

EDITORIAL

In devoting this final issue of 1972 to articles treating various aspects of the report of the Alberta Commission on Educational Planning — the *Worth Report* — *The Journal of Educational Thought* recognizes the importance of this comprehensive attempt at educational planning. Even more, we recognize the importance of examining the *Worth Report* carefully so as to judge it both in relation to the scope of the attempt to plan for the entire range of educational activities in Alberta and in relation to the technical and theoretical questions arising from the assumptions and methodology of the *Report*.

Dr. Walter Worth, then a Vice President of the University of Alberta, was commissioned in June, 1969 to direct a planning exercise that was to take account of social, economic and technological trends to 1990, to examine needs of all the people of Alberta, and to recommend changes and priorities for a comprehensive educational system. Though Dr. Worth, as sole commissioner, has final responsibility for the *Report*, the commission had the help of nearly 100 consultants, sponsored many research studies, held 36 public meetings, convened 14 conferences and supported three major task forces reporting on basic education, post-secondary education, and lifelong learning. The scope of work assigned to the commission means that its report, in the words of Professor Adams' lead article, "is more in the genre of those blue-ribbon commissions and committees which have in the past several years generated so many fat, comprehensive statements in nations' capitals throughout the world about preferred educational futures."

The following articles are from persons outside of Alberta as well as from people involved in education in Alberta, and the intention is to achieve some balance between comments on the *Worth Report* in the context of educational planning and in the light of world-wide concern with the organization of educational systems and comments on the *Worth Report* touching on specific assumptions and data used in planning for education in Alberta.

The first article, "Planning Educational Futures," is by Donald Adams, Professor and Chairman of the International and Development Education Program in the University of Pittsburgh. Professor Adams specializes in educational planning, and he examines the scope and methodology of the *Worth Report*, comparing it to other undertakings in the planning of education. While he draws attention to the breadth of view of the Alberta planning exercise and commends Dr. Worth for trying "to discuss educational questions within the perceived social, political, economic and professional contexts," he questions the thoroughness and usefulness of

much of the *Report's* treatment of these broader aspects of planning. He concludes with two major criticisms pointing to the *Report's* failure to discuss the planning techniques used in its own development and a failure to discuss the mechanisms for creating, reviewing, and criticizing change in education.

A shorter companion piece to Adam's general article is Dr. G. Loken's "A Critical Examination of Enrollment Forecasts and Fiscal Projections in the *Worth Report*." Dr. Loken is Associate Professor of Educational Administration in The University of Calgary and Assistant to the Dean of Education. He was formerly a research officer with the Alberta Universities Commission. Dr. Loken examines some of the enrollment and cost projections underlying policies set forth in the *Worth Report*. The questions about the accuracy of these projections constitute a detailed query about planning in relation to conditions in Alberta which usefully supplements the general observations of the first article.

The new editor of *The Journal of Educational Thought*, Ralph M. Miller, contributed the third article, "Wishful Thinking is no Guide to Education". His thesis is that the social theory of the *Report* is ill-founded and largely irrelevant to the educational recommendations. If, as Adam's initial article suggests, Dr. Worth has been correct in drawing attention to the social and political contexts of educational planning, Miller argues that the *Report* has dealt with these questions in a superficial and unconvincing manner. He finds that important questions are too often begged when Dr. Worth simply assumes what requires to be proved.

The next article, "Charting the Course of Canadian Education," is by Dr. David Munroe, who was Vice Chairman of the Parent Commission which reported on education in Quebec. Dr. Munroe was previously the Director of the Institute of Education at McGill and has more recently been an advisor to the Department of the Secretary of State for Canada. Because of his experience in Canadian education and his knowledge of the several provincial and national reports on education, Munroe is able to set the *Worth Report* in the context of commissioned studies of Canadian education.

The concluding article is by Philip E. Vernon, Emeritus Professor of Psychology, University of London and presently Professor of Educational Psychology in The University of Calgary. From the background of his special interest in mental measurement and child psychology, Professor Vernon concentrates upon those assumptions and proposals in the *Worth Report* which appear to conflict with research findings. In particular, he contests the possibility of changing students and their teachers through rational planning of the educational system and advocates caution regarding two of the learning modes which Dr. Worth describes and which he would apply to some levels and objectives of education. Professor Vernon

also criticizes some of the proposals for expanding Special Education Services.

We hope these articles will contribute to the discussion of the *Worth Report*, in spite of the difficulty in coming to grips with such a massive topic in the space of five articles. Anticipating continued discussion of the *Report* we invite readers to respond, either by taking issue with points raised in the articles or by taking up new questions in the *Worth Report*. Depending on the response, we are prepared to devote substantial space in the next issue to readers' reactions.

Editorial Note:

To facilitate reading all references to statements in *The Worth Report* are being placed in parentheses in the texts of the various articles, e.g. (p. 168). All other references are given in standard form. For the benefit of readers the bibliographical designation of the *Worth Report* is Walter H. Worth, *A Choice of Futures*, Report of the Commission on Educational Planning (Alberta), Queen's Printer, Edmonton, 1972