

Manpower and Education

Goals of education are dictated by conditions prevailing in the society the education system serves and by the demands laid on the system by society. Canadian education goals are changing today, to become more exacting year by year. No longer, as in pioneer days, do we consider an elementary-school education adequate for the majority, a high-school education necessary for a minority of the population, and college education necessary for the few. No longer is a second language a frill, science second to arts and reserved for a minority, and good health and a willingness to work adequate recommendation for employment.

The radical change in manpower needs in Canada at present has resulted from a number of movements, such as the increase of mechanization in farming, fishing, logging and mining, where investment holdings and technical organization have been increased. This has speeded up urbanization and secondary production. Likewise, automation and technological advance are changing the demands for manpower and the changes and increases have been so rapid that the schools, colleges and universities have not been able to keep pace with the demand. Today, we have both a fairly high rate of unemployment and a fair number of unfilled jobs.

The impact of changing social and economic conditions is having a tremendous impact on education. In addition to clamour for change, and a willingness to try new methods, there are rising expectations manifest throughout the systems. The most easily seen demand on higher education is for expansion in the number of places, but the other needs are at least of as much importance. Progress, however, is limited by inertia and by vested interests in the maintenance of the status quo.

Vocational and Technical Education

Interest by the Federal Government in ensuring an adequate supply of trade and technical personnel dates back almost half a century, to the first grants made to agriculture under the Agriculture Instruction Act of 1913 and to the Technical Education Act of 1919, which introduced the principle of matching provincial capital expenditures. Though interest in vocational education increased somewhat over the years, only recently has it been generally recognized that a serious shortage of training facilities and effective technical and vocational programmes has hampered economic advancement and production. Increased urbanization, expansion in technology and secondary manufacture, and greater interest in school "dropouts" who lack training and have, in any case, insufficient education to benefit by it, will influence Canada's education efforts. The realization that the country can no longer count on immigrants to provide the necessary skills has served as a stimulus to greater effort.

The current federal-provincial agreement (the Technical and Vocational Training Agreement, operating from April 1961, to March 31, 1967) provides that the Federal Government will reimburse the provinces for 75 per cent of the cost of buildings and equipment for vocational training. There are the following programmes under this agreement: technical and vocational courses in secondary schools for pupils spending 50 per cent or more of their time in