

## EDITORIAL

While education suffers when its focus becomes too parochial, *The Journal of Educational Thought* is alert to its obligations and opportunities as a Canadian publication serving a substantial Canadian constituency. The first consideration in selecting articles must always be quality; subsequently, weight can be given to the focus of the article and, specifically, its applicability to Canadian education. Canadian articles have never predominated in *The Journal of Educational Thought*, except in our last issue, dealing with the *Worth Report*. That issue will certainly remain the exception, but even though its point of departure was an educational planning document specific to a single Canadian province, issues raised in the discussion concerned major questions in education, and two of five contributing authors are internationally known in their fields.

In considering articles submitted from outside Canada, we still give first importance to quality but must, in addition, guard against articles which too narrowly treat topics specific to other countries or localities. Major educational problems, such as finance, balance of pupil responsibility and initiative against requirements of disciplines and the organization of instruction, place of education within the social system, etc., can be discussed in specific and highly localized contexts and yet have implications for other localities and countries. Indeed, the ideal article may well require to have a specific context to give substantial meaning while yet treating a topic pertinent to other situations.

The articles in this issue well reflect these editorial concerns. The opening article by George Tompkins is specifically Canadian, and perhaps it is limited in the sense that few other nations share our combination of geographic and linguistic-cultural hazards to national consciousness. Yet the value - or danger - of various forms of nationalism in today's world makes the discussion of national consciousness, in any particular national context, pertinent to other men in other lands. While Tompkins' review of major shifts in the concept of Canadian identity (including his recognition of the carelessness of equating "identity" with "unity" or even with "national consciousness") may be particularly interesting to Canadians, his comments on various proposals for educational programs to serve these purposes are germane to discussion of the national uses of education in other countries.

Professor Tompkins' article was originally prepared for the program on "Education and Nationalism in Canada" which was part of the *Institute on Canadian Society* held at The University of Calgary in the summer of 1972. The program was jointly supported by the Division of Continuing Education and the Department of Educational Foundations at The University of Calgary, while the Department of Continuing Education was responsible for the Institute in its entirety. A second paper prepared for the program will appear in the August issue, and a third paper dealing with education and society in contemporary Quebec will later complete the series of articles on education in relation to national issues in Canada.

The remaining articles in this issue, contributed from Israel, the United States, and Canada afford an international balance of content. More important, they suggest alternatives and tactics rather than concentrating upon

criticism of current educational practice. It often seems that journals exist mainly to criticize current practice, and valuable as the critical function is, those involved in serious study of education also have a responsibility to investigate new possibilities. Thus, Daniel Linden Duke reports on the open school. While open schools exist in many North American school systems, there is great variation in their organization and degree of flexibility. It is useful, therefore, to have a detailed report on the functioning of open schools with attention to the philosophical, empirical, and practical justification of the approach.

Ron Lahav's article on futurology and education might well be called a "memo to educational planners," and without returning to the specific weaknesses of planning discussed in relation to the Worth Report by Don Adams, Lahav considers how planning may shift from emphasis on statistics to informed speculation. Asserting that speculation is vital to planning seems much like saying we must guess more and plan less, but it clearly points to the paradox of planning; the more complete and accurate planning attempts to be, the more likely it is an extrapolation from current trends. As such, the desire for completeness and precision limits the scope of change, for embarking on new courses is always fraught with uncertainty and requires giving up some of the security of what we can know and measure.

This conflict between efficiency and invention was well put by John Dewey:

Doubtless many of the methods which are now in process of attempted standardization are not worth the attention they receive. Too often we are deciding upon which is best among three or four ways of doing things, no one of which is good. In short the limits of the efficiency movement are the limits of what is already achieved in the way of school technique. The movement may succeed in ascertaining which is best, relatively speaking, among them. It cannot tell whether any one of them has, relatively to some future invention, any claim to existence.<sup>1</sup>

If Lahav challenges planners to risk uncertainty by engaging in more speculation, Pat Duffy Hutcheon seems to be returning to familiar ground in taking up the question of academic freedom. While much of the discussion of academic freedom is in the liberal arts tradition, the defence of the university as a community of scholarly inquiry does have a clear future orientation. Looking to the future must involve thinking the unthinkable and, consequently, universities which would address themselves to the future possibilities of mankind must not be confined within the limits of the public and practical wisdom of the time, nor cowed by the demands of particular groups.

Looking to the future is not worth doing unless it is done with hope, and to have hope means not accepting present trends as inevitable and not reading the future as a mere extension of now. Yet, knowing that we cannot change all things, a hopeful future orientation seeks to identify those things that are important - and possible - to change. The future we look to must then be, to some degree, the world we choose. Any worthy future is a vision of what may be rather than a resigned acceptance of what seems likely. Thus, the critical functions of scholarship and the freedom to think new thoughts are of redoubled importance if educators take stock of the future and are of a mind "to make no small plans."

<sup>1</sup>John Dewey, "Current Tendencies in Education," *The Dial*, LXII, 739, April 5, 1917, p. 289.