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ABSTRACT

For various historical and social reasons, Canada's educational system tends to accept and reflect a greater divergence of philosophical backgrounds and ethnic origins than the American system does. In most provinces, the major church-related school systems receive financial support from the province. A second difference is that Canadian provincial authorities have guarded their autonomy jealously, which results in strong provincial departments of education, relatively weak local systems, and minimal federal influence on education. There is no Canadian equivalent of the U.S. Office of Education or the National Institute of Education. As in the United States, educational finance is a policy issue of considerable importance in Canada. With the exception of New Brunswick, all provinces rely on a combination of municipal and provincial fiscal support, though the relationship between these funding sources varies considerably from province to province. However, variability in school support within each province is considerably less than in most states in the United States. (Author/JG)

THE ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF CANADIAN EDUCATION

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Of the multitude of public governmental services provided in Canada, none has been more dramatic in its impact and development than has the field of education. On more than one occasion it has been described by the Economic Council of Canada as the "number one industry" of the country, a characterization rather easily documented simply by reviewing some very basic statistics. Currently, in excess of 6.5 million Canadians out of about 22.5 million are enrolled in the schools, colleges, and universities of the nation; better than 7 per cent of the Canadian labour force is in the employ of educational systems; and of special interest is the fact that for a number of recent years Canada has led the developed nations of the world in terms of the percentage of its Gross National Product devoted to educational purposes. In 1972, the latter figure approximated 9 percent or better than $8 billion.

As in the United States, the most spectacular growth has been since the Second World War. For example, during the 1950's the population enrolled in elementary schools more than

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doubled, while similar enrolment support was evidenced by the young people registered in secondary schools during the decade which followed. Post-secondary enrolments also forced serious strains on the colleges and universities of the nation by increasing from something less than one-fifth of a million in 1961 to better than 500,000 by 1970. At the present time, we tend to reflect the overall patterns of U.S. enrolment in that our

TABLE 1

ENROLMENT IN ELEMENTARY-SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CANADA 1960-70

Year	Regular Public	Federal	Private	Other	Total
1960-61	3,989,257	44,187	168,163	2,695	4,204,302
1965-66	4,909,788	46,067	203,681	41,705	5,201,241
1969-70	5,571,997	36,526	146,341	53,872	5,808,716
1970-71	5,650,335	34,290	145,148	56,025	5,885,798

Source: Education in Canada (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1973), p.300

elementary numbers have peaked and are now declining. However, secondary numbers, along with post-secondary enrolments continue to pose problems of accommodation and instruction for educational administrators.

Some Background

The origins of Canadian education go well back into the period of colonialism. Beginning with the French origins

in what is now the province of Quebec, and later augmented by a number of dominantly English and Scottish groups, there was a considerable press for public education. Consequently a publicly supported school system entered the scene in the 1840-50 period, assisted in very important ways largely by schools and colleges financed and operated by various orders within the Roman Catholic Church. It is quite important to keep in mind that our Canadian heritage is dominated by the two national groups -- the English and the French -- and that this has resulted in some extremely serious and successful efforts to minimize federal intervention in the provision of educational services. As a consequence of this diversity of background, we differ from the U.S. scene by recognizing two official languages (English and French) and by having a number of provinces which provide financial support to the Roman Catholic school system or to the non-Roman Catholic system if it happens to be in the minority status. French-speaking Canadians today comprise better than one-quarter of the total population and of course are concentrated largely in Eastern Canada, especially in the province of Quebec.

Early higher education in Canada followed a similar pattern of either French or English affiliation. Laval University was originally established in 1635 as a Jesuit College, and later granted a royal charter as a university in 1852 and a Papal charter in 1876. A number of so-called King's colleges, along the Anglican Church theme, were established in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Ontario. A bit later McGill and

Dalhousie were developed as private non-sectarian schools of higher education.[1]

Canada became a nation with the endorsement of Confederation through the enactment of the British North America Act, passed in 1867. Under Section 93 of this Act, education continued to be the exclusive prerogative of the constituent provinces, of which there were four at the time of the elevation of Canada to national status. Over time, other provinces were added and today there are ten provinces and two large territories (Yukon and Northwest Territories). In a very real sense the overall organization of our federal system is similar to that of the United States, except that in the case of the latter federal intervention and involvement in the public elementary and secondary school system is much more extensive than it is in Canada. On the Canadian scene, the federal government has direct educational responsibility only for native Indian peoples, for residents living in the two Northern territories, and for the children of members of the armed forces. It is worth emphasizing that the fact that we have a very sizeable non-English speaking minority ensures that the responsibilities and authority for education remain confined relatively strictly to the ten provincial jurisdictions.

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[1] David Munroe, The Organization and Administration of Education in Canada (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974), p. 2.

For reasons somewhat similar to those put forth in the U.S., the Canadian federal government assumes some additional responsibilities in the educational field. As one example, it focuses some of its attention on the important field of vocational and technical education, an obvious response to the manpower needs of the country. In addition, as part of a relatively complex system of fiscal federalism, rather considerable support is provided for post-secondary education, especially that of the universities. In the case of the latter institutions, federal monies are also available for student loans and scholarships. It should be further noted that the bulk of the research funds so necessary for the academic community are provided from the federal treasury.

Before launching into a further discussion of organization and control as it relates to Canadian education, it may be of value to present a brief historical overview of the educational experience in this, the second largest nation in the world. To some extent at least, large geographical size and a small population concentrated along the southern border make it difficult to come to overwhelming generalizations about education in Canada. Yet, when careful stock is taken it is obvious that there are many more similarities than there are significant contrasts. The fact that we are a nation born of two other major national groups, each of which has also been identified with the two mainstreams of Christianity, has resulted in some rather interesting developments, however.

The commonalities which can be identified in Canadian education stem from three major sources: first, common agreement since the mid-1800's about the importance of providing and acquiring education; second, similar understandings concerning the need to provide schools and school systems; and third, broad-based consensus on the appropriate programmatic thrust of the public schools. As a result of these three basic agreements, highly regulated provincial public school systems have been developed, accountable both substantively and fiscally to the public it was designed to serve.

Unlike the experience of at least some other Western nations, the Canadian decision to concentrate on a public school system has been supported strongly ever since its inception. That is to say, the concept of non-public or independent school systems is not well supported throughout Canada. This problem has been dealt with in other ways which I will describe later. The public schools in Canada have come to be regarded as the appropriate means for educating children from all social strata, geographical locations, or wealth backgrounds. In summary, the Canadian social and economic demands of educational importance have been placed squarely before the publicly supported school system.

In Canada, as elsewhere in the western world, the period prior to the development of a public school system was characterized exclusively by various forms of elitist education.

Education was for the select few who were identified to hold leadership positions in the church or state. The demand for an enlightened and literate body politic, as suggested earlier, resulted in the various provinces of the newly formed nation accepting the challenge and they responded by developing a centralized system for the provision and control of education. Through the use of centralized boards or ministries of education, chief school officers and inspectors of schools were appointed, provisions were made for the preparation and licensing of teachers, programmes of curricula were developed and distributed, and textbooks were approved. Local interest was ensured through elected trustees whose tasks were essentially related to the management and maintenance of the local school or school system. In order to respond to the need for compulsory attendance, school taxes were levied on all real property held within the local community . At the risk of dramatic oversimplification, this is the pattern which essentially exists today in most Canadian provinces, although there is increasing evidence that some of the centralization just described is due for modification. In any case, it is important to remember that in Canada the key to understanding the public school system is to recognize the sovereign power held by the provinces.[2]

The issue of the extent to which religion should influence public education is one of almost endless debate.

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[2] T. C. Byrne, "Trends and Issues in Canadian Education," Educational Administration: International Perspectives, eds. George Baron et al. (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1969) pp. 28-53.

In the U.S., a major effort has been made to separate totally church and state. Canada, at least in education, has taken a much more laissez-faire attitude with the result that in most provinces at least the dominant religious denominations are accommodated within the provincial system. The one exception is my own province of British Columbia which operates a totally non-sectarian school system.[3] In terms of more accommodating provinces, Newfoundland and Quebec are noteworthy. In the case of Newfoundland, which entered Confederation only relatively recently (1949), several religious denominations are recognized and receive support from the provincial authority. Quebec, on the other hand, operates what could be described as a dual public school system within the single province, the one unit focused on the French-speaking Roman Catholic system and the other on the English-speaking Protestant structure. From this brief account, it is possible to suggest that a more pluralistic approach is taken to education in Canada than is the case in the U.S., reflecting perhaps the conception of a society and educational system which is "mosaic" in its nature rather than "melting pot" in its overall goals.

As in the U.S., the late nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth evidenced a variety of social forces which made important demands on the Canadian school system. Like the U.S., Canada also encouraged extensive immigration

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[3] Douglas Lawr and Robert Gidney (eds.) Educating Canadians: A Documentary History of Public Education (New York: Van Nostrand and Reinhold, 1973) for the material covered in this section.

with the result that large numbers of non-English (or non-French to a much lesser extent) had to be assimilated into the society. As well, industrial and commercial development dictated a need for a much better quality of technical education. Demographic shifts to urban centers also required that people be prepared for different life styles and the resultant reduction in rural populations identified further inadequacies to which the schools were expected to be responsive. These important social needs resulted in a second burst of enthusiasm for a larger and better public school system.

As a consequence, educational reforms were incorporated which tried to move away from the single-minded adherence to basic skills and the traditional disciplines. This new concept of "education for life" resulted for example in the development of programmes in industrial education, home economics, and nature study. Educational programmes were developed with the conception of a well-rounded and integrated curriculum to prepare people to become major contributors to the Canadian social order. In addition to the development of new programmes, new institutions in the form of technical-vocational schools were built. Larger units of educational government were also organized in the early 1920's. However, resistance to programmes other than the old established ones, coupled with an ailing economy, ensured that much of this movement for reform had to be delayed until after World War II.

The third round of expansion in the public school system in Canada took place in the 1960's. This time the central theme focused on issues of equity -- educational opportunities for all youth in order that they might assume the most productive and satisfying role in society. As in the U.S., education was perceived to be an important answer to a number of social ills, including poverty, unemployment, social mobility, and a general deterioration in the life styles of people. Attendance figures ballooned, especially in the secondary and post-secondary institutions, and it even became necessary to incorporate new institutions such as community colleges into the publicly supported educational system. Costs escalated dramatically but fortunately it was a period of economic growth which was more than able to sustain such an impressive demand.

Today we find ourselves in a position where approximately three-quarters of those who enter school graduate from high school, a figure somewhat lower than that of the U.S. It should be noted however that these retention rates vary rather considerably depending on region. For example, the retertion figure in 1970-71 for the Western Canadian provinces was 80.2 per cent as compared to 55.8 per cent in the Atlantic provinces. The territories which are administered by the federal government, on the other hand, retained only slightly more than 30 per cent of its student body in the same period.

TABLE 2

GRADE 12 ENROLMENT, RELATED TO GRADE 2 ENROLMENT TEN YEARS EARLIER

Province	1965-66	1969-70	1970-71
Newfoundland	- - -	- - -	- - -
Prince Edward Island	42.3	59.5	60.2
Nova Scotia	32.5	49.6	52.7
New Brunswick	41.5	55.0	58.5
Quebec	29.4	48.1	62.9
Ontario	59.0	67.6	71.4
Manitoba	59.8	71.8	72.8
Saskatchewan	66.7	73.7	76.6
Alberta [a]	86.1	86.3	89.3
British Columbia	68.8	75.6	78.8
Yukon and N.W.T.	- - -	25.6	31.2
Canada	50.5	62.8	69.8

Source: Education in Canada, p. 361.

[a] Not comparable with rest of Canada, owing to different methods of classification.

In this regard, it is of importance to note that the population of these territories is dominated by Native Indian and Eskimo groups.

Organization and Control of Schools

Under the parliamentary form of government which is practised in Canada, an elected minister who serves as a member of the premier's cabinet (in this case, really the provincial board of education) and the legislature is assigned

responsibility for public education. In this capacity as Minister of Education, this individual is assisted and advised by a deputy minister who is a senior member of the provincial civil service and usually an educator. The deputy normally serves as the means of continuity within a department but in some provinces where early educational change has been sought it has become increasingly common for the deputy to be replaced when a government is defeated. In the main, departments of education assume responsibilities very comparable to their counterparts in the United States and include:

1. The supervision of the preparation and certification of teachers.
2. The supervision and accreditation of public schools.
3. Overall curriculum approval and textbook usage.
4. The provision and supervision of provincial funds for local systems.
5. Legislation pertinent to the operation of the public schools.

Local boards of education, organized in most cases on a county or regional basis, are operated by elected trustees for the purpose of maintaining local school systems. To these local corporations, the legislature (most often through the department of education) delegates the responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of schools, for the recruitment of qualified teachers, for the preparation and control of

budgets provided both provincially and locally, and for the ove epresentation of local residents in the operation of the schools. Normally, such boards are required to employ a professionally qualified superintendent to serve as their executive officer.

In all, five Canadian provinces (Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec, and Newfoundland) make legal provision for the establishment of so-called "separate" schools, systems which are normally operated by separate boards of education. These are run as distinct districts but under the same rules and regulations of the department of education as are imposed on the regular public school system -- the same legislation, teacher requirements, and general curriculum expectations. In three additional provinces (Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick), there is no legal provision for separate schools but informal local provisions make it possible to provide special selected schools for minority language or religious groups.

As I have already noted, the dominant decision-making authority in Canadian education is at the provincial level. It is there that the improtant decisions are made. It should be noted, however, that particularly in a number of the Western provinces efforts are being made to decentralize programme and other important decisions. The provincial dominance even extends to organizations of teachers and school trustees.

Although the salaries of teachers are negotiated locally, the bulk of their political muscle is dependent upon provincial federations of which all teachers must be members. As a balance to this organized strength of teachers, local boards of education have formed powerful trustee associations at the provincial level. It is expected that shortly administrators will be making serious efforts to gain strength through similar collective efforts.

From what I have already said, it should be evident that we have no equivalent of the U.S. Office of Education or the National Institute for Education. Consequently, federal influence on education is minimal, being restricted to the areas of responsibility identified earlier. The only attempt to coordinate Canadian education in any way at all is the Council of Ministers of Education from the various provinces.[4] This body has no recognized legal function but meets regularly to consider matters of mutual provincial concern. Obviously, included in the latter will be federal intentions with regard to matters which affect education. However, the Council of Ministers is advisory only, leaving Canada with nothing in the way of a federal coordinating agency concerned with educational affairs. This lack of a national policy focus for Canadian education leaves each of the provinces in positions of undisputable strength when determining their own educational priorities and future directions.

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[4] John J. Bergen, "The Councils of Ministers of Education in Canada and West Germany," Education Canada, Vol. 14, No. 3 (September, 1974), pp. 20-28.

As in school systems throughout the world, educational finance remains a policy issue of considerable importance in Canada. The fact that the nation, as represented by its constituent provinces, continues to contribute at a maximum ratio of the Gross National Product suggests that the education of Canadian youth is an important overall objective. However, because public elementary and secondary education remains an almost total provincial matter, there is considerable variability between the various provinces (see Table 3). Critics of the degree of federal involvement suggest that these differences

TABLE 3

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PER PUPIL EXPENDITURES, 1970-71

Province	Enrolment	Cost per Pupil
Newfoundland	160,915	$ 349
Prince Edward Island	30,622	$ 483
Nova Scotia	214,897	$ 523
New Brunswick	175,912	$ 415
Quebec	1,585,757	$ 746
Ontario	2,022,401	$ 825
Manitoba	246,946	$ 655
Saskatchewan	247,332	$ 645
Alberta	423,922	$ 793
British Columbia	526,991	$ 685
Canada	5,650,335	$ 731

Source: Education in Canada, pp. 375-6.

represent a form of discrimination with important social implications. Obviously from the data provided in Table 3, expenditures on public education are closely correlated with the "ability to pay" of the various provinces.

Another aspect of educational finance which is of interest concerns the source of revenues available for public education. Of special interest to many students of educational finance is the Canadian province of New Brunswick which in 1969 went to a system of total provincial funding. With this exception, all other provinces rely on both municipal and provincial fiscal support but the relationships of these two governmental sources vary rather considerably. For example,

TABLE 4

SOURCE OF SCHOOL BOARD INCOME, 1970

Province	Total ($'000)	Federal	Provincial	Municipal	Other
Newfoundland	56,171	---	93.7%	1.2%	5.1%
Prince Edward Island	14,809	---	73.9%	26.0%	0.1%
Nova Scotia	112,781	0.5%	56.0%	42.3%	1.2%
New Brunswick	73,134	---	99.6%	---	0.4%
Quebec	1,183,400	0.5%	62.6%	35.9%	1.0%
Ontario	1,668,759	0.7%	50.8%	47.1%	1.4%
Manitoba	161,725	0.4%	50.3%	47.0%	2.3%
Saskatchewan	162,042	1.5%	44.2%	52.1%	2.2%
Alberta	339,333	1.4%	57.0%	39.7%	1.9%
British Columbia	360,769	1.4%	41.7%	54.8%	2.1%
Canada	4,138,805	0.8%	55.3%	42.4%	1.4%

Source: Education in Canada, pp. 372-3.

the provincial government of Newfoundland provided close to 94 per cent of all operating costs in 1970 while in British Columbia only approximately 42 per cent came from the provincial coffers (see Table 4). In the case of those provinces where costs are shared between the province and the municipality, the bulk of support programmes are of the foundation type, based on varying degrees of ability to pay. However, regardless of the mode to be utilized, it is quite evident that reform in educational finance is as critically needed in Canada as it is in the U.S. The one important difference which can be discerned is the fact that variability in support within each provinical jurisdiction is considerably lower than that which is found in the various counterpart states.

Summary

An effort has been made in this brief paper to identify some of the important differences in Canadian public education, when compared to its counterpart system in the U.S. One important dimension which needs to be considered is the difference in origin of the two systems. Coming out of the pluralistic contributions of both the French and the English cultures, Canada's system of education tends to accept and reflect a greater divergence of philosophical backgrounds and ethnic origins. The fact that church-related educational systems receive provincial support is an important accommodation made to the divergent groups that make up Canada, dating back as far as the days of Confederation.

A second important difference focuses on the difference in the way in which the two federalist systems operate in the field of education. While the constitutional bases of both nations make the state or province the locus of responsibility for education, the overall systems have developed very differently. In their efforts to avoid federal encroachment and to ensure important ethnic or cultural identities, Canadian provincial authorities have guarded their autonomy jealously. Decentralization, at least until very recently, was limited with control of what should be taught and by whom carefully defined at the provincial level. As a result we have strong provincial departments of education and relatively weak local school systems, relationships which are the direct opposite of that encountered in most states.

This strong centralist tendency is also reflected in the degree of authority granted to the cabinet minister responsible for education. While it is true in most cases that a politician in this position will try to reflect the will of the majority, it must also be recognized that he, along with the cabinet, are free to make all the important decisions which affect education. Formal structures for ensuring that a variety of interest groups concerned about education can exercise their collective voices do not generally exist. Political exigencies of the day are demanding that such groups be polled, however.

A third difference of interest focuses on the financing of education. Our province has already adopted province-wide financing and a number of others are considering such a possibility. At least one major political party is committed to the desirability of removing the financing of education from dependence on taxes on real property. A further dimension of the finance issue concerns the role assumed by our federal government in the financing of higher education. Currently, something approximating one-half of the operating costs of universities is provided through fiscal shifts initiated by the federal government. It should also be noted that while the variability of support levels between provinces is almost as great as it is between, the within-province variability is considerably lower than is the case in the U.S. counterpart.

A final difference to be considered relates to the organizational modes of vested interest groups in education. Organized teacher groups with compulsory memberships have been a long established tradition in Canada, especially in the western provinces like Alberta and British Columbia. Militant postures on matters related to teachers, especially in the welfare realm, were established in Canada some fifteen to twenty years before their arrival in the United States. In addition, of course, the closed shop feature has yet to be accepted on the U.S. scene. Likewise, the development of strong

and influential trustee or school board member associations is a well established historical fact. Other organized interest groups, such as school administrators, are not as well identified and influential as their U.S. counterparts, a weakness which is currently receiving much attention.

Very briefly, then, these are some of the important differences which I can perceive. They are important and distinctive, yet it remains as an obvious observation that the commonalities between U.S. and Canadian education are greater than the differences.