

In my judgement, the two most successful essays in *The Social History of Occupational Health* are Gill Burke's "Disease, Labour Migration and Technological Change: The Case of the Cornish Miners" and Perry Willson's "Industrial Health and Scientific Management in an Italian Light Engineering Firm." Burke outlines an intriguing story of increased lung and hookworm disease among Cornish miners resulting from specific technological changes introduced by a declining and desperate copper and tin mining industry. Rather than acknowledge their own responsibility for increasing occupationally-related disease and death, mine owners attempted to shift the blame to their worker victims who, they said, were solely responsible for their own fate because they failed to comply with safety measures such as wearing masks or watering drill-generated dust. The workers, by contrast, felt that they had no options because the masks were difficult to work in and the watering slowed them down (which decreased their pay) while exposing them to hookworm disease, for which they were also held responsible. Willson explores the managerial utility of a "safety committee" which included worker representatives in an Italian factory during the Fascist period. He argues that, together with an industrial psychology department, this committee successfully manipulated workers' beliefs so that they became convinced the factory management really cared deeply about their health and safety. But Willson demonstrates that this belief derived from public relations rather than actual company policy and that the firm clearly expected to enhance productivity by the "psychologically favorable effect" on the workers of greater safety protection. The management's real motive was not benevolence but "winning their employees' passive acquiescence."

The essays by Burke and Willson are more satisfying to read than most of the others not because of their point of view — which is fairly consistent throughout the volume — but because of their lucid exposition and forceful argument. Unlike some of the other contributors — in part, no doubt, because of the problems of translation — Burke and Willson develop their cases slowly, systematically and persuasively. They present integrated interpretations in place of the sometimes stroboscopic flashes common to several of the other papers. If all the essays here were on the same level as these two, one could say with confidence that the "re-thematisation" of the history of occupational health is not only an important goal for the future but already a considerable achievement in the present.

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J. DONALD WILSON, ed. — *An Imperfect Past: Education and Society in Canadian History*. Vancouver: Centre for Curriculum and Instruction, University of British Columbia, 1984. Pp. 218.

Canadian educational history has made great strides since the early 1960s, so much so, that a volume such as the one under review could not have appeared even a decade ago. With two exceptions, the ten essays in *An Imperfect Past* stem from papers presented at the 1983 Vancouver conference held under the sponsorship of the Canadian History of Education Association/l'Association Canadienne d'Histoire de l'Éducation and its American counterpart the U.S. History of Education Society. The collection is prefaced by two important introductory articles, one by the editor J. Donald Wilson on the current state of Canadian educational historiography and a provocative companion piece by Professor Brian Simon on the broad linkage between education and society. The remainder of the book focuses on four themes: "Literacy and Female Education", "Native Peoples and Education", "Schoolmasters, Reformers and Ideology" and "Rural Education and Ethnicity". All of these are important in the context of Canadian educational history but one wonders why other and equally important themes such as the lengthy historical conflict over bilingualism or the interplay between religion and education (to mention but two possibilities) were overlooked. In fact, such omissions illustrate the main problem with the collection. The title *An Imperfect Past: Education and Society In Canadian Education* suggests something more than is delivered in the book. In the editor's defense, he does make it clear that the essays reflect "...the current interest in regionalism

and avoid the national perspective. No new synthesis is presented here, but doors are opened to new ideas and new styles" (p. 1). A true comment but nonetheless, one that substantiates the point that a more modest title would have reflected the somewhat restricted scope of the book.

It has become a conventional cliché for reviewers to complain that collections of conference papers are uneven in quality. However, such is not so obviously the case in this instance. Although the papers reflect widely divergent styles and approaches all are significant contributions to a fuller understanding of Canadian educational history. Nor does it detract from the importance of the volume that the majority of the papers presented fall in the category described by the editor as "moderate revisionism" (p. 10). As Professor Sol Choen once commented on "radical revisionism" in an article in *History of Education* (quoted by Wilson p. 10): "There is a tendency [amongst the latter] to polarize and simplify, and to drift toward conspiratorial interpretation of events. There is a danger that past ideas and actions may be combined with the moral or social prejudices of the historian to produce a work that distorts the past in an attempt to castigate the past and to lecture the present". There are no such castigations in *An Imperfect Past*.

What emerges, is a pot-pourri of articles that ranges widely over the Canadian educational scene. To illustrate: one gains insight on such divergent topics as the extent of literacy in colonial Louisbourg (the sole article dealing with Atlantic Canada), a comparative analysis of the emergence of Domestic Science in early-twentieth century Ontario and Quebec, the "other side" of poet Duncan Campbell Scott — his role as a civil servant in the Department of Indian Affairs through to a first rate analysis of the "open ended oligarchies" (p. 166) fostered in Upper Canada by the venerable John Strachan. Although imperfectly titled, all who read *An Imperfect Past* will find that social and educational history can be illuminating, imaginative as well as scholarly.

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B. ANNE WOOD — *Idealism Transformed: The Making of a Progressive Educator*. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985. Pp. xiv, 232.

J.H. Putnam was one of the giants of Canadian education in the early decades of the twentieth century. Together with such leading reformers as James L. Hughes, John Seath, and James W. Robertson, Putnam laboured to transform the inherited educational systems into ones that responded to the needs of the new industrialized and urbanized society that was emerging in Canada during the period of their professional careers. The heavy emphasis placed by the schools on the academic side of education and, especially the stress on the classical curriculum, was, in their opinion, no longer appropriate for all children. Not only did this approach prevent the majority of children from advancing beyond the elementary school; what was even worse was that schools did not equip their graduates to secure rewarding employment.

What should the schools be teaching? What methodology should teachers be using? How should schools be organised and administered? These salient questions were troubling the minds of numerous educators at the turn of the century. The best known response to these queries has been labelled the New Education Movement. The purpose of this monograph is to describe how one Canadian educator, Putnam, became the most outspoken advocate and practitioner of this reform program.

Wood has concentrated most of her attention on the intellectual formation of her subject's mind. Essentially, this book is a study of how this educator acquired the mental lumber with which he set out to construct a school system in the city of Ottawa where he was the chief inspector of schools from 1910 to 1937. Beginning with his career as a teacher and progressive-minded municipal reformer in Ottawa, the author traces the impact on Putnam's mind of a whole host of philosophic ideas. He