

Education in Canada is compulsory until the ages of fourteen or sixteen, depending on the province, and ninety-seven per cent of all Canadians can read and write. Indeed, many children begin some kind of schooling at the age of three or four (at nursery school) and some continue with post-graduate university courses until they are past thirty. There are more than thirty thousand schools in Canada. The traditional one-room school of the rural areas, the ultra-modern structures of the newer suburbs, the ivy-covered edifices of the universities, all form part of the network of educational institutions across the land. While most schools are easily accessible, some students must travel by bus for several miles, and in parts of northern Ontario children attend a school on wheels, a railway car that moves from community to commu-

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nity. In isolated northern areas students also take courses by correspondence. Free education is available to all children from the age of six. Most schools are co-educational.

Schools and universities extend their facilities and services to the whole community. The schools provide gathering places for meetings, socials and dances and together with the universities play an important role in the national life.

The school year usually starts at the beginning of September and runs until the end of June. The university term is shorter—usually from October to May—but summer courses and other branches of study ensure that the universities' doors are seldom closed.

Under the terms of the British North America Act responsibility for education is vested in the provinces. There is therefore no federal department of education but there are ten provincial departments, each with exclusive jurisdiction over all matters relating to education in its own province. Separate schools are provided for religious minorities in some provinces — Protestant in Quebec, Roman Catholic in others. Several religious denominations operate Newfoundland schools under government grants. Relatively few students attend private schools—between two and three per cent in the English-speaking provinces and about twelve per cent in Quebec. In spite of the multiplicity of educational systems and authorities, co-operation between provinces together with the work of national educational associations has produced more uniformity than might be expected; a child can move from a school in British Columbia to one in

Ontario, for example, without any great disruption. The French-speaking schools of Quebec, however, differ considerably from the others.

Education in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon is the responsibility of the Federal Government of Canada and of the government of the territories. It is provided in different centres in schools owned by the Federal Government, by missions, by mining companies or by municipal authorities. At present there are 31 federally-operated schools and 36 other schools over which the federal Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources exercises jurisdiction.

Class activity outside a modern school

