

# Pussycats On Prowl

(CUP) — What's a Pussycat? Any dictionary will tell you it's a carnivorous mammal long domesticated and kept by man as a pet or for catching rats and mice.

But ask the question during an education debate these days, and you'll get a slightly different answer.

Pussycat has taken on a new meaning in educational circles during the last month or so because it is the unlikely name adopted by a select group of men who are now taking the lead in the country's biggest industry and most crucial public field.

**Education.**  
The handful of men, choosing their code name because they operate most effectively in the dark alleys of education research and political mobility, are bent upon improving educational systems by applying the most recently-developed techniques in management and technology.

The Pussycats, revealed to the Canadian public last month for the first time, have already established an immediate goal: an interprovincial Canadian Office of Education which would link education with the economic community.

It is their hope that such an office could keep pace with social development in Canada so that our school system won't ever again serve society's needs as poorly as they now feel it does.

Who are the Pussycats? They are educators and researchers like Donald H. MacLaren, 45, a brilliant, blind staff sociologist for Air Canada; Clare Westcott, executive assistant to Ontario education minister William Davis, and Davis himself; John J. Deutsch, chairman of the Economic Council of Canada and Dr. R. W. B. Jackson, head of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Some of them come from industry: from Union Carbide of Canada Ltd., Bell Telephone

Co. of Canada, Aluminum Co. of Canada Ltd., International Nickel Co. of Canada Ltd., and International Business Machines Co. Ltd.

How did they become involved in the future of education in Canada?

In February, 1965, The Pussycats approached Ontario education minister William Davis, who agreed to create a committee to explore the idea of establishing a joint relationship between industry and education on information systems.

This liaison committee set up task forces which were charged with:

- Designing a system by which success in school could be related in a meaningful way to success in employment;
- Examining industrial training policies procedures and objectives and relating these to secondary school curriculums.
- Studying the design of management information systems, which included a look at business simulations and management games, and
- Assisting the Economic Council of Canada in its study of man-power skill needs to 1970.

Out of these projects has developed the Pussycat's push for a Canadian Office of Education, an expensive, scientifically designed system for constant communication between such groups as students, teachers, guidance counsellors, industry managers, education administrators and researchers.

The basic idea behind such an office is that it would replace the current system which employs techniques until a crisis forces change. Such an office would operate on the theory that constant feedback of information among all these groups would lead to constant modification and updating of education.

It is anticipated that such an office would operate partly on a regional basis with five main sections: the Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies and British Columbia.

Why has industry, or certain segments of industry, suddenly become prominent in the initiative to modernize Canadian education?

A dramatic explanation for this question can be found in the annals of Air Canada, which has been facing stiff competition, has had to face a situation in which technical and management techniques change rapidly.

But high school graduates applying for jobs with the Crown corporation lacked up-to-date knowledge of physics and chemistry and couldn't speak correctly or compose intelligible sentences.

Air Canada met the problem by establishing formal schools to educate its new employees and re-educate those employees left behind by innovations in technical areas of airline operations of the 60's.

In other words, Air Canada reluctantly became an educational institution, and joined the ranks of many other cor-

# CUS Policy Rejected

**WATERLOO (CUP) —** The Canadian Union of Students' education policy could be headed for its first major test of the year, here on the University of Waterloo campus.

Students' council decided Monday night (Oct. 3) to reject the national union's stand on universal accessibility, in a bitter, emotional debate which dragged on until 3 a.m.

After four hours of debate, council voted 8-7 with one abstention to reject the free tuition and student salary concepts approved at last month's CUS Congress in Halifax.

The vote came after council had passed a "principles of education" resolution, and other CUS Congress resolu-

tions fighting battles in a technological age.

When corporations such as Air Canada began to compare their educational techniques with those used in public schools, they received a rude shock. They saw school systems employing out-of-date teaching techniques to teach out-of-date courses. They saw out-of-date teachers, and almost no educational research. And they saw no national co-ordination of education in Canada.

From there, it is not difficult to see why industry has begun to take a deepening interest in the approach taken by government toward education in Canada. And also how the Pussycats have come to seize a leadership role in education.

tions. Among these resolutions were statements such as: "Every individual has the right to an education. This right must be guaranteed to him by society." This passed 17 to 1.

When the Univac resolution went down to defeat, council president Mike Sheppard announced he would have to resign his position.

Fighting back tears, he said: "I fought this from the guts. All summer I've battled with the Ontario government for changes in the Ontario aid program. I can't face Davis (Ontario's education minister) after this."

But today, Sheppard was quoted as saying he will give council two weeks in which to "come up with something better than the status quo or else I will resign."

He charged the eight councillors who voted against the resolution were "trying to block others' chances" for an education.

"I only wish the referendum could be taken among people who can't afford to go to university," Sheppard has battled continuously since his election last March for Univac and all it stands for.

Meanwhile, efforts to obtain a student referendum at Waterloo on the question are proceeding.

The U of W's student federation constitution says a petition signed by five per cent of the students is required before a student referendum can be held on such a question.

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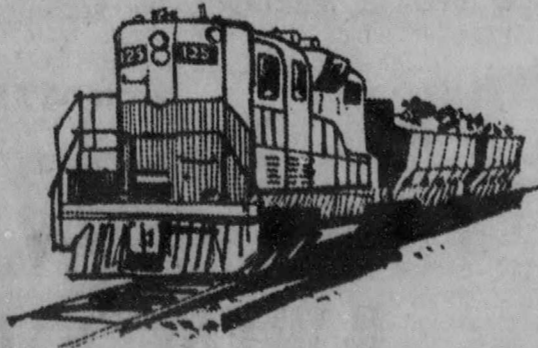
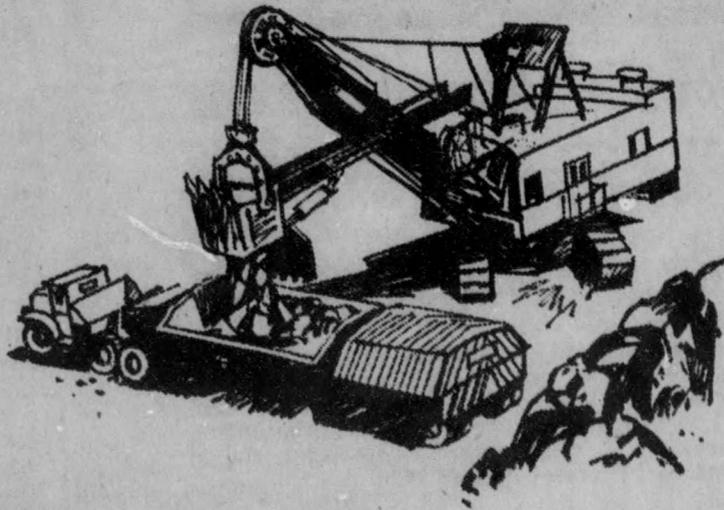
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