



Education in Canada means ten provincial public systems and two territorial ones, nearly as many "separate" school systems, private schools of every type and a large variety of federal educational institutions.

In coming together to build their country, Canadians from many cultural backgrounds discovered that tolerance and flexibility were necessary in order to unite so many different and often divergent elements. The education systems which evolved were designed to accommodate this diversity and build on differences of history, geographic location, and ethnic origin.

Education has always been an important part of Canadian life; the system now in place is highly respected and admired throughout the world. This booklet outlines the historical situation in which the educational structure developed and describes the various elements of the present system. The five appendices list names and addresses of educational organizations and relevant statistical information on education in Canada.

Constitutional authority

When the four original provinces of Canada (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario) were united in 1867, responsibility for education was vested in provincial legislatures rather than in the national government. This constitutional jurisdiction over education was given to other territories as they achieved provincial status and was re-affirmed in the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

While the constitution does not recognize a federal presence in education, the federal government has assumed responsibility for the education of persons outside provincial jurisdictions — native peoples, armed forces personnel and their dependents in Canada and abroad, as well as inmates of federal penal institutions. More significantly, as education has expanded and its contribution to national objectives has been accepted, federal participation in the form of financial assistance has become extensive. It includes support for postsecondary education, funding of job training and re-training programs, research grants and support for the development of official minority and second-language programs.

The Council of Ministers of Education, an agency created by the provincial departments of education in 1967, provides a means whereby the provinces can consult and co-operate in matters of mutual interest and concern in education. (See Appendix C for address.)