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THE CANADIAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

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To discuss one Canadian system of education would be misleading, for there is an independent and distinct system in each of the ten provinces. (1) Also, an active interest in education is maintained by several departments of the Federal Government, some directly involved in the education of Indians, Eskimos, children of armed forces personnel, and other special groups.

One hundred years ago, the British North American colonies which entered into Confederation insisted, as a condition of union, that education be strictly a provincial matter. Section 93 of the British North America Act of 1867 provided that educational legislation should be the exclusive responsibility of each provincial government. In 1867, Section 93 applied to New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Ontario, and it was applied, in the same or slightly altered form, to the provinces which subsequently entered Confederation: Manitoba (1870), British Columbia (1871), Prince Edward Island (1873), Saskatchewan and Alberta (1905), and Newfoundland (1949).

As a consequence of Section 93, there are ten provincial education systems in Canada today and, though they have much in common, some possess unique features. Newfoundland retains a denominational organization under a single Department of Education. Quebec's Department has two branches -- one essentially French-language and Catholic and the other English-language and Protestant. All the other provinces have single administration systems, but some make provision for tax-supported separate (or dissentient) schools.

(1) A detailed description is contained in THE ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN CANADA, available from Publications Distribution, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ottawa 3, Canada (or from the Queen's Printer, Hull, Canada). Catalogue No. 81-535, \$2.00.