

Selkirk immigrants to Manitoba; the Hebrideans who people the south of Saskatchewan; the Glaswegians who dug the first coal mines on Vancouver Island - in all more than two million Canadians who claim Scottish forebears and who form the country's third largest ethnic community.

Many a ship which for two centuries carried Scots westward across the Atlantic, would bring back not only timber for the great shipyards of the Clyde, salt fish, fine furs and abundant wheat, but Canadian students bound for the Scottish universities - St. Andrews, Glasgow, Aberdeen and particularly Edinburgh.

Quite apart from its high academic standards and intellectual celebrities among the faculty - then as now - there was another circumstance about Edinburgh University that appealed quite naturally to the sons and daughters of Scottish-Canadians: This was what the Commonwealth Universities Year Book discreetly refers to as "the economy of its lodgings".

Scottish immigrants and their children returning from Scottish universities brought to Canada the legendary respect of the Scot for the practical benefits of education. But they also brought with them the Scottish respect for human values, the ready sense of humour, the habit of modesty and warm neighbourliness, and a quiet determination to build a nation devoted to the pursuit of equal access to security and dignity for every individual citizen. The Scottish influence had a profound impact on the early development of Canadian education systems - indeed I suppose it is more to our Scottish ancestors than to any others, that we owe the fact we have long enjoyed in Canada the kind of comprehensive school systems that are still in dispute in parts of this country. From our Scottish ancestors we have learned to relax and enjoy comprehensives.

Canadians acknowledge this debt in many ways - in the thistles and St. Andrews crosses which adorn the coat-of-arms of many of our universities, in the continuing links between teachers and scholars, in the growth of Scottish studies in Canada - as well, I suppose, as in the continuing support of the distillery business, and the continuing disapproval of this habit by some in our Presbyterian congregation!

Two Nova Scotian historians, MacLean and Campbell, have summarized the influence of Scotland on Canada as follows:

"The attitudes of the students in the old land toward education were carried with them and congealed in this new society: the lad of the crofter or tradesman was not turned away from Edinburgh University, nor was he kept out of institutions of higher learning in Nova Scotia because of class distinction."

While the seeds of Scottish education spread rapidly across Canada, the new soil in which they grew inevitably altered the texture of the flower. In a predominantly Scottish area of Nova Scotia - Pictou County - the school curriculum at the turn