

book review

Education's an assembly line?

By DERWIN GOWAN

"The Politics of the Canadian Public School," edited and with an introduction by George Martell, 275 pages, paperback - \$4.95, cloth - \$11.00, James, Lewis, and Samuel, publishers.

"And what did you learn at school today, Johnny?" Parents sometimes wonder what Johnny is learning at school, and it appears that a bit of wondering is justified. This book goes into, in fair detail, just how students are sort of run down the educational assembly line in Canadian elementary and high schools, and some of the points brought out are rather alarming. These articles show how, all too often, educators take it upon themselves, or else are requested by the government, to impart values and ways of thinking into impressionable students' minds.

Unfortunately, this book is not of too much use to anyone from this part of the country, as it has a section dealing with Quebec, Ontario, and British Columbia. However, as seems to be the current trend with anything

coming out of Toronto, they forget that the Maritimes and the Prairies are still parts of Canada.

The gist of this series of articles appears to be socialistic. Also, the authors seem to be of the opinion that it is up to school teachers to change the curriculum in schools to one which will allow students to develop into fuller human beings. Inherent in the views presented is that the interests of students, parents, and teachers are all one and the same. This may be true to some extent, although it should be remembered that the school boards which caused a lot of the problems brought up in this book were elected by the very parents whom the teachers are purportedly trying to help. Possibly the teachers assume a bit more than they should.

The authors are likely right when they say that educational systems tend to discriminate against the poorer people in Canada, and, if this was to be projected into a Maritime setting, you could likely say the rural people. There is too much practical and vocational training and not enough of the basic reading skills, a lack of which can hold one back in any line

of work. Still, there is a subtle bias here. They judge how good a particular school is by how many of its graduates make it to university. This implies that people should want to go to university, or that university training is somehow or another superior to other forms of post-secondary education. Of course, being that the articles were written by university graduates, this prejudice has to be expected.

The book says more basic language skills should be taught at school. Some parts of some articles would lead one to believe that the authors could do with a few English courses themselves. Actually, the English is not all that bad, but, like most journalists, they use a liberal sprinkling of single clauses beginning with conjunctions. And we all know that that is not a complete sentence.

The book is not all that bad, although one has to remember it is written from a biased viewpoint, i.e., that of the teachers. If you want to know how teachers regard our educational system, this is a good place to start. This is a viewpoint which a lot of politicians, academics, and journalists tend to ignore.

Art ideas demolished

On Wednesday, March 26, and April 2, 1975, at 8:00 p.m., the Beaverbrook Art Gallery will present the art film series, "Ways of Seeing". In this acclaimed series, the distinguished British art critic and author, John Berger, explores the ways in which we look at pictures. The four part series, described as controversial and stimulating are easy to grasp but succeed in mercilessly demolishing every preconceived idea on art.

Programme One: March 26 - The first programme is not so much about the paintings themselves as about how they are most frequently seen - in reproduction. Reproduction has destroyed their uniqueness. Their meaning is no longer a constant for it can be changed by what is shown opposite them, by words put around them, by music played over them. This film is also about how paintings can be obscured by the false

religiosity and mystification which so often surrounds them.

Programme Two: March 26 - An examination of how traditional European oil painting has looked at women. Do they really celebrate women, as we are taught to believe, or do they merely provide titillation for the male voyeur. Berger looks at the difference between being naked and being nude.

Programme Three: April 2 - John Berger believes that we misunderstand the real meaning of the European oil painting because we are normally encouraged to look only at a few exceptional works instead of the hundreds of thousands of unremarkable pictures which made up the main tradition.

Berger also argues that the inventions of the medium of oil paint itself, around 1400, was an important factor in the develop-

ment of a tradition of painting which was a celebration of private possessions. He argues that this aspect of the tradition still continues today in the modern medium of advertising and publicity.

Programme Four: April 2 - John Berger shows how the images of advertising and publicity are related to the tradition of oil painting; a connection which we fail to see only because we are encouraged to believe that painting is "fine art" whereas publicity is simply commerce.

This programme is also about the specific nature of publicity itself; the dreams which it conjures up, the magical transformations which it promises, the types of life which it idealizes.

Two half-hour programmes will be shown at each screening. Admission free.

Bamboo Nightclub features Caribbean culture

As in years past, the Caribbean Circle presents its annual Big Bamboo Nightclub. This show has been highly praised and is well worth seeing. The Caribbean scene is portrayed in various ways and represents a small portion of Caribbean culture which is always exciting and educational.

The Big Bamboo Nightclub will be held in the SUB Ballroom on Saturday, March 22, 1975. Tickets will be on sale shortly at the SUB information booth. Features include singing, dancing, and Caribbean cuisine.

**TELEPHOTO**

by Steve Patriquen

Sir Stainless:

I thank the Lord that you do not write an auto column, or we would all have to drive Pontiacs. Stainless, the purpose of this column is to inform the people, not to feed your ego. Mr. Hogan appears interested in his readers and what they desire to know. Your immutableness has driven me to think several times; thank you. Your self aggrandizement is apt to end not with a bang but a whimper.

I didn't realize I stole your joke. I didn't even know it was a joke. Am I correct in assuming that you agree with my point? Humour is an excellent way of avoiding the truth. I hope I will never be accused of bastardizing my truth. I hope I will never be accused of bastardizing my work.

What do you mean, the people get what they deserve? I don't see what choice we have with you at the helm. Your dandiocal attitude is contributing to a certain amount of unrest in the province. In the event that all the INSTAMATIC owners storm your temple I will be there with my guanaco to defend your rights. Somewhere along the way you have been misled and the only cure is total reeducation. I believe it was in the concrete operational stage that you should have been introduced to the glories of the INSTAMATIC. Don't worry, you will only have to retrace your steps two or three years.

Pretty damn seldom where my letter go. She no fly. You no more fit run photo department than godsake. That's all I hope!

Equipollently Yours,
X-15

Dear X-15:

If I wrote an auto column the only thing I would insist on is that all people drive cars. The object of this column it seems, is to warn the public of the creeping isidious disease which is infecting the world. This disease, of course, is *Instamaticitis*.

This disease is terrifyingly easy to get, involving only a minor outlay of bread, and is growing rapidly. *Instamaticitis* probably infects more Canadian households than it does not. However, if you think this means it is popular, ask someone with a cold what they think of nasal drip.

The disease, curiously, seems to infect mainly the lower intelligence groups, the kind that can't be bothered worrying about f-stops, shutter speeds, ASA's, depth of fields, etc. They seem content, upon infection, to merely point, shoot, and presto! instant mistakes. The carriers of this disease also develop [no pun intended] a strange affection for their corner drug store, delivering little black bundles and receiving little white envelopes in return. Where seems to be a psychological dependancy here something like a pacifier.

The only cure for this terrible scourge is a good mental health education program. This will prevent future cases of the disease. The only cure for those already infected is an *Instamaticectomy*. No you can't catch it off a toilet seat.

CLICK

Note: reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated.