F. H. JOHNSON. — *A Brief History of Canadian Education.* Toronto : McGraw-Hill, 1968. viii, 216 pp.

HOWARD ADAMS. — *The Education of Canadians, 1800-1867 : The Roots of Separatism.* Montreal : Harvest House, 1968. xii, 145 pp.

Canadian educational history has not received the same serious scholarly attention which has been accorded to the other aspects of our national development. Canadian historians have tended to adopt an arms' length approach to this field of enquiry, viewing it in a somewhat disdainful manner. Educational history has either been regarded by the historical profession as irrelevant to a comprehensive discussion of the main themes of Canada's political and constitutional evolution (especially within the framework of the traditional Whiggish interpretation), or else it is relegated to the position of a subject of minor status suitable only for teacher-training institutions which, again, have not generally been recognized as being a part of the scholarly community. As a result, most of the published work on Canadian educational history has consisted of articles and monographs concerned primarily with the achievements of certain prominent educational leaders or with the history of a limited number of notable schools and universities. In recent years there have also appeared a number of histories of various provincial educational systems, notably British Columbia, Alberta, New Brunswick and Newfoundland. Generally speaking, these monographs have been works of sound scholarship; but the authors have not always portrayed their stories in wider national tones.

Until recently this type of literary production has been largely mediocre in quality and uninspiring in the treatment of its themes. No writer has really attempted to analyze major educational trends in Canadian history or to discover the significant thoughts of any prominent leaders in this field. No attempt has been made to integrate Canadian educational history within the main stream of Canada's historical development and thus to indicate the role which education has played as one of the major formative influences in the evolution of Canadian society. Canadian historians may have been impeded in undertaking such a project by a number of deterring factors. The fact that control of education has been fragmented by the British North America Act has made it difficult to discover any really national themes in Canadian pedagogy. That we have not yet produced a major educational philosopher or spokesman who could give expression to a distinctively Canadian approach in this field has, no doubt, placed limitations upon work in this area. Furthermore, the Canadian habit of imitating American models in education has also undermined the need to investigate any special Canadian initiatives in pedagogy.

The question might well be asked, can educational historians make a significant contribution to deeper and more analytical understanding of Canada as a community ? Or must educational history remain simply an uninspiring

study of schools and a dull recitation of the various clauses of our accumulated educational legislation ? Surely this would be a trivial approach to the nation's life and understanding of itself when education now commands so much attention from the public, the press, and the mass media. The public's growing criticism about the ever increasing amount of its money being spent on the various aspects of education and the attacks of the adherents of student power on the once sacred precincts of the country's universities are the bases of innumerable newspaper and magazine articles.

Within the past two decades every province has appointed at least one royal commission on the problems of contemporary education. This trend witnessed its most startling climax with the publication earlier this year of Ontario's *Living and Learning*, a committee report unlike any other in this staid province's history. The public enthusiasm and the critical acclaim generated by this report are clear expressions of the popular interest in education. Today education has become everyone's business, and consequently every man has assumed the posture of an expert in educational matters. Other nations have witnessed similar national debate on this subject, and quite often it has stimulated scholars to take a closer look at the development of their country's educational facilities and their relations to that society's total development. The study of educational history in Canada could benefit from this same process. Hopefully, scholars will use this opportunity to reappraise educational history as a field worthy of serious investigation and will try to discover new and imaginative approaches to its study.

It is gratifying to report that much of the graduate research now being carried on in this field is attempting to evolve new and exciting perspectives on Canadian educational development. Some studies are trying to relate the impact of science and technology in Canada on education from 1880 to the present time, and at the same time, to show the influences brought to bear upon educational departments and policies by various pressure groups in industry, labour, and agriculture. The growth of educational facilities as expressions of the various social reform movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is another approach under investigation. One or two new theories of research, such as education as a reflection of changing concepts of the family or education in the background of nineteenth century political reform groups, are being explored. These are stimulating studies which, if followed and expanded, should increase our understanding not only of the unfolding of Canada's educational systems but also shed light on the various solutions being offered to present day problems. Under these circumstances educational history could become a field of serious scholarly endeavour. What is particularly vital is that scholars working in this field become acquainted with the procedures and new sources of information provided by allied disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Basically, Canadian

educational historians should now be assiduously uncovering the links which exist between Canada's social and cultural developments and its educational efforts.

Unfortunately the two volumes under review, F. H. Johnson's *A Brief History of Canadian Education*, and Howard Adams' *The Education of Canadians, 1800-1867*, do not go very far in fulfilling the above mentioned criteria for sound educational history. Johnson's book is simply a very short history of Canadian education handled in the traditional manner. We are treated to a bird's eye view of these developments in something less than two hundred pages. The publisher's desire to make it a short study naturally imposed certain limitations upon the author, but it has lead him to over-simplify many significant topics and has prevented him from handling new ideas with any degree of perception and imagination. The book does not offer an analytical treatment of Canadian educational history and its role in the establishment of a distinctive Canadian community. Rather this volume is, in many ways, another history of schools and educational legislation set forth in the now generally accepted chronological framework. There is, to be sure, a slight attempt at the beginning of most chapters to indicate the prevailing social and economic conditions of the period under discussion, but no real union is secured between these socio-economic factors and the resulting educational facilities. Herein lies one of the most damaging criticisms which, in the opinion of this reviewer, can be made against this book : that is, its total failure to integrate educational developments within the story of the nation's emergence. Educational history is still a side-show in comparison to the main drama presented in the political arena.

Dr. Johnson, who is Director of Elementary Education in the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, has divided his book into three sections. The first two present a chronological study of the early French and British colonial regimes, the Confederation era, and the period of nation building, which he ends at 1920 without giving any particular reason for the process stopping in that year. Events and trends in the remaining years of the twentieth century are considered in a topical fashion. The use of these two approaches leads to some confusion and unevenness. It would have been better to have adopted one approach or the other. In the earlier historically oriented sections the author adopts the standard liberal interpretation of Canadian history. Indeed in the opening chapter, entitled "Canadian Education : The Formative Influences", from which we might have expected some new insights, we are treated to a consideration of the usual environmentalist approach. The author neglects to mention the tremendous impact which the English and Scottish educational traditions exerted upon Canada. At the end of this chapter, in a section devoted to "The Essential Qualities of Canadian Education", we are given a very cursory treatment of what Johnson considers

to be these distinctive features : the tolerance extended to religious minorities, the reluctance to adopt new or radical innovations, and the utilitarian philosophy which pervades Canadian education. Is this all that is essentially different about our systems ? It is poor fare to offer a searching student. No generalizations or broad patterns of evolution are developed in this chapter, when some could have been of inestimable assistance to students of Canadian educational history.

In his review of the events and personalities in Upper Canada in the years before Confederation, Johnson does not deviate from the old fashioned rendering. Egerton Ryerson is still the mighty hero who, together with his reform-minded associates, is pictured as assaulting the entrenched powers of the narrow-minded, grasping, Family Compact led by the bigoted John Strachan, the Anglican rector of York. Unfortunately Johnson apparently has not taken into account the revisions of the role played by Strachan and his colleagues in the forming of Upper Canada as given in the works of S. F. Wise, R. E. Saunders and Hugh Aitken. Johnson has completely misinterpreted the career of Strachan and his impact on education in Upper Canada. Nowhere does he record the all-important fact about Strachan that he had been educated in the Scottish system of the eighteenth century, generally regarded as probably the most advanced in the British Isles, if not in Western Europe, and that Strachan attempted to incorporate many of the liberal features of this approach into his own conception of a national system of education for the colony. Unhappily for Strachan, he was thwarted in his attempts to provide schools imparting a very liberal curriculum for all the people, regardless of their religious affiliation, by the reform element in the colony, and also by members of his own political group, the Colonial Office, the powerful Anglican missionary societies, and the English hierarchy. Moreover, this section of the book is marred by a number of factual errors. Strachan, for example, was never ordained as a Presbyterian minister in Scotland. It is doubtful if he was ever truly a Presbyterian. Johnson claims that Strachan had no interest in elementary schools even though he sponsored the Common School Act of 1816, when the documentary evidence clearly indicates that Strachan was wholeheartedly in favour of providing such facilities for the population. The author goes on to say that by the charter granted to King's College, York, in 1827, Strachan "... restricted the faculty to members of the Church of England" as was the custom at Oxford. Again this is a misreading of the evidence. Strachan wanted to be able to recruit men from any denomination for the staff and he interpreted the terms of the charter in this manner. The only religious test placed upon faculty members was that those who served on the college council must subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. Indeed, there are too many such errors in this book. It needed better editing.

As a result of adhering to the oft-repeated but now unsupportable criticisms of Strachan and the Family Compact, Johnson elevates Ryerson into the position of the major and perhaps the only significant educational figure in the colony's history, an honour to which he is no longer entitled. Perhaps Johnson should have pondered more deeply on the judgment of G. Spragge, a noted authority on Strachan's educational efforts, and which the author does quote. Spragge once wrote, "If Egerton Ryerson established the educational system of Ontario, a good foundation was laid in Upper Canada by John Strachan." [1] Really, when one discards the accumulated prejudice of the years, it is astonishing how similar Strachan and Ryerson were in their approach to education. Is it not time that historians began to see the lines of continuity here instead of constantly reiterating the already over-worked areas of conflict and diversity between these two educational leaders ?

Another topic in this section of the book which should have received a fuller treatment is education as an issue during the Confederation debates. Johnson merely quotes a part of section 93 of the British North America Act. The all too brief reference to it stands starkly alone at the end of a chapter dealing with education in the Atlantic provinces before 1867. No explanation is given for its inclusion in the legislation. No discussion of the background of the section is offered. Nor is there any reference to the role of Alexander Galt in this issue or the debate concerning education at the Westminster Conference. Finally, there is no analysis of the section, which seems to be a startling omission as this part of the Act figured prominently in two major national crises : the Manitoba School Controversy of the 1890's and the debate concerning Ontario's Regulation XVII in the years before and during World War I. (In fact, the latter dispute is not even mentioned in the text.) This seems to be most unfortunate since the country is now sustaining another crucial debate over the language issue in education and also on the role of the Federal Government in education. Another aspect of the Confederation agreement which might have received some notice is the question of a cultural compact. Was such an idea implied in the agreement of 1867 ? Here again is a pertinent and highly relevant contemporary topic which the author could have utilized to reveal some new insights into our national evolution.

In the last section of this volume, which is concerned with twentieth century problems, practically every chapter exhibits the same of lack of tight organization, of relevancy, and of any attempt to connect the changes which appeared in the educational systems with the socio-economic conditions. This characteristic is most notable in the chapter dealing with the recent spate of royal commissions. It is simply a catalogue of the official titles, aims and recommendations. No attempt has been made to relate these reports to the

[1] G. W. Spragge, "John Strachan's Contributions to Education, 1800-1823", *Canadian Historical Review*, XX (1941), 147.

specific needs of the various provinces which appointed them. Nor does the author give an adequate discussion of the effects or results of the recommendations which have already been implemented. Similarily, his discussion of the role of the federal government is limited to a dull recital of the various pieces of legislation and their most important clauses under which this branch of our government acts. A final example of the failure to deal in depth with a specific topic in this section of the book is the chapter on Progressivism and its impact upon Canada. As there has been a mounting attack on the effects of this educational movement over the past decade in both Canada and the United States, it is not unreasonable to expect an educational historian to indicate the overall influence of Progressivism on Canada and to make an assessment of its successes and failures. But, unfortunately, Johnson merely gives us a very cursory and disjointed account of this philosophy and its practice in Canada.

One comes away from this book with a vague and unfulfilled feeling. What has Johnson really told us about the evolution of Canadian education as a constitutent element of our society? Indeed, it is not an easy book to read as the style is not graceful or flowing. His technique of listing causes, laws, clauses of legislation, results, and many other topics detracts from his effectiveness as an historian. While the book does possess an extensive bibliography it is not by any means exhaustive as there are many significant omissions from lists both of secondary works and of the unpublished theses. No mention is made of Abbé Gosselin's old but still useful book, *L'Instruction au Canada sous le Régime Français* or of Canon Groulx's *L'Enseignement Français au Canada*. Not including John Porter's indispensable *The Vertical Mosaic* is inexcusable. George Spragge's older thesis on monitorial schools [2] and Sylvia Carleton's dissertation on Egerton Ryerson and Education in Ontario, 1844-1877, [3] deserve to be included as do many others. Johnson's book represents a beginning move towards a more interpretative account of Canadian educational history, but it leaves much to be accomplished. The colour, the clashes, and the conflicts of Canadian history are not clearly discernible in this little volume.

On the other hand, Howard Adams' book, *The Education of Canadians, 1800-67 : The Roots of Separatism*, abounds with a description of the heated clashes and protracted conflicts of Canadian educational history. Indeed, the book itself will probably become a source of controversy. But it is all sound and fury signifying nothing. Adams, who is an associate professor of History of Education at the University of Saskatchewan, does not explain in an objective fashion the origins of the disputes in the early nineteenth century

[2] George Spragge, *Monitorial Schools in Canada, 1810-1845*, unpublished D.Pæd. thesis, University of Toronto, 1935.

[3] Sylvia Carleton, *Egerton Ryerson and Education in Ontario, 1844-1877*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1950.

which centered around the growth of the educational systems in the colonies of Upper and Lower Canada. This volume is probably one of the most misleading ever published in the field of Canadian history. The deception begins with the sub-title, *The Roots of Separatism*, and carries right through to the last page. Adams, for example, never defines what he means by the word separatism, which is a fantastic deficiency in a day when it linked with a special brand of French Canadian nationalism. Apparently this philosophy is not the focal point of Adams' thesis, although one cannot be absolutely sure. In fact, the atmosphere of vagueness is one of the most intolerable characteristics of this badly written book. In fairness, one should note that he does advance many interesting generalizations which might serve as useful avenues of further research into the educational problems of the period; but time and again these statements are left unsupported by any type of factual or documentary evidence. Every page abounds with these structural faults.

In the end, the book is really an example of special pleading. Adams is writing as a polemist, not as an objective historian — as the author of the preface, Dr. W. W. Walsh of McGill University, correctly indicates. Too often, Adams' argument is obscured by the shrill and defensive tone of his "tract for the times". He has assumed the role of an advocate for a special cause which, again as Dr. Walsh points out, arose in part from Adams' own unfortunate experience with certain types of educational facilities during his childhood. But surely this is an unsafe guide or point of reference for an historian to use who is trying to lay bare the roots of our present discontent.

Adams' contention is that the educational systems of the two Canadas in the years before Confederation were deliberately foisted upon an unsuspecting population by a group of excessively pro-British leaders, among whom he includes John Strachan, Egerton Ryerson, the Roman Catholic hierarchy and John A. Macdonald. They make strange bedfellows and collaborators ! Moreover, he claims, what the people really wanted was a system of secular schools controlled and financed by the government. The populations of the two Canadas had been advocating this suggestion for years. One of Adams' most unbelievable oversimplifications is what he calls the "democratic and national movement in Upper and Lower Canada" which "was brought to an abrupt end in 1837 when the Imperial regime and Catholic clergy routed the popular forces" (p. 112).

After the rout of this mouvement, according to Adams,

> When the middle and lower classes became sufficiently powerful to enforce their demands, John A. Macdonald and Egerton Ryerson captured the leadership, redirected their objectives and inflicted colonial forms upon the population. Their actions prevented the normal development of indigenous cultural institutions. The colony of Ireland, with its master British institutions and large Catholic population served as the model, and the Irish National Schools became the basis of Canada's own system. Careful censorship was exercised over the Canadian curriculum to guard against American influence, or republican and

> democratic ideas. In addition to permitting only British topics, the interpretation of history and civics was oriented towards a reverence for the achievements of the mother country and her national heroes. Literature programs were selected to inculcate a veneration for the British way of life; teachers who were not Anglican clergymen worked under political rules patterned on those of Ireland; and the whole program was enforced through a centralized Board of Education which was largely Anglican and Conservative (pp. 111-112).

There never was a "democratic and national movement" in the two colonies at any time before 1867. Nor did the extreme reform groups of W. L. Mackenzie and L. J. Papineau capture the following of a majority of the population, as the voting statistics only too well indicate. Finally, the passage seems to claim that a majority of the population demanded secular schools in the middle of the Victorian period, when religion was still regarded as the main foundation stone of society. They definitely demanded the abolition of any specific denominational teaching or the control of the schools, at least in Upper Canada, by a quasi-established church; but the idea that religion should be removed completely from having an influence over education in this period is ludicrous.

By labelling Strachan, Ryerson, the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and certain politicians as the leaders of a plot to prevent the people from having a secular system, Adams is obviously accepting a conspiracy thesis of history which is totally unacceptable. The picture he paints of the struggles over education in the two colonies is done in hues of black and white, and in the process he grossly oversimplifies the entire story. He allows no room for the subtle influences which were at work to change the systems. Owing to his "emotional investment" in the story, Adams' whole interpretation stands condemned largely for his refusal to treat his material with proper respect for the procedures of historical research. He attempts to impose twentieth century views and attitudes on Strachan and Ryerson. His criticisms of the former are of the traditional variety, and in this he is similar to Johnson. As with Johnson, Adams neglects the more recent revisionist work done on Strachan and the Family Compact. Indeed, Adams uses quotations from sources which were decidedly inimical to Strachan, such as T. Robertson's emotional diatribe, *The Fighting Bishop* (Toronto, 1932).

In a similar vein, Adams condemns Ryerson for not proposing a more secularized system of schools. "Ryerson did not advocate a secular school system at any time" (p. 56). Well, who really did in the 1840's ? Instead, the author claims Ryerson "held that a system of education should be 'in harmony with the views and feelings of the better educated classes'. In the mid-nineteenth century the 'better educated classes' were synonymous with the wealthy who occupied the positions of authority in the government and judiciary. An aristocratic system of public instruction would be in harmony with the interests and benefits of the governing circles" (p. 54). Imagine calling Ryerson's scheme of education an aristocratic one ! Finally, Adams inaccurately

accuses Ryerson of deliberately fostering and aiding Roman Catholic separate schools in a secretive and deceptive manner, when, as the plain facts indicate, Ryerson disapproved of such schools and attempted rather desperately during his career as Chief Superintendent to prevent their extension, and to circumvent the activities of Bishop Charbonnel and his associates. Like Strachan, Ryerson was a consummate politician who instinctively knew when to accept a compromise on details for the sake of preserving the basic structure of his own design. Adams places far too much emphasis on Ryerson's desire to use the text books and regulations of the Irish National Schools. Actually, as is well known and should be clear from a close reading of the evidence, Ryerson's inspiration was Prussia, not Ireland. All of this is overlooked by Adams in his too hasty and unseemly search for convenient quotations to buttress his inadmissible arguments.

And so the pages roll on with more of the same. His discussions of educational developments in Lower Canada are couched in the same style and language. At one point he writes : "During the first half of the nineteenth century formal education in Lower Canada was largely under the control of the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning" (p. 13). This is not strictly correct. He then continues with a critique of the Institution's policies and activities and severely criticizes it for its heavy Anglican composition and orientation. These structures are no longer tenable when one refers to the exhaustive and scholarly treatment of the Royal Institution offered by Dr. L. P. Audet in his monumental history of education in Quebec [4] and in the master's thesis of Real Boulianne submitted to the University of Ottawa in 1964. [5] Both of these studies conclusively show that after 1818, when the Institution was finally established, no attempt was made by it to deliberately follow a policy of assimilation and Anglicization. Indeed these two studies indicate that the board generally acted with the best intentions towards the French population and strove to create a complete system of schools for both linguistic and religious groups in the colony. Nowhere in his discussion does Adams refer to the conclusions of these two scholars. His handling of the Fabrique Act of 1824 and the School Act of 1829 is also inaccurate. Referring to the latter piece of legislation he says, "The new educational system established by the Act of 1829 was an almost immediate success" (p. 23). Again Dr. Audet's work challenge the accuracy of this bald judgment.

Finally the bibliography is extremely revealing of many of the inadequacies of this book. He indicates that he used many primary collections but no detailed list of these is given. If Adams wants his arguments to meet with any kind of friendly reception he must disclose his sources so that the reli-

[4] L. P. Audet, *Le Système scolaire du Québec*, Québec : Les Editions de l'Erable, 6 vols., 1950.

[5] Réal Boulianne, *The French Canadians under the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning*, unpublished Master's thesis, University of Ottawa, 1964.

ability of his ideas can be certified by other scholars. Among the many omissions in the secondary sources cited are the works of Helen Manning and Fernand Ouellet. The neglect of the latter is particularly serious, as it is the major re-interpretation of the period Adams is writing on. His list of theses is exceedingly brief and shows that he has neglected to take into account much of the recent research done in the field of Canadian educational history.

To refute all of Adams factual errors, misinterpretations, and over-simplifications would take another book. It is highly important to note that basically Adams has to be faulted for his failure to act as an objective historian. His emotional bias seriously undermines the authenticity of his initial premises and, in turn, leads him to develop a very simplistic view of the events, policies, and personalities of the period. Finally, his whole approach forces him to draw a series of untenable conclusions. This book may be an excellent example of how to draw a legal brief, but it is exceedingly poor history.

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CAMERON NISH. — *Les Bourgeois-gentilshommes de la Nouvelle-France*, 1729-1748. Montréal et Paris, Fides, 1968. xvii-202 p.

Si on faisait abstraction de la querelle un peu farfelue soulevée depuis dix ans déjà autour de l'existence d'une bourgeoisie en Nouvelle-France, le récent ouvrage de Cameron Nish, *Les Bourgeois-gentilshommes de la Nouvelle-France, 1729-1748*, apparaîtrait comme l'illustration partielle d'affirmations historiques (non d'une thèse) qui sous-tendaient l'enseignement de Guy Frégault et qu'on retrouve dans la brochure *La Société canadienne sous le Régime français*. Celle-ci contient en effet, au moins en germe, l'exposé de l'optique comparative qui situe la Nouvelle-France parmi d'autres sociétés coloniales d'Amérique et que Nish utilise à son tour comme cadre de référence. Elle comporte aussi cette description de la « classe supérieure » de la société canadienne qui diffère assez peu du groupe des « bourgeois-gentilshommes » dont parle Nish :

> Titrée ou non, de petite noblesse ou de bonne bourgeoisie, la classe supérieure, enrichie par le commerce, donne le ton à la société canadienne. Elle forme une oligarchie qui se partage les postes de traite, occupe la plupart des fonctions publiques et se signale dans les expéditions militaires. En réalité, c'est elle qui a construit le Canada — celui qui disparaît en 1760 — en bâtissant son économie, en dirigeant son expansion territoriale et en inspirant sa politique [1].

Sorti de sa gangue polémique, l'ouvrage de Nish se présenterait donc comme un effort pour expliciter ces constatations de Frégault, effort couronné

[1] Guy FRÉGAULT, *La Société canadienne sous le Régime français*, publication de la Société historique du Canada, brochure historique n° 3, Ottawa, 1954, p. 14.