

recognize the Parti Québécois' victory.

"If we are to take at face value the assurances of the Parti Québécois leader reiterated during the campaign, we must conclude that the people of Quebec did not vote on constitutional, but on economic and administrative issues, and that Mr. Lévesque and his party have been granted a mandate to form a provincial government, not to separate that province from the rest of Canada.

"I can only assume that Quebec's new government intends to follow both the letter and the spirit of the Canadian Constitution. Under such conditions Mr. Lévesque and his Cabinet will have my co-operation and that of my colleagues. In keeping with its constitutional responsibilities, the Federal Government will continue to serve the best interests of the people of Quebec, even as it serves those of the other provinces.

"I am confident that Quebecers will continue to reject separatism because they still believe their destiny is linked with an indivisible Canada."

Kidney-disease machine

The Kidney Foundation of Canada's recently-donated single-needle machine to the hemodialysis unit of Quebec's University of Sherbrooke's teaching hospital will greatly improve the artificial kidney equipment by making it possible for each patient treatment to consist of a single injection instead of two. This will have the advantage, among others, of preserving the blood vessels of patients who receive injections.

The Foundation's primary aims are to support and promote research on the prevention and cure of kidney diseases. In 1975, some \$84,556 was put at the disposal of researchers.

The Foundation also encourages education of the public concerning kidney diseases. Last year, \$36,000 was devoted to this in Canada and thousands of persons were given information on possible prevention of this type of disease.

In the Eastern Townships, Quebec, the Foundation sponsored a disease-detection program in the elementary schools; 11,500 children were examined.

Student influence aspect in learning process

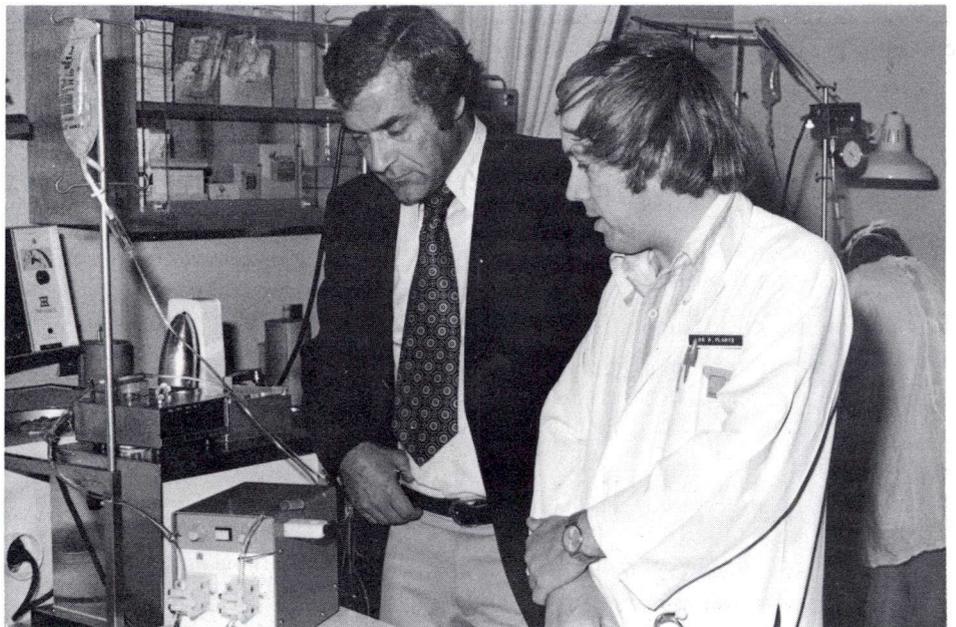
The academic achievement of students is greatly influenced by the performance and abilities of their fellow students in the classroom. This influence, called the "peer group effect", can be altered by changes in the composition of students in the class and thus it constitutes an important tool for educational policy-makers attempting to improve the efficiency of the school system. This is the principal conclusion reached by Vernon Henderson, Peter Mieszkowski and Yvon Sauvageau in a study released last month under the auspices of the Economic Council of Canada, *Peer Group Effects and Educational Production Functions*, (Printing and Publishing Supply and Services Canada, Ottawa, Cat. No. EC22-45/1976; price: Canada, \$3; other countries, \$3.60.

Data on students moving from kindergarten to Grade 3 in Montreal's Catholic French-language schools showed that at these levels, family background and pre-school IQ have a greater impact on academic performance than changes in the mixture of the peer group. However, only the latter can be regulated by educational policy-makers to conform with achievement aims.

The authors give two explanations of the effects of the peer group. One is that the learning process is a process of interaction between students, with weaker students learning from stronger students in the same class. Hence, more capable students tend to benefit from a homogeneous class while weaker students do not. Second, teachers adapt the calibre of their teaching to the average quality of their classes, setting higher standards for classes with higher average student capability.

Students of similar ability and performance have traditionally tended to be placed in the same class. However, this study raises strong doubts about some of the beliefs underlying this procedure. According to the authors, a more heterogeneous class composition, mixing weaker with stronger students, would improve peer group effects and increase general achievement. "While the stronger students will be adversely affected by the mixing, the weaker students will gain more in terms of absolute achievement than stronger students lose."

The study reflects the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Economic Council of Canada.



The chairman of the Kidney Foundation (Eastern Townships section), Luc Fouquette, and Dr Gérard Plante, director of the Nephrology Service of

the University of Sherbrooke's teaching hospital, discuss the new single-needle machine donated to the hemodialysis unit by the Foundation.