

## The C.T.F. and the Teaching of English

Manifesto of the Committee in charge of the Dominion-wide survey in English,  
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A NEW-COMER to the wide field of educational work in Canada must necessarily try to form some estimate of the relative strength of the forces that work towards or away from the pursuit and attainment of common objectives in Canadian education. One finds too often in the "new" countries that there is much greater readiness to pay a facile lip-service to the cause of national identity and unity than to think out patiently and fearlessly all that is involved in the attainment of such unity. I have heard, for instance, distinguished representatives of Canadian and Australian education pressing for mutual recognition of teachers' certificates as between England and the Dominions, and then revealing that there was no such mutual recognition as between the States or Provinces of their own lands! In other words, much less had been done than was supposed, by educational means, to give substance and unity of meaning to the single-sounding terms, "Canada," "Australia" and so forth. Even now Canadians may well say: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Education, not in schools only, is still contributing its great share to determine what "Canada" shall mean, and it is by no means clear that this criterion is always kept in mind by those who shape educational policy.

Administratively Canada cannot be an educational unit. Both history and geography combine to forbid it, and no words need be wasted, even by a new-comer, to vindicate the Provincial basis on which the administrative structure has been built. But, even for a sound policy, the price has to be paid. What that price is, in this instance, does not take long to discover. We pay it in the form of separation of *mind* as well as of administration, and so of increased difficulty in achieving a common Canadian mind in the use of that potent formative instrument—Education.

We are apt to be altogether too facile and superficial in our thinking on this process of Canada-making. The functioning of powerful Departments of Education with the whole weight of Provincial Governments behind them, tends to induce that fatally unreal type of thinking which assumes that the issue of an administrative order and the solid attainment of an educational end are the same thing. The achievement of educational ends that are worth the effort is not so easily accomplished, but one can detect a marked disposition in some Canadian thinking to overlook the fact.

It is influences such as these—the necessary drift towards provincialism and the serious underestimate of the difficulties in the way of a common Canadian unity—

that make the Canadian Teachers' Federation so important. One feels instinctively that here is a powerful instrument for correcting the less desirable consequences of the administrative policy that Nature and History have forced upon Canada. For the Federation stands for the recognition of a view that is wider, longer and deeper than many which are ordinarily taken. Wider because it sees all Canada, longer because it contemplates the Canada that is to be as well as the Canada that is, deeper because it recognizes the need for long study and labour and much close co-operation if the desired common ends are really to be achieved.

The Federation can do much useful and necessary work in the comparatively narrow field of furthering and protecting the professional interests of teachers as such. But its main justification lies elsewhere. It is characteristic of North American communities that they plan to achieve some of the most vital of community ends by non-governmental agencies. Thus the great corporations on the economic side are paralleled by great cultural organizations, such as the Y. M. C. A. on the social side. The existence of the C. T. F. is a further expression of this readiness to meet public needs by private and voluntary co-operation. From a purely selfish point of view its formation seems barely worth while. From the sounder community point of view it is very much worth while. Even for selfish motives the wider view would have its value. *Increase of prestige* is the most urgent professional need of teachers at the moment and this is more likely to be achieved by deserving than by demanding it.

The real justification of the C. T. F. will be furnished by its capacity to organize the co-ordinated study of the common problems of Canadian education. On the administrative side some loosely-compacted machinery for this purpose exists already. But there seems to be little possibility of any concerted action by Governments to set up really adequate facilities for the common study of common problems. The field is one that voluntary agencies must occupy if it is to be occupied at all. The C. T. F. cannot hope to do all that is needed, but it can at least show the way, and allies and auxiliaries may then be forthcoming.

Experience has already shown which is the most powerful of the cultural influences that may serve to bind together a highly diversified Canada. It is just the English language with its literature. The universality of English need not and should not imply any hostility to other languages that are spoken in the land. But it