

INNOVATIONS

MASSEY COLLEGE: AN EXPERIMENT

Affiliated with the University of Toronto, Massey College is a new development, in fact an experiment, in higher education in Canada. Not yet completed, it is to be a graduate college based upon the most satisfactory methods employed in the United States and England.

The composition of a graduate college as such is not easy to describe—the method of scholarship rarely lends itself to formal organization. This is true of such institutions in the United States and England, and will be true here. According to Robertson Davies, Master-Designate, the founders and originators have tried to adopt certain of the ideas of both countries without directly imitating either.

Courses will not be offered directly, for the institution is not meant to be a degree-granting or teaching college, but a centre for research and post-graduate work.

Those eligible will be graduate students engaged in serious research in the recognized humanities and

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sciences who have received a strong recommendation from their faculty heads and who meet the requirements of a College Selection Committee. Accepted applicants will be granted Junior Fellowships.

Such instruction as is given will be done through the tutorial system. Many of the Senior Fellows will maintain quarters in the College in which they will meet the graduate students for special discussion and instruction. The majority of the Junior Fellows will be resident and as is the case with most university students,

It is most probable they will do a great deal to instruct each other, benefiting also from the society of the Senior Fellows. A considerable number of distinguished guests will live on the campus from time to time to impart their specialized knowledge and to discuss pertinent topics with the students.

The cost of attending such a graduate college is difficult to estimate. As could be expected from the calibre of student to be enrolled, a large portion will have received scholarships for post-graduate study. Mr. Davies desires, nevertheless, to keep the cost to the student as low as possible so there can be no question of exclusion because of lack of funds.

A pamphlet more fully describing Massey College will be distributed throughout the world early this year.

"SOMEWHAT LOOSE"

Going only by such information as is available at this time, I would say there is definitely a place for Massey College in this country.

Canada needs an institution organized in this somewhat loose manner. Perhaps "loose" is not exactly the correct term—it hardly sounds complimentary—but it could be the step from university life that university itself is the step from high school. Granted, the university environment is far from being simple, uncomplicated, and useful only for intellectual pursuits, but surely more concrete achievements can come from tuition fees and books than is now the case.

Massey College may provide the spark for a nation admittedly growing soft physically, growing more and more dependent on the US, growing fearful of the trade effects of a united Europe. Massey College would be uni-

quely Canada's own; it would give serious students the added impetus to achieve something to bring satisfaction, both to themselves and to the nation.

An individual attending university can learn a great deal over a cup of coffee, often even more than through lectures because of the personal contact and discussion involved (and I do mean this seriously). It would be nice to abolish exams, yet what would goad the average person on?—Nothing.

The tutorial system at Massey, with the personal and intimate contact on a high intellectual plane, will provide this impetus, bring the sharing of both hazy ideas and concrete fact. There are many who feel the need to be independent, to regulate their own lives with no interference from others, but there are few who actually possess the ability to pace themselves completely by themselves.

Massey College would combine the small amount of direction the brilliant student requires with the freedom and the stimulating atmosphere he craves.

MONTESSORI METHODS

Education is changing more rapidly than ever. Today the educators of the free world are becoming concerned both with curricula and the methods of teaching. This development is partly the result or fear of, and competition with Russia, and partly the result of an honest desire to advance.

Whatever the basic reason, the fact remains that the "how" of education is receiving as much emphasis as the "what" of education. In the future the process of learning will become increasingly difficult as the fields of knowledge broaden and standards rise. Obviously children are going to have to learn more and learn it faster than before.

Strangely enough, two schools of thought becoming prominent were developed near the turn of the century, the Montessori school in 1906 and the Rudolf Steiner school of Anthroposophy in 1919. Canada, at the moment, does not have an example of either although Rudolf Steiner schools have been established all over the world.

The philosophy and the methods of both are almost identical. The in-

These sensitive periods are transitory, however, Doctor Montessori felt. Unless the child has an opportunity to explore and learn at the peak of his interest, his attention will shift to other things and his explosive eagerness may never be recaptured.

As a result of prolonged scientific study, Doctor Montessori concluded that an enduring interest in learning could best be assured by starting training when a child is three years of age and providing plenty of opportunity for him to advance at his natural rate. Thus most Montessori schools are for younger pupils and teach the basic elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

The Rudolf Steiner school begin with the pupil at an early age but continue through the high school level. They aim further for "the realization of a bridge between the two worlds of experience—the everyday

RENAISSANCE IDEAL MAN

world and the world of inner experience." The Steiner pupil is trained to become an all-round individual, a sort of Renaissance ideal man, skilled in scientific inquiry and artistic achievements.

In both schools the "prepared environment" essential for the younger groups is a real rather than a play world. It includes everything from small ordinary school equipment to elaborate apparatus and teaching materials. These are not used to illustrate the words of the teacher but to enable the child to develop his senses and to learn for himself under guidance.

The theory is that you cannot educate directly, but in the right environment education comes through spontaneous exercise of the child's own faculties. As a result, knowledge is fully assimilated instead of becoming half-forgotten facts.

The main drawback preventing widespread adoption of these two methods seems to be the lack of trained teachers. They are merely a link between the child and the teaching apparatus while the children are quite free and independent with the few restrictions of basic ground rules.

The Steiner schools feel it would be much more profitable for both teacher and pupil if the teacher

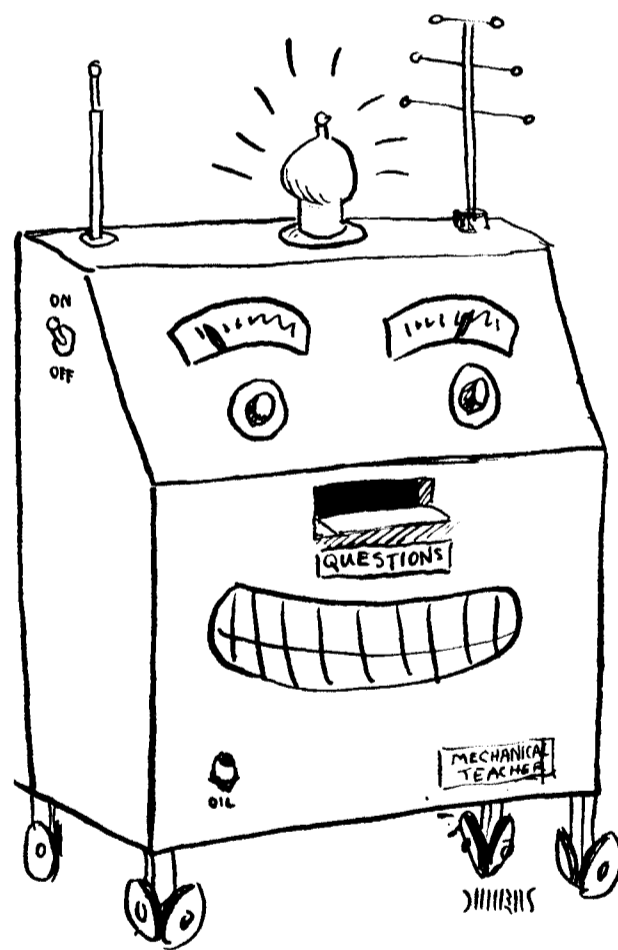
APATHY AND INERTIA

could remain with the child throughout his formative school years. Understandably here again is a serious shortage of trained personnel.

But what of the mere average student in an average school? The future will be shaped and influenced just as much by the somewhat mediocre as the gifted. The only way to resolve the moral conflicts now moving to a climax is through education, for through education comes perspective.

Parents are beginning to fear that their children are not receiving the best possible preparation for tomorrow. To my mind the question is just as much what is being taught as how it is taught. The Steiner and Montessori schools may provide a good background for learning and teaching machines and the use of T.V. may take over from there.

However, parents and the general population should not look wholly to methods for the answer. At least part of the problem rests with the apathy and inertia of youth itself.



"MISS JONES, WILL YOU PLEASE STAY AFTER CLASS."

Stories
on this page
Lynne Greason

fant child lives in, what seems to him, a chaotic world. He gradually achieves a sense of order by learning to distinguish sights, sounds and odors. Then, between the ages of three and six, the child passes through periods of sensitivity in which he awakens as an individual.

He reveals surprising mental agility and shows intense, almost passionate interest in the adult world. He loves to learn new words. He is interested in orderliness and good manners—not as a game but as a representation of the adult world towards which he is moving.