

EDUCATION

Education in Canada is compulsory and free of cost to all children from the age of 6 to 14 or 16, depending on the province, in some 26,520 schools. However, some children enter nursery school as early as three or four, and go on to kindergarten at five. Many university students continue their postgraduate studies until they are 30 or over. Most schools are co-educational. About 97 per cent of the Canadian population is literate.

The traditional one-room school of the rural areas, the ultra-modern structures mainly located in the newer suburbs, the ivy-covered buildings of the universities, all form part of the network of educational institutions extending across the land. While schools are easily accessible to most pupils, some must depend on correspondence courses and special tele-

vision and radio programmes. In remote areas of British Columbia, children attend classes held in school buses, and certain areas of Northern Ontario are similarly served by railway cars.

Schools and universities extend their facilities and services to the whole community. The schools provide space for meetings, socials and dances and, with the universities, play an important role in community 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 university doors are seldom closed.

Under the terms of the British North America Act, responsibility for education is vested in the provinces. There is no federal department of education but ten provincial depart-

ments exercise exclusive jurisdiction over education in their respective provinces. In some provinces, legislation authorizes the operation of separate schools by Roman Catholic or Protestant minorities. Quebec provides for both Roman Catholic and non-Catholic schools. Several denominations operate Newfoundland's schools under the Department of Education. Relatively few students attend private schools—between two and three per cent in the English-speaking provinces and about 12 per cent in Quebec. In spite of the multiplicity of educational systems and authorities, co-operation between provinces and the work of national educational associations have produced more uniformity than might

be expected. For example, a child can move from a school in British Columbia to one in Ontario without any great disruption. In this respect the French-speaking schools of Quebec differ considerably from those of other provinces.

Education in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon is the joint responsibility of the Federal Government and the Territorial Councils. Classes are held in schools owned by the Federal Government, by mining companies or by municipal authorities. There are 42 federally-operated schools and 26 others operated or assisted by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources.

Class activity outside a modern school

