

## To Know Ourselves

In 1972 the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada appointed a Commission on Canadian Studies.

Its four-volume report, entitled **To Know Ourselves**, created a considerable stir when it was released in 1976. It found, in the words of its chairman, T.H.B. Symons, president of Trent University, that "there is no area . . . in which a reasonable balance and attention is being given to Canadian matters. . . . There simply isn't a discipline in the country devoting an adequate proportion of time to teaching and research about the particular problems and circumstances of this society."

It recommended that universities and colleges establish major Canadian-oriented teaching and research programs and suggested that more emphasis on Canada be encouraged in existing courses. However, it rejected the use of a quota system that would require a certain amount of Canadian content.

## Language and Religion

### The Atlantic Provinces

In five provinces—Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Newfoundland—separate public schools are maintained for Protestant or Catholic minorities.

The official view in Newfoundland is that all young men and women should be "possessed of a religious faith" and that the schoolroom is a proper place for religious instruction. Before consolidating in 1971, Newfoundland had three hundred denominational school boards. It now has thirty-five school districts—twelve Roman Catholic, twenty-one integrated Protestant, one Pentecostal and one Seventh Day Adventist. The churches are directly involved in school administration.

In some schools religion is taught through the first eleven grades, but there are many where it is taught only in a few grades, and others where it is not taught at all.

In the other Atlantic Provinces—New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island—the direct influence of churches is minimal. In certain districts in New Brunswick Catholic parents may have their children assigned to schools where the students are predominantly of that faith. It is an informal arrangement and is found only where population patterns make it practicable. Any religious instruction offered is available only outside regular school hours.



*Carleton University in Ottawa. The university founded an Institute of Canadian Studies in 1957, which now offers a three-year B.A. program and an M.A.*

### Ontario

At Confederation Ontario had a single school system with separate Protestant and Catholic schools. The French-speaking Ontarians had schools in which French was the language of instruction, and it was not unusual to find schools taught in German or Gaelic.

In 1912 the Ontario government limited the use of French as the language of instruction to the first two years of school and required that all pupils study English. Schools whose teachers were not qualified to teach in English would lose their provincial grants. Later the law was modified to provide for a limited number of bilingual schools, but it was still vigorously resisted. French-speaking parents in Ottawa demonstrated against the law, and the Catholic Church said it would deny the sacraments to parents who sent their children to English-language public schools. Sympathetic Quebecers established a fund to help the Ontario schools which had lost their grants, and French speakers in Montreal boycotted goods manufactured by English firms.

After some twenty years of controversy, the government retreated and French-instruction schools were gradually restored.

### Quebec

In Quebec the majority of children go to Catholic schools, while most of the rest, including children from Jewish, non-sectarian and atheistic families, go to schools administered by Protestant school boards.

Quebec has separate French and English schools as well as separate Catholic and Protestant ones. They are not the same, though they are often confused.

Protestant schools are almost always English-language schools, and French-language schools are almost always Catholic, but there are exceptions. The Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal has its *Bureau des écoles protestantes du Grand Montréal* administering several French-language institutions, including its *Ecole Secondaire de Roberval* (Roberval High). There are also a good many English-language Catholic schools on both the elementary and secondary levels.