

Looking Ahead

In Canada, as throughout most Western countries, and many others, education is undergoing a quiet revolution. In response to social, economic and political pressures, its role is changing so that it can contribute more to economic advance and social progress. At one time a distinct line was regarded as separating the academic and professional from the world outside; today this has almost disappeared. With increased emphasis on trade and technical education, closer liaison between municipalities and school boards for finance, more university people serving part-time outside the university or on loan to business or government, and contracted research being undertaken by the universities, the universities and schools are returning to the community. Part-time and refresher courses will increase this trend, as will participation of the National Film Board, the Canadian Broadcasting Association, libraries and museums.

There are both quantitative and qualitative major expansions. The Canadian population has been increasing now for a full generation, so that, while members of one generation are swelling university ranks, members of the next are pattering to kindergarten doors. Although the birth-rate is no longer at its peak, the median age for marriage having dropped, the present increase is appreciable. Actually, Canada's population is expected to increase by about 22 per cent during the 1960s and to pass the 20-million mark in 1966. The percentages of both young and old will increase disproportionately. Added to the expected increase in actual numbers is the tendency for youth to stay longer in school or to return at both the high-school and university levels as more services are provided.

At the same time, an "explosion" in scientific knowledge has raised many problems concerning the best use of the time of students. Attempts to update and streamline mathematics and science are observable in the new mathematics, new physics and so on, which emphasize structure and are aimed at increasing the power of the student in the subject. It is likely that curricular content and organization will undergo considerable development during the next decade.

Both the economic and social structures are undergoing metamorphosis, and the changes are affecting the demands on education and the role it might perform. Most of the planning undertaken so far is influenced more by economic than social needs, in part because economic data are more easily come by. It is likely that progress will result in the social areas from rural-urban movement, increased urbanization, crowding, urban renewal and so on.

Efforts at the elementary-secondary level will be aimed at providing greater opportunity with allowances for individual differences, at obtaining functional mastery of a second language, making better use of modern audio-visual aids and other learning devices, and ensuring that all children leave school with an educational background sufficient for training on the job or possess competence in some job area adequate for employment.

At the post-secondary level there is need for expansion of technical institutes, and the number of junior colleges will be increased considerably. Community colleges may be established as the demand for post-secondary education grows with increased automation and leisure.