

3. Where and How is Canada Taught in U.S. Schools?

To sharpen the picture, let us overlook what might be called incidental teaching. It is obvious that on occasions when Canada and the United States have shared a war or some form of international agreement, it is necessary to make at least fleeting mention of the other participants when telling the story of the United States. Such incidental references do, of course, have a kind of importance and should not be ignored in any attempts to improve the situation. However, leaving them aside for the time being, it is possible to state that where Canada is taught at all, it tends to be in the form of history or geography at the grade 5 or 6 level. History units tend to be extremely brief (not over two week's duration, and often less) and optional; geography units tend to be somewhat longer and are usually combined with study of other American neighbours or, in some cases, as an extension of American geography. Perhaps it should be mentioned that, in an obvious effort to please, many American educators added the information that when events of significance occur in Canada they are usually mentioned during "Current Events" discussions. How the teachers and students become aware of such events is somewhat of a mystery for, of all the newspapers I saw, only the New York Times and The Christian Science Monitor appeared to give Canadian news any continuing attention.

Thus we come to the question of the degree to which teaching about Canada in U.S. schools is inaccurate and inadequate. In my opinion, it is unfair to say that, in the usual sense, Canada is presented inaccurately to American school children. Such a statement would usually mean that a considerable proportion of the facts presented were out of date or false. This is certainly not so. By and large, the textbooks in the schools seem to be as up to date as it is possible to be, and the overwhelming percentage of the facts they contain may be said to be accurate as of the date of publication. I refuse to join those who raise a hue and cry over the announced results of factual polls which one or another enterprising