of this century.

I believe that school boards, educators and Ministers of Education are going to find themselves increasingly involved with the provision of expanded early childhood education. It is really impossible, and certainly not consistent with the development of education, to think that we can dissociate ourselves from what happens to the child in the very early years.

We are going to find demands upon us to establish a far greater choice of facilities and services in which parents may enroll their children for early childhood education. I believe the diversity that characterizes our society today, and will be increasingly evident in the future, will probably be reflected in how early childhood education evolves in our country.

There will also be increasing demands upon our resources to provide increased educational opportunities for citizens of our province with special needs. I am thinking here not only of those in the low income range, but also of our native Indians who have not received the backing and the resources they needed to enable them to take full advantage of education in our province. The native Indians of this province are the first ones to say that they are not special people, but they do have special needs.

We have figures to show how very few of our native Indians achieve university standing, how few are teachers in this province and how many are drop-outs from our school system. This is an area into which we must enter, in cooperation with the native Indians, to eliminate the barriers that obviously have been placed before them.

I believe we shall find increased demands for the public school system to provide far more choices and options than those now available. The monolithic, public, democratic schools served an important purpose in the early decades of this century in drawing together the citizens of our country, but a monolithic structure is very unreal in the kind of society we seem to be moving into — an affluent society that respects variations in human personality and recognizes different levels of aspiration must try to develop many different kinds of options within the system.

I believe that the whole area of teacher supply and demand must be looked

at closely for the future. This means that schools of education must look much more closely at revising their programs to recruit more teachers for the disadvantaged and gifted and other groups with special needs.

The teaching profession itself shows signs of undergoing stresses and changes, as are many other professions. The future directions are not clear even to the profession itself. However, it is obvious that teachers will find increasing demands on them to create classroom learning situations that will help young people to master concepts necessary to survive in a rapidly changing world.

To do this they will require assistance from administrations and school boards and government. Thus I believe there will be increased involvement of teachers in decision-making related to school budgets and legislative changes in education.

I believe we shall also see an increased involvement of parents in the professional and policy aspects of education, and this is likely to have special implications for school boards, administrators and teachers.

#### **New Attitudes Toward Education**

The attitudes with respect to the role of men, women, children, the family and schools are undergoing great changes — also our attitudes toward our work, leisure and what we often think is the quality of life. The changes in these attitudes are going to affect profoundly the future of education and its role.

Our society today is still utilizing only a fraction of the energy, training and ability, ideas and productivity of people — of women in particular. Changes in these areas will create educational developments many will not understand, perhaps many will not like. However, I think we shall have to concede that there will be changes to meet these new attitudes.

The whole area of lifelong learning will be gathering impetus in the coming years. The advent of affluence for some of our citizens (perhaps more than we have seen in the past), increased communications, developments in science and technology — all will continue to bring about demands for lifelong learning. There will obviously be greater demands on educators, school boards and departments of education across the country to create the environment for continued learning experience.

All these areas I foresee as *challenges* to meet. What are we going to do about these challenges? Are we prepared to meet them?

# THOSE FIRST SIX WEEKS

## AGONY AND ECSTASY

CAROLINE PARRY

**A fascinating diary account of the first six weeks of school for a beginning teacher in England. Teachers new to the profession will find solace in knowing that others have faced similar problems. Experienced teachers will re-live their own first weeks with some chuckles and perhaps the odd tear.**

Every teacher was a new teacher once, was probably worried and timorous about the first September morning, and was most likely afflicted with restless, perhaps sleepless, nights for weeks. Equally probable, most seasoned teachers must wince, at least inwardly, when they think back over their initial efforts at managing their very own class. I certainly do — in fact, I wince inwardly, grimace outwardly, and often shudder all over!

I began my professional career in England, after three years of working in schools with only a BA, but not a Teacher's Certificate, to my name. In 1970 I had finally taken a one-year course to qualify as a primary school teacher, and duly certificated, I returned to daily school life the next autumn. Despite my previous experience, I was as nervous and awkward as every other probationer that September.

In England a newly qualified teacher is called a probationer for his or her first year of teaching and is supposed to be under some supervision and to receive as much guidance as necessary all year. The headmistress (or headmaster) is supposed to report on the new teacher's general progress at regular in-

*The author is living in Victoria while her husband does research. She is, among other things, doing some volunteer work in the schools there.*

tervals, and a supervisor from County Hall, which is the English equivalent of the School Board, visits infrequently. There are also various special meetings for probationers to get together, get to know one another, and realize that they are not struggling alone.

Basically, however, I found that my probationary year was my own affair, and despite some special contacts, it was up to me whether I sank or swam as a teacher. One of the ways I tried to help myself keep my head above water that first year was to write a weekly diary. On Friday evenings I would sit down at the typewriter for a therapeutic hour or so, and relieve all my pent-up feelings — the accumulated thoughts, worries and delights of my week's work. Then, on Sunday evening when I prepared for the week ahead, I could be more objective. I would go back to my diary and list all the past week's actual achievements and, from that, project an outline of what I hoped to do over the next five days.

I had been appointed to a village school in the north of England, for children aged five to seven. As Infant Schools go, this one was relatively large, for its enrollment was more than 360 children in the summer term, and there were 10 full-time teachers, plus the headmistress and her secretary. My 29 6½-year-olds were a 'top infants'

class, because they were beginning their third and final year at the school, and would go on to the adjacent Junior School the following autumn.

The children came in to school at 9 o'clock every morning, and went home at 3:30 in the afternoon. I came to school at 8:30 and seldom went home before 5 p.m. — and even then I was laden with work to do that night, when I would have been far better off asleep! Most school mornings the top infants would gather with their age group, or with the entire school, for assembly, conducted by Miss Kirby, our headmistress. I used that short time to set up a display, hang pictures, organize the next lesson's materials, or discuss a problem with another teacher.

At noontime, although school meals were available (and subsidized), many children would walk home to dinner in the 1½-hour break. Sometimes I went for a walk myself, to try to collect my thoughts after a hectic morning, but once I'd eaten my own dinner, I usually had too much to do in the classroom.

There were also two daily playtime breaks, midmorning and midafternoon, each 20 minutes long. How I needed those breaks to catch my breath, refuel with a cup of tea, and get ready for the next round! Sometimes I would jot down bits in my diary during those brea-

The B.C. TEACHER

WEEK I: Tired. So tired. Almost too tired to actually talk to myself about this first week as a full-fledged teacher. Exhausted with the sheer physical labor of this week, and the unceasing mental striving, not to mention all the searching moments and conversations...

Physically, one of the reasons I am so tired is that I have been battling with a classroom that is too small, too dark, too dull! As I am the only new teacher this year, I guess I've been lumbered with the classroom nobody else wanted: a classic dungeon of schools vintage 1890. Eighteen feet wide, 23 feet long, and a ceiling so high I could have a second classroom above me. Three tall windows at sky level on the outside wall and a sheet of small panes from waist level to ceiling on the inside, corridor wall — I must get a frieze or something put up over those, so that I stop feeling like the newly-acquired goldfish and Miss Kirby stops peering in at me!

Despite all the windows, the natural light we get from them is inadequate to work by except on brilliant mornings, and for all we can see of the outside world, we might just as well have had no windows at all. The room is over the boiler house, furthermore, so it is often overheated. I open the creaky old windows to cool us down, but then as soon as someone opens the door galeforce draughts assault us, displays blow apart, papers fly, and my temper soars.

There are 15 pairs of wooden desks (a few of them simple tables with no storage space beneath), my own big desk, and several lots of shelves, drawers and cupboards to accommodate in this dungeon, and I cannot seem to find an arrangement for all these that permits the children to see the board *and* to get at the cupboards easily, without being roasted by the radiators in the process. The only extra space I've been able to create is a painting area down by the washbasin at the end of the corridor, which seems awfully far away.

The whole school building has been repainted inside this past summer and still feels fresh. However, someone must have thought that the lovely gay chartreuse paint along the corridor walls was not a suitable color for classrooms as well, so *my* walls are cream and chalkboard dull green. I am so frustrated with this color scheme, when I come in from the bright autumn now prevailing outdoors, that I have decided to paint the craft shelves, the wooden junk box and my desk ORANGE. I got permission to do so and set to work today after school — what a satisfying, positive action to take, especially on a Friday afternoon!



WEEK II: My orange paint certainly has brightened up our classroom, but on Monday morning the net effect was far from pleasing — the flipping stuff wasn't all dry! For two days I had to keep 29 curious children away from the most marvelous glossy and sticky surfaces imaginable. The fact that one of those surfaces was my own table created even more headaches: where to put my essential clobber and how to get at the vital materials inside the table?

At first I tried rational explanations and appeals. 'The paint isn't dry yet and it won't wash off your clothes, so please be careful, everyone,' I explained. Then I became more authoritarian: 'Ross, don't you dare touch that or I'll...!' Finally I smacked his adventurous hand, but quickly regretted it, because then I was covered in orange paint, too!

Ross...it had to be him. And it's not surprising that he is the first child I mention here, as he has absorbed about 90% of my attention since school began. I guess every teacher has at least one absolute horror of a child, but I'm tempted to think Ross is worse than most, and I've been saddled with him because nobody else could bear to have him — just like my tiny dungeon of a classroom. Ross has a twin sister, Kerry, who is also in my class — she's as bossy and fussy as he is obstinate and devilish, but at least she is on a work level commensurate with the rest of the class, whereas Ross hasn't a clue.

I'm trying to find out more about the twins' home background; so far, I've met both parents and think, without leaping to conclusions, that they seem very impatient with their children. Obviously, violence and force have been overused with Ross, and he needs quiet, firm discipline — but I am woefully loud, and not nearly firm enough, confident enough. He must sense my unsurety, for he constantly tries to provoke me with his behavior, taunting me

thing spells; other times I waited to spill it all out on Friday.

The first six weeks of the autumn term, until the half-term holiday (no long Thanksgiving weekend in England) were my real initiation period, and they were tough weeks. Not only was I constantly tense and tired, but my husband, who patiently absorbed all my woes every evening over supper, was also exhausted from trying to make me *less* tense and tired.

#### Many Problems Are Typical

Looking back on that first half-term now, and re-reading my stream-of-consciousness diary, I can see that I was confronting many typical problems that beset new teachers: exploring the nature of groups; deciding how to pattern the daily routine; establishing relationships with children and staff; debating my role as an authority figure and disciplinarian, and questioning many of my goals and assumptions. All these seemed much more immediate concerns than the actual content of the children's lessons, though that, too, worried me.

My diary was heavy with worries and problems those first six weeks. Perhaps the diary extracts below, from my writing during that period, will reassure a few beginners currently wondering if they will ever survive intact...

if I tell him off, interrupting when I try to give directions, heckling the other children. His emotions are too tangled to allow him any inner peace: he cannot learn, and meanwhile I have no peace...

**WEEK III:** I feel as if I am getting somewhere slowly with 'academic work,' with the material I am supposed to be teaching, but it has been done largely by feeling my way in the dark, and I fear me that things will continue this way for some weeks to come. All I have to build around is the official knowledge of which reading book each child is 'on' and the intuitive knowledge I'm fast gaining about each child's abilities and tendencies. At the same time I'm so overwhelmed by problems that are horribly immediate — like the wet paint last week, or the mistakes in my attendance register this week — that it is hard to build up an overall teaching/learning scheme...I've only finished giving a simple reading test to the whole class today... I must get down to making maths work cards, too — maybe Sunday afternoon...

Basically, I am planning each school day around an initial 'free choice' hour. As the children come in, they choose one of the creative activities laid out on the different tables: sewing, drawing, working on scrapbooks, working with clay, painting (out in the corridor space I have made), and so forth. I wanted to try this idea out while I was in college, but never could because I had to abide by already established timetables during teaching practice sessions.

It is an approach the primary specialist was very keen on; I've read about it in Sylvia Ashton-Warner's books: give children creative opportunities first and then structure their learning experiences from there. The initial creative output provides many children with a chance to blow off steam, necessary before there can be any input ... it's a kind of bridge time, between home and the emotional life of home, which the child leaves behind every morning, and school, which may make intellectual demands on the child that are premised on his emotional stability.

After this first hour, the children have their milk and settle down to do some writing (about their news or a topic we are working on), while I try to hear some readers in between giving spellings, encouragement, advice, scolding... This begins before playtime and carries on afterward until dinner time. Number work and math activities fill the afternoon until play time, and then we have stories, talk and songs to finish off with, to go home with...



I feel good about this last part of the day now, after play time. Everyone comes in to sit on the rug (an old one from home that brightens the floor up a lot), bunched together in a nice, slightly tired out group around me, the mother hen. We talk about things on the nature table, share news, examine books and toys the children have brought in, look at labels on pictures or captions on displays, and the children who can read them do so. Then we have a story and a song or two to finish off with.

I'm trying to read from their library books at present, so that they are more familiar with them themselves and feel they can 'read' the more difficult ones, have more interest in them, and enjoy them more. Songs in book form are very conducive to this, I've discovered. Our 'story time' is a happy, warm period that the children like and I like.

**WEEK IV:** A bad week. Probably a very bad week. Ross was so very bad that I got worse and worse with him three days running, hating myself more and more. Perhaps by today things have improved a bit, but then they *should* have, after the all-time low of Ross cheekily dancing on top of the desks during story-telling on Wednesday! He was too far away to grab, but too close to ignore, and I couldn't get the other children involved enough in our story to forget him. What they really wanted was to watch the showdown that eventually, inevitably, came. I lost my temper and just shook Ross, I'm ashamed to say, until I finally got myself under control and then it was hard not to cry. I never knew I had such a temper before...I have to laugh at myself for thinking I am a non-violent person — I was only non-provoked!

With so much of my attention and energy absorbed by Ross this week, I am really neglecting the rest of the class. The unfortunate results of this are that no one is concentrating on any-

thing, my voice is more and more strident, and at least two other major behavior problems are emerging. Not to mention the number of children who are not working to anywhere near capacity, I'm sure, and the number who are enjoying any chance to say, 'No, I don't want to...' I guess I feel too unsure of the children still to let them get on for themselves enough of the time, and I haven't yet given them adequate tasks, appropriate tasks, that they can get on with themselves.

This latter worry is an aspect of the whole issue of routine. The responsibility of establishing routines, procedures, standards, feels enormous, and I really didn't know where to begin when school began a month ago. The strain of this responsibility must be another factor in my overall fatigue: I must decide how we come in and go out; when we talk or don't talk; what we do and don't do; where things are kept; what attitudes I espouse; how I discipline them and whether it is consistent or not; even what prayers we say at home time! (For the time being I have decided one thing, and that is not to say prayers at all, as they only make me feel hypocritical — we sing 'Cum Bah Yah' instead.)

To make all these matters worse, I lost my lesson notes and a borrowed book off the back of my bike on Wednesday, Miss Kirby came in about the noise at least three times on Thursday, and one of the other teachers said I ought to drop this 'messing about first thing' just to get control of the class, this morning. But how can I stop what I've begun? It is the proverbial situation: I can't change horses in midstream. This afternoon I just couldn't bear to stay and tidy up after school, after the week it's been, so I left with the children, for a change, and stopped to visit Mr. Wright on my way home.

He was the tutor I respected most at college last year, and his advice was

sound today, too — though hard to swallow. He thinks that I really have done the wrong thing in beginning my probationary year by trying to be different; that my experiment with free activities first in the morning is, after all, not something any of the other staff members advocate, even if it was encouraged at college; that the first thing to do is to fit in with the other teachers, because, he says, teachers are conservative by nature, and to fit in with the children's conception of a teacher, too, so that I'm accepted and don't get a reputation as a snob or an innovator or both... He's right, but now the question is whether to continue the program I've begun, and accept the consequences, or to about-face (maybe thereby *saving* face) on the grounds that the children are too noisy...

**WEEK V:** A better week, all things considered, despite not being able to concentrate on the 'Three Rs' as much as I had intended. I arrived on Monday still unsure about my morning program, but resolving to do more reading and number work and to be better with Ross and Kerry (therefore better, too, by extension, with all the other children clamoring for my attention). Despite my tolerance, however, Ross was again intolerable by Tuesday afternoon.

This time I did not erupt into volcanic fury, but just walked him quietly into Miss Kirby's office, and left him there so that we could both cool off. Consequently she came in to talk about Ross after school — though I suspect she had been working up to having a talk to me anyway. We agreed that I didn't yet have my class in hand (I had said as much to a visiting County Hall gentleman this week as well, but I am not sure it sank in).

Then Miss Kirby made two very sensible suggestions: first, that I should limit the freedom offered to the whole class in general and to the wild ones (i.e., Ross) in particular. She thought I should do this by shortening the time for free choice in the morning and by eliminating, for now anyway, the noisier options such as dressing up (I must say I am relieved to let that one disappear, no matter what dramatic potential I may be inhibiting!).

Then, second, she suggested that I center down on some specific interest of Ross's and exploit it — such as ships,

she said. Knowing that Ross's father makes diving equipment, I decided to initiate a book about diving which all the children could contribute to, but Ross could be in charge of. After looking at all the pictures we collected, Ross has ignored the whole thing — but it's going like wildfire as a project for the rest of the class! Ironic, yet predictable.

I did try to tell Miss Kirby that Ross would refuse to be interested in anything she or I pushed him to get involved with, but still, I am glad she made the suggestions she did. I don't know why I haven't been able to see those solutions myself, however, and my pride is smarting a bit about the whole situation. Nonetheless, the week certainly did improve from then on...

**WEEK VI:** ... feeling frustrated not so much because of what I do wrongly, but of what is *undone*. A lot of situations have so much missed mileage in them. I could/we could get so much more out of stories, the radio and TV programs, things the children bring in to share. Too little time, too little foresight on my part; not as much concentration as there might be, on their part...

The best thing about this past week was the succession of friendly talks I've had with several other staff members (who are also, finally, calling me Caroline, instead of a polite-but-distant 'Mrs. Parry'), culminating in Miss Kirby's compliment to the children and me about the big 'giants' frieze we have made for the back wall of the classroom. Their pictures developed from a series of giant stories I've been reading in the afternoons, which really appealed to the children's imaginations: there's one picture of a giant with — count them — ten heads! Next week I want to start them writing their own giant stories — perhaps I shall see if I can construct some sort of giant beanstalk to fasten their writing to...

Anyway, Miss Kirby said she felt I had a good week, and she's right. I think the routines I want to establish are getting better rooted now. The morning activities are set up for each table group of children in rotation now, and the rota is written on the board for them all to refer to. Ross is about the same, but the whole class is getting on more smoothly around him, so I feel less harassed by the combination of their demands and his provocative behavior.

My discipline/control/what-have-you is still wobbly, for I don't like to make myself be a dominating ogre, and yet you really do have to make yourself be one for the first week or two with a new class, in order to teach them that you mean what you say. Then and only then, I guess, can you afford to relax and make friends. Joan, another teacher whom I'm getting to know better now, did try to tell me this, but I thought I could do it my way. I tried to make friends with the children from the beginning, and now cannot backtrack and become the ogre I need to have been, now cannot wield a certain credibility...

Reading John Holt this evening makes me realize very clearly how much I am in a double role at school. On the one hand, I am exploring teaching and learning with children, for myself — a process that is bound to be full of mistakes. On the other hand I am trying to be competent (even Good, maybe even Perfect!) in the eyes of the other staff, the headmistress and County Hall. But they do not see with my eyes, perhaps do not seek what I seek.... It's not surprising that I find I can be playing contradictory roles; it's no wonder that I feel my probation so acutely, and await the accumulation of sage experience so impatiently.

After all, an exploration of education for myself is no instantaneous process — nor is the route well mapped. Is it possible, I wonder, to make my own unique and personal chart of the educational waters at the same time as steering a straight course for 'success,' conforming to the general image of teachers, and adhering to established teaching methods? Maybe my diary entries in five years' time will yield me some sort of answer... ☺



# Vancouver — Extended Classroom for Fraser Lake

One of our articles last month described the activities of Vancouver students visiting rural areas. Here is a reverse account — the adventures of rural students visiting the big city.

RONALD C. GEARY

Vancouver is 700 miles from Fraser Lake School, but for the past two years it has become an extension of our Grade 10 classrooms.

Teaching about the history, geography, educational and cultural activities of a big city was difficult when I first came to Fraser Lake, because few of the 500 students had travelled within the province to any great extent.

To listen to lectures about or discuss universities, vocational schools, planetariums and art galleries successfully, without having visited any, was like explaining the taste of an apple to one who has never eaten one.

When I was appointed principal in 1971, I had hopes that our Grade 10 students could have the opportunity to take a trip to Vancouver. During the summer of 1971 I discussed the idea informally with the future Grade 10s. They agreed it was an excellent idea, but probably unobtainable. However, they would certainly work to achieve such a goal.

After many discussions with the students a Tenth Grade Club was formed, and a visit to Vancouver was the objective. On May 18, 1972 the students left Fraser Lake at 4:00 a.m. for their first trip halfway through the province, with Vancouver as their main objective.

Before the bus and train trip, the students experienced many and varied educational experiences so the trip could take place. They learned to organize a functional club, work in large and small groups, write numerous letters, accept the responsibilities of leadership, organize budgets and earn money without any outright donations, for all money was earned from some form of public service.

They shoveled snow off the roofs of homes and businesses, staged a fashion show for the community, fed over 400 people at a Foreign Food Festival, served hot lunch programs during the cold weather, organized and produced dances complete with name bands of the area, had a spring house-cleaning auction and many other activities. Many of the students stated that the fund raising was one of the more educational and fun-filled projects of the whole year.

The following is an account of that trip, written by Joe and Janet Dunham, the teachers who helped organize the trip and served as chaperones.

At 1:00 a.m., May 25, 45 Grade 10 students from Fraser Lake School got off a bus in front of the school. They were tired; they were happy. At the same time two chaperones also departed from the bus. They were exhausted; yet they too were exuberant. They had all just returned from a six-day educational tour of Vancouver. The reasons for the exhaustion: miles of walking, little sleep, a 14-hour train ride, high emotional level, which had been sustained for six days.

The reasons for the smiles, the grins, the total happy feeling of everyone involved are not so evident. A new way of looking at themselves and others and a feeling of a better way of life opening to them could be part of it. Yet, overall, everyone was happy for the simple reason that the trip had exceeded all expectations in its success.

Thursday, May 18, was traveling day. We left the school at 4:00 a.m. on a school bus. At Prince George we boarded the train for Vancouver. It was a long 14-hour trip, but spirits were high when

we arrived. A chartered bus was waiting to take us to the YMCA and YWCA, which were to be our homes for six nights. We had about an hour before 12:00 p.m., which was curfew, so everyone had a bite to eat and a quick exploration of the areas around the Ys.

Friday morning, May 19, we boarded a chartered bus for BCIT. We were greeted and received a short talk on the school and what its function was. Then we were divided into three groups and given tours of the school.

Students were impressed in many ways. Most were impressed by the equipment the school used. We visited their television and radio studio, food processing plant, electronics labs, X-ray labs, petroleum processing plants, simulated fire-fighting studio and countless other rooms, where knowledgeable people explained the equipment and the courses offered.

Many students were impressed by the 90-97% placement rate BCIT has achieved. Our students talked with BCIT students and gained a more personal feeling of what went on in the Institute.

Then we again boarded our bus and traveled to Simon Fraser University. Here the students were divided into two groups and given tours with a question period and talk by counsellors at SFU. We visited the theater, the computer room, the audio visual department, the library and various other facilities.

Our students were most impressed with the architecture of SFU. Most noticed the different atmosphere compared with that of BCIT. Some were also doing some serious thinking about the lower placement rate of SFU (47%) as compared with BCIT's 90%.

In both institutions, high marks were stressed to our students. It is in this area that a comment should be made about the value of such a trip. Many of our students had never thought seriously about attending a post-secondary institution. Being there forced them to think about it and also made them realize many opportunities education could give them.

Also, the fact that these students were Grade 10 is important. If they want to attend a post-secondary institution they now know the importance of their marks in Grades 11 and 12 for admittance. They have two years to prove themselves capable students. If they had been older students — Grade 11 or 12 — who wanted to attend, but who had low marks, the experience would have been a futile, depressing one.

Friday evening the students went out on their own. Janet and I were apprehensive about this, for this was the first

time the students had been away from us. Our fears were groundless, however.

It is at this point that I should discuss the other side of the educational value of such a venture as ours. I really cannot say how or how much the students gained from their personal views of the city. I can say that in most cases it was a tremendous amount. We saw many students afraid to venture out of the Ys. Some went only two or three blocks that first evening. Yet when everyone came in at midnight, I lay in my sleeping bag listening for two or three hours to excited conversations about what they had seen or heard.

A few went to theaters, but most just walked in groups and observed and got a feel of the city. At this point my wife and I were still teachers to the students and didn't play too large a role in their conversations. Gradually over the six

world held many interesting articles. Gastown was exciting and fun-filled. Many students did much shopping here. Chinatown was fascinating and a group of 15 of us ate there.

At this point the students were getting to know us better and we sat and talked for two long fun-filled hours. Saturday evening we went to Playland on the Exhibition Grounds. This was pure fun with rides and games. Again that night the discussion went far into the night. Now, however, we played more and more a part in the discussions. Questions, really good thoughtful questions, were asked and debated. Discussions varied from university, jobs, differences in city and rural life, the derelicts of the city, the skyscrapers, cost of living and countless others.

Sunday started as our most disappointing day, yet it turned out to be one of the best. Stanley Park, a picnic

### Some Student Comments On The Trip

To us bush babies Vancouver has lots of excitement compared to Fraser Lake but Fraser Lake has lots of unpolluted air, water and land and Vancouver doesn't. The bright lights would be fine but the fishing, hunting and swimming are fun too. The things a person wants to do have a lot to do with where they live. It depends upon what a person likes to do. Therefore a person might like really swinging, and also like outdoors. This is where one must make sacrifices.

Living in Vancouver is more complete than living in Fort Fraser. There are more things to do and everything is concentrated.

The city is a crowded, polluted place where you push your way through a crowd, not knowing anyone and not caring about anyone else.

In Fraser Lake people can have a good time by just enjoying one another's company. It's the same in the city, only people begin to rely on the night life and drinking or drugs to get to enjoy themselves. There's something bad if people have to turn to fantasy to be able to live easier.

I think Vancouver is a beautiful place to have a vacation but I wouldn't want to live there. I think I got a lot of understanding of what it would be like to live in a city that big.

Life in the city is not bad. It's quite nice for a short time like the amount of time we spent there. I don't think that I would want to live in Vancouver for a long period of time, say four or five years. One year might not be too bad. Really though I would rather live in a small town in the country.

I liked SFU the best out of the formal tours. It's a nice university and it's compact and organized. Everything is open to the students and they really seem to appreciate it. Our guide for the tour was nice and very interesting.

days, they grew used to us and we had some exciting and educational conversations. We became more human to them, and they became human to us. Surprising what being with people for 24-hours a day for six days can achieve.

Saturday was a day for shopping and touring. The students were not required to stay with us, but many did. We had check points at certain times of the day so we knew where everyone had been and was going. We visited Robsonstrasse, where shops of the

and the Aquarium were scheduled. We did them all, yet it was overcast and rained in the afternoon. We walked to Stanley Park and tried to find a place for our picnic. Because of the civic workers' strike, we could find no place to cook. We went to the Aquarium and all were impressed with the killer whale show and the rest of Vancouver's outstanding aquarium. Then we trooped to the beach, built a campfire and cooked our hot dogs. Then the rain came, so we all went back downtown.



*The train arrives, but Gord is a bit apprehensive of the luxurious transportation.*



*A visit to the Gastown Art Gallery was part of an exciting and fun-filled tour of the area.*

*They learned a lot here. Maybe someday ...*



Sunday evening was quite informal and this is the point in the trip when my wife and I realized that we were having a great time, the students were acting very responsibly, and that it was surpassing all expectations in an educational sense. We talked over coffee with various groups, went to a theater, did more talking and in general just had a relaxing time of informal discussion. Finally everyone was tired enough that sleep came easily, but the high level of excitement continued.

Monday was still overcast. In the morning we walked to the Art Gallery. Many had visited smaller galleries in Gastown on Saturday. The Vancouver Art Gallery is an impressive one, but it contains many modern pieces. The students didn't enjoy the modern paintings as much as those of the 19th century. Also, there was an Emily Carr exhibition and some Japanese pottery. The students seemed to like the things they could relate to and disliked those they didn't understand.

Monday afternoon we took a tour of the harbor on small ferry boats. This was a relaxing trip and we learned much about shipping, loading and the international scope of trade from Vancouver ports.

Monday evening was an entertainment night. I spoke with the manager of Oil Can Harry's Night Club and he agreed to let us all in, provided, of course, that we drank non-alcoholic beverages. We did and we all enjoyed ourselves. We heard two bands and did some dancing.

As we left, students all thanked the manager, some had their pictures taken with him, and this was just further evidence of another educational aspect of the trip. They began to realize that the success of the whole trip depended on each individual. Anyone who got out of line in any way reflected on the whole group and as this was realized, people became more and more responsible for their actions. This is a small point, but an important one.

Tuesday morning was rather a thoughtful time, for all realized that the trip was coming to a close. We boarded public transportation to UBC and toured the campus and library. Most marveled at its size in comparison with BCIT and SFU. Because UBC was not in session, we didn't get the feel of the place as we did at the previous institutions. Also, most people were thoroughly exhausted and the miles of walking proved hard going. Al Adams, an administrator, gave us an impressive tour of a fabulous house in Cecil Green Park on the campus.

Because Tuesday was our last day, we

had a free afternoon. Most went shopping. Then we gathered at the Spaghetti Factory in Gastown and filled up for the energy needed for the trip back on Wednesday. Curfew was early on this night and we had pizzas waiting at the Ys. We fell asleep, 47 tired but happy people.

Wednesday we got up early, took the bus to the train station and boarded for the trip back. As we boarded, we noticed 27 Grade 7s going north for a field trip to a rural area. We were on the same coach. As the Grade 7s marveled at every cow, horse and tractor we passed, our students were quite tolerant and friendly, explaining the ways of the north. Truly amazing what sophisticated, well mannered, responsible people they had become in just six days!

The students learned that their actions reflected on the group and thus individual responsibility was reinforced. They learned from hearing new ideas and observing objects and they learned more in discussing their observations. They learned about living by talking to older students at the institutions, professors, lay people, shop owners, night club managers, waiters and waitresses. They learned from all people they saw and talked with; even the derelicts of the city had much to teach about life.

Teachers love to observe learning taking place. My wife and I were fully rewarded as we watched six days of continuous learning — learning that is important and cannot be found in any classroom. We were rewarded even more because we learned too. We learned what it felt to be 16 years old again, with all of its doubts, optimisms, questions, and energy. We learned that 45 Grade 10 students are among the nicest people we've met.

Would we venture out again on such an expedition? Just give us two minutes to pack.

#### And There Were More Trips

The Durhams did just that. In May 1973 they accompanied a second expedition to the big city.

This year the Grade 10s have again organized a club and are already busy planning, earning money and looking forward to their trip. Like the Grade 10s of the past two years, the students plan to visit UBC, SFU, BCIT, the Aquarium, the Planetarium, Stanley Park, Vancouver Art Gallery and the Maritime Museum.

They plan to spend their free time getting to know just what this big extended classroom called the City of Vancouver has to offer.

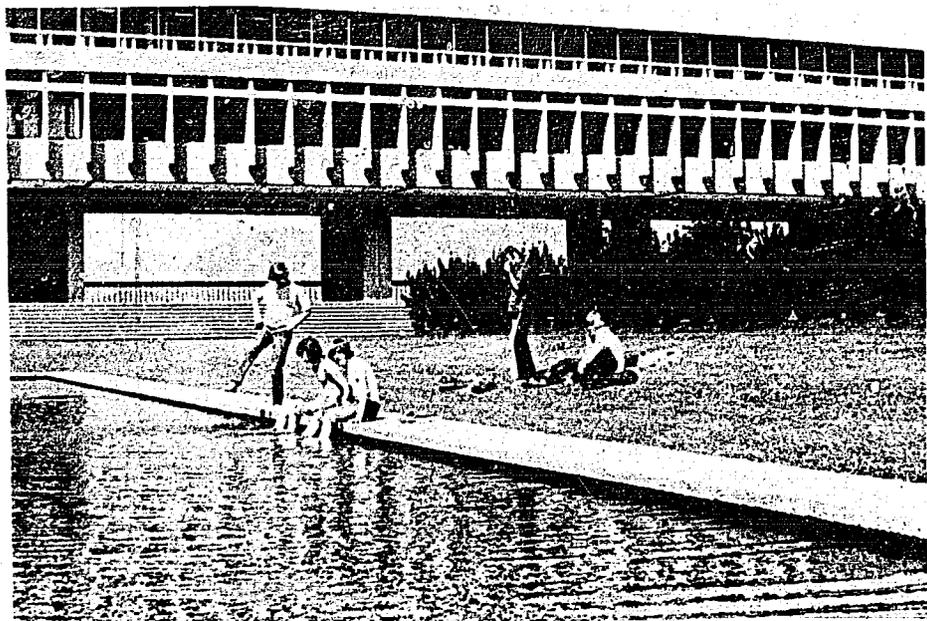


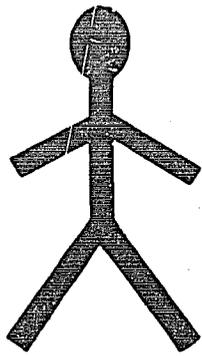
Picnic at Stanley Park after the Aquarium. A little rain didn't dampen appetites.



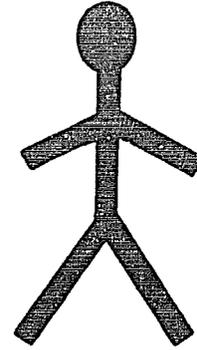
At the Aquarium...a talented 'Grade 10' in action.

SFU — Nice place to rest... Maybe a place to attend for a longer stay.





## A new look at staff committees



DOROTHY GLASS

According to this vice-principal, the traditional organizational structure of

our schools is neither adequate nor appropriate for today's rapidly chang-

The school system today is under examination by many groups in our society. The appointment of John Bremer has served both to intensify the examination and to focus it on specific areas within the system that are in need of improvement.

Although it is generally accepted that many changes are necessary, we teachers cannot but be concerned about how we shall fit into the system of the future and what we can do to assist the process.

Generally, schools have been slow to change and it is not uncommon to hear it said that the school system is 10 to 20 years behind the times. However, today's society, to whose values the school system should adapt, is a rapidly changing one. It is the speed of the changes that disturbs us and it will continue to do so until we, as teachers, are able to evolve an organizational structure to adapt to this accelerated rate of change.

It is the individual teacher, working with his or her students, who ultimately must accept proposed changes and adapt them in ways that result in more effective learning for both teacher and students. And since it is the teacher as an individual who must be responsible for what happens in his/her classroom, the teacher should definitely be consulted and be part of any decisions that affect what he/she does.

The traditional structure of our schools is neither adequate nor appropriate for today's society. Research on the process of change in an organization and the best procedures for implementing change has shown that the old pattern of the principal as bureaucratic leader with the familiar hierarchy is no longer acceptable.

*The writer is vice-principal of Campbell River Secondary School.*

In its place various alternatives are springing up. Influencing their growth is the additional demand of the human element in the school for recognition and satisfaction of its needs. Both teachers and students are more than just cogs in the organizational machine; they are individuals with needs that must be considered (Maslow's hierarchy). McClelland and Atkinson (1968) suggest three important determinants of work-related behavior:

- need for affiliation (acceptance, belonging, social interaction)
- need for power (authority, control and influence over others)
- need for achievement (accomplishment, to excel in relation to internalized standards).

In recent years more and more teachers have been asking for a voice in decisions that affect them. We are supposed to be professionals with an expert knowledge in our specific areas, but we are seldom consulted on any but the most trivial matters. We are becoming increasingly frustrated because we are not recognized as professionals.

As Douglas McGregor, Professor of Management at MIT, suggests, 'when man's social needs — and perhaps his safety needs, too — are thus thwarted, he behaves in ways which tend to defeat organizational objectives. He becomes resistant, antagonistic, unco-operative. But his behavior is a consequence not a cause.'

He also states, 'The man whose needs for safety, association, independence, or status are thwarted is sick, just as surely as is he who has rickets. And his sickness will have behavioral consequences. We will be mistaken if we attribute his resultant passivity, or his hostility, or his refusal to accept respon-

sibility to be his inherent "human nature." These forms of behavior are symptoms of illness — of deprivation of his social and egoistic needs.'

In a 1966 study, five major reasons for job satisfaction were achievement, interpersonal relationships, recognition, the work itself and responsibility. Dissatisfaction was attributed to administrative policies and procedures, working conditions and lack of status.

Teachers (and administrators are also teachers) must develop an organizational structure that will allow the satisfaction of basic needs and be one that can initiate and deal satisfactorily with the change that has to be an integral part of our schools.

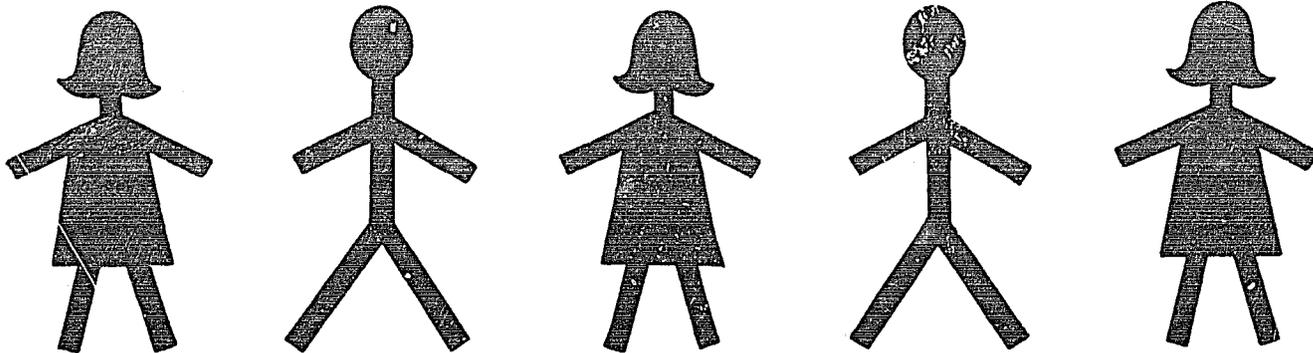
The concept of the staff committee is an aspect of organization that can do much both to meet the needs of teachers and be most effective in implementing change.

The purposes of the staff committee are these:

- To work to improve the educational program and processes in the school with a view to improving the students' learning opportunities.
- To assist in making necessary changes by allowing teachers to be part of the change process instead of just recipients of change.
- To provide opportunity for teachers to express their views and participate in the decision-making process, and thus improve the quality of the decisions made in the school.
- To provide a means of meeting the needs of teachers for affiliation, power and achievement, and thus encourage the human growth of teachers.

### Who Serves on a Staff Committee?

In some schools the principal has appointed a few teachers as advisors or has met regularly with department



ing society. The principal as a bureaucratic leader, for example, is no

longer acceptable. Staff committees, she says, can do much to effect neces-

sary changes in education and at the same time meet the needs of teachers.

heads and then claimed that he/she works with a staff committee. This is certainly not so. A staff committee must be representative of *all* teachers.

In smaller schools, the staff committee could be the entire staff, including the principal. In larger schools, teachers should be elected by their peers to represent them in working with the principal. The teachers forming the committee must be representative of the total teaching group, not merely appointees of the principal. Besides being in a position, then, to speak for the group, they must also be accountable to the larger group and report regularly to it.

Such a staff committee should meet regularly with the principal to deal with such matters as policy, evaluation problems, specific changes, and so on. The agenda should be circulated to all staff members well before each meeting so that all concerned may be certain their points of view will be expressed at the meeting. (If a teacher wishes to speak on a certain item, he/she should be allowed to do so.) A variety of points of view is essential for a complete consideration of any subject. Directly or indirectly, every teacher is thus part of the staff committee and should accept responsibility for contributing to its discussions.

Teachers (including administrators) who are starting to work on staff committees should be aware that changing behavior and attitude is a slow process. Time is needed for encouraging each member of the group to develop his/her level of participation and for developing an overall accepting, supporting atmosphere. This does not suggest that one should work for an absence of conflict. Opposing ideas are vital to an eventual decision and should be encouraged and viewed with an open mind, the group

working always for creative, positive results.

Some principals encourage the formation of staff committees and then complain that the whole thing is a failure because the teachers don't want to get involved, won't take the initiative, or can't ever come to a decision. Many teachers have been conditioned by years of traditional leadership behavior, on the principal's part, that emphasized pseudo-participative techniques.

It is important, therefore, to remember that some teachers need practice in participation and decision-making. The principal must continue to work with the teachers, who may be passive, hostile or unco-operative, until they gain a more positive attitude. All individuals will have to grow in their ability to handle differing opinions, to assess questions objectively and generally to learn the skills involved in positive group interaction.

#### The Role of the Principal on the Staff Committee

The principal must realize that today it is important that he/she be primarily a leader, not an administrator. In the process of initiating change, the leader is an essential ingredient — as an initiator, a catalyst and a co-ordinator. Havighurst (1972) reports that 'the quickest way to change an institution is to change its leadership.' Because it is not likely we shall suddenly have a complete turn-over of principals, it is essential that present principals examine themselves critically and work to develop that pattern of leadership that has been shown to be most effective in working both with change and human resources. An important part of the role of the principal would be facilitating the solution of group problems. How the principal does this is particu-

larly vital to the success of the staff committee.

Miles (1965) speaks of two theories of participative leadership. He states that: 'for their subordinates, managers prefer a *human relations* approach, aimed at improving morale and reducing resistance to formal authority. For themselves, they prefer a *human resources* approach, whereby they want their superior to recognize and make full use of their own currently wasted talents.'

With the human relations approach the basic objective is to have the participants 'feel a useful and important part of the overall effort.' The principal wants a co-operative and compliant staff and therefore allows them to contribute ideas, but to have no say in the decision-making.

The human resources approach views all participants as 'reservoirs of untapped resources.' The role of the leader becomes one of 'creating an environment in which the total resources' of the group can be utilized. The basic objective is to improve decision-making and the total performance efficiency of the group.

This suggests that those affected by decisions have a lot to contribute and should be involved in the decision-making. An important point is that the more important the decision, the greater is the need for the principal to encourage ideas and suggestions from the staff.

Group interaction is sometimes improved if the principal does not act as chairperson of the group. Often a counsellor, or some other member of the committee who has had special training in group dynamics, makes an excellent chairperson and greatly facilitates member participation and interaction.

The principal then has as much right

as any other member of the group to participate, although sometimes, because of the need to ensure adequate information is available, he/she must speak more often. When acting as information-giver, however, the principal must make a clear-cut distinction between factual information-giving and 'loading' with his/her own interpretation or manipulation.

#### Decision-making and the Staff Committee

It is important to consider the type of decision-making that is to occur in the staff committee. A 1969 study analyzed the amount of power possessed by individual members of small groups in relation to the involvement by the members. Three types of decision-making were used:

- Centralist — in which the principal asks for advice, but makes the decision.
- Majority — in which all contribute ideas, but a majority vote of the members makes the decision.
- Consensus — in which all contribute ideas, but a consensus of the group makes the decision (the percentage of agreement necessary is decided upon beforehand, i.e., 85%).

It was found that the consensus type of decision-making produced better interaction patterns (members offered more opinions and had more positive reactions to others' statements), greater satisfaction with progress and greater commitment to action on the part of the participants. However, the time needed for this process was greater be-

cause there was more discussion.

Participation on a staff committee is not enough; it is the nature of that participation that is important. When participants were using the consensus method of decision-making, the human needs of interpersonal relationships, recognition, self-satisfaction and responsibility were all being met as well as providing greater commitment to any decision (which is so important a part of the process of change).

It is evident that the consensus method of decision-making would not always be practical or necessary in the staff committee, since for many items a simple majority would be acceptable and satisfactory to the members. The consensus method should always be used, however, where real change is to be made in the schools, since the

## LET'S SELECT SCHOOL PRINCIPALS DEMOCRATICALLY

ROBERT M. STAMP

The time has arrived for teachers, students and parents to participate in the selection of school principals. This does not mean giving control of the selection process to any one of these three groups, but it does mean that all three should play a meaningful role.

The decade of the 1970s has brought a growing acceptance of the idea that those who are affected by decisions must be involved in the making of those decisions. In the area of education, this means that the three groups most immediately affected by administrative decision-making — i.e., teachers, students and parents — must participate in the formation of those decisions.

Traditionally, each of these three groups has been granted limited participatory roles at the more remote levels of educational control. Teachers, for example, have been admitted to curriculum decisions at the provincial level through their provincial organizations. Parents, too, have had some advisory voice in provincial curriculum decisions through Home and School or Parent-Teacher Association membership. More recently, in many Canadian cities, teacher, student and parent groups have been asked to contribute to policy-making at the school board level.

But it appears that in the future more and more decisions regarding education will be made at the individual

school level rather than at the school board or provincial level. This decentralization of decision-making is under way in such areas as curriculum, student evaluation, staff selection and budgeting. Thus if meaningful participation from teachers, students and parents is to continue in the future — and it must — then provision must be found for this participation to occur at the individual school level.

Surely the principal of the local school is the most powerful factor in shaping the general philosophy and goals of that school. His influence on goal determination has a powerful impact on the three groups most immediately affected. Therefore, a necessary first step in their participation in decision-making must be a voice in the selection of the principal.

How would such a system work? Once a principalship became vacant, the superintendent of schools would establish an advisory selection committee. This committee would include representatives from central office administration, and from the teachers, students and parents of the school — perhaps two or three from each group. The administration representatives would probably be chosen by the superintendent, while the teacher, student and parent representatives would be elected by their fellows. The committee's chairman might be named by the superintendent or elected by the group itself.

The next step might be to draw up a list of 'qualified' applicants for the posi-

*The author is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Calgary. The article is reprinted with permission from ATA Magazine.*

co-operation and commitment of most teachers is essential.

#### Other Factors to Consider

In the early stages of working on a staff committee, teachers have not necessarily reached a high degree of skill in techniques of group interaction. The principal should encourage procedures that will eventually lead to a complete collegial approach to decision-making. Initially the group could gain practice in handling less complex problems. The principal might explain that they would act as an advisory board for a while, he/she accepting or rejecting the advice given. As skills improve, the group could then assume more responsibility in decision-making. One very useful method of improving skills is to provide an in-service session

for the staff using one of the 'discretionary days.' (The BCTF Professional Development staff can provide the names of resource people who are trained in group dynamics.)

Some questions that should be settled by members of the staff committee are: At what point do they want to be involved in the decision-making process? Should the principal do the preliminary work, such as investigating alternatives, gathering data? How much involvement do they want? Perhaps routine decisions, or ones on which a policy has already been established, could be handled by the administration.

Another aspect of decision-making in the staff committee that must be considered, given the present provincial endorsement of 'line' of authority, is the realization that the ultimate respon-

sibility for all decisions made must remain legally with the principal. This in turn will have a bearing on the type of decisions made.

Because each staff committee consists of several unique human beings, it is easy to see that, although each adheres to the key aspects of organization and process mentioned above, each staff committee could evolve and operate differently. It would be interesting to hear from teachers who work in such committees — telling us how and why their committee is effective in meeting the needs of teachers and implementing change. Such reports could be of great assistance to another group that is struggling to operate as a staff committee elsewhere in the province. 

References available on request.

tion. Some of the names on this list would likely be obtained from the superintendent, some would be nominated by committee members, while others would be secured through open advertising. The committee would then screen the applicants, determine a short list, interview the leading candidates, and recommend one name (or perhaps two or three names in rank order) to the superintendent.

The superintendent could accept or reject the committee's recommendation. Ideally, in the case of rejection, he would be obliged to state reasons, and the process would begin again. The result would be the selection of a new principal through a process that allowed participation by the three groups most affected by the selection.

Would such a process be workable? It seems to be working at the university level, where instructors and students are serving with senior administrators on advisory selection committees for deans and department chairmen. Despite the fact that 'mistakes' will continue to be made under the new system as they were under the old, few university people would advocate a return to the previous procedure of 'appointments from above.' It has been recognized both by administrators and non-administrators that those affected by the decision must have some voice in arriving at the decision.

(The process also seems to have worked for several generations in those Protestant churches where the congregation plays the major role in selecting its minister. If we are prepared to let

'the people' decide on who shall guide their spiritual development, why can't we let them help select the person who will guide their intellectual development?)

Many educators tend to accept advisory selection committees in principle, but express doubts about their practicality — especially parental involvement. Let us examine some of these doubts.

Would the committee usurp the authority of the superintendent of schools and the local school board? No it would not, because it would have advisory power only, not executive power. The committee could not force a candidate on the superintendent and trustees against their will. Its advice could always be rejected. The ultimate power of appointment would continue to rest with the local system.

Would the process be too time-consuming? It would indeed be more time-consuming than the traditional 'appointment from on high' procedure. But the greater investment of time would be justified on the grounds of a choice satisfactory to all parties concerned.

Would the three parties have sufficient knowledge and maturity to make wise choices? There should be no question here in the case of teacher participation — if teachers are not competent to make judgments about educational matters above and beyond those pertaining to their own classrooms, they do not deserve to be members of a profession. Student participation? Perhaps this would have to be confined

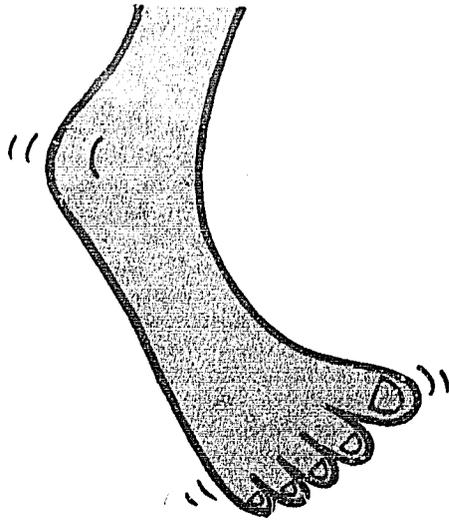
to pupils at the high school level. But let us remember that students often have a better idea of what is actually going on in a school than anyone else. Are parents ready for the challenge? Probably not in every community at the present time. Therefore, the school should take as its responsibility the often-neglected task of educating parents about education.

Then there is the question of representation. How could we guarantee that teacher, student, and parent members of the selection committee were truly reflecting majority opinion? They would be representative as long as free and open elections were held to determine the members. You would never achieve 100% voter turnout on the part of the parents; but the lack of 100% voter turnout in civic, provincial and federal elections cannot negate the legality and validity of those elections.

Finally, there is the question of the successful applicant having to serve so many masters. But with growing decentralization in education, no principal can afford to ignore the needs, interests and aspirations of his teachers, students and parents. Their involvement in his selection would help guarantee that he address himself to their concerns.

What is proposed is not teacher, student or parent control of the selection process, nor veto power over the choice of a principal — merely the involvement of these three groups in the selection. The rationale for this step, and its proven worth at other levels of education, demand that it be tried within public school systems. 

# KEEPING PRINCIPALS ON THEIR TOES



A vice-principal told me recently that at least three elementary principals in his district, having served long-term contracts, were 'living in retirement' while leading their schools, waiting only for their pensions to become effective.

Unfortunately, the problem is not confined to one district. I believe that action on the problem is overdue, and I'd like to propose a solution.

I suggest that principals be appointed for a specified term, ranging from three to six years. The principals should be able to apply for re-appointment, of course, but all positions would be subject to open competition.

Term appointments would offer at least five advantages: (1) increased opportunities for younger administrators, (2) measures of accountability, (3) easy exit from and easy return to positions of leadership, (4) improved school-community relations, and (5) insurance against inadequate leadership. These I shall discuss in a moment, but first a little background.

In recent years, the school principalship has become an increasingly complex and responsible position. The responsibilities of principals for school-community relations; program development; staff selection, evaluation and in-service training; pupil personnel management; physical facilities planning and operation; and finance and business management have all increased. The range of skills needed by

principals to perform these tasks effectively has grown considerably.

Research evidence supports what nearly all educators already know — good schools have good leaders. A recent B.C. study examined the relationship between the 'executive professional leadership' of principals and the 'organizational health' of their schools. Executive professional leadership was defined and measured in terms of the quality of the principal's leadership behavior in his or her school.

Organizational health was defined and measured in terms of the ability of the school to survive, maintain and adapt itself amid changing environmental conditions. A 'healthy' school was characterized as having clear goals, a co-ordinated communication system, an equitable decision-making structure, adequate problem-solving mechanisms and maximum opportunities for self-actualization.

A positive and significant correlation was found between the 'executive professional leadership' of principals and the 'organizational health' of schools. Principals high in executive professional leadership administered healthy schools; principals low in executive professional leadership administered unhealthy schools. In short, principals *did* make a difference.

Since healthy schools need high quality leadership, every effort should be made to ensure that principalships are occupied at all times by the best administrators available. I believe short-term appointments could facilitate the

attainment of this end.

As I indicated at the outset, I think all principals should be appointed for a specified term, ranging from three to six years. At a point not less than one year before the term appointment expired, the principal could request re-appointment, or give notice not to stand for re-appointment. In either event, the position would be declared vacant and a search for an appointee could begin.

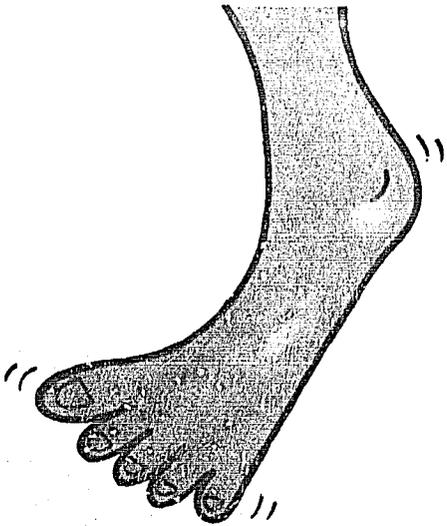
In conducting the search, the school board and its central office staff should consult as freely as possible with teachers, students and the community. In certain circumstances, a school district might even want to establish a search committee composed of central office staff, principals, teachers, students and community representatives, which would make recommendations to the school board on the criteria for selection, on the individual school's needs and the suitability of available candidates for the position.

What are the advantages of term appointments for principals?

## Increased Opportunities for Younger Administrators

In one B.C. district 85% of the elementary principals have occupied the principalship of a school for more than 10 years; 60% have been in their present positions for 20 years or more. Lack of mobility, as evinced in this district to the extreme, is characteristic of the school leadership situation. Employment opportunities for recent leadership trainees, and for vice-principals

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NORMAN ROBINSON

How do you deal with principals who have retired on the job? The author suggests that term appointments will not only solve that problem, but offer several other advantages.

who hold potential for principalships, have steadily decreased since the school building boom of the early 1960s.

The vice-principalship, ideally a training ground for school leadership, has become a career position for many; upward mobility is limited — there are too few vacancies to fill. Potential principals find their knowledge and strength of purpose dissipated after years in the training ground of menial managerial tasks.

Administrative leadership programs in universities are producing school leaders specifically selected and educated to assume roles as knowledgeable and sensitive principals. Yet the minimal possibility of an instant principalship, and the static nature of vice-principal positions, restrict this infusion of contemporary educational ideas and practices into the schools. The advantages of education, adaptability and youth may be re-integrated into public school leadership by seeking such alternatives as term appointments of principals.

#### Measures of Accountability

Under a policy of re-appraisal every three to six years, principals would be persuaded to maintain a high level of quality leadership, a high level of school health, for they would be forced to refer to the conditions of their appointment as school leader at the end of each term.

Term appointments would not deny the normal grounds and procedures for dismissal and termination of contract. Although shorter term appointments of

principals would produce an easier method of terminating a principalship, the major purpose would be to stimulate accountability, not to purge the system.

#### Easy Exit and Easy Return

Many principals, not entirely satisfied with their positions, or not entirely suited to school leadership in a changing society, are faced with the problem of leaving their principalships gracefully. The present system of contracts does not allow for early retirement, sabbatical, return to university, or transfer to purely administrative duties (i.e., district staff) or the classroom. Dissatisfaction or inadequacy can result from legally stringent contracts and a tradition of 'life appointments.'

Term appointments are significant in allowing for principals who do not want immediate re-appointment. Early retirement, sabbatical credit, return to the classroom would become feasible alternatives — an impetus for mobility. A policy that provides easy exit, and easy return to school leadership would encourage principals to seek alternatives beneficial to their capabilities and needs, and would reflect positively on the tenor of schools.

#### Improved School-Community Relations

If some consultation with owner-electors were included in choosing an appointee to the principalship, better communication lines between the school and its feeder-public could be facilitated. Initiation of owner-electors

into a more active role in school decision-making would help alleviate the present apathy, tending to dissent, in public attitudes toward the public school system.

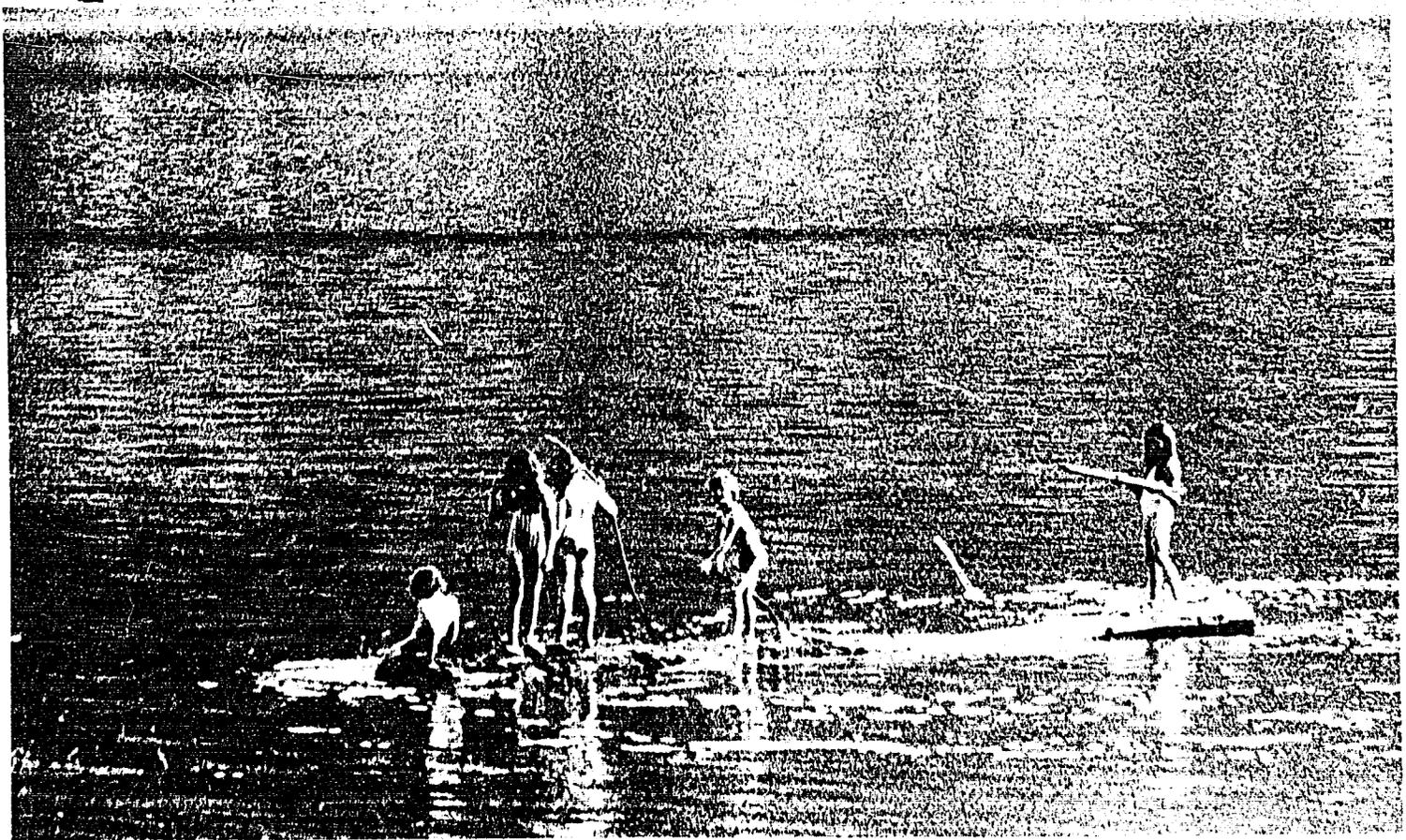
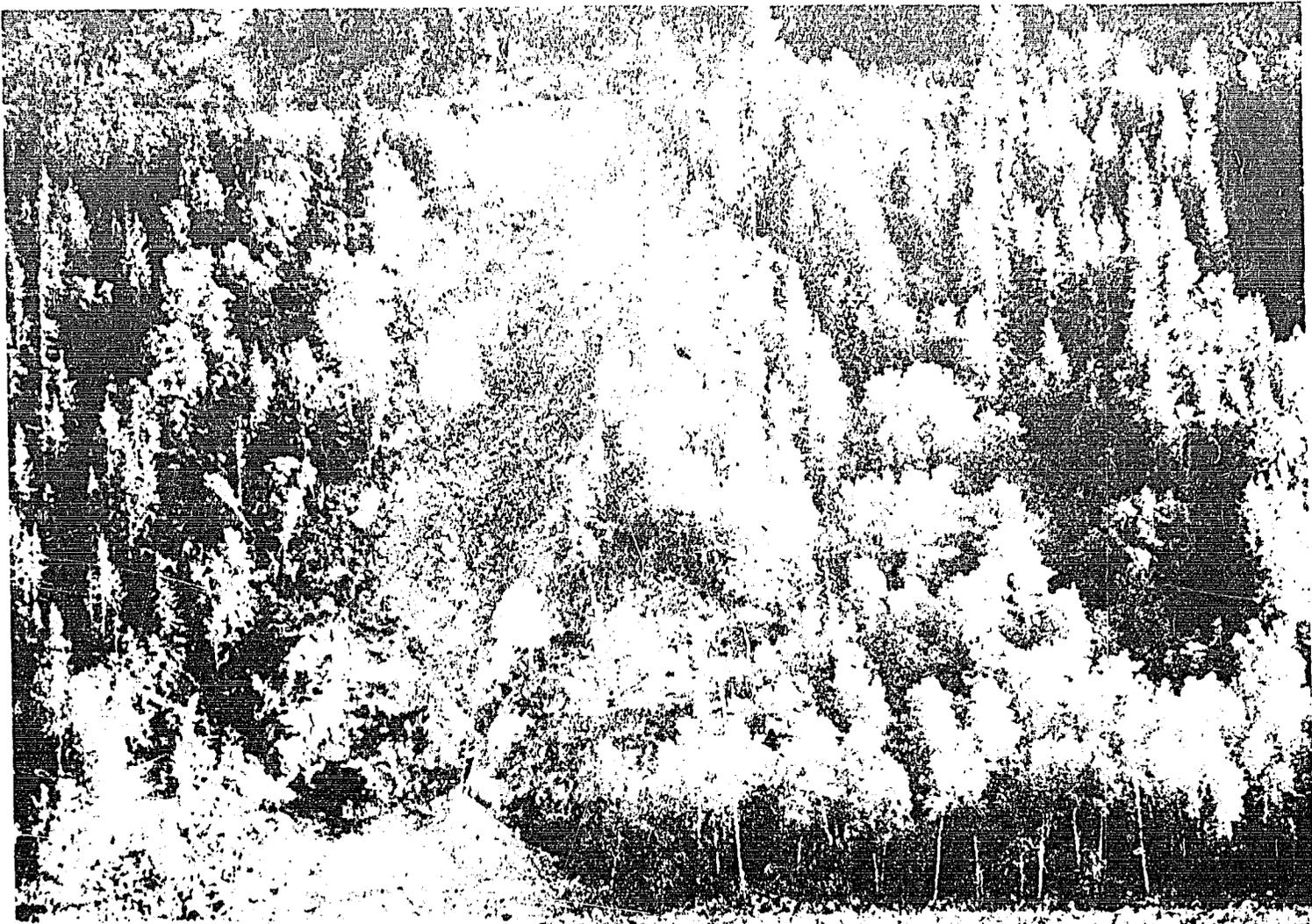
Recent research in B.C. indicates that the community will be more apt to offer financial support to schools that are responsive to the needs and demands of the feeder-public.

Participation in ensuring quality leaders, and a perception that district officials foster a policy that necessitates quality leaders, would stimulate positive public attitudes toward the school system.

#### Insurance Against Inadequate Leadership

Term appointments would make it possible to dismiss more easily those principals inadequate in their leadership positions. Provisions for relocation to a more suitable principalship, appointment to a less affective position, return to the classroom, or return to university for re-training would be a desirable protection for this small minority. Quality leadership is crucial to quality schools, very few concerned people would deny that inadequacy demands action.

The present school leadership situation demands relevant, if not radical, re-adjustment. In proposing term appointments, I suggest that the situation can be remedied by exploration of workable alternatives. I hope the advantages of term appointments of principals are justified, and the proposal itself provocative.



# FORUM FOR FEELINGS

DANIEL F. WOOD

This is how it began —

'Prunie's buggin' me. He calls me Breadface an' I don' like it. Bein' called Breadface,' complained Tom, age 8.

'Don't tell me, tell Prunie,' I say.

'Prunie,' Tom says to a tousle-haired redhead, 'I don' like you always buggin' me.'

'I don't always bug you.'

'You do so!'

I cut in, 'Prunie, do you sometimes call Tom, Breadface?'

Reluctantly Prunie admits, 'Well . . . sometimes.'

'An' I don' like it!' shouts Tom.

'Well, what do you want Prunie to do?' I ask.

'Don' do it, you hear Prunie! I don' want you callin' me Breadface again. Unnerstan?'

A third kid jumps in at this point. 'Prunie's always buggin' me an' puttin' me down too.'

It's looking like a rough day for Prunie, but he retorts, obviously stung, 'I don't like bein' bugged either an' you . . . both of you bug me so don't you do it, hear?'

'Hey,' and I throw open the discus-

A teacher in Vancouver's New School — Canada's oldest experimental school — contends that schools should discuss feelings, because feelings are as real as facts, but much more elusive. He argues that social

studies, for example, can be real if teachers will put as much energy into the 'social' as they do into the 'studies,' and suggests several ways in which they can do so.

sion to the class of 32 kids ranging in age from 7 to 12, 'are there others who don't like put-downs?'

A chorus of yeahs.

'I don't want to get into who's putting down whom right now,' I shout over the cacophony of name-calling and the fingers pointing like arrows. 'Not now. Hey! What I want you to think about is WHY people often put others down. Why?'

We carried on from here into conversations about hassles at home with siblings, old resentments unaired, feelings of inferiority, and personal aggressiveness.

Although there are still a lot of put-downs, I felt a secret pleasure when I heard Prunie ask Bill recently, 'Bill? Can I put you down?'

He was at least aware of what he was doing. A first step.

The basic objectives of the elementary social studies curriculum orients the child toward the development of certain knowledge, certain skills, critical thinking, and the consideration of certain feelings, values and attitudes.

I'm not surprised that — in the B.C.



The kids, loaded into vehicles, start off on a 'juice trip' to a classmate's house.

Curriculum Guide — feelings, values and attitudes are listed last. To me it seems quite purposeful.

Today, most teachers of social studies use three approaches: recitation, presentation and problem-solving, techniques that usually are focused on the development of certain knowledge and certain skills. The two techniques of recitation and presentation fit very comfortably in a teacher's bag of tricks. Like the maps, charts and facts on Columbus that — to a child — seem to pop out of a teacher's head magically, facts and figures fall like Vancouver rain. Like Vancouver rain in November.

Kids are impressed. Jeepers, Mrs. Galloway sure knows her stuff. Mrs. Galloway is smugly satisfied. I taught that lesson better this year than last year. The kids listened too. And at recitation or quiz time Mrs. Galloway is further encouraged, for there's the proof — lots of correct answers.

Knowledge has been transferred. The first item in the Curriculum Guide.

If I'm too hard on Mrs. Galloway, let me admit now that I'm Mrs. Galloway, that I've felt smug in my knowledge, that I've reveled in dishing it out like so much chocolate icing. It's easy. So easy.

Why, after a hard run at tens and units and a jog around to the slow readers, how about a rest with social studies and 30 winded kids, dishing out to them some tip-of-the-tongue chocolate facts?

I've nothing against facts. I have a lot against their overuse.

Like chocolate, facts can become a dull, nonnutritional diet. A diet that often excludes the development of critical thinking and the growth in feelings, values and attitudes — two areas much maligned by their omission from most social studies classes.

These are the areas I am concerned about, for although facts are of great importance, they are secondary to a genuine attention to a child's social growth as a human being, a person with fears, doubts, aspirations, joys, inhibitions and resentments just like Tom's and Prunie's. These emotional qualities should become the curriculum through which facts and figures can be transferred, for to ignore these feelings, these fears and aspirations and resentments, is — in a child's mind — to make them illegitimate.

Illegitimate?

Illegitimate.

Let's pretend that Tom and Prunie



had been sitting in Mrs. Galloway's class as she droned on about Columbus, sitting there harboring those secret resentments. They, and kids in general, would think: Aw! she's got no interest in what's bothering me. There's no help, no unnerstandin' from her. Maybe I shouldn't feel so uptight. It's okay. I've gotta concentrate on this Queen Isabella dame anyways...

We all do this: dissolving the edges of a too-bothersome-reality as a defensive mechanism that allows us to 'get on with it.' It's self-denial. In the end we've illegitimized our feelings (whether of stupendous joy or torturous hostility) because the expression of powerful feelings frequently seems to interfere with the workaday, studyaday world. The expression of such feelings seems to be antisocial in a school or office situation.

School should be a place, a forum, for the discussion of feelings, a place for growth in self-awareness, confidence, understanding of fears and accomplishments, for feelings are real, as real as facts — only much more elusive. And social studies can be real if teachers put as much energy into the 'socials' as they now put into the 'studies.'

The discussion between Tom and Prunie took place in a Group Meeting, usually held each morning to start off school. Although the content of these meetings varies from day to day, I feel that I can make a few structural suggestions to those willing to open up the classroom to social/emotional considerations:

- The age of the group determines the length of the meetings so 5-10 minutes may be enough for kids younger than six while kids of 10 or 12 may carry on for an hour.

- We usually use an Agenda, a large sheet of blank paper on which both teachers and kids may write whatever they wish to discuss. Although this does prevent some of the red herrings from entering the conversations, I think there's a need to be flexible so that whenever an important issue arises it can be dealt with.

- We usually use four Talking Chairs, which are placed in each corner of the meeting room, and those who wish to talk must wait until a chair is unoccupied. This procedure definitely cuts down on interruptions and serves in a very real way the same purpose as the conch in *Lord of the Flies*.

- The teacher shouldn't allow himself/herself to be sucked into the role of being judge; there are powerful peer pressures at work.

- Sometimes these peer pressures have to be softened since kids are notoriously authoritarian with each other.

- Children should be continuously reminded not to generalize, but to be specific. Instead of accepting a child's, 'Kids are teasing me about my haircut,' the teacher should ask, 'Who? Which kids?' In this way the child can say, 'Karl and Peter,' leading him to deal with these two persons directly.

- Blaming, such as 'Karl and Peter, I don't want you teasing me about my haircut,' is of short-term value. The long-term effect is greatest when these comments can — with sensitivity — be moved into a group discussion.

From 1900 to 1950 the amount of knowledge available to man doubled. From 1950 to 1960 it doubled again. It seems obvious that we are moving from a society of technical discourse, one concerned primarily with data, to a society of moral discourse, concerned



*On one of the frequent trips outside the school this group enjoyed a ride on the merry-go-round.*

primarily with decisions. Few people talk with any enthusiasm about how many billion gallons of oil the Arabian peninsula produces . . . a technical concern; most of us are worried about the pollution effects of that oil . . . a moral concern. Few would point to the burgeoning population of India — an incredible half billion — without considering the moral imperative of population control.

We have to let kids work on the process of decision-making and judgment-making so that they can deal effectively with their moral growth. But we — as teachers — must not become moralists.

Not only in class meetings, not only during social studies, but the entire day for children should be presented in such a manner that — whatever the activity, whatever the plan or proposal — the kids feel a real sense of power over themselves, a sense of their social obligations, a sense of the need for co-operation and compromise. What good is it . . . Really! What good is it for a child to learn — in the abstract (as the Curriculum Guide suggests) — that the home is a source of shelter and safety if the child feels embarrassed or constrained to phone home from school to confide in his/her mother that he/she's having a bad day? Abstract knowledge makes for great generalizations, but poor security and — for most children — the intellectual growth far, far outstrips the emotional growth.

It's not surprising. So little is done today to give kids power over themselves, to establish that sense of themselves that we value as self-esteem.

A year ago so many kids were complaining about the prices at the local corner store, Fairway, that it received an alliterative four-letter replacement for

its first syllable. But name-calling wasn't satisfactory. So the kids, working closely with a teacher, decided to set up a store themselves. They soon found that at the age of 7 to 11 they had real power.

First, those most interested held an organizational meeting at which time specific chores were distributed: treasurer, storekeepers, advertisers, wholesale shoppers, and lots of volunteer customers. Next, a group of kids built the store from an old counter and plywood. After the planning of the purchases and the subsequent wholesale shopping, the kids decided on a reasonable mark-up, advertising themselves with a 'No Rip-offs.'

I don't know quite how they did it, but after two months The New Store had managed to lose \$6.00! I kept my frustration well concealed though I suspected the trustworthiness of a couple of sweet-toothed storekeepers.

Although the store failed, the kids had held real power and had learned from first-hand experience several rudimentary social studies concepts, concepts of substance because they had not been placed in the ethereal realms of abstraction.

I don't advocate turning power over to kids unfettered; the world seems to have enough problems with unfettered power already!

What I repeat is this: Teachers should consider a step-by-step, carefully guided, distribution of power to kids both individually and in groups. The result will be a marked increase in the children's self-esteem. After all, it's not in a child's nature to be submissive, docile or oblique, but it's awfully convenient for adults.

It comes down to this: To develop self-esteem kids need a real challenge,

one not so difficult as to be overwhelming. To establish a situation of real challenge kids need to confront themselves and others with problems, emotions, plans of real concern. To develop or elicit this concern there must exist a freedom to participate and this results when a teacher lets go a bit, saying, in effect, 'You work it out. I'll be here, but you work it out.' If the challenge is not overwhelming and the kids work it out successfully, Bingo!

I can do it myself!

I feel good!

I'm all right!

Self-esteem.

If, at any stage, a teacher is too apprehensive, too moralistic, too quick to 'help out,' the process of self-awareness is short-circuited and the kids think, 'Gee, he's sure smart.' And then the teacher will bask in the children's admiration and steal the self-esteem for himself.

A teacher who needs that reassurance is insecure and will find it hard to let go and allow kids to have power over their own education, their own view of themselves. In later years these kids will have learned not to trust themselves, seeking authority and approval from others. Jonathan Kozol writes: 'Many of us feel so little self confidence in our hearts by the time we finish school that we are afraid to try anything important unless we have first gotten permission from somebody else who seems more powerful and thereby already authorized.'

As we move beyond social studies, the new curriculum will grow out of a revolution in materials because most teachers fall back on the textbooks and supplementary material that inhibit innovation just as a mountain inhibits the course of a glacier. The new materials will be focused primarily on the children's social and emotional understanding of themselves in relationship to others; they will lead the children out of their classrooms into their neighborhoods, their communities, where they will find involvement, not vicariously, but in real situations with real problems and decisions.

Here are a few books, a few strategies that start with the premise that the community is an extension of the classroom.

*The Yellow Pages of Learning Resources*, a direct outgrowth of Philadelphia's Parkway Program, the original School Without Walls, is a book that lists alphabetically — from airport to zoning board — all the offices, factories, stores, serv-

ices available to students who want to explore their city. It describes possible strategies that kids can use on a visit to each of these resources.

For example: *Dry Cleaners*. First, there's a dialog between the editor of the book and the proprietor of the dry cleaning establishment in which various questions are raised about the operation of the store. Then the book suggests further questions: What actually happens to my wool shirt? What about the pollution effects of the chemicals? How are stains removed? What is a franchise? Can I ring up the next sale?

The format is simple and easy to revise for each school district. To my mind every school board should promote the development of such a book, a sort of access catalog to that area, to be available to each teacher and student.

I would like to think that — in a time not too distant — every individual, every service, every factory will understand its responsibility to education. When that time comes in the history of our society and our schools, clubs, shops, unions, industries, the butcher, baker, candlestickmaker will accept as natural their obligation to contribute directly to the education of the youth. For that matter, with the gradual decentralization of the public schools, this will become a necessity. At that time school will be just part of — to borrow Illich's word — an educational network, serving and being served by students.

#### New Materials Are Available

Another set of booklets, print still fresh, has been made here in B.C. with the help of the BCTF, a LIP grant and people at UBC. Called *VEEP* (Vancouver Environmental Education Project), these booklets encourage teachers and students to explore the community, making it into a classroom where skills in measuring, observing, analyzing, mapping and interviewing can be encouraged.

One booklet suggests a Treasure Hunt, in which the class is divided into five or six groups. (1) Measure 36 feet N from the phone booth by Merrimart; (2) Turn E and take 3 giant steps; (3) Go to the red object ahead of you; (4) Snap a picture or draw the hotel across the street... And so it goes. Another booklet illustrates specific architectural styles (gables, stained-glass windows, porches) with the dates when these styles were popular. With this information the kids can be sent out on a dating game, the kind no parent could possibly object to!

The *Yellow Pages* and the *Urban (VEEP) Studies* develop children's own sense of observation and questioning in a real



Anne on a 'juice trip' to a classmate's farm. Since she'd previously lived on a farm, she blossomed here, becoming an expert and forgetting her insecurities.

situation. From this they can face their community with a confidence fed from their knowledge that their environment is both understandable and fun.

I want to mention three other strategies that draw students and teachers outside the classroom. These all fall into the area of camping, each building on the feeling of confidence gained from successful completion of the prior activity.

First, 'juice trips' and 'sleepovers.' A 'juice trip' at The New School is a visit to the home of one of the kids, where pop or Kool-Aid is served. It sounds delightfully simple. But it has a considerable philosophic history since, through the creation of new friendships, through the social mixing of different economic backgrounds, through two or three families making co-operative arrangements, through the sharing of toys, the 'juice trip' becomes a means for breaking down some of those social and economic plywood walls behind which many people hide. Frequently the parents pick up, feed and return the children (a group of whatever size the house can happily accommodate). A few brave parents have taken on juicing up all 35 kids!

This 'juice trip' idea seems to work especially well with children who are having difficulty in school because — once they're back home — they can show competence, they can make decisions.

I should think that a letter from the principal's office to the kids' parents would open a few doors, perhaps at first to five or eight kids only, but as the idea gains support, to more homes and greater numbers.

Some would argue that such visits occur naturally, so why — as in the case of the 'juice trips' — do it on school time? I'd counter that it is precisely this attitude, that there exists something called 'school time,' that needs to be challenged. If we are to encourage children to look on learning, that quality of absorbing and interpreting new ideas, values and information, as people's life-long fundamental concern, we have to break down the entrenched belief that there is such a thing as 'school (in other words, learning) time.' After all, most of what we learn — you and I — is incidental, bits and pieces, the price of bacon here, the sound of Mozart there, the best way to deal with Grandma back here again. Bits and pieces. Sometimes in collage. Kids need to trust that they can and will learn everywhere, all the time, in and out of school. At that point we have moved out of the prison of 'schooling' into the fresh air of learning.

#### Move From Success To Success

From this, children can and will move into 'sleepovers' in which one or two friends stay overnight at a classmate's house. Although The New School's children range in age from 13 down to four, I don't believe there are any kids who haven't slept-over, nor do I know of any coed 'sleepovers.' Yet.

The second strategy I want to mention is an elaboration of the juice trip /sleepover theme, just as the third strategy will be an elaboration of the second, for kids — like adults — move most comfortably from success to success, any jump too wide representing an area of potential failure.

*Continued on page 68*

The B.C. TEACHER

a matter  
of opinion

## THE STUDENT AS SUBVERSIVE

DAVID HILLEN

Teachers needed to be told to be subversive. The result was *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*. Students need no such book. Students are instinctively subversive.

Subversion is normally political; its aim is to overthrow the established order. It can mean, as well, to cause the downfall, ruin, or destruction of anything. Apparently its root meaning is to undermine the principles of something, to corrupt. Students are subversive in all these senses of the word.

Only the naive would not expect this. This is what adolescence is all about! It's the age to be iconoclastic, idealistic, anti-everything. The anti-establishment role can lead to extremes of negativism in the young that television and newspapers force upon our attention. In a few students it is sincere, but for many it's only a convenient 'front' for subversive activities.

With no surprise, we come to realize that students have all the crucial characteristics of subversives. They indulge in hasty conversations that fade quickly when the enemy (read, teacher) comes close. Where profitable they are legalistic, frequently with the intention of clogging the courts with minutiae. Have you ever given a homework assignment with loopholes? How many did it?

Like subversives anywhere, students keep verbal 'dossiers' or profiles on the enemy (read, teacher). The weak points of all teachers are well known. 'Softies' are marked with big asterisks. The elective approach makes it easier to take their classes and avoid any semblance of hard work. (Sometimes the enemy plays right into your hands.)

Occasionally the would-be revolutionaries even organize to the point of controlling the school newspaper. Frequently 'effete intellectuals' on the staff encourage this. If this fails, there is always the opportunity to go underground. In most schools you don't have to go very deep to be safe.

As for any agent, lies are necessitated. These usually take the form of fictitious notes for absenteeism. For some students, this is their only truly creative moment. Naturally there is a secret code, slang, and other affects of revolutionaries such as hand signals, slogans

and graffiti. Ever tried to keep a bulletin board in the hall? Finally there is the typical hatred of that most detested creature among subversives, the double agent (read, nark).

Minor symptoms of subversion surround the teacher. The 'group-bug' that hits students on exam and assignment days is one. Another is the fact that on a common test students in period nine always do better than students in period one. It's called 'jungle telegraph.' Have you ever had all the students in your room crunch a piece of paper exactly at 3:13 p.m.? Skipping classes and studies is a similar symptom. Perhaps most persistent is the subversive power of simple inertia, indifference, nonviolent resistance, call it what you will. In some cases this reaches the proportions of a year-long 'sit-in.' Generally you have to threaten genocide to get students to use the 10-minute work period at the end of the lesson.

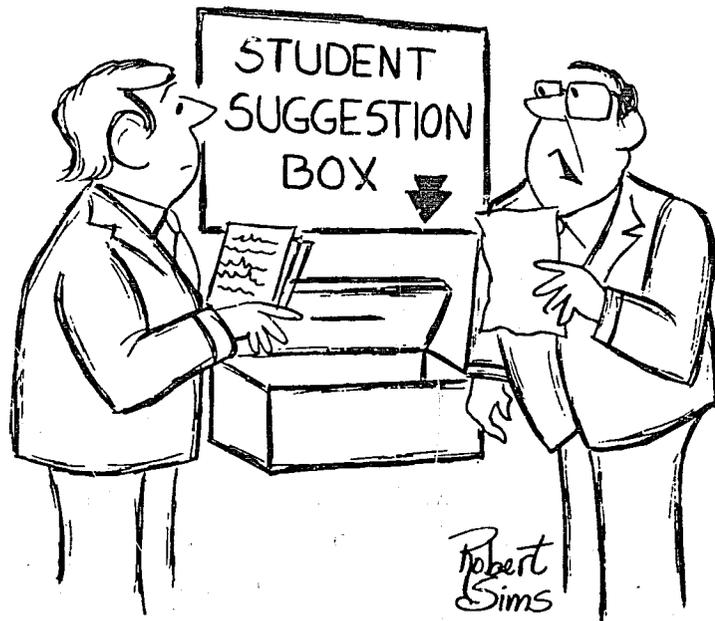
*The author is on the staff of Saltfleet High School, Stoney Creek, Ontario. The article is reprinted with permission from The Bulletin, the magazine of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.*

At times, subversion reaches epidemic proportions. Copying homework in the cafeteria qualifies. So does sneaking a smoke in the washroom or the locker room. Plagiarism on essays is also a front-runner. On exams the usual hit-and-run guerrilla warfare becomes a pitched battle as the students are positioned in their foxholes and the teacher takes up his 'vantage point' to 'vigilate' for such subversive activities as: cribs, notes on the inside of fingers or belts, hand movements, or attacks of fixated eyeball.

Once in a while, deliberate 'power plays' against one teacher occur. The attempt is made to force the teacher to back down, often on a symbolic issue, which could become a precedent. At these times such phrases as 'Get your old man to phone the principal' or 'If nobody does it, he can't flunk all of us,' are overheard.

If there is a lot of subversion in the schools, you would expect a fair amount of counter-intelligence activity (CIA for short). Be not disappointed! What else are vice-principals paid those fabulous salaries for? The V-P is the head of CIA in the school. He runs the detention room for 'political prisoners.' He organizes 'search and destroy' missions into the washrooms. 'Aliens' in the school are sent to him for 'identification.' His uniformed (collar and tie) agents (read, teachers) do regular 'body counts' for him at the beginning of each period. Every few days a mass 'surprise raid'; that is, a 'spot-attendance check' is made. The V-P himself is expected to make personal and regular 'reconnaissance patrols' through the washrooms, halls, doorways, and to the Friday night dance.

In a less facetious vein, there is too much subversive activity by students in our schools. The underground of drug pushers and users is a problem we have yet to honestly confront. Weak students are generally the most subversive. This explains why individualized reading plans and group work is seldom successful for these people. They have learned to always take the easy way out. Often we make these 'easy ways' too accessible. Thus all they learn is that subversion pays.



"This one suggests we listen to their suggestions."

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## Forum For Feelings

Continued from page 66

A few school districts have recognized the need for outdoor schools where kids come into intimate contact with nature. North Vancouver's camp in Paradise Valley outside Squamish takes two to three classes a week for a five-day confrontation with the environment with such exercises as pond studies, mapping, track-following as curriculum signposts. Beyond the clearly exciting aspect of learning in the woods lies a hidden curriculum, one that shares importance equally with the stated curriculum because planning and packing for such an adventure, one away from home, organizing work duties there, setting up personal goals, telling ghost stories around the campfire and dirty jokes in bed, cleaning up before departure: contribute to that social growth of the child that best occurs when the traditional social guidelines of parents and siblings have been removed. Then, children must learn to organize themselves, to cooperate with others, to make those frequently painful discoveries about themselves and their relationships with their peers.

The third strategy — an on-the-road-movable-feast-and-circus camping trip

— requires the greatest effort obviously and produces the greatest insights. Imagine taking an entire class in a bus or a couple of vans, even with a few parents along to help out, overnight, shopping, camping, cooking, cleaning up! Whew! The teachers at The New School have led almost 20 such trips, some lasting two weeks and covering 1,500 miles. I have written about these trips elsewhere and don't wish to detail the myriad procedures involved in organizing such an experience. Of course, working with a team of supportive teachers and having parental assistance is crucial to a major camping trip's success.

For too long, much too long, virtually the entire social studies program was concerned with family/community/nation and taught in the classroom without any real support from those that make up the family/community/nation. If teachers can overcome a certain feeling of self-righteousness that they alone have the training to impart knowledge and question values, if teachers can say, 'I'm not afraid of having another adult in the classroom,' if they can come out from behind the cloak of professionalism — that thinly veiled concern with salaries and pensions — and open the classroom to anyone with a sensitivity

to children, with ideas and experiences that can exhilarate children, the class can become a vital space again, where parents can feel comfortable, where old people can tell stories, where babies can crawl, where teachers and parents can talk and argue as equals, sharing in the planning of the education of their children.

What I'm proposing involves risks for teachers. To some it means a challenge to the mothering role, the adjudicator role, the initiator role, the encyclopedic role. To some it may seem self-denial: it seems so 'human' to want to guide children. Others will argue correctly that kids won't do it. No, I agree, not at first. For kids have been conditioned to be unassertive, to look on their education as so much bubble-gum for the mind.

But kids can learn to trust themselves and thus become assertive, taking responsibility for those self-discoveries that lead to self-esteem.

It has always amused me that the standard-gauge railroad tracks have exactly the same width of separation as the Roman chariot's wheels. The 1971 'new' Social Studies Curriculum Guide is modeled almost identically on the 'new' 1916 Social Studies Curriculum Guide. It's 1973 and it's time to update.

The B.C. TEACHER

# new books

C. D. NELSON



## I AM IN DANGER...

of being classed with the *Grinch Who Stole Christmas* and similar spoilsports, but nevertheless I must deflate yet another balloon. It seems that my chromosomes lack that particular gene that allows almost everyone else to wallow complacently in the manifestations of our current cultcha — the sort of mindless *kitsch* of our time.

For instance, I cannot abide 97% of the programs on TV, or movies, and what passes for today's music. I consider anything out of Walt Disney's studios a disaster. (No, Virginia, there is no *Mary Poppins*, only a lovely book by P.L. Travers.)

Naturally, I have a healthy skepticism about most books, too, especially those phenomenal best-sellers that sometimes crop up for no good reason. At the risk of being torn into 3" x 5" strips by outraged librarians, teachers, children's reading specialists, book reviewers and maritime ornithologists, I hereby present my minority report on the runaway bestseller *Jonathan Livingstone*

*Seagull* by Richard Bach. I consider this book the biggest put-on of the literary decade. It is a non-book, telling a non-story in pedestrian style, illustrated with fuzzy photographs of very ordinary seagulls, with plenty of blank pages all selling at an inflated price. If we must have anthropomorphic stories (and I would rather we did not), we must trade the cheap vulgarity of *JLS* for the timeless techniques of *The Wind in the Willows*, *Peter Rabbit* or even *Uncle Wiggly!*

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PARAGRAPH?...

We all have our *hang-ups*. Our *life style* is losing its *credibility*. So we must *escalate* our *social machinery* to derive more *meaningful* aims from both *on-going* and *up-coming* experiences. It is *simplistic* to rate being *up-tight* as normal at this *particular moment in time*.

## ANSWER...

Every italicized word or phrase. 'Pray you, avoid them,' as Hamlet instructed the players.

## MUSIC LOVERS' CORNER...

Someone asked Lawrence Welk what he thought about violence. 'I like them,' he said, 'and I also like cellos, flutes and clarinets.' — C.D. Nelson

## DRAMA

*Encounter; Canadian Drama in Four Media* (Methuen Canadian Literature Series). Eugene Benson, Ed. Methuen, Toronto, c1972. Paperback \$4.30; cloth \$9.50

This book contains the scripts of three stage plays, two radio plays, two television plays and one film play. The attractive publication is about ¾" thick and 6½" square. I mention this size because it adds much to the attractiveness of the book, it being easy to handle, if you can imagine yourself doing so, standing in front of a microphone reading a part.

The material is varied and provides an excellent chance to compare the different styles of writing necessary for the various media represented. The effective teacher of English could use this book to illustrate the demands made on writers who provide programs on radio, television, film and the theater today. You might agree that most young people, and perhaps most adults, watch television and films, but give little

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$A^2 + B^2 = C^2$

heed to the people who have had to write, rewrite and rewrite again that nebulous document known as the 'script.' Continuity, camera angles, closeups do not happen by accident, they are all planned and must appear in the finished script. Because these different types of script are all in the same book, comparison can be simple and fascinating.

All the material has been written by Canadian authors and the radio and television plays have been presented by the CBC. You might even be lucky enough to catch a rerun,

or perhaps videotape a show (with permission, of course) so that you can use it in the classroom in conjunction with the script.

For those teachers who are not too familiar with the technical terms used in film and television production, there is an excellent list of explanations of such terms at the back of the book. There are also some good photographs to stimulate interest.

The book clearly illustrates, for example, the fact that most of the television script is taken up with technical information and camera instructions; the radio script shows

how important the words are, because they must appeal only to the sense of hearing.

*Encounter* is certainly a book worth considering for the senior English class, the drama class or any class or group concerned with present-day communications media. Dare we say it might make a pleasant change from dissecting Shakespeare? Your class, after studying a book of this kind, might even discover that Shakespeare had a lot in common with the film and television script writers of today. The book is worth every cent of the price.—John Getgood

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### LANGUAGE ARTS

*Manspace*, by Alec Allinson, Beverley Allinson and John McInnes. Nelson, Toronto, c1973. \$4.25; Teacher's Guidebook \$2.50

This Grade 5 textbook, with its accompanying guidebook, is totally different from any standard elementary textbook. The teacher and student will find it full of stimulating ideas and unique individual ways of communicating these ideas.

*Manspace* is not a reader. Its basic premise is stated in the guidebook: 'The acquisition of both language and thought begins not in writing (although *Manspace* provides for that) but in talk. It is by talk that the child first learns to order his world, to interpret his experiences, and to communicate with others.'

The content ranges from exciting, thought-provoking pictures and questions to short two- or three-page vignettes from such children's classics as *The Wind in the Willows*, *The Twenty-one Balloons* and *Tikta'liktak*.

Both the students' book and the teacher's guide suggest a variety of possible responses to the pictures' self-expression and open questions. Students are encouraged to communicate orally in discussions, interviews, tape-recordings of their own poems and stories, as well as by written stories,

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diaries, reports, plays.

The scope of the book is very broad, encompassing people and their world. Specific topics include Homes with a Difference, Windows into Space, You are in Space, Overcrowding, Aloneness, Problem Cities, Pollution. The overall theme is that everyone is a part of 'Spaceship Earth,' a community of minds.—Janis Rickard

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## resources center

For your professional information needs, ask the Resources Center,  
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Phone 731-8121  
Hours: Monday-Friday 9-5; Saturday 9-1.

The materials listed, plus many others, are available on loan.

### DUNN, RITA STAFFORD

Practical approaches to individualizing instruction; contracts and other effective teaching strategies. West Nyack, N.Y., Parker, 1972. 254p. LB1031/D8

### EISNER, ELLIOT W.

Education artistic vision. New York, Macmillan, 1972. 306p. N85/E48

### HOPKINS, LEE BENNETT

Pass the poetry, please! Using poetry in pre-kindergarten-six classrooms. New York, Citation Press, 1972. 199p. PN1085/H66

### KOPPITZ, ELIZABETH (MUNSTERBERG)

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# NO CLASS

GRETA NELSON

God, what an irritating kid. I know what's wrong with him all right. I can follow the usual format; he will fall in like a ripe apple. A good way to illustrate my methods, really: sometimes you get people who try to play your game without knowing what it is, and you have to work like hell to straighten things out.

This guy seems easy. He's classic. Drumming his fingers against the seat of the chair. Throwing his hair back from his eyes. Hunching over. Restless. Eyes darting all over. Too damn polite — he's been told by somebody how you behave in public, but he doesn't like it. Only sixteen, run away from home, tried suicide but made sure someone knew, to rescue him. Probably into dope. Smoking up a storm.

'Your name is David, isn't it?'

A sudden, smart coming to attention. Deferential.

'Yes, sir.'

'We'll be on in a minute. Feel OK?'

'Oh, yeah! Sure.'

'Any questions about this?'

'Well yeah, who's going to be out

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there?'

'Mostly teachers, counsellors, some parents, maybe.'

'Yeah, well, what do we talk about?'

'What would you like to talk about?'

'I d'know. Do you have anything in mind?'

'We'll just let things happen. That all right with you?'

Shifting in his seat. Crossing his legs. Drumming his fingers. Doesn't look me in the eye. Irritating.

'Yeah, sure, OK.'

The conference worker darted in, eyes bright with the weight of his responsibility, dark hair ruffled.

'Dr. Samson, I think we'll be ready for you in about a minute. Would you come out with me onstage? Uh - you too, - David - is it?'

'That's right.' Quick stubbing of a cigarette. Good grief. Sixteen, and smokes like a chimney.

The giant amphitheater gleams palely behind the footlights. Faces are stacked in ghostly rows back into obscurity, only the faces directly below having expression, looking human. A giant, subdued rustle emanates from the yawning abyss.

I never get used to this onslaught of listeners... best to get working right away, get busy. Introductions are over.

'Would you mind telling me your name?'

'David.'

'And how do you feel being here in front of all these people?'

'Oh - kinda scared.'

'The people frighten you?'

'Well, no, not really. Are they all teachers?'

Scrabble of interest, subdued chuckles, rustlings.

'Yes, David, most of them are. Do you mind being here?'

'No, not really.'

'Now, you have something to ask me?'

'Oh! Ah - no, but I'll answer any questions.'

'What is your biggest problem?'

'Ah - like - well, people won't leave me alone.'

'You want them to leave you alone?'

'Well, not really, I like people.'

'You like them, and want them to leave you alone. Who bothers you the most?'

'Well - ah - my mom, I guess.'

'How does she bother you?'

'She bugs me all the time.'

Like Hansard: Oh oh, from the listeners.

'What does she bug you about?'

'Going to school. Keeping clean.'

'What do you do when she bugs you?'

'I don't do what she asks me to.'

'And so you fight over it?'

'Well, no, I just sort of don't do it.'

'Would you like me to tell you what I think about why you don't do it?'

'Oh, yeah. Sure.'

'Could it be that you like to show her that she has no power over you?'

'She does, though. She has lots of power. I don't mind her using it, but she just bugs me about things I don't think are important.'

This isn't going straight after all. The kid should have recognized the intuitive truth of what I said. Damn! This will have to go on and on until he admits his part in balking people. I'll go on to his teachers...they probably bug him, too, and for the same reasons. Funny how kids nowadays will not take any blame for their fights with teachers and parents. It's so obvious. They want to show power, have revenge, get attention, withdraw - just like everyone else.

An hour later, —

The auditorium is empty. The eminent Dr. Samson has left, having wrested the admission from David of his culpability as a perpetrator of conflict. He has expounded the principle again and again of the need for new ways to offset young people's manipulative powers. The audience had felt stimulated, satisfied in its need to see some light into the terrible dilemmas the ragged young people present, vindicated in its need to lay blame on the real villains, to make sense out of the uncontrollable behavior of the young. It was so clear. The boy David must take responsibility for his negative behavior. He must see how motivated he is to show his power over parents and teachers.

David wandered away. What the hell, he thought, and emptied his mind of the garroting of the past hour.

There was a piano in the anteroom and he sat down to play in the half dusk of the distant stage lights. He burst strongly into 'Classical Gas.' The air of the room began to move with rhythms.

The fingers of his large hands moved with a joyous abandon that knew no brooking. The fingers were long, spatulate, beautiful in their sure chase of emotion. There was no break between the piano and the player: they were one unit.

The chords throbbed and throbbed, strong, visceral. The melody surged up, down, around the harmonies.

The atmosphere crackled with the strength of his playing. He played unself-consciously, leaving one song only to break into the next.

When he finally left, he dragged his feet. What a burden he was to everybody! No class, not a bit.

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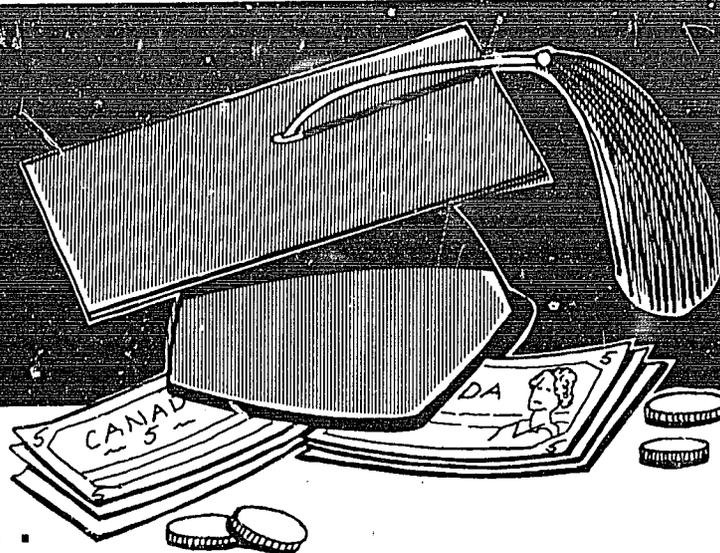
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