

ARTICLES

ABSTRACT

This article deals with the OECD Report of 1976 on Canadian education. It reviews issues concerned with the planning, aims, and assumptions of Canadian education. The article focuses on a critique, occurring in Appendix B of the OECD Report, that attacks the most fundamental assumptions of the Canadian public school system. The criticism charges that the Canadian school system is organized along the lines of an old-fashioned industrial enterprise with children treated as raw materials that are processed through grade 12 where the best go on for further academic processing in universities. The article concurs with the view of the OECD Report.

D.A. MacIver*

A Question of Aims and Assumptions in Canadian Education

The OECD Report on Canadian education did not cause a great stir.¹ It was not as fulsome in its praise as the report on research in American education,² nor as biting in its criticism as the report on planning in British education.³ It did raise issues about planning and about the aims of Canadian education and analyses of these problems have been pursued by Canadian scholars.⁴

Nevertheless, amongst the well-balanced statements of praise and blame lies one section of the Report that is unremitting in its criticism of Canadian education.⁵ The critique may have been ignored for so long because it threatens almost every aspect of Canadian education. It is an attack on the most fundamental assumptions of the public school system. On the other hand, the critique may have been ignored because it appears in such an obscure part of the Report. It is simply not usual to find a major criticism in Appendix B.

In brief, it is argued in Appendix B of the OECD Report, that the Canadian school system is organized along the lines of an old-fashioned industrial enterprise with children perceived as the raw material. Once on the assembly line of grades the child is processed to the end of grade 12. The processing is predominantly an academic matter with the best products going on for further processing in the universities.⁶

The Examiners raise one set of issues related to the organization and aims of Canadian education and these are summarized below. The rest of this paper is a consideration of the assumptions that underlie the contemporary organization and goals of Canadian education. The need for this analysis is implied in the Report. The necessity of this analysis becomes pressing as the relevance of the school to leisure, employment, and unemployment becomes ever more obscure.

*Dean of Education, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick.

A Summary of Appendix B

The OECD Examiners are lucid in their statement of the view that the organization of Canadian education is based on “. . . traditional industrial concepts. . .”⁷ and that the system is hierarchical, paternalistic and fragmented. Specialized functions are not well coordinated so that students are placed at the mercy of experts, while the generalist teacher who knows the child best has little influence.⁸

The desire for efficiency and economy, fine industrial concepts, are assumed to apply to education and these *assumptions are not questioned*.⁹ Communities lose their schools in the name of economy; children become weary through travelling long distances and may even suffer “. . . harmful physical and mental consequences.”¹⁰ Children lose peer group relationships because of specialization, and competition becomes “talent hunting”.¹¹ Children are streamed from the earliest grades but they benefit little since:

Most schools are deemed to be functioning well if children who are predicted to be slow learners, and who are given “appropriate materials”, prove that the diagnosis is correct by lagging increasingly behind others.¹²

The OECD Examiners go on to point out that the best resources are devoted to the best performing students, By the same token, vocational subjects are seen to be “separate and different” from academic subjects and social selection combined with “strongly directive counselling” ensure that students will accept the opinion of the school authorities. This whole perspective undermines the notion of the Canadian secondary school as a supermarket of subjects providing the student with maximum choice.¹³

The organizational and administrative structure of the school undermines the development of any sense of community amongst students or teachers. Everything is atomized and opportunities for free cooperation are virtually non-existent so that:

. . . “participation” becomes a matter of individual choice, and is permitted only in a strictly regulated context.¹⁴

In other words, administrators, teachers, and students are expected to know and accept their places in the hierarchy.

In sum, the school has become a reflection of the industrial enterprise. The irony is that industry itself is being reformed. Specialization is being emphasized less and workers are being called upon to perform more generalized functions. Certain levels of authority are disappearing and the worker is acquiring more control over his workplace. The Examiners conclude that education, which is much like a service industry, is being developed along lines that are typical of the manufacturing industry. This is occurring when the manufacturing industries are seeking alternatives.¹⁵

Industrial Organization - Academic Goals

The brief summary of Appendix B of the OECD Report reveals that in the view of the examiners Canadian education is organized after the fashion of a traditional industrial enterprise. In industry raw materials are converted into end products. In education the student is the raw material to which something has to be done in order to produce an end product which, in the case of education, may be described as an “educated person”. The aim of education is the educated person and this trivial claim is a useful place to start. While volumes have been written about the nature of the educated person, it is clear that, even after twelve years of schooling,

every graduate cannot be described as educated. The product most carefully sought in the school system is the academically competent¹⁶ person who functions well within the system. Academic competence is revealed by success in the curriculum and the student's success within the system reflects his/her acceptance of the organization and values of the hidden curriculum.¹⁷ The part that both the overt and hidden curricula play in the school system are discussed below.

As far as the overt curriculum is concerned, two features stand out: there are certain "basic subjects" that are perceived to be more significant than others, i.e., language arts, mathematics, social studies, and success in these subjects is normally determined by written responses.¹⁸ The aims of any given program normally include statements about achieving success in the cognitive and affective realms. However, an analysis of what is tested in schools reveals that the efforts of teachers are overwhelmingly directed towards the cognitive achievement of their students.¹⁹

From the earliest grades the schools are organized to produce students who are competent in the academic areas. Teachers start the selection process early in school life and in many schools in Canada, students are already being streamed in the elementary and junior high grades. In most schools in the English speaking world, high school students are categorized according to their academic ability and the most able students are perceived to be the successes of the school system. In making judgements about schools, the "best schools are perceived to be those with the highest percentage of scholarship students. The "best" teachers are perceived to be those who teach the students who achieve the highest academic ranking. Other dimensions may be used in making judgements about a school, but the academic achievements of the students are the preeminent criteria used in judging the success of a school.

The most successful students are destined for the university and the skills that will be required at the university dominate their school day. These same skills also dominate the school day of those who *may* (or *may not*) go to university and of those intelligent students who have no intention of attending university. Other students who will not or cannot fit the academic mold enter vocational classes, do part time work in business or industry, or receive other special training. The students who do not pursue university work are generally perceived to be the failures of the system. The most obvious failures are those who withdraw from school. On the one hand, they are perceived to be "drop-outs" who cannot handle the subject matter or the system. On the other hand, drop-outs may perceive the system as being irrelevant, because their vocational plans do not include university.

The frightening fact is that one description of education can apply to all of Canada.²⁰ The description may be applicable to the whole developed world. The OECD Report is unequivocal in the view that Canadian education is organized to attain academic goals. The system is monolithic and students in schools are subjected to rigorous control. All of this emphasizes the industrial orientation that dominates the organization of education in Canada.²¹

It is not rational to speak of an industrial organization unless there is a product and the "student as product" is an old concept. Indeed, it would seem that the end product of the organization of, for example, a grade seven class is a grade eight student.²² After twelve years of schooling organized along industrial lines the most prized end product is the university student. In descending order of esteem there are the students who are able to go on to some other mode of higher education,

then there are students whose readiness for further study is marginal and finally, there are those who must leave school but who are ill prepared for anything. There is a clear ranking from the best to the worst kind of end product as is the case with industrial products.

The Process of Homogenization

One of the features of this concentration on academic subject matter is that all students receive the same kind of academic diet. At least, this is the situation until most students have reached high school. Normally, students are moved along from grade to grade with some students being accelerated or decelerated by a year or two. In order to move children along in this way, academic work must be designed to fit the abilities of the average child - or the average child is made to fit the work provided. In any case, virtually all students study the same subject matter and all are required to accept the same time schedules, study what has been pre-planned, and follow the routines of the school without question.

These issues raise the matter of the hidden curriculum which effectively prepares students for participation in industrial society. Students who have endured the routines of the school for twelve years are likely to possess the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic, and they are likely to submit to the imposition of dull and tedious work without complaint. Bowles and Gintis summarize the situation:

The school is a bureaucratic order with hierarchical authority, rule orientation, stratification by "ability", as well as by age, role differentiation by sex, and a system of external incentives, much like pay and status in the sphere of work.²³

More than this the hidden curriculum will have effectively revealed to many students that they are not as academically competent as others. The latter group will have been prepared not only to perform dull and tedious work, but they will have been convinced that they *ought* to perform that work because they are not competent enough to do otherwise.

Consistent with this position is the study that Bowles and Gintis report regarding the personality traits that are associated with scholarship as it is identified in the public schools. They show that when I.Q.'s are controlled there is a positive correlation between a particular set of personality traits and academic achievement.²⁴ The dominant traits of the successful student can be summed up as submissiveness and docility. These are the traits of followers, not leaders. They go on to show that academic success is negatively correlated with the traits of creativity, aggressiveness and independence.²⁵ Again the study was designed to control I.Q.. This side of the study is especially serious because these are exactly the traits that are essential to the development of business and industrial enterprises. They are also the traits that characterize leadership in contemporary society, but they are not rewarded in school. According to these studies, students who seek academic success must develop the habit of concealing these traits.

In some senses contemporary education is remarkably successful. It enables students to be selected according to the principles of academia; it habituates students to certain roles in society; and it often convinces students that the roles identified by the schools are by right theirs. Except for the few students who have attended private or alternative schools, all Canadian students have been through what is virtually the same process of education. All have been made to wrestle with the same curricula (overt and hidden) and the evidence suggests that a main result is that students are forced into one of three or four categories. While these grades may be

a reasonable assessment of specific academic achievement, they are absurd when the application is used to describe the student as person. Yet such elision is common. The A students are destined to become manager of society; the B students the technicians; the C students the workers, and so on. This suggests an appropriate mode of education only if the aim of education is to prepare students for their places in some kind of hierarchical work situation that can be predicted with accuracy, while they are in school.

There are serious flaws in this process, even if consideration is restricted to the preparation of students to participate in the economy of the country. For example, in some provinces up to fifty percent of young people under the age of 24 are unemployed. In the same provinces, up to one third of the adult work force will be unemployed at any given time.²⁶ The fact that this percentage of the population greatly exceeds the number of students who will go on to university seems hardly recognized by those who plan curricula. It seems to be assumed that everyone who goes to school either will go to university, or will be gainfully employed, an assumption that is clearly wrong.

There are other serious problems. The homogenizing influence of the contemporary school must do particular damage to the creative student, the very intelligent student, or to the normal student who is uninterested in academic achievement. The damage that is inflicted on students who, for whatever reason, cannot accommodate to the contemporary process of schooling is probably greater than has ever been imagined.

The Academic Ideology

An important implication of the OECD Report is that the school system is controlled by academic administrators, bureaucrats, and teachers. All of these personnel have experienced a similar kind of education. Almost without exception they have pursued academic programs in high school and they will all have studied at a university. As a result the academic orientation is virtually guaranteed because of the experience of those who control or teach in the public schools. Parents who are workers, welfare recipients, unemployed, or small businessmen who have not studied at universities have lost any close contact with the public schools. Evidence has already been cited regarding the academic dominance of the public school via the curriculum which reflects the experiences of those who run the schools.²⁷

There are few who would argue against the necessity of requiring all children to learn the basic skills. What is being challenged here is the assumption that academic scholarship is the overwhelmingly important value in public education. The traits of scholarship and submission, the preference for theoretical as opposed to practical subjects, the concentration on evaluation of cognitive achievement, the academic orientation of those associated with the schools, all suggest the domination of the schools by an academic ideology. The evidence builds to confirm the impression of the successful student as one who is a lover of theory and whose dominant personality traits are contemplative, submissive and obedient. The practical and aggressive student is not destined for much recognition in the public schools.

It is inevitable that after fifteen or sixteen years in school and university the habits acquired in ensuring success will be well established.²⁸ It is also inevitable that students will take these habits into their first jobs. No matter what their work, the skills and patterns of thought acquired through the early years will be dominant. The comparatively brief on-the-job training that most neophytes receive is

hardly likely to change the habits that have been successful throughout their schooling. And contemporary schooling has some interesting traditions which shed light on the problems current in education today.

The Spectator Theory of Learning

The main tradition of western education has involved a view of the school and university as being somehow apart from society. Many philosophers in the Greek-Judeo-Christian tradition have held that a main role of the schools is to protect children from the pressures of the world until they have learned enough to make reasonable judgements.²⁹ While students learn from the example of their teachers, they come to maturity through a study of the great works of western literature. In this tradition it is argued that all the knowledge necessary to act wisely can be learned from the great tradition of Western literature that has been handed down from time immemorial.³⁰ Schools prepare the future managers of society by immersion into western literature and science, but those who cannot succeed in these fields are destined for the role of worker and follower.

The teacher is the unquestioned authority in the classroom and the authority is vested in both the teacher's position and in his/her knowledge. At the level of practice this theory suffered in the late sixties and early seventies, but in recent years the position of the teacher as authority has been reaffirmed and parents are now seeking ways of exerting more control and guidance over their children. The demand for rigorous study of the disciplines of grammar, composition, mathematics, history and so on, has been emphasized in recent years. And this is another reaffirmation of the "great tradition" of Western education.

The problem with this tradition is that it stems from the time when education was limited to the few who held power. Plato's theory of education, realistic education to the citizens of Athens while the state depended on a slave population for its existence. Priests in the early Church sought out the rare but brilliant student who was educated with the children of nobles, but normally teaching of the serf or simple freeman was limited to the catechism. In effect, contemporary education, which is egalitarian in intent, has its roots in an approach to education which was intended for the upper classes of a highly stratified society.

There is yet another curious anomaly about this traditional approach to education. While contemporary scholars emphasize the rigorous academic study that was required of students in the past (and which ought to be required of students today) they ignore another dimension which played an important part in the ancient tradition. Plato's Republic is commonly regarded as the classical statement on education and its place in society.³¹ While scholars recognize the rigorous emphasis on rhetoric, logic, mathematics, and so on, they tend to ignore Plato's emphasis on aesthetics, physical education, and a gradual introduction into practical life. Indeed, for Plato the true scholar could only be discovered *after* he had demonstrated his ability in more practical realms.

To summarize, it would seem that the academic subject matter which dominates the public schools stems from an ancient tradition. This tradition originated when education was a privilege of a dominant minority, which is a radically different situation from today. Furthermore, classical education did emphasize aesthetic and physical education as well as a gradual introduction into practical affairs. Those who advocate the academic dominance of the public schools continue to refer to this ancient tradition, but it is an odd justification.

Plato's ultimate scholar, the philosopher king, was free to contemplate the "form of the good" independent of the practical affairs of state except when called upon to perform some service. This ivory-towered perspective pervades public education. It is as if the public school student is being trained from his earliest years to contemplate and observe the world. This spectator theory of knowledge dominates the public school, especially at the upper levels and amongst those identified by their teachers as the best students.

The Dominance of the Academic Perspective

Education, like any major social institution, appears to most people to have a mode of operation that is beyond question. The operation of the school system has become such a part of the consciousness of the people that it is difficult to conceive of another way to treat young people between the ages of 5 and (in many cases) 22 or 23. The schools and universities (as concrete manifestations of the institution of education) are there, and that is where young people go.

It is not difficult to criticize aspects of education in some fairly superficial ways, such as claiming that teachers are not teaching as effectively as they should, or by arguing that there ought to be more mathematics or more language arts. It is a different matter to argue that schools should not be organized as they are, or to argue that the school system is so concerned with intellectual activity that it distorts the nature of education because it has much broader concerns.

While such claims are often dismissed as being "philosophical" (and hence somehow irrelevant) it is possible that such claims are ignored for quite other reasons. Criticisms that seriously threaten the system may be systematically ignored because they pose too great a threat to those who have committed their lives to public education. Indeed, those who are totally involved in the system of education are unlikely to be able to make cool unbiased or unemotional judgments about the system itself. This is especially the case if the critique of the system threatens the means by which a person earns his/her living.

Sometimes alternatives to the system develop. Private, religious schools spring up, publicly financed alternative schools may be established and occasionally there are free schools to be found. In the late sixties and early seventies the possibility of a radical change in education seemed to exist in urban centres such as Winnipeg, Vancouver, Edmonton and especially Toronto. It seems that this period of potential change (roughly 1969-1972 in Canada) was atypical and Marcuse was correct in claiming that a characteristic of contemporary capitalist systems is that criticism is absorbed or accommodated within the system.³² This seems to imply that the established system of education is nearly impervious to significant change.

Institutional intransigence is particularly apparent because education is such an integral part of the life experience to the child. More significantly the life experience of the middle classes seems to be fully congruent with the values and attitudes of the academic ideology which has already been discussed. Bernstein's studies, for example, reveal that the archetypical middle class situation is verbally oriented and reflects a controlled and ordered view of life.³³ In such a life situation the occupational responsibilities of the parents control the household. This simply means that the household is closely tied to the clock. Other obvious emphases in such households which are referred to by Bernstein include the control of spontaneous behaviour, cleanliness, a high value on education, a familiarity with books, and other artifacts associated with learning. It is no exaggeration to label such a life as "Apollonian" because the dominant values are order and reason.³⁴

The Apollonian life style is highly valued in the school setting with its emphasis on obedience which is perceived as order (and often referred to as discipline!"). Cognitive development, that cherished goal of the schools, is perceived as reason. The congruency between the middle class home and the contemporary school is remarkable. The successful student possesses the esteemed values of the home and school and these values (especially reason and order) are also the dominant values exhibited by the managers of contemporary society, i.e., bureaucrats of all kinds, politicians and academics.

Teachers, the formal conveyors of the academic ideology, have a special stake in ensuring the tradition. Not only does the value of their vocational skills depend on this approach, but in most cases in Canada a teacher's salary is directly related to years of experience and academic achievement. Children, while in school, spend most of their time with teachers who have a high regard, or at least a respectful concern, for academic success. A critique of the academic ideology is unlikely from this source.

University professors are even more supportive of the academic viewpoint than are teachers, and they are usually more articulate. Their whole training is academic and they are authorities in special areas. Verbal skill, coupled with a blurring of the range of their expertise, provides many professors with an authority that is unwarranted. A mechanic may know exactly what he wants for his children, but if an academic disagrees, the mechanic is likely to lose the verbal argument regardless of the strength of his case. Here is a classical example of a situation that is rampant in society. That is, the verbally effective individual who is quick thinking and glib, or who has been trained in the rhetorical tradition of the universities, can overwhelm better positions that are held by less articulate people.

The picture that develops is that of an academic mind-set which holds sway in the universities and schools, and it will be suggested later, in other major institutions as well. It is a mind-set that reflects a life style that has become dominant amongst certain groups in society and which is virtually unchallenged, but as will be argued below, this dogma ought to be criticized.

Problems of Academic Dominance

While there remain notable exceptions, managers of society, bureaucrats of all kinds, politicians and academics, have achieved demonstrable success in education. It has already been argued that this success will have been achieved by the development of habits and skills over a period of twelve years in public school and four or more years at university. These habits will not be easily discarded when the student enters his vocation.

The habits of the academic are reflected in the style of government that manifests itself in Canada today. Politicians and civil servants will study anything that is in their interests to study because it delays action that may threaten their position. Royal Commissions are constantly traversing the land; environmental studies are undertaken, briefs are prepared, and problems are studied and reviewed. Many, if not most of these reports, are shelved and forgotten, few are systematically used as programs for action. The OECD Examiners state:

One might recommend more seriousness on the part of those commissioning reports, and less eagerness for sheer quantity of output, for Canadian educational administration threatens to drown in a sea of unread, unstudied and unevaluated reports.³⁵

The OECD Examiners, however, make no comments about the morality of writing their own Report.

While there are probably more glaring examples of the misuse of report writing and research, Dumont cites a case in which two studies on the same topic were done in the same department by two different groups of researchers. Neither group was aware of the work of the other and each group arrived at a different set of conclusions.³⁶

The academic disease is endemic. The symptoms appear in royal commissions or courts of law, where "experts" or "specialists" can be rounded up to speak on any side of any issue. If a Canadian expert cannot be found, foreign experts are imported and they often appear to carry even greater prestige and extra special knowledge. These are instances of undue academic influence on the "real" world. The emphasis is on contemplation, research, postponement of action, argument, recommendations for more research, more argument, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Research is the task of the university, but the influence of the university on contemporary society is so great that government departments themselves resemble universities. There is the constant shuffling of internal reports; the scribbled notations on the margins of documents; the establishment of study groups; the interminable series of meetings; the presentation of new policies, and so on. All this, coupled with the fact that senior civil servants and university academics are interchangeable, make large segments of government resemble the halls of academe.

The enormous sums of money spent on royal commissions, on similar but less prestigious studies, and on various other kinds of research is an obvious drain on the economy. When these researchers are ignored they represent a complete waste of resources. It would seem that the academic influence has spread beyond its area of competence.

There are other critical areas where the academic influence has become more of a handicap than an advantage. At one time education was perceived to be the way to upward mobility, but now this mechanism has gone awry. Selecting students for careers on the basis of academic competence seems to be self-defeating. For example, there are far too many students who are fully qualified to enter medical schools, law schools, and schools of education than can possibly be accommodated in those schools or absorbed by the respective professions.

The growing spectre of large numbers of unemployed young people who are academically competent ought to be a matter of serious concern. Ironically, public pressure is being exerted in order to make the schools more academic than ever (i.e., "back to the basics"). This response, however, is understandable when it is recognized that the major institutions of society are dominated by the academic mind. The answer to our problem seems to be another study, another report, another review or another project, but this does not help the worker or the unemployed.

Education and Practical People

Students who do not perform well in the academic world tend to leave it in order to enter the "real world". Students withdraw from school for an infinite number of reasons. Some students simply lack intelligence, but others find school lacking in challenge, boring, tedious and irrelevant. Many students leave because they simply will not accept a combination of control and seemingly irrelevant subject matter. Some students suffer schooling until they reach grade 12 and then eagerly enter the work force.

It is from this melange of students variously defined as “borderline”, “indifferent”, or “failing” that the main body of the work force of society is derived: the labourers, crane operators, electricians, dockers, auto workers, farmers and so on. Similarly, many bank clerks, typists, secretaries and telephone operators come from the ranks of those who leave school early or who reluctantly complete twelve grades.

Once they have left school the life of the worker becomes quite different from the life of the student. If students take trade courses they quickly identify with the trade areas and disparage academic subjects that have to be studied concurrently.³⁷ Once in the work force the pattern of life of the worker is dominated by practical affairs and this means getting results. The front end man has to change tires properly; the mechanic has to get the car going; the typist must produce copies; the lineman must get the power flowing. This is specific, goal oriented work, where achievements are obvious and failures cannot be concealed. It is this element that gradually disappears from academic life.

Bernstein and others argue that the schools impose a set of foreign values on the lower socio-economic classes in society.³⁸ It is suggested that the working class is more haphazard, more spontaneous, less controlled, less dominated by the clock and more emotional than the middle classes of society. It is a life style oriented to action not thought, to deeds, not words, to immediate enjoyment and not postponement of pleasures. In its more idealized form this life style may be called “Dionysian” in contrast to the Apollonian life style of the archetypical middle class situation. The Dionysian life style may be characterized by a willingness to take risks; to appreciate the joys of physical work; to be stimulated by danger and other challenges; to accept personal responsibility for action; to be willing to challenge authority; and to accept competition which is free from academic subjectivity or political influence. While these qualities may be essential to miners, steelworkers, lumbermen, firemen and entrepreneurs, they are qualities that are simply unacceptable in the contemporary school.⁴⁰

Not only are the Dionysian qualities frowned on but humanistic tendencies like cooperation are discouraged in the educational system. The demand is for a personal response to academic tests and exercises. The whole range of behaviours associated with the schools and universities depend on individual responses to given cues and on submission to an established routine. The best student is perceived to be the one who knows how to compete according to an arbitrary set of rules while cooperation, such as essential aspect of contemporary life, receives only lip service.

These general claims regarding the dissonance between education and the economic enterprise are supported by writers who cite studies that make specific claims regarding education and the economy. Berg argues that the educational enterprise plays a much smaller part in economic growth than has generally been held to be the case.⁴¹ He even refers to one study that showed that in some situations better educated workers tended to change jobs more frequently and to be more discontented with their work.⁴² Paci goes further by citing cases where illiterates were taught to perform effectively in the skilled trades.⁴³ The relationship between contemporary academic schools and the labour market is not clear, but the obsession with academic achievement seems to have little to do with the world of work.

There are other questions that may be raised about the academic emphasis of the

schools. Workers in society have usually "failed" in school while the managers of society have usually "succeeded". It is reasonable to wonder if labour-management conflicts are not due, at least in part, to the educational system which clearly benefits one group and discriminates against the other.

The mode of thought that dominates the public schools is academic and not oriented to produce observable and fairly immediate results. People oriented to performing physical labor for a living seek a more pragmatic mode of thought. Schools do little to develop thought in relation to action, which tends to make workers skeptical of the value of theory. It is another of the many ironies in education that the more emphasis that is placed on academic activities, the more scholars press for rigorous intellectual exercises, the less functional the school becomes for the man who desires to live the life of a labourer or skilled tradesman. What workers want is to learn to think so that they can apply reason to achieve practical goals. Perhaps the worker will move to some other stage where he/she can enjoy the exercise of reason for the pleasure it provides. This, however, is more likely to come after the practical person has learned the usefulness of theory.

On Aims and Assumptions

This study concurs with the view held in the OECD Report that Canadian education is organized along industrial lines and that this organization is for the purpose of achieving academic goals. The personnel of the schools are steeped in the university tradition and this reveals itself in the highly academic orientation of the schools. What is questioned here is the mode of organization of the public schools and especially the emphasis on the academic tradition.

Virtually all students are required to pursue a course of studies that reveals this academic dominance. This results in a large proportion of students finding the schools irrelevant to their career choices. The comparatively small percentage of students who go on to university benefit from the experience, but besides becoming more academic they tend to become more docile and submissive. The academic style of the schools is continued through university and the habits gained in 12-16 years of study develop an approach to life that tends to discourage action. As so many people in responsible positions have internalized these habits and attitudes, society is burdened by many irrelevant academic procedures (Royal Commissions, studies, reviews, etc.).

If this critique is valid it raises many questions about the school system, but these are questions that challenge the organization and aims of contemporary education. The major criticism here has been aimed at the "over academization" of the schools and the influence that this appears to have on society. It is necessary to consider approaches to education that develop more pragmatic modes of thought and which pursue more active life styles. An educational system that adopts different approaches to the industrial and business world and which considers the problem of leisure and unemployment as critical issues is clearly needed. This, however, is material for another paper, but it is subject matter that urgently needs to be explored.⁴⁴

Footnotes

¹OECD *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Canada*, Paris, 1976.

²OECD *Reviews of National Policies for Education: United States*, Paris, 1971.

³OECD *Review of National Policies for Education: England and Wales*, Paris, 1975.

⁴See, for example, Collected Papers entitled *Educational Research and Policy Formation*, C.E.A./C.E.R.A. Research Conference, Calgary, Alberta, 1977.

⁵OECD *Review: Canada, op. cit.*, pp. 106-111.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 106-7.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 107 (italics *not* in original).

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 110.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶In this context "academic competence" simply refers to achievement in school prepared tests or in provincially prepared examinations. It is significant that one of the main pressures being placed on provincial departments of education is for the establishment of standardized tests so that students may be compared with each other. The objective of these standardized tests is to "see how the schools are doing".

¹⁷See, for example, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), pp. 135-141.

¹⁸E.H. Humphreys, "Interaction and Prestige of Secondary School Teachers in the Province of Ontario", *Sociology of Education*, Fall, 1970, Vol. 43, No. 4, pp. 401-418.

¹⁹See, for example, D.A. MacIver, *Facts, Reasoning and Respect for Persons in the Social Studies*, University of Alberta, 1970 (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation). See especially Chapter III where the nature of school examinations are considered, pp. 82-124.

²⁰This is the whole thrust of the critique made by the OECD Examiners. See Appendix B, pp. 106-111.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²G. Venn, *Man, Education and Manpower*, American Association of School Administrators, Washington, 1970, p. 126.

²³Quoted in George Martell, "The Schools, the state, and the corporations", in George Martell (ed.), *The Politics of the Canadian Public School* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Co., 1974), p. 18. Illustrative examples omitted.

²⁴Bowles and Gintis, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-141.

²⁵*Ibid.*

²⁶The problems of unemployment in Atlantic Canada are horrendous. Official figures must be considered with some caution. Unofficial figures indicate that in Bathurst, New Brunswick, for example, 38% of the adult population were unemployed (March 16, 1977). In a C.B.C. News broadcast, it was estimated that 46% of the unemployed in Canada are under 25 years of age (March 15, 1977). These kinds of data are sometimes obscured by "official" and "adjusted" statistics.

²⁷OECD *Review: Canada, op. cit.*, pp. 72-77.

²⁸See, for example, the classical statement: John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: Modern Library, 1957).

²⁹See, for example, J. Maritain, "Thomist Views on Education", In J.J. Brubacher (ed.), *Modern Philosophies of Education*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹B. Jowett, *The Republic* (New York: Modern Library (nd)).

³²Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.

³³Basil Bernstein, "Social Class and Linguistic Development", in A.H. Halsey, Jean Floud, C.A. Anderson (eds.), *Education, Economy and Society* (Free Press: New York, 1961), pp. 288-314.

See also Basil Bernstein, "Social Class, Language, and Socialization", in Jerome Karabel and A.H. Halsey, *Power and Ideology in Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 473-486.

³⁴The use of the terms, "Apollonian" and "Dionysian", while being used stipulatively in this context, are intended to reveal something of the qualitatively different approaches to life that are taken by different classes in society.

No attempt is made to make use of Nietzsche's concept in a technical sense, but it is felt that the heuristic value of his expressions are both useful and important.

³⁵OECD Report, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

³⁶Fred J. Dumont, *Report of an Assessment of Educational Needs of Northern Albertans* (Edmonton: Department of Education, 1976), p. 23.

³⁷Oswald Hall and Richard Carlton, *Basic Skills at School and Work*, (Toronto: Ontario Economic Council, 1977), pp. 168-9.

³⁸Bernstein, "Social Class, Language and Specialization", *op. cit.*

³⁹See footnote 34 above.

⁴⁰While this kind of work is arduous and dangerous, it is necessary to the economic success of society. It seems reasonable to suggest that the qualities which make good workers ought to be at least encouraged in the school system.

⁴¹Ivar Berg, *Education and Jobs* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970).

⁴²*Ibid.*, pp. 87-8.

⁴³Massimo Paci, "Education and the Capitalist Labour Market", in J. Karabel and A.H. Halsey, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-355.

⁴⁴See D.A. MacIver, *Education, Economy and the Rural Worker*, Work in preparation.

Résumé

Cet article concerne le rapport de 1976 de OCDE sur l'Éducation au Canada. Il énumère les projets, les buts et les principes de l'Éducation canadienne, en partant d'une critique contenue dans l'Appendice B du dit-rapport qui attaque les principes les plus fondamentaux du système des écoles publiques du Canada.

Cette critique reproche au système scolaire canadien d'être organisé sur le plan d'une entreprise industrielle démodée, de considérer les enfants comme de la matière première, de les traiter comme tels jusqu'en 12^e année, puis d'envoyer les meilleurs dans les universités pour continuer à subir un traitement semblable. Cet article est d'accord avec le point de vue du rapport de l'OCDE.