

Varsity Voices

Division of NFCUS

To The Editor:
Division of NFCUS? What does the French Canadian think he is accomplishing by it?—autonomy and separatism? Only autonomy he insists. French Canada must be given more "autonomy" or it will have to solve its problems by "separatism". But what is the difference?

Don't let separatism cloud the issue. Neither it nor autonomy are democracy unless coupled with responsibility—the responsibility of respecting the views of the 51 per cent majority.

These views of the society which one accepts (the 51 per cent majority) are not static. They are always open to new ideas, and therefore to change. It is difficult to effect change with a major minority pushed away "behind the stone fence" to solve its own problems. It is equally difficult to effect the best change if 1/3 of the student population is given 50 per cent of the vote. One loses the advantage of democracy (of agreeing on the best view) and gets instead a weighted result which may or may not (as in the case of dictatorship) be the best one.

In a discussion on Monday afternoon, a great many English speaking delegates preceded their opinions with "I realize we don't understand French Canadian problems . . ." Does the French Canadian think we are ever going to understand him, to come to an agreement with him if he builds a wall around himself by creating a second "country" in NFCUS? Or does he merely think he is inferior—a poor little weakling who has unique problems?

His religious problem is unique, (in our time) yes, and I only hope that he uses his new found freedom wisely. I hope he learns to stand up and express his own views—without striking out (likely at someone else's bidding) every which way, hoping to hit upon a solution.

Most of his other problems are the same, in varying degrees, as the rest of Canada. Quebec isn't the only place where NFCUS seems ineffectual, who is misunderstood (does the east understand the west?), who has economic difficulties, and educational frustration. Its delegation isn't the only one who can't return home before effective restructuring of NFCUS.

Division is not the answer (whether it is the type suggested by Quebec or B.C.). Neither is the B.C. concept of a veto the answer. Both of these factors tend to further divide NFCUS by isolation segments, pushing them away "behind stone walls." There is no effectual sounding board to present a united front for student problems—indeed no effectual

sounding board to even solve them.

But it might even be a temporary victory for the French if NFCUS is dissolved (and for the delegate from U of S, Regina, it would solve his problem of whether or not to join NFCUS). But temporary the victory would be. French and English would be no farther ahead in understanding each other than now.

But maybe this is what the French want—a clouding of the real issue, making NFCUS be the spot (as separatism is) that he "hits upon" during his great religious reformation, his great break-through in thinking.

Is dissolution of NFCUS desirable? Surely the French Canadian knows how mighty words eventually are.

Does he forget how persuasive a talker he is? How beautiful his language and wonderful his culture? Does he think we don't need his different point of view (we aren't all Social Credit)—that his views on the problems of other Canadian universities are useless? How are we going to agree upon the best view if the best view is absent?

Through their religious reformation, French Canadian are just experiencing a new freedom of thought. The rest of Canada hopes the reformation is a success, but hopes also that the French Canadian in his struggle to be recognized as the important individual he is, doesn't overlook democracy in NFCUS, and doesn't forget the rest of Canada.

Lee Morrison
French Major

Who Is Inferior?

To The Editor:

I read with interest your front page story about racism. I was particularly interested in the comments of Professor Charles Hobart, minority-group relations specialist in the department of sociology and bigotry.

Unquestionably Professor Hobart is right. We should pity the landlord who refused to rent a suite to a Negro. We should pity all "close-minded people." We should pity anyone who is not as good or enlightened or open-minded as we are.

I think I might generalize without condescension and say we should pity anyone who is inferior to use in whatever way we decide he or she is inferior.

R. D. Mathews
Dept. of English

The Gateway will publish letters under a pseudonym, but in all cases writers must sign their own names and include an address or telephone number.

Book Review

Former Editor Of Life Reviews Koerner's "The Miseducation Of American Teachers"

Are our teachers well-taught?

That is the subject of a raging debate in American educational circles today. On one side are found the "progressives"—united in their belief that teachers must pass courses in "methods" (how to teach); on the other, and carrying the attack today, are found the "traditionalists"—who maintain that teachers must pass courses in "content" (what to teach).

James D. Koerner is one of the most articulate critics of the "progressive" position.

We reprint below, with the kind permission of the editors of The Freeman magazine (September issue), a John Chamberlain review of Mr. Koerner's latest book. It should inspire considerable debate in the ranks of education students—indeed, in the ranks of all those concerned with the revolution in education.

Mr. Chamberlain is a critic, historian, and former editor of Life.

By John Chamberlain

James D. Koerner calls his book *The Miseducation of American Teachers* (Houghton Mifflin, \$4.95). The title is not quite apt, for Mr. Koerner is not aiming his shafts at the parochial schools on the one hand, or the many secular private institutions on the other. They have teachers who are both scholarly and literate. Indeed, by implication or inference (or both together), Mr. Koerner's indictment of the public schools amounts to a brief for private schools.

True enough, Mr. Koerner does profess to hold out some hope that the worst ravages of the "educationists" who now control the major power centers in the American public school system will be overcome. But the bulk of the book is so steeped in pessimistic reporting that one wonders about the nature of Mr. Koerner's trust in a saving remnant consisting of a "handful of independent-minded school boards in each state."

The reason for deriving a pessimistic conclusion from Mr. Koerner's exceedingly well-documented study is that the "revolution" of the past thirty years has become an entrenched orthodoxy on practically every level of influence and control.

The teachers' colleges, stuffed with dull and repetitive courses in "method," grind out the annual group of neophyte instructors who have only a halting command of the subject matter they are supposed to impart to their future students.

Presumably an intelligent neophyte could go on to get up his

chosen specialty for himself. But brainy lads and lasses are repelled by the teachers' college curricula in the first place, and the few lively individuals who put up with their "miseducation" just to get coveted jobs soon discover that they are expected to take more dreary courses in nothingness just to qualify for salary raises.

There is no time to read Elizabethan drama or critiques of Keynesian economics in a "progressive" school system that puts its stress on conforming to "educationist" theory.

BAD TO WORSE

Even if the bright teacher resists, he finds that he is compelled more or less to use the texts and the methods prescribed by an Administration that is itself a product of the orthodoxy. And so things go from bad to worse as enthusiasm is killed.

Mr. Koerner's book, when it consists of the author's own prose, is sparkling. But, as befits a good reporter, Mr. Koerner has included many examples of the stuff he is inveighing against, which means that the book has its long dull stretches.

FLUTTER KICK PhD

Sometimes the quotations from "educanto" or "educationese" are unconvincingly funny. There is, for example, the list of dissertations on page 187. The Ph.D. or the Ed.D in education has actually been awarded to people for grinding out wordage on such topics as "A Performance Analysis of the Propulsive Force of the Flutter Kick", or "The High School Student's Perception of Most-Liked and Least-Liked Television Figures", or "A Study of Little League Baseball and Its Educational Implications."

But the fact that such stuff is not offered as parody material for college comic magazines soon causes the reader to wipe the smile off his face.

SUBSTITUTE PARENT

And when Mr. Koerner piles up his examples of the lingua franca of the educationist in his "L'Envoi" chapter, the humor is quickly buried under the weight of what is listed as "the extended cliché", or "the enervating fugue", or "the forward passive"; or "the jargonized pyrotechny." The "educantoids" who write "educanto" are masters of meaningless sentences about "meaningfulness" and unstructured paragraphs about "structures." A teacher is never a teacher; he is a "critical inquirer", or a "director of experiences", or a "producer of effects", or a "motivator", or a "creator of learning environments", or a "substitute parent."

Naturally the textbooks written by the educationists are themselves filled with enervating fugues and grandiloquent bromides. And the textbook publishers, who might be willing to commission a few masters of clear, simple English to write texts, are stymied.

IS THERE NO HOPE?

Sterling M. McMurrin, former U.S. Commissioner of Education says in an introduction to Mr. Koerner's book that there are "teachers of high ability and good education" in our school system, but Mr. Koerner is primarily interested in drawing a generalized picture, not in isolating a few bright spots.

For myself, I wish he had tried to single out a few points from which a counter-revolution in public education might just possibly be expected to take off. Are the "teachers of high ability and good education" inevitably bound to be suffocated by the dreary orthodoxy that surrounds them?

Take Carl Hansen, the superintendent of the Washington, D.C., school system, for example. Not so long ago Dr. Hansen started an experiment in "basic education" in the Amidon School.

The idea was to restore some of the old-fashioned teaching methods of the pre-Deweyite day in a desegregated school of mixed I.Q.'s drawn from various social and economic backgrounds. Reading, in the first and second Amidon grades, has been taught by phonovisual chart methods that include a heavy dose of old-fashioned phonics; "social studies" have been sidetracked in favor of courses in history and geography. Dr. Hansen insists that the Amidon experiment has been a huge success—and he is now extending the "basic education" counter-revolution to other Washington schools.

PHONICS RESTORED

To take one other example, there is the town of Weston in my home state of Connecticut. Some of the kids in the Weston primary school were having trouble learning to read by the Deweyite "look-and-say" or "whole word recognition" method. The "independent-minded" school board of Weston decided that reading delinquency had gone far enough, and accordingly it hired Mrs. Hamilton Basso, the wife of the novelist, to make remedial recommendations. Old-fashioned phonics were restored to the Weston primary grades on Mrs. Basso's advice.

Do examples such as the foregoing constitute much ground for hope? I'd like to hear more from Mr. Koerner on this.

