DEMETRIUS MANOLAKOS, MONTREAL

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The Greek community in Montreal has created a school system over the past thirteen years which is now serving as a model for other ethnic communities. The accomplishment lies in being able to strengthen our Greek heritage while enabling our young people to become active participants in both the English and French speaking cultures. In fact, I think most people would agree that *a graduate of our Greek schools is probably better equipped for Canadian society than many individuals who are members of the two majority cultures.*

But you have to understand how bad the situation was prior to 1971 to get the full impact of our success. The Quebec government historically put all children who were not Roman Catholic into the Protestant schools. In Montreal, therefore, you saw Greek students at the high school level ending up in Montreal High or Baron Byng.

"As the school population swelled after the Second World War, a lot of young Greeks got lost in the system."

Up until the Second World War, this arrangement did not work too badly, because there were small numbers of immigrants compared with the situation following the war. Many of the Greeks, including myself, had been born in Canada, so we grew up in a gradual process of integration into Montreal society. By 1950, the influx of immigrants increased dramatically, and this swelled the enrollment in the Protestant schools. A lot of young Greeks got lost in the confusion which followed.

For the most part, their parents were taken up with the business of financial survival, and the teachers were overburdened with the big classes. In Greece, teachers take a strong hand in guiding and disciplining students, and parents automatically expect them to provide any kind of direction or correction that is needed. When they came here, they assumed that the schools would take the same kind of responsibility, but it did not happen.