

THE STATE AND NEEDS OF EDUCATION

1979-1980



Conseil supérieur
de l'éducation
Québec

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THE STATE AND NEEDS OF EDUCATION

1979-1980 REPORT



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Conseil supérieur de l'éducation

The State and Needs of Education

1979-1980 Report

Editeur officiel
Québec



Québec, December 15, 1980

Mr. Camille Laurin,
Minister of Education,
Gouvernement du Québec

Dear Mr. Minister,

In accordance with Article 9 of the Act governing the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, I have the honour to present you with this body's annual report on the state and needs of education, for the period extending from September 1, 1979 to August 31, 1980.

Yours sincerely,

Claude Benjamin,
President



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INTRODUCTION

For its 1979-1980 report, as a follow-up to the International Year of the Child, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation has chosen to direct its attention to the student's place in the school. The Conseil sounded out the opinions of high school students whose direct, plain-spoken and incisive comments comprise most of the first chapter. In the second chapter the Conseil presents the contribution of its Commission de l'enseignement supérieur on the student's place in the university. Although the style of this chapter is different, it is imbued with the same concern.

The five chapters in Part Two bring together the reports presented to the Conseil by its Committees and Commissions, the exception being the report of the Commission de l'enseignement supérieur, which the Conseil included in Part One. These reports highlight some of the salient features of the state and needs of education from the various sectorial perspectives: the Catholic school, the Protestant school, the elementary school, the secondary school and adult education.

The chapter on the secondary school should be read in conjunction with the first part of the report. The comments found therein, though reflecting the expression and viewpoints of the students concerned, are not intended to portray the reality of the school as a whole or of all schools. The vivaciousness of the first pages nevertheless retain their suggestive impact: educators can never be too attentive to young people.

The report concludes with a compilation of the advice and recommendations submitted by the Conseil during the course of the year¹.

1. Also see Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Rapport d'activité 1979-1980, Québec 1980, 73 pp.

Part one

THE STUDENT'S PLACE IN THE SCHOOL

- *They hide from our problems.
They don't want to see them.*
- *What do you think they're
afraid of?*
- *Reality!*

(Dialogue with high school students)

At the dawning of the Seventies, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation restated the fundamental truism that the student should be the focus of educational activity. It was not alone in saying this. Since that time, particularly in the various reforms inaugurating the new decade, this principle has never ceased to be reiterated with all kinds of nuances and in all kinds of forms in meetings, committees, consultations, policies, plans of action, negotiations, debates, studies, projects, reforms. Students have been guaranteed a preeminent place in all adult discussions concerning the schools.

But what kind of treatment is reserved for students in school every day? This is where the stated objective becomes elusive. There are many obstacles to implementing the basic principle in the forefront of all the reforms, pitfalls for good intentions that lead to the disillusionment behind the students' comments in the following section. Foremost among these pitfalls is people's blind resistance to anything that disturbs them, and the living presence of students is such a disruptive influence. Even those who have been most open to accepting the principle soon abandon it in practice, basing themselves instead on standard teaching methods, bureaucratic red tape, power relationships, routine, or any less costly replacement for personal risk in relations with students.

While educators may deplore these aberrations as they seek in vain to capture the student's interest, they rarely question the part they have played in this, most often unknowingly. They blame work methods and material means, and they expand these and add others. They do this without seeing that the missing

factor is the students themselves, invoking their name to justify their projects but invoking it in their absence, for fear that the students may hold up a mirror and make the educators see themselves in it.

It is already suspect that there has hardly been any participation by students in the round of public interventions that has pushed them into the forefront of all the public statements. It is also time to find out from the students themselves whether they have actually felt the results of all these noble intentions.

During the International Year of the Child, those young people who were willing to play along were systematically given the opportunity to speak out and take the initiative. Out of these symbolic displays we should have at least retained this approach, so that it could be introduced or maintained in our everyday relations with youth. A booklet of grievances produced during this Year already asked the unavoidable question: "And afterwards?" This provocative title must have been conceived as a direct result of encountering the fickleness and confusion of adults in their dealings with youth. In the same way the following words, which perhaps are an answer to this question, are unrelentingly apt: "The adults should listen to us. We could help them".

This is the perspective in which the Conseil undertook to attentively gather the testimony of students concerning their position in the school system, with the hope that the movement would spread to the schools at a time when educational projects are being developed almost everywhere. Obviously we did not cover all the students or even all the academic levels. A choice had to be made in the short term, and the Conseil decided to focus on two sectors that play a key role in the development of personal independence:

- the high school level, where adolescents begin to demand some responsibility;
- the university level, where students are fully responsible citizens under the law.

Students at other levels are also worth listening to, and they will be eventually to the extent that the academic community grasps the benefits of this approach, just as it will undoubtedly emphasize its limitations. Thin-skinned educators who are offended by these student views will be tempted to see the schools as being "on trial". We will not fuel their suspicions by developing superfluous defences. Our job is to present the perceptions of a great many students concerning the conditions imposed on them in the school system, as well as the lessons that we can extract for ourselves and for them from their account of their experience.

If the picture seems gloomy to some people, it is because, in their legitimate inclination to hope that the situation was otherwise, they are forgetting to think through a fundamental rule of human relations - when you're being listened to, what you talk about first is what's going badly.

What purpose would it serve to ask about the students' feelings if we didn't learn anything except what we had already agreed to tell ourselves? By "listening", just as we have tried to do, we learn how "others" perceive things. It is only by obtaining this "other view" that the contradictions extant between stated intentions and those displayed in practice can be revealed. Stepping up exchanges between specialists will be in vain unless it is recognized that in the school system only the student can provide the professional with this radically different "other view".

Sometimes educators are afraid to listen to students, as if paying attention to them means endorsing all their statements and granting all their wishes. But while we should avoid censoring the feedback we receive, since even the "wailing and gnashing of teeth" will teach us something about what is happening in the schools, we should also relate the comments to the situations and emotions that inspire them. Otherwise, educators will tend to feel they are under attack, and will confront the students with defensive postures that disfigure their message. Educators should also look at their reactions, responses and assessments in terms of how they understand their own expectations. Otherwise they will only provide the students with an

echo of their own statements, and their feedback will become nothing more than an exercise in letting off steam, with no commitments required of either the student or the listener.

These are the terms of such an exchange. It is useless to dream up educational projects if the students are not taken into account - not subjugated, not worshipped, but just made part of the picture. Students' perceptions, when placed in context, teach us something about the students, about ourselves and about the school, where the relationship between students and educators operates.

It is in the context of this relationship that the students' testimony becomes meaningful for us, and we must then ask ourselves whether we are trying to escape from this relationship. A school's whole character grows out of this daily interchange between teachers and students. There is too much of a tendency to look elsewhere for an ideal school, retouching the model as the mirage recedes on the horizon. To establish some control over the "school in the making", would it not be more worthwhile to see the school as it is rather than constantly gazing into the distance at the school as we would like it to be?

In the "never-never land" where adult aspirations concerning the schools sometimes dwell, Alice (to mix a literary metaphor) is only a child, but she knows that to get back to the real world, all she has to do is open her eyes.

1. "THEIR" SCHOOL

How High School Students see their Position

The testimony on which this report is based was gathered last spring in eight different schools, from a hundred students in all high school programs.

Each interview was held in the school with a group of seven or eight students from a single sector (junior high, vocational, general) selected by the school administration or the student council. Each group had sixty (60) to ninety (90) minutes to deal with three topics in succession: participation in school activities, relations with teachers, and the teaching of French.

The interviews were taped, then replayed and transcribed. We have selected and synthesized from these interviews to present the following overview and provide a starting point for our analysis.

The version of the teachers or school administrators was not required. This document is not meant to be a comprehensive file on the school, but an overview of what students are feeling. The teachers and school administrators who read it can use it to evaluate the constraints inherent in their own situation, which they already invoke on many other occasions.

The fact that there are not even more students cited in the following pages does not lessen the value of the feedback, since more can be learned by hearing one person out completely than by conducting a cursory survey of a large group, whose "yesses" and "nos" can't be placed in context.

Finally, the students are quoted extensively without any editing except that which is required for clarity, and without toning down the rough edges of their verbal statements. The tone and style of what is said are just as important as the "ideas" and often tell us more.

The "Padlock Law":
Participation in School Activities

*"They're always afraid we'll
do something".*

(A junior high school student)

It was noontime in their five hundred student high school, and André and his friends were complaining that they had nothing to do. The gym was occupied by organized teams which had in turn to reserve two weeks in advance; the library was closed during lunch hour; the former recreation room had been redesignated for the booming pastoral program; one whole wing of the school had been condemned and the rest of the building was threatened with closure; and it was winter outside. So André and his friends decided to play ball in the corridor. The principal passed by and told them to stop. It was the same situation the next day. The students were urged to go play outside, but the cold soon drove them back into the building. They were reminded about the pastoral program, which lends its resources to junior high school students, but there's not much one can do there. The student café is the preserve of the senior high school students, and the loud music and smoke drive many away.

The following week, André and his friends were playing ball again in the corridor. Threats by the principal stirred André to revolt, and he wrote a carefully drafted letter to the school commission. But the typing teacher seized the first defamatory version and handed it over to the principal who summoned André. The indignant student shoved the teacher, and the principal summoned his parents. The school commission acknowledged receipt of the letter and referred André back to the principal, having contacted him already. In his letter of complaint, André said he and his friends were dissatisfied with the services they were getting from the school, asked that the library be open during lunch hour, proposed major changes to the student café, demanded a room, and finally pleaded that something be done "to keep us occupied". But André and his friends would never get the room they needed. Spring came and they went outside to play.

André's story is representative in more than one respect, as interviews with other students confirm. Rooms in the school are inaccessible to students, programmed activities impose their own form of tyranny, and adults, who are often incapable of imagining a concrete solution to a concrete problem, react defensively.

THE USE OF ROOMS

The students say that as a general rule all rooms are locked except during the hours specifically stipulated in the class timetable or during supervised activities. Nobody can get a room opened without written authorization, and students must be able to justify their presence anywhere at any time.

Classrooms are closed at noon and at the end of the day, and students are even forbidden access to classroom floors at those times. If they want to get together "spontaneously", written authorization and generally a teacher's presence are essential, so that students are often denied permission or run into varying delays. For example, some junior high school students who wanted to have a noontime party in their classroom talked to the teacher who talked to the principal whose consent finally arrived two weeks after the initial approach.

Locker rooms are closed during class hours. They are opened for a few minutes at the beginning and end of the school day. If a student wants a book he's forgotten to take during those times, he has to do without it.

Access to the gyms is limited. Sometimes they are closed at noon. "The gym is locked and there's nobody inside", one student marvelled. They are opened if a teacher shows up, and it has happened that students already in the gym for basketball practice had to get dressed and wait outside for a tardy teacher. Generally gyms are occupied for physical education and organized teams. It is very difficult, even impossible, to play spontaneously in the gym with partners selected on the spur of the moment. Sometimes the gyms are

open for community use in the evening, while students enrolled in the school, who have given up on adorning the waiting lists, are essentially shunted aside. It's hardly any more convenient to use the library, which closes at the same time as the school, fifteen to forty minutes after classes end. There's no time for students to do their homework there. During lunch hour, various policies ensure that free access is rare: in some schools the library is always closed; in others it is opened twice a week at the students' request. Still other schools have what amounts to a quota system: students have to register like they would for an activity, or they have to present a ticket at the door and choose their books in ten minutes, before ropes bar access to the shelves. There is even one library where students aren't allowed to leave after they enter: they stay shut in until classes resume.

The only places where students can gather are the cafeteria, the corridors or indoor open spaces. These are only accessible at noon, if they exist. In the days prior to our visit, the open area in one school was temporarily reserved for members of the band, so that what people there called "school spirit" was paradoxically promoted by excluding other students.

The corridors can't be locked, but it is often forbidden to sit on the floor, or if there are no benches, students can only sit on the floor in a row and in limited numbers, which scarcely facilitates conversation between more than two people.

The cafeteria is used for all kinds of purposes, primarily for eating. But it is also used for playing cards, cutting classes and detaining students who infringe the regulations (like the student who was caught in the corridor by a monitor after the bell when she was looking for a book for her French class) when the school doesn't have an appropriate room D-116 or A-11 to use as a detention hall. In small junior high schools with no cafeteria, the gym or the auditorium occasionally is used instead. In one case the doors are locked and the students can't leave before the appointed hour; in another case the students have to rush their meals to get out as soon as possible.

The only alternative is to go outdoors. But "outdoors there's nothing". The grounds are covered with huge parking lots and generally are not equipped for sports. Only one of the schools we visited had a track. There are also schools where you can't see outside: windowless classrooms with fluorescent lighting where the walls seem to close in on you, and "when the system breaks down, there's no school". We noted one school where the windows are arranged in such a way that you have to climb three floors to reconstitute a whole tree growing in front of them from the same angle.

The school buildings themselves close right after class, except for authorized activities and a few other cases of tolerance. At the appointed time the chains are put in place and the students have to leave the premises "We do it instinctively", the students said laughingly. "There's no danger of our staying"! Besides, the school buses don't wait.

TRUST

School administrators have good reason to be concerned about maintaining order, and the main purpose of the "padlock law" is to prevent theft, vandalism and absenteeism. The students themselves perceive the reasons for these measures and relate the way they are treated to incidents of this kind. But these reasons should be analyzed and brought more in touch with the students' real situation.

Hasn't the whole school been organized in terms of delinquents? Most of the restrictions affect all of the students, often without any distinction except for academic level, sometimes with greater flexibility for older students, but with little consideration for each individual's capacity to assume different gradations of responsibility. "They don't trust us", the students tirelessly reiterate. The system's intent is to close the door to delinquents; but by closing it to everyone, the insinuation is made that any student with free time is a delinquent who doesn't know it. The system wants to avoid students doing "something bad",

but the students feel that they "can never do anything". This is exactly how one junior high school student expressed it when he blurted out the brilliantly ambiguous complaint that "they're always afraid we'll do something"!

"They tell us: it's your school, it's your home", one student commented, a claim she immediately challenged. In all the groups we met, the theme of the school as a prison kept cropping up. Prison isn't exactly a place for schooling in responsibility. One "former prisoner" recalled how weeks after his "release" he still had a tendency to come to a halt in front of a closed door. When asked "Is there a place in the school where you feel at home?", one student retorted, "Yes, our lockers!" Almost coincidentally, the students' lockers are the only closed places they can use as they please (when the locker room is not locked).

There are schools where permission to occupy a room is more readily given. But the bolt on the door is still the rule everywhere. There is certainly no question of abandoning the school to the students, but they don't have any wish for this. What they want is a concrete solution to a concrete problem, the need for space. For example, students used to be allowed in classrooms at noon, and supervision was ensured by requiring that they leave the door open.

PROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES

Most schools offer students a range of regular cultural and sports activities aside from classes. The programs are generally designed by adults and the students take their pick.

Cultural activities, for example, are often organized like courses, at fixed hours, in classrooms, and under the direction of a teacher. Students have to register for them and places are necessarily limited so that, as one student regretted, "you can't do something one week and then change..."

Sports activities are entrusted to physical education instructors and are mainly geared to training teams for competition. Students register for them: "you always have to register for

everything"! The coaches select the best athletes. The others don't play or warm the bench. This preoccupation with performance upsets many students who already tend to be alienated from sports by the compulsory program and the systematic evaluation of physical education courses. One student, whose friends were eliminated in the cross-country trials, raised the question: "What if they wanted to prove that they can do it, even if they finish last"?

For outings and certain occasional, mainly social, activities (dances, tournaments, festivals), the student council is usually consulted, and it is called upon to sound out student preferences and even assume various responsibilities. But teachers and principals tend to "drop in" for inspection, and the event of the year in one school degenerated into chaos when the film *Molière* was screened before poorly prepared students at a local theatre, where the precaution had been taken to lock the doors to prevent anyone from leaving before the end.

STUDENT INITIATIVES

Student initiatives, even when the schools really want them, often run into many obstacles in terms of access to equipment, the decision-making process and adult supervision.

There is one indispensable and universal condition for organizing anything: "you have to find a teacher"! With few exceptions, nothing can be done unless a teacher is present. Many teachers are receptive, but this condition makes the students completely dependent on them. "There's already been a video activity", one student recalled, "because there was a teacher who was interested".

There are schools where equipment appears to be available on request: all the student has to do is present his i.d. card. But generally the process is cumbersome and students have to go begging for equipment. Some vocational students had to repeat the same procedure four times to borrow football equipment that was right there on the shelves, and still they finally could only get a ball.

The problem is that sports equipment is mainly reserved for official teams, which are under adult control. One student formed the first girls' basketball team in a school where volleyball was the "organized" sport. She had all kinds of trouble getting together the equipment she needed, and she only obtained it bit by bit during the course of the year. In another school, where handball was already "organized", a vocational student put together a small handball team. Excluded from the practice room, he found another room which was inadequate, and the team fell apart during the year. "kids like us can't start things", he concluded. "Adults have to do it".

Students get near audio-visual equipment and technical instruments in general even less often: "You don't touch it"! Or you need permission, a teacher and three weeks. When the students realize that they don't have access to the very expensive and tempting "playthings" in the school's showcases, they just give up: "We have the time to get fed up and change our minds", explained one electronics student who spent whole days at home playing around with parts from old T.V. sets but who couldn't find anyone to help him experiment with the school's precious oscilloscope. "If the people in charge in the school delegated their responsibility", he added, "they'd be less afraid. If you used the equipment in your name and it were on your card it would be *your* problem. But they dump the whole responsibility on the teacher".

For more complex projects that involve groups, the decision-making process is perceived as an obstacle. Students in one school who entertained hopes of organizing an excursion had to talk to the class representative who submitted it to the animation council in which the principal was one of the participants. The principal then informed the parents' committee before the proposal came back down to the sector council and finally to the class representative again. "It's like climbing a mountain, and the students end up not proposing anything any more", commented one of the animation council participants.

Even when a project is accepted, one student confided to us, the bureaucratic paper chase starts all over again for every need and every step. "you're fighting all the time for the least little thing, and you never make it to the top of the hill". This student had been embittered by a distressing experience. "I tried to organize something, but they were always tripping us up". He and his JEC group had thought up a "student day" for the whole school which would have involved a trip outside the building. He obtained authorization and prepared the program for the date that had been agreed upon. But as the months passed, the administration postponed the date, thus forcing the group to change the initial program, which was no longer appropriate to the season. Next the administration invoked the excuse of insufficient resources, and then it reduced student participation to just one level. Each time the group adapted its project to the new requirements. "They kept cutting us back all the time and finally, the morning we were supposed to leave, there wasn't any bus. The administration had forgotten to tell them to come"! The "student day" didn't take place. "I'm not doing anything any more", this student said. "A year is a long time to be given the runaround".

There are more modest projects, but the students often meet with rejection, most frequently because of lack of money. The refusal is not always clearly expressed; instead conditions are imposed that amount to the same thing. Thus, fifth year students who wanted to organize a sugaring-off party had to meet the following conditions: not use the name of the school, make the excursion self-financing, set the departure time after classes and supply a list of fifty students who would be ready to participate. The project never got anywhere.

All these difficulties inhibit students. "They make us not feel like organizing anything, because the preparations take too long". The initiatives that do get somewhere are all the more remarkable. One student who started a very well-attended chess club had to wait a long time before the school opened a classroom for him. Now the members play there every lunch hour even though they have to rush to put everything back in

order when classes resume. "The teachers aren't involved enough", another student commented ironically, "but who's going to stay there watching people play chess"?

When students benefit from the conditions they require to organize something, there are many advantages indeed. According to the students, a broomball tournament for which they had full responsibility was more of a success than a sports day planned by the top brass, because the students were instinctively able to circulate information among themselves, simplify the formalities and relay their enthusiasm to each other.

In one exceptional case, in a school where the student council had essentially fallen apart, students enrolled in one activity formed a sort of club which the most senior among them were coopted to administer. Autonomous student activities exist, but such autonomy is rare and niggardly.

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Though many student initiatives are essentially owed to student councils, these bodies have no real power. They don't have a budget or an office (except in one case and this is a room without a table), and they have no facilities for communication. Finally, they are under the control of a teacher or recreation technician. They are recreation committees rather than student "unions". Each class elects one representative, and sometimes a council is formed for each level or sector, but without any student hierarchy; there is no elected executive responsible to its constituents. One school straightforwardly established an "animation council" with equal representation of teachers and students.

Also, the councils are often perceived by students as a sort of conveyor belt for the administration line: "They're there for decoration"! In some cases they are the successors of student associations dissolved after conflicts with the administration. "In my comprehensive high school", one student reported, "there is no student council. There already was

one and there were problems. The students set up a new one and even planned some activities, but the administration said that this was up to the teachers".

When students are invited to participate in the decision-making machinery of the school or the school commission, there is still no guarantee of real consultation. In one region where the educators responsible like to point with pride to the experiment, the student representatives are somewhat disenchanted: they attend meetings but they are not elected by the students and have no means either of getting a comprehensive picture of their opinions on the subjects discussed or of providing them with the information they receive.

THE LONELY CROWD

Without free time or suitable space, there is no way students can develop their life as a group. Five or six friends might want to spontaneously get together to talk, use their imaginations, be creative or just hang around, but going strictly by the rules they can't do this. When asked to make one suggestion to improve the school, one student simply said: "Give students more of a chance to talk to each other".

The problem is that those who are already suspicious of students when they are walking around alone are frankly afraid of them when they form groups. This tendency can be seen at work in the consultative mechanisms where students have no mandates and thus are dealt with only as individuals. It can also be seen in the fact that the student associations themselves have no resources, which means they are prevented from functioning on a group basis. The reality is that the means of collective action have been rendered impotent.

Some will say that there isn't enough staff to supervise everyone, everywhere, all the time. This is certainly true, since even in free activities, there is a tendency to continually shift responsibility from students to adults. "They tell us to organize activities. But there has to be a teacher there all the time"! Rather than relying on personal

trust and spontaneous group discipline, teachers burden themselves with a superhuman task of supervision. One also sees many schools giving in to a morbid hunger for specialized and expensive staff whose presence reduces the scope of student autonomy still further. In fact, there is one school in which "corridorologists" are invading the last bastion of students who just want to "hang around". On the other hand, there is another school where successful measures have been taken against vandalism by establishing a student maintenance cooperative whose members are paid and who instinctively make sure that their work is respected. This is an example of how to use the self-regulatory process, which is less costly for the administration and more beneficial for the students.

STANDARDIZATION

A school's material resources (rooms and equipment) are not considered to be a support structure for student curiosity and free initiative, but rather to be "toys" that are too valuable to leave in their hands. As a result, costly facilities are underused or are only used under adult control for standardized activities that are measured and dispensed like regular instructional programs. "What I'd like, "isn't classes in sports, you know, but just to play for the fun of it"!

It thus would appear that all outlets are closed to students except for "study" (classes or standardized activities). "It isn't a human environment. Everything is geared toward study, and we're spending our youth doing this"! Traditionally extracurricular activities have been an occasion for play, spontaneity, and free, unstructured initiative, where students can experiment, explore, invent and rediscover on their own (though not completely in isolation from adults): this is what distinguishes these activities from classes. But if we are continuing to expect students to develop something other than abstract knowledge, we're carefully avoiding any risk of this actually happening. "We can't display our values... they never let us create anything in that system".

Every time one of the values of real life in the schools seems to have disappeared, there is a tendency to try to recover it in the form of instruction. Thus some people hope for classes to introduce students to social life, perhaps without seeing that it is not abstract knowledge about social life that students are missing but rather, in many cases, the concrete conditions for their development as individuals. You can repeat the word "sports" a hundred times, but it doesn't have the slightest relevance to the real world as long as the student doesn't have a ball in his hands, in which case there is no need to say anything. Talking about "social life" will never make it a reality, unlike the abortive "student day" we mentioned earlier.

In reality, given that the situations we have described don't crop up everywhere all at once, such standardization of activities is detrimental to the courses themselves, since they lose out on what students could learn outside of class about themselves and about others, and then try out on the teacher in their compulsory assignments.

When their initiatives are authorized, students don't have ready access to complex responsibilities. When implementing a project that has already been approved, they still have to refer to adults for each step, and they aren't even given the choice of means within the limits of overall criteria. The responsibility they are given is one-dimensional. Much has been said about the fragmentation of knowledge, but in this case it's initiative that's in pieces.

Yet in their families, outside of the school, many students assume heavier responsibilities than they do at school. They take care of the younger children, drive the family car, administer their personal budgets, and work part-time. Most important of all, they are not under constant supervision.

At school, however, adults don't let the students have any separate existence, and the students thus cannot interiorize the adults' requirements. This is the definition of dependence.

MEANS OF EXPRESSION

Student lounges or cafés, which students can theoretically arrange as they wish, are a source of problems, and their privileges are being eroded. Popular music and a "smoky atmosphere" make them the hangouts for a certain type of regular, so that they don't satisfy all groups of students, though these others are often forced to take refuge there because there is no other room reserved for students "where we could create our own kind of atmosphere", as one disappointed student explained it.

In some schools these lounges have been closed or access has been restricted to senior high school students. In others, the administration has stopped serving juices, suppressed the music, or moved the piano (which was padlocked anyway) to the pastoral room. There is a marked tendency to make the pastoral room take the place of the student refuge. "The pastoral program room is nice," said the JED member we quoted earlier, "but nobody goes there. It's comfortable, it's decorated, there are coloured lights, there's quiet music. But you can't move. You can't do anything like play checkers or talk loud".

In one school, where the student café was closed, an alternative solution was considered before the pastoral service. "They tried to give us a room for each level, with a teacher there full time and the right to do what we wanted. The door was open one hour a day and we couldn't do anything, so the idea was dropped".

In schools where there are student newspapers, the teachers or the administration have more say than the students themselves. In one school only one issue was published this year, and the administration reduced it from three or four pages to "a sheet folded in half", citing the cost of paper. According to the students the printing service serves the teachers first and is always overloaded with work.

The only newspaper completely run by students that the groups we interviewed talked about started as an initiative by some teachers and was then taken over by the students. The teachers kept it alive as one of several Wednesday afternoon activities. The students who had signed up lost interest by little. But a more tenacious core group obtained the right to manage the newspaper themselves, and formed word teams to ensure publication. Then they wanted an office so they could work there during their free time. They only got this at the end of the year. It is open every lunch hour, but the students don't have the key, because the room belongs to... the pastoral service.

In another school, however, junior high school students told a different story of how their situation had regressed: their newspaper only has two pages, only two issues were published and the articles were selected by the teacher. Yet last year they completed elementary school by regularly producing a twenty-page newspaper in which they published "jokes, cartoons, drawings and poems..." without the teacher intervening except to correct their grammar. "We did it ourselves. We had stencils, we stapled it, we distributed it. This year we don't know what's happening. The students on the newspaper don't have any responsibility. Last year we had to do the paper, we had to get it out on schedule; we put our ideas down on paper and then things moved fast! I find that we had more freedom in Grade 6 than in Secondary 1".

PASSIVITY

The students acknowledged complaints of student "passivity". This exists because irresponsibility is not without its attractions. When reduced to a condition of irresponsibility, individuals tend to become passive, this being one of the "advantages" of irresponsibility, since it's so much easier to expect other people to do everything. Conversely, people who are compelled by circumstances or by the trust other people place in them to take responsibility develop a sense of responsibility, since it's so much more satisfying to play an active role.

A whole generation has been characterized as passive, but this is a myth. Students today are not any more "naturally" passive than those of other years - they have become passive wherever they are subject to the objective conditions for passivity. Those who believe otherwise are just trying to absolve themselves of blame when they have contributed to creating these conditions.

In one school where the "padlock law" was accommodated to a more flexible style of participation in the everyday academic life, students formed CRABE, the "Comité révolutionnaire anti-bof de l'école", to combat general inertia by taking initiatives. In the same school, students took over management of the student newspaper from the teachers who had launched it, and the newspaper is now self-financed and expanded.

What do the students write in this paper? Exactly what all students say when they have the freedom to act and to speak out as they did in the interviews on which this report is based. On the back page of one issue, a cartoon strip signed by two students tells the following story. A student suffering from an "attack of paranoia" one evening prepares some liquid explosive. The next day he checks "whether the doors are well chained, as usual", pours the liquid in the lock and sets fire to it. The explosion causes the ceiling to collapse and sends the students rushing for the emergency exits. "Unfortunately the doors won't open, and the students perish, buried in the debris from the ceiling".

So that students can live and not be suffocated to death, "high schools should favour freedom and initiative, spontaneous expression, development of critical faculties and freedom to choose certain activities" (*L'Ecole québécoise*).

Time for Living:
Relations with Teachers

"They're never there"!

(A senior high school student)

It happened during a taped interview with eight senior high school students. They had spoken freely, sometimes harshly about their life in school, and then about their relations with their teachers, whom they did not hesitate to name. Suddenly, without first specifying whom he was referring to, one student, soon followed by the others, made the following comments to the visitor:

- What turns me off the most is that they're never there: Why is it that they aren't here today? I came here for this. Every time I want to gripe, they're never around.
- Can you make a report to the teachers on what we said?
- (Several students together) Yeah, make them listen.
- They're hiding from it. If they'd been invited they wouldn't even have come.
- Go see the principals instead. If you talk to the teachers it could make trouble for us. There's no problem with the principals. It'd be o.k. with me if they heard it.
- Anyway the teachers can't change anything...
- ... like they say, you gotta go to the boss!

Yet just before the interview, the principal had also greeted the visitor with a request. The school had held an Olympic Day the day before, after lengthy preparations, and student participation had been disappointing. "During the interview couldn't you ask them why they didn't come and tell me their answer? I'd be curious to know".

How is it that people who haunt the same corridors every day had to communicate through an intermediary who was a stranger besides, and through the hastily improvised medium of a

tape recording, when this school was well endowed with athletics programs and sophisticated consultative machinery? But this isolated incident reveals what all the students' feedback expresses more indirectly: relations with teachers operate in the much broader context of relations with adults in the school; no matter how student services are improved, they are not enough to create the quality of relationship that is sought; the teachers, without whom the students can't make a move, are paradoxically blamed for not having enough to do with them.

SUPERVISION

There are two types of supervision to ensure that the rules are respected. Guards, officers and janitors open and close the doors, evacuate the premises, examine written authorizations, call offenders to order and report them to the competent authorities. Teachers do the same things but mainly in their classrooms, and they also sign written authorizations.

Control is based on the note system. "You need a piece of paper for everything, even to go to the toilet". Aside from the signature of the teacher (or administrator), the note generally indicates the destination, time and duration of the excursion. Students who are the least bit late automatically have to spend more time obtaining a note from the administration before they can enter the classroom.

In some schools, offenders are assembled in a supervised, or even locked, room, along with other students who have been ejected from class because they failed to hand in an assignment, for example.

There is also a file on each student in which infractions are recorded. "You commit an infraction in math class and they put a behaviour card in your file". Infractions are evaluated in demerit points and entered on a scale, with different disciplinary measures, up to suspension, applying at various cut-off points. In other schools the number of

visits to the detention room serves as a criterion: "If you go twice, they call your parents; four times and you're suspended".

Informing the parents of the student's misbehaviour by letter or telephone is part of the system. "They get a report at home and we get yelled at"! A junior high school student expressed the feeling of several others on this issue: "Why always call our parents for discipline, instead of telling us"?

One school has sought to control absenteeism by replacing the note system with an agenda book in which students also note their assignments and lessons and sign on the appropriate page after the sentence: "I was absent on..."

THE GROUP

When students mentioned underpopulated classes or schools, they always linked this to their desire for attention. "The teachers would have more time to spend with us".

Some students who have moved from one system to another have experienced learning difficulties: "I was in a small school with 272 students in Secondary I and II - every teacher took care of you individually. In a comprehensive high school you're a number. I was better in class in the other school in math, in French. Here I don't understand anything any more".

Other students had behavioral problems: "My first year here, kids were breaking holes in the ceilings and ripping the clocks off the walls. We had classes in big open areas with sixty or seventy kids in each and two or three teachers explaining things. Now there are smaller groups and things have improved".

Students in the vocational sector, where the optional courses more often are attended by small stable groups, talked about these with obvious satisfaction that they in no way evinced for courses in the general program. "Relations are

better because you're more at ease in small groups. There's more of a community spirit. You learn to accept each other". More concretely, "you're less embarrassed to ask questions", and students help each other more.

Among the virtues that the students attributed to small groups is the possibility of talking to each other and getting to know each other. "I used to go to X school, a small school with four hundred students. It was falling to pieces; there were holes in the floors - on the second floor you could see the floor below. It was so small that the teachers had to talk to you. So everything went just fine! I did my best years of high school there. You knew everybody".

TEACHING

Most of the students, without knowing to what they could attribute this good fortune, spontaneously mentioned some teacher who made everything seem easy, whose subject they liked and whom they liked. But there is hardly any clear pattern in this field; the situation varies considerably depending on the teacher and depending on the school.

The students' main complaint is that explanations are inadequate. "They don't take the time to show you. They don't give a d... - they're going to get paid at the end of the week"! A vocational student was more specific: "In French, math and English you're mixed in with the general students and the teachers don't treat you any different, whether you understand or not".

In particular there is an implicit problem of time. One school has therefore changed its course timetable by grouping two consecutive periods together, so that classes last seventy-five minutes (followed by a break), with four classes a day instead of six. "It's more practical", said the students. "You have more time to learn the material better and there's more follow-up on the explanations. You don't have the same classes every day, there's more variety, and you have less different things to go over at night so you can

assimilate the information better". This was exactly the type of system proposed by some vocational students, who have to run to a French class between two mechanics periods and thus waste time repeating their preparations (putting on their work clothes, getting out their tool boxes).

In schools where individualized instruction has been adopted, a balance has been established between fixed classes and free workshops, so that each student can choose to work on his weak points in a workshop as long as necessary with the help of a teacher who is there precisely in order to answer each student's questions.

In most schools, explanations have to be completed after class, and this is often difficult due to lack of time. Many teachers are accessible. But there are problems. Students have to "take time out of the next class" or miss the school bus, or they "almost have to wait in line" in the teacher's office. In many cases, "when the class is over, it's over". The only remaining option is a "make-up class", generally part of the guided activities program on a timetable that is already eating up most of the available free time.

In one group where the comments about the teachers were somewhat aggressive, one young redhead said: "When you want to use the individual help program, you knock on the door and they've gone already. There are compulsory periods outside of class where they're supposed to answer questions and they aren't there. I'll bet you \$10 that at 2:45 there's a big bridge game going on in the back room in the maths office. People have already gone looking for them for a class and they wanted to finish their game!"

The teachers who are appreciated are those who know how to present their subject while seeming to be talking about something else: "They talk about things that interest us, and we're at the age where we're interested in a lot of things"; or "they take the time to please the class". In ecology class, one student said, the teacher was very serious and half the students didn't work. "With another teacher we laughed, we did everything and we made a lot more progress; we really woke up".

Students in the vocational sector feel they have the advantage over others insofar as relations with teachers are concerned. "We talk to them more, they come from the field we're going to, and they tell us about their experience. There's one that we call 'Pop'". Whenever students talk about a teacher with satisfaction, it means that they have learned something about him apart from the subject he is teaching. One student noticed a long-haired bearded type at the start of the year. "I said, who's that character? It was my French teacher! But under all that hair the guy knew what he was talking about. I said to him 'you look lost', and he said, 'it's true, I sure am!'" Contact had been established.

PARTICIPATION

As we have seen, a teacher's presence is required for all activities. Even if many teachers get involved willingly, the students point out that "it's volunteer work" and that they thus often encounter refusals. "You ask the teacher to supervise the gym for fifteen minutes", one student said to a chorus of approval by the others, and his first reaction is, 'Oh, no! I'm only paid to teach!'

At the school where the Olympic Day was held, the teachers hesitated collectively for a long time before participating. As one student explained, the return to work protocol or the collective agreement required them to remain in class during pedagogical day. At the animation council, where teachers and students decide on activities in this school, the problem often arose: "What are you going to say to a teacher who says that his union doesn't want him to do something?"

This student wondered why the younger teachers are the first ones to lose their jobs no matter what they do. "But the younger ones are really closest to us. They go through so many things with us students! There's a teacher in Secondary 5 who works like a dog doing overtime without being paid for it, but because of seniority he's going to have to leave next year. You see what I mean? All that will be left will

be all the old crocks who are only interested in their subject. So then there's nothing more to do in school and they're going to wonder why there are broken windows!"

In another school vocational students complained that their recreational activities have been reduced to a bare minimum even though they paid their fees like everyone else at the beginning of the year. Besides they do contract work in the shop for the school or its customers, either free of charge or for a small fee when the service is billed to the customer, and the teacher allocates any surplus to the materials and equipment budget. The students see this contrast as a form of manipulation, leading one student to declare reprovingly, "It's the vocational students who do the work!" She suggested that the students be paid for these services so that they could offer themselves the same school outings and dances enjoyed by students in the general sector.

"I was in the commercial art program", recalled one student in another school, "and the students wanted to do a "school spirit" poster. The administration didn't want this, but they had us do wedding invitations for people from outside. The students always come last!"

ACTIVE LISTENING

All the students had one common demand, often mutely expressed - to be "listened to". At the end of one day of consultations, one adolescent expressed her satisfaction by saying, "I liked being listened to".

Students are rarely consulted on regulations, except in certain rare schools where they have obtained the concession, for example, that teachers announce tests two days in advance, or have held a referendum to decide to ban cigarettes in the school.

When they are consulted on a given subject, they sometimes are not taken seriously. One meeting between the administration and the student council allowed the students to express their complaints and wishes. Other meetings were promised,

but this never happened. Or junior high school students participated in a survey on their satisfaction with school: "It was multiple choice", noted one respondent bitterly. "There was no space to say what we thought and it was only selected students who answered".

When specific problems arise, students are sensitive to the refusal to see or to really listen. The case of light drugs in one school was mentioned. A groupe of students and teachers attended a conference on the subject, while the administration stayed away. Or they pretend to be ignorant of the situation, said one student, or they catch a student and threaten him. "He isn't going to quit because he's threatened. Quite the contrary, They've got to try to see the reasons for what he's doing and help him. For example, if the student has problems in school, instead of making threats, find a teacher to explain things to him after school".

Students show this kind of tolerance themselves in their approach to others. One youth asserted that the guards in his school have a fridge full of beer and are always drunk. "It must be a minimum wage job", he said. "They don't have any training". What students really want is for the adult in the school to set their problems aside and come to them: "It would seem to me that the students are what's most important in the school. But the staff see the big problems first. They don't see what's happening at the base, at the grassroots, what the students themselves want. If they saw it, it seems to me that things would be o.k.!"

BUREAUCRATIC REMOTENESS

In the field of human relations, which all too often tends to be buried in abstract psychology, students' impressions are not always related to their causes. We should therefore analyze these impressions, be taking a closer look at the concrete conditions that structure the relationship with the teacher or any other adult in the school.

Restrictions and supervision are inevitable. But the more the restrictions are increased, from those that are most severe to those that are least useful, the more cumbersome supervision becomes, so that the function is shared among several categories of individuals (guards, teachers, administrators). To ensure that the system has the required coherence, mechanical means of information are proliferated (notes, registrations, cards, files) and these tend to "bureaucratize" relations with students.

When an adult catches a student in the act in this kind of relationship, he does not concern himself with the circumstances of the offense with the delinquent's state of mind - he just asks for his note. This is because different people are responsible for authorizing, stopping, interrogating and imposing sanctions on students. The bureaucratic encounter has an automatic nature that exempts the student from answering for himself and the adult from knowing the student.

Sent by the guard to the teacher, the principal, and to the parents who, as all the surveys indicate, themselves count on the school, the student sees himself caught up in what he perceives as a system of denunciation. "Why always call our parents... instead of telling us?" This is the Bill 25 model: an adult who notices a young person "in difficulty" (often absent from school, for example) has the duty not to intervene in a neighbourly way, but to notify a civil servant who entrusts the case to a specialist who asks for the help of volunteers or calls the parents themselves. This system is useful for mending rips in the social fabric, but means that disciplinary action in school, for which no person has full responsibility, ultimately loses its meaning of education in self-discipline.

COMMUNICATION

In a system in which instruction is given in class, the pedagogical relationship operates through the group. When the group is functioning normally, it helps the teacher do his job, since there are always students who are ready to repeat or supplement explanations to others whose attention has wandered or who are slower to understand, while other students are capable of getting noisy ones to shut up, since bonds have already been forged within the class. This sharing of responsibility takes a considerable load off the teacher.

Certain uncontrolled factors like class size and stability compromise this model. There are thresholds of tolerance beyond which social behaviour patterns become strained and then deteriorate. A vocational student provided a case in point - when she missed a French class she needed a friend to give her the information and would look for such a person in school.

After some excesses, attempts are now being made everywhere to rectify the situation. "Community cells", "counties", "home rooms" and "tutorials" are being formed, all of which tend to reinstill the group virtues.

The size is not the only issue. The nostalgia for small groups implies the concept of time: time to talk to each other and get to know each other; time to explain things and talk about experiences; time to assimilate and establish bonds. The time spent together structures the pedagogical relationship just as surely as the number of students.

Even in a functional group, students are only receptive to knowledge if it is conveyed in the form of concrete experience. It is experience that makes knowledge something other than an empty language, giving it the essential character from which the desire to learn develops. And it is the role of personal experience in acquiring knowledge that makes extracurricular activities so important. It is in these activities that the student adapts and explores what he has been taught, that knowledge becomes part of experience and

experience enriches knowledge. This is also the point at which information becomes part of the student's personal baggage so that he can retransmit it in turn.

Vocational education courses often have learning conditions that are lacking elsewhere - small groups, more time together and communication of concrete experience.

CODIFIED RELATIONSHIPS

Time is an essential factor in all school activities. But to the extent that the school community loses its internal dynamism and the school proves to be a disappointment, its expectations are passed on to the teacher, who then invokes the collective agreement when additional demands are made on his time. The role of the collective agreement is to defend those party to it against abusive workloads, just as the role of administrative standards is to impose restraints on the demands of the clientele, whose needs are unlimited by definition. There is no such thing as a "bionic" teacher, and for the most part relations with students in the school are codified.

Working conditions and standards in effect mould the service offered to the students even if this was not the primary intention when they were formulated. Thus, the bus drivers' collective agreements require some schools to end classes at 2:45. Classrooms are built without windows in order to save heat. And job security leads to the ageing of the teaching staff.

A whole study could therefore be done on the terms of collective agreements and pedagogical plans of action, particularly concerning the pedagogical consequences of working conditions and the conversion of pedagogical objectives into acceptable, or even advantageous, working conditions.

Students are vulnerable because they are the only group in the school which is not organized. Like the teachers and the administration they have interests, but unlike them they do not have a collective rationalization system to justify

their interests and have to yield to those of other groups. "The return to work protocol didn't provide for make-up classes", said one student. "The students didn't agree, but they weren't organized..."

This difference throws the relationship out of balance. Students sometimes run up against group prohibitions (for example, the refusal to watch the gym), where they used to deal with the teachers in a direct personal relationship.

THE QUALITY OF LIFE

Because of the inherent nature of teachers' duties, students never cease to expect that the teacher will give them personal attention, though the quality of this is not easily measurable.

"Some teachers need retraining", said one disappointed student. "We have to write Ministry of Education exams; they should have to also. Not on their subject - they know that. But they don't have any relationship with us. You have your class, you go to it, you finish it, you leave". There is a whole range of ways to provide an active presence and animation between simple supervision and total control, ways that would give students and teachers a chance to watch each other "experiencing life" and discover each other as individuals.

In dealing with cases of deviant behaviour, it is a distortion of the cause-effect relationship to dwell on the symptom without going back to the need that it demonstrates, and thus without verifying if it predates the student's attendance at school or arises out of it, or if the school can and should satisfy this need and how. Certainly one must often continue to act on the symptoms, by preventing a student from shoving the teacher or looting a locker, for example. But stopping there, in cases that do not amount to real delinquency, means running the risk of seeing these symptoms spring up elsewhere, by forgetting that behaviour is also a form of language.

There are schools where teachers and administrators agree to act outside the codes without repudiating them, and in all systems there are teachers whose personality transcends most difficulties.

"Much remains to be done, however, to transform the school into a network of close and warm relationships uniting students, parents, teachers and administrators, failing which the school at best will be a knowledge factory". (*L'Ecole québécoise*).

The Demands of Linguistics:
the Teaching of French

*"We understand, but we don't know
how to say that we understand,
and she (the teacher) thinks that
we don't understand!"*

(A junior high school student)

It was late in their third year of high school. Madeleine and her friends wanted a moral instruction course in a school which didn't have one. They went to the administration and were told they needed thirty students. They found them and were told they needed the parents' signatures. They got them. The following year they took the course. But in their fifth year, the religion teacher was put in charge. Conflicts quickly arose. "She was teaching morality and not moral relations!" Throughout the year there was one problem after another.

Near the end of the year the students had to produce a French assignment. The eight of them decided to get together and write up all these vicissitudes in a "newspaper", with the intention of distributing it in the school, which didn't have one. They assembled their poems, some of which had been composed in the heat of the moment during the year, and presented their French teacher with a collective twenty-four page work, one of the poems in which said:

"I wanted to speak
So that you would listen to me
But when I spoke to you, you stifled me,
So I kept silent"

Their work far surpassed that of the other students and they received the top mark. With considerable toil and trouble they distributed about forty copies and received an emotional response from two teachers. "It showed me", said Madeleine, "that written French can be more to the point as a means of communication than the spoken language".

In reality, Madeleine and her friends were able to experience something that is often lacking, according to our feedback from the students - the awareness of having something to say, the pressing need or the opportunity to say it, and the means and support to do this.

THE FRENCH PROGRAM

The students were virtually unanimous in their feeling concerning the value of the French program, and their three main criticisms were stated quite bluntly. First of all, "it's boring!", and some students let out an interjection of disgust when they made this statement. The courses are boring particularly because the same thing are constantly repeated every year, starting in elementary school: "It's all the same old stuff!" Nevertheless, "it doesn't sink in" - students complained that they don't understand anything, that they don't learn anything and that "most people have trouble".

Students do a little of everything in this course, however. What sticks in their minds most often are formulas. For example, "we learn diagrams; this starts from the sentence, this is a tree with arrows, you make a circle and you mark a 'p'..." Others are astonished to find when they open their exercise books that "you get to it and it's all done in advance!" Or leafing through the pages they groan, "he gave us five hundred subordinate clauses and didn't explain anything!"

One school conducted a "reading exercise" that was particularly detested by the students. "There are ten letters and you mark how many 'a's there are; you only get to see it for a fraction of a second. You take a pencil and draw circles to train your eyes to follow it without moving your head..." Students also do more traditional controlled readings: "You don't feel anything, you aren't into it, you're hardly there - you're always into your damn cards!"

One student took phonetics in third year: "It works like this. My name is Lise but you can write it as LIZ. It's the same thing - you change all the words". Another student in

the group quickly recalled a young cousin he had caught spelling by making letter sounds: "Poor kid. He could get all mixed up!"

When students do express great satisfaction, it's because they learned French by writing. "I like it when we do lightning compositions", confided one of them. You write by flashes, you let down all your acquired barriers, and you let out whatever you have to give. You look at what you wrote, you're satisfied with yourself and you work on it". One student who described himself as a "super-slow" writer was pleased that such exercises had enabled him to eventually write twenty-two pages of a novel produced in class. "It takes imagination and it makes you discover your French. It's not like the way we had to cram our skulls last year".

Some second year students collectively wrote a novel, which is now in publication, over a period of a few months. "At the beginning of the week we talked about all our ideas for the chapter, we chose one and then wrote it up, either on our own or in a group. I wrote the eighth chapter all by myself. We learned a lot more vocabulary and grammar this way. I learned to write French. I like to write - I want to be a journalist".

THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

In other courses, the students' French is not systematically corrected or evaluated. "It depends on the teacher", said the students. Some teachers who do correct the French do not take it into consideration in marking the assignment. "Even in French they don't take off marks right away for spelling. In poetry they don't correct syntax".

Not all students have had this experience yet, but one fifth year student added: "I'm going to CEGEP and I'm not very strong in French. That didn't work against my getting in. It's not stimulating! What's needed is chemistry and math".

In one school at the end of the year a pedagogical day was devoted to "The French language, everybody's business". A plan of action for the current year provided for development of a common policy for evaluating French, and organization of language-related activities, particularly literary competitions.

But it is precisely these activities, and especially a student newspaper, that are lacking in many schools where students have no encouragement to write except in class. Junior high school students, disappointed with a newspaper that the administration produced without them and nevertheless called *L'Ouverture* (The Opening), recalled that in elementary school they had published their poems in a bulletin to parents and that they were even read over the intercom with the whole school listening.

When the students themselves are involved in running a newspaper, the number of pages and the frequency of publication increase. In the school where the newspaper is now managed by the students, it grew from a single sheet to twenty pages. The "Comité anti-bof", which was conceived to take initiatives, organized a literary competition which the student council, born late that year, later took over. The committee also sponsored a literary workshop day with two guests from outside the school. The week prior to our visit a local bookseller had held a book sale and exhibit in the school, with discounts for students.

In the vocational sector, students learn the terminology of their elective. "If you show up in industry with what they teach you", said one electrical engineering student however, "they're going to send you back to school!" Students in some trades also have to learn the English terms. "In the store the guy wouldn't understand you. And how is it written on the stereo?"

PERSONAL USE OF FRENCH

Students read little at home, and what they do read is mainly comic books. "I like T.V. better than the newspaper", one boy confessed. "It's less tiring and the picture is in colour. The newspaper is full of lies; sometimes I just read the headlines". Another student who only watches English T.V. programs, explained his choice this way: "The French programs are boring as hell! You can understand the English just from the gestures they make. Try it. Turn down the sound on a French station - you won't understand a thing. Turn down the sound on the English station and you'll understand". He gave the example of the film *The Towering Inferno*.

One vocational student gave this unique example, however. "I've started to read. The best way to learn is to read. I've been reading for a year and I have less problems in French. Before that, I never read". And he suggested to a weaker student, "For grammar you'd be better off buying a book and learning it on your own!"

Students write on their own initiative more often than one might think. Many are like the one who admitted, "I touch a pencil once a month". Others, especially the girls, write letters, a personal diary, poems. They sometimes find a penpal through a teacher, or they invent one and never send the letters. But as one boy put it, "You phone more often than you write!" Students write poems during math class: "I see my sister writing them - she has a whole notebook full". A hard-dressing student, who never pays attention in class, said, "I'm in the middle of writing a book, a novel about drugs. I showed it to the teacher and he said it wasn't bad".

But when students write they make little use of the dictionary or of what they have learned in school. They write "without checking whether it's bad" because "it comes to you all by itself and you write what comes into your head". In the case of letters it depends on the correspondent, but generally students write them "the way they talk". The essential factor is often: "I understand myself". But the supreme confession is: "When you write and nobody's reading it, it doesn't matter if you make mistakes!"

Writing does not necessarily make students like French courses. "I write and I read poetry", said the hairdressing student, "and I find French class a drag! It's the people I don't like. They take themselves too seriously, they never talk to anybody, they're uptight!" She saw no connection between the course and usage: "I write but I don't do analysis!"

The course, indeed, is not of immediate use. "You don't know what you're going to do in life and you need a lot of basic things. "And one never knows when it can be of service: "It's useful later for reading legal documents". Some students think the French program is mainly for specialists: "It's good for somebody who wants to go far in his studies". Or they say: "French should be kept for people who want to become poets or secretaries".

"I'm going to be a mechanic", said a junior high school student. "You don't go into a garage and ask for a 'retrovi-seur' (correct French for 'rearview mirror'). French words are for bigshots!" Anyway, another student concluded, "When you go to work they don't ask you to analyze the parts of a sentence".

A student in her final year, for whom "words can mean anything", almost did an apologia for maintaining silence. "You understand each other better by touching and looking at each other". She plans to work in a day care centre.

WORK METHODS

When questioned on how they learn work methods, students, especially the younger ones, thought first in terms of material presentation: the heading, where to put the name and the alphabetical number.

Most were taking a methodology course, where they learned how to prepare a work outline, look up items in encyclopedias, riffle through library catalogues and write a letter. But the course is not useful to them, first of all because "they show us a method and we don't have enough time to

practice it", and secondly because "the methodology teacher doesn't have the same criteria as the other teachers".

This course is part of the fifth year program. "What's the idea of putting it in Secondary V?" complained one graduating student. "They should teach you this in Secondary I or II. Then it will help you develop your abilities for Secondary V where you challenge things more because by then you have a feel for writing". Some schools have in fact advanced the course to the early grades, but this does not resolve all the problems. "They showed it to us at the beginning of high school. Then we changed schools - and methods".

One school breathed some new life into this whole concept. It dropped the course and integrated the teaching of work methods into each subject, on the basis of a predetermined time allocation. This is already the natural situation in the vocational sector, according to students in some trades who gave the following two examples, apart from field placements. "In technical drawing you learn how to build a house to scale, "while" in forestry you do simulated exercises, and you tend to work as close to reality as possible".

Elsewhere students have the impression that they have not learned how to do research and structure their ideas: "We never learned how to think". But there are a few rare exceptions, including this one: "Everything he told me in French was useful to me in other subjects. It's a method of thinking, a method of working".

THE LANGUAGE OF THE CLASSROOM

Everything that needs to be said has already been said about the poor quality of French in the schools, and there is no point repeating it. Whatever the students said about the French course they could perhaps have also said about other courses, but this is not the issue. In this subject as in others, the students are obedient to the pressure of circumstances rather than to what they are taught. It is the demands of linguistics that we have to examine.

There is a clear break between what is taught in French class and the French at which students then try their hand. They do not see the connection and don't know how to reestablish it. Everything proceeds as though two different languages were involved. And in effect, the French they learn and the French they use are often two totally different things.

There is in fact a tendency to teach French in a cognitive way. Knowledge is taught rather than knowhow, and concepts rather than usage. "They don't show us the tricks", said one student in reference to the grammatical rules of agreement. "It was my mother who told me about them after school".

What students retain is what they do, such as graphs, for example, and not what is said to them. In doing graphs they learn how to do graphs and not necessarily how to write a sentence. As they said themselves, they learn to write by writing. Teaching which separates itself from usage becomes separated from usage.

There is a tendency to transpose the concepts and methods of university disciplines, linguistics in this case, to high school teaching. This knowledge is undoubtedly useful to the teacher, whose mastery of the language is presumably taken for granted, but it is premature at the learning stage, since thinking about usage comes after usage. Linguistics is the study of the language for itself; its object is the language. But the language has another end than itself; it is a set of means which have the purpose of communicating or understanding a message. The science of language defines the distance from language.

When teachers let students express themselves without being concerned about form, they create confusion. In linguistics, any verbal or written production is received, because it can always say something about the language. But in usage what is necessary instead is that the languages says something: French instruction should only be normative. Languages certainly evolve and disappear, but we will also die some day yet do not seek to hasten that moment.

One can know everything about the chemistry of colour and remain incapable of holding a brush. Learning French through linguistics or any other discourse on language is like studying dietetics before learning how to cook, or sociology before learning how to live in society, or methodology before learning how to work methodically.

Work methods have been "taken out" of the French course (and other courses), the work method itself has been made separate, and yet educators are then amazed that students have trouble reintegrating it. Is it not the supreme irony that in the methodology course itself, students scarcely have time to "practice"?

It's unfortunately a truism to say this, but you learn to work by working and to think by thinking. Traditionally, as one student rediscovered, it was the use of French which ensured this function, since it is language that brings thought into the real world and since by making reasoned use of language in school, one learns to master both language and thought.

The first requirement is the pressure of usage in the French class itself. Once again one must know what one is talking about. Training students who barely know how to read in rapid reading is teaching them to run before they have learned to walk. Notwithstanding these fantasies, the new French program will be based on a return to teaching focussed on usage. But some versions of the new program now in circulation are written in the very jargon that has already created so much confusion in the teaching of French because of its sometimes imprudent use.

THE LANGUAGE OF "THE OTHERS"

Even more than from the course itself, students are susceptible to the pressure of usage around them. It constitutes a fiction to confine the quality of French to French class when French is used in all classes. Yet apart from certain exceptions, there is no common policy in the schools in this regard, nor in the teacher training programs. It is possible

to complete CEGEP and even obtain a doctorate without mastering the French language. Mastery of French is never really required.

It is just as much a sham to urge students to read and write without facilitating practice of these skills in school - for example by closing the library during lunch hour or by stifling the student newspapers. French usage then is never really necessary except in conversation. Yet all the students complain with some maladroitness that the language they learn should be of immediate use. To make the situation even worse by depriving them of rooms, real initiative or the means to express themselves raises the question of where they can talk (or write), what about and with whom. The last straw in the whole sham structure is for a student in a school without a newspaper to have to write a newspaper article... for French class.

School activities offer structured exchanges, in a form like a newspaper, public debate or minutes of a meeting, that requires conscious and developed use of the language under the scrutiny of others, since when nobody is listening or reading, the demand lapses.

Mastery of the language is only maintained by usage. But if the schools do not immediately create conditions requiring usage, the language of the students will rapidly decline, due to lifestyle pressures acting against the written language and producing what is referred to everywhere in the Western world as the "new illiteracy". When the student who said that he likes to watch English-language films shuts off the sound, he is demonstrating that French in this case is competing less with the English language, as one might believe, than with the language of visual images (since French films rely more on dialogue).

Some students still write for their own use, but they are often indifferent to form. This is because the pressures of usage in this sense have remained insufficient - the students have been unable to internalize the requirements of form and they have no linguistic consciousness. French, which is often already the language of one social class

("les Messieurs", the "bigshots"), then remains the language of "the others", and its usefulness for oneself is put off to the unforeseeable future.

In reality, the French language is becoming the private preserve of specialists, all the more so since the French program has lent itself to this confusion by borrowing its content and pedagogical concepts from linguistics. The new illiteracy is contemporaneous to the fragmentation of knowledge. Each area of specialization functions in a rudimentary language that is incapable of conveying the meaning of the specialty next door but with which the specialist is nonetheless content, just like the student who wants to work in a day care centre and is predisposing herself to regress to the language of childhood. To be translatable, jargon must be based on the presumption of a common language, but the French language, in falling prey to one kind of jargon, is also tending to shut itself off from the others.

If this situation continues, the classroom will ultimately become a theatre of the absurd, where a teacher uses jargon to teach students who speak joual a language that is not used anywhere.

Conclusion

*"Here they don't do our
thinking for us".*

(One student's tribute to his school)

If all the gloomy vistas painted by the students applied to the same school, there is no doubt that the picture would be a heartbreaking one. But this is in no way the case, and it is not an overall picture that is at issue but a number of trends.

A school is a living whole where various trends are in play. Some times these are vague and sometimes they are very clear, as they merge together or conflict with each other to nourish, restrain or give direction to the school's vitality. It would be a literal misrepresentation of the student's testimony to confine oneself to the experiences that give cause for anxiety, confer them with an absolute nature and draw the conclusion from this of a sort of "general bankruptcy" of the schools. The students were not seeking to dramatize a situation but to communicate their malaise concerning some aspects of their life at school which we had submitted to them for examination.

What must be retained from their feedback is that all the schools where they are "living out their youth" have a certain number of more or less pronounced alienating tendencies in common - estrangement from the physical environment; depersonalization of day-to-day relationships; systematization of learning and consequently "professionalization" of the most minor aspects of student life; dissolving of collective bonds; and, embracing all of these phenomena, underestimation of the inexhaustible resource represented by the student population itself.

"It's society that's like that", said one student with

lofty dreams of "changing the system". The trends we have mentioned indeed also characterize life in society and have been absorbed by the school as if by osmosis, since the school is never as separate as is claimed or desired from the society that both surrounds and pervades it.

Often it is the parents who under false pretenses saddle the school with expectations that the family, religion, the village and work have ceased to fulfill. And education professionals, who themselves are prey to dislocation from other quarters, are thus constrained to bear a double burden in school. To cite only one example, it has become commonplace to emphasize the clash of two "cultures" in discussing relations between adults and youth, but not enough thought is given to the fact that in school the adults are in the minority and are thus theoretically even more susceptible to the blind fear of young people that inhibits so many generous impulses.

The school's alienating tendencies are also the result of earlier collective decisions - centralization of resources and democratization of education, specialization of teachers and diversification of electives. Nobody is thinking of putting these choices into question. The fact they were conceived to put a halt to trends that were being rejected (elitism, the rarity of skills, scholastic rigidity) and then engendered other trends that were unexpected (gigantism, bureaucracy, fragmentation of tasks) simply reminds us that there is never a final solution for an evolving institution. In the long run problems are not resolved but exchanged.

But the situation is different in the immediate future. While structures provide the long-term matrix, human resources are the heart and soul of short-term solutions. Schools have been able to dream up answers to alienating patterns. All of the following possibilities were offered to students in just one school, for example: one half-day per week of free activities integrated into the timetable; an independent student newspaper

and various literary initiatives; instruction on work methods incorporated into each subject; a more homogeneous timetable of seventy-five (75) minute periods; and (without going into more detail here) sex education meetings focussing on emotional relationships, as well as a wide choice of religion, moral education and religious culture courses.

There is room to manoeuvre, and there is plenty of room for the imagination. This is because alienating tendencies are interrelated and result not from insufficient resources but from inadequate organization of these resources. Apart from meeting special needs, looking for cures for adding still more facilities, courses and specialists entails the risk of "adding" to the malaise through increasing the fragmentation of energies that often makes it hard for individuals to retain control of their lives in school.

All the resources are there. In those schools where educators have been able to reduce the extent of one of the "fractures" constituting the general feeling of unease, they first of all modestly compressed all the issues at stake into one: how, on the basis of the resources available, to serve two equally desirable but conflicting objectives - for example, the students' need for space and the necessity of protecting the premises; or maintaining the staff's workload at a manageable level while opening the library during free periods; or the need for systematic evaluation of French while safeguarding the autonomy of the other subjects; or generally, the welfare both of adults and of students in the school.

As the interviews have shown, the school's main resources in this regard are the students themselves, and it is precisely the role of the school to develop their gifts, from which it will then be the first to benefit as its just reward.

Some, on the pretext that "we already know all that", would undoubtedly hope that nothing be said about testimony that strikes them as personal criticism and makes them feel discouraged. So in conclusion we must restate the valuable instruction we have gained from the

students' experience:

- It is neither methods nor programs nor management styles nor computers that are lacking in the schools, but access to ordinary things that are already there: a room, a ball, a newspaper column, a corrected assignment, a conversation, an hour to oneself, a meeting...
- To find means of access, you don't need major upheavals but above all just to talk to each other, not only in the statutory meetings but from day to day, depending on what is needed, just like in real life, and without leaving anyone out, so that immediate solutions can be found to circumstantial problems.
- In seeking solutions, the students are ready and able to help us if only we would listen to them, because their everyday lives are at issue and they are favoured with imagination in this area, while our work is often obscured by our professional way of seeing things.
- The schools are already teeming with original solutions, stemming from a permanent dialogue in which changes are made smoothly with the parties almost acting in complicity, or from the inexpensive resource we have mentioned - imagination.
- Those who do not recognize themselves in the problems or solutions presented in these pages have only to engage in their turn in consulting "their" students, in line with their obligation to establish orientation councils under the terms of Bill 71, adopted earlier this year.
- However, student participation will have no effect unless the objective conditions for participation are provided: space, time, means and authorization.

- Taking these conditions into account, a school is first and foremost a relationship between adults and students, and in this relationship there is no substitute for a willingness to take risks.

2. THE BUREAUCRATIC UNIVERSITY

The Institution and the University Student

Through its work in the past several years on the university's social function, the objectives of the first cycle of university studies and training in the basics, the Conseil, and particularly its Commission de l'enseignement supérieur, has already concerned itself with the conditions to which students are subject. This concern is more pointedly expressed in this report, as an extension of the previous chapter on the position of high school students.

This second section starts with the facts and then proceeds with an analysis or diagnosis. Use has been made of the experience of the members of the Commission de l'enseignement supérieur themselves, and there have been consultations in academic circles. There is little significant data on the student's place in the university institution. However, it must be noted that the Commission d'étude sur les universités, in the part of its report dealing with the universities' internal administration, touched on some aspects of the question in a way that ties into the concerns we have put forward herein¹.

The Conseil is aware of the diversity of situations prevailing from one establishment to the next. It has noted trends which are not all encountered to the same degree in any one university. In proposing its particular diagnosis, it is seeking to determine some paths for action.

Some facts

In any survey of university structures, university

1. Commission d'étude sur les universités. Comité d'étude sur l'organisation du système universitaire, Report. Book Three. Les étudiants à l'université, Québec 1979.

accessibility, programs and teaching, a number of facts, or at least questions, arise with regard to the student's place in all this.

University Structures

Without considering all university structures, four major aspects can be noted: the organization of academic life, trade unionism in the university, student participation, and student services.

THE ORGANIZATION OF ACADEMIC LIFE

The rapid expansion of Québec university enrollment has posed organizational problems and modified the rules according to which the institutions functioned. With all the demands made upon them by the various tasks resulting from this expansion, have the consultative and decision-making bodies and the officers responsible for administration made the students their primary concern? Has the quality of life of students on campus been the main focus of their activities? What part of their time and effort have they applied directly to student life in the university?

It is not possible to provide answers to these questions for all Québec universities. But it is permitted to observe that the deliberations of some university meetings have dealt primarily with the status of professors, research, faculties and university bodies. The participants' discussions, which are a reflection of their general concern, appear to be oriented to organizational questions much more than to the realities that immediately affect the students. Operational and administrative issues monopolize their attention.

If this statement were proved true in even just one establishment, it would already be one too many. How can one accept that concern for students is practically absent from the deliberations of the main consultative, decision-making or administrative bodies? In a period of

accelerated growth, the university has perhaps attained a size which it is spending considerable time solving problems that it has engendered itself, to the point that it is threatening to neglect its fundamental preoccupation of serving the students.

TRADE UNIONISM IN THE UNIVERSITY

In addition to the organizational difficulties stemming from the rapid growth in enrollment, there is another factor of change in living conditions on campus - the advent of trade unionism. The fact of union activity on campus cannot be made an issue, but questions can be raised on the way unions conduct activities.

The pressure tactics used by the unions to support their demands have contributed to changing the relations between the groups making up the university community, as well as the strictly pedagogical relationship between professors and students. On the one hand, management personnel, professors, support staff and students now see themselves confronted as groups with reactions that are collective rather than individual. On the other hand, interruptions of the academic session compromise the participation of the professors in work for which the essential purpose is the student's welfare, to the same extent that they compromise adherence to the course outlines, forms of evaluation and course content that had initially been planned.

Furthermore, faculty union action has its impact on professors' participation in the different consultative and decision-making bodies. Often formally designated by their unions, the faculty representatives have to convey the union's point of view, which is certainly influenced by their professional interests but very little by the interests of the students.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

Are the students themselves in a position to ensure that they are represented on the university's bodies?

Universities have gradually endowed themselves with structures in which students can participate. It would seem that the experience of recent years permits a few observations.

When they are called upon to participate in administration, students discover that they are poorly informed and the forces present within university bodies reduce their role. Students accordingly are not very interested in the issues presented to them, to the point that it even becomes difficult to fill vacancies. The result is that there is little student presence in the consultative and decision-making processes.

Since this experience seems to have been a disappointment, would students gain from refocussing their action on the basic units where everyday problems are handled, rather than participating in higher decision-making bodies? However, consideration must be given on the institutional level to the existence of all sorts of statutes, standards and regulations that have a clearly determining influence on the small units, to which students thence could not limit their participation.

It would seem desirable that interesting experiments in participation tried out in certain universities be extended, and that some preoccupation be given to look for and ensure better conditions for student participation. Where particular difficulties hinder the concretization of this objective, the universities and all groups interested in higher education should proceed with a serious assessment with the students themselves of the present situation and pursue their thinking on the real meaning of participating as an aspect of education.

STUDENT SERVICES

To ensure that students get the education and conditions favourable to their welfare and academic activities, the universities offer them individual and collective financial assistance, housing, pastoral, placement, health,

psychological and guidance services.

Lack of resources can lead these services to pay more attention to their existence and operations than to the quality of their approach. No matter how well structured these services are, do they receive the administrative support and human and financial resources they need to attain their objectives? Do high university bodies give the people responsible for these services adequate credibility and attention? Are students really being served by entrusting a marginal structure on the fringe of the university's pedagogical services with the responsibility of responding to student needs?

In the course of the consultations it was possible to observe that student services are administrated without too much communication among the three groups representing the administration, the services and the students themselves. Those in charge of student services are also so preoccupied with financial problems that almost all their energy is geared to the services' survival rather than to the approach that should ensure healthy prevention within an overall design for education.

To sum up, as far as university structures are concerned, administrative bodies preoccupied with management fail to consider the students; the unions essentially have their members' well-being in mind without looking out for the students too much; student participation in the consultation and decision-making processes is functioning poorly at the institutional level; and finally, student services are having difficulty ensuring their own survival. These are the first that can be established.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

A second group of observations pertains to the university's accessibility. The Québec education system was reformed in the early Sixties with the intent, clearly expressed in government policies, of favouring effective democratization at all levels of instruction. To attain this objective and respond to the new needs created by fairly

strong demographic growth, considerable financial and human resource investments were made, and new institutions of higher education were established to facilitate access to the university, particularly for the population of the outlying regions. Where has this led after two decades?

A general overview of the situation first allows us to observe that there has been a major rise in university enrollment in Québec as in most industrialized countries, as well as a diversification of the student body in terms of social origin and the proportion of men and women.

Beyond this observation, which would not be enough by itself to make one believe that democratization is a fait accompli, three aspects of the present situation can be emphasized: the graduation rate from the first cycle, the quotas for the various programs and the social composition of the student body².

THE FIRST CYCLE GRADUATION RATE

From 1971 to 1976 the rate of first cycle university graduates compared to the total population between the ages of 18 and 24 declined from 4.5% to 3.9% in Québec. Furthermore, the gap which already existed between Québec and Ontario in 1971 increased in the five following years, since the Ontario rate rose during those years from 5.2% to 7.4%³.

PROGRAM QUOTAS

What student in the past few years has not had to apply to two or three university programs at a time in more than

2. See Commission d'étude sur les universités, Comité d'étude sur l'organisation du système universitaire, op. cit.

3. Ibid., p. 10

one establishment to ensure his admission to university? The present policy of program quotas in some cases impedes student access to programs for which they have the greatest interest and the most aptitude. There are about fifty undergraduate programs subject to quotas in Québec universities, and there is every indication that there is a risk of this situation intensifying in the years to come, because of certain constraints.

SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF THE STUDENT BODY

The present student body of Québec universities originates from various social backgrounds, and a large number of students come from the working classes. The Université du Québec, for example, recruits more than half its clientele from white collar and blue collar socio-economic backgrounds⁴.

Unfortunately we lack the data to be able to verify whether the various social classes are represented in the university in proportion to the breakdown of the Québec population into different social strata.

However, there is recent data available on the probability of Secondary V students of various social origins in the public French-language school system making it to university. The data shows that in the case of students from backgrounds in the liberal professions or senior management, this probability is more than four times higher than in the case of students from the working classes⁵.

4. P. Dandurand, M. Fournier and C. Héту, Condition de vie de la population étudiante universitaire québécoise, Département de sociologie, Université de Montréal, 1979, p. 33. Quoted in Comité d'étude sur l'organisation du système universitaire, op. cit., p. 99.

5. Alain Massot, Structures décisionnelles dans la qualification-distribution du secondaire V à l'université, Université de Montréal, June 1978, p. 136. Quoted in Comité d'étude sur l'organisation du système universitaire, op. cit., p. 13.

These observations lead one to question the conditions to which students in the Québec educational systems are subject at the various instructional levels. The degree of university accessibility to all applicants deemed capable of pursuing higher education is undoubtedly dependent on the system's adaptation to a clientele coming from a wide range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds at all levels of instruction. Despite the government's objective of democratizing education, some fundamental problems remain. The consequences of the declining birth rate since the early Sixties should give groups concerned with higher education an incentive to favour access to university for a larger proportion of students.

To this end the university should on the one hand guarantee sufficient information for all sectors of the population, diversify its programs in accordance with real needs, and do some thinking about the present practice of imposing quotas on programs and about conditions of acceptance. At the same time it should participate in a more general debate on the question of accessibility. There is already a form of discrimination at the high school and college levels that diminishes the possibilities of access to higher education for a large number of young people. Also, it is in the community outside its walls that the university will be able to arrive at a better grasp of the major problem posed by socio-economic conditions. By working together with the people who know the community, the university will find it easier to discover means of improving access to higher education for all social strata.

Teaching

The Green Paper on a Quebec scientific research policy posed the problem of the fundamental duality that marks a university professor's status and the definition of his responsibilities in carrying out his duties⁶. Academic

6. Gouvernement du Québec, Pour une politique québécoise de la recherche scientifique, Québec 1979, p. 118.

circles have a tendency of defining professors as both teachers and researchers, and this ambiguity has its repercussions in the distribution of day-to-day tasks and in teaching.

A PROFESSOR'S WORKLOAD

Because of their status, university professors should be able to divide their workload between teaching and research, the two activities that comprise their overall responsibilities. Research practice varies widely, however. During the consultations on the Green Paper on Québec scientific research policy, it was repeatedly asserted that only one third of university professors really spend their time on research.

On the other hand, teaching duties alone involve many varied tasks that require a lot of time and availability. Students attach particularly great importance to guidance from their professors. During discussions on this issue, students emphasized the extent to which they rely on the quality of their relationship with their professors. The same point is made in the findings of the Candurand-Fournier survey: 30% of the students consulted considered that their professors gave the impression of not having time to spend on them. Given the fact that a professor's job is defined as being that of a teacher and researcher, the time allotted to research can also provide an easy pretext for dodging guidance tasks, among others.

TEACHING AND PROMOTION CRITERIA

It is a university tradition that promotion criteria are established in the following order of importance: first research, then teaching, guidance work, and participation in committees and other bodies. This order of priorities

7. P. Dandurand et al., op. cit., p. 183.

does not always motivate professors to expend time and energy renewing their course content and teaching methods. A professor who legitimately aspires to career advancement will be more inclined to be oriented to activities that receive greater recognition. On the other hand, competence acquired in research does not necessarily endow a professor with the knowledge and aptitudes required to promote pedagogical innovation.

It would therefore be appropriate for the university to ask itself some questions about rationalizing professors' activities. In its comments on the Green Paper on Québec scientific research policy, the Conseil has already suggested that "greater flexibility should be introduced into apportioning the various elements of the professorial workload. Thus one could explore the hypothesis according to which some professors devote themselves solely to teaching, others solely to research and still others to both. During his career a professor could also alternate between teaching and research"⁸.

Always in view of improving its preoccupation with student needs, the university could offer professors services in pedagogical assistance, increase and upgrade these if they already exist, and finally recognize professors' success in the field of teaching or student guidance as it does in the case of research.

Programs

The universities presently offer a variety of programs which are intended to be adjusted to the needs of the clientele. We will comment here on three points in this regard: program content, student participation in developing program content, and the failure and dropout rates.

8. "Pour une politique québécoise de la recherche scientifique. Commentaires", in L'état et les besoins de l'éducation. Rapport 1978-1979, Québec 1979, p. 303.

PROGRAM CONTENT

It can first be observed that there has been a proliferation of programs, particularly those officially recognized by a certificate, in the face of requirements for and the development of knowledge.

It is appropriate to ask oneself whether concern for students has been sufficiently present in the thinking and in the activities of those mainly responsible for designing, developing and approving programs. Do the programs embody a concept of education that is really related to the needs of the students and the objectives of the programs? Is it not often the case that the preparation or implementation of programs are more influenced by the teacher's particular skills and the requirements of the subject involved? Students are simply confronted with a certain number of programs and have to modify their selection accordingly.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPING PROGRAMS

For the past few years, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation and the Conseil des universités have invited academic circles not to adhere too exclusively to the coherence of a discipline in identifying objectives governing program content. Other important dimensions should be taken into account - educational objectives and the student's individual and social development needs.

Even if it has to call upon experts to develop its programs, the university could consult the students to make sure that the objectives and content of the programs are relevant to their needs. There would also be a possibility of concrete student participation in certain particular aspects concerning practical training and recommended field placement models, for example.

THE FAILURE AND DROPOUT RATES

Some programs are frequently abandoned by students after

the first few sessions or lead to failures that then cause students to be excluded or withdraw from university studies⁹. The available data does not allow us to get a clear picture of the present situation in all Québec universities, but on the basis of cases like those noted in the report of the Commission d'étude sur les universités, academic circles should ask themselves about the real motives that impel students to switch to another program or simply abandon their studies. Was enough information available at the outset? Does the content of certain programs really meet the students' needs? Should the university maintain outmoded programs that no longer arouse student interest?

In conclusion, insofar as programs are concerned, more cooperation seems necessary at the modular or at least at the departmental level. It would be appropriate to question the very concept of a program, proceed to evaluate the programs, and observe the concrete conditions under which they are applied. If the program were seen as a set of elements with interrelated objectives that tend to respond to concrete needs, the evaluations would become more significant and would lead to different questions being raised. The university would then better see the relevance either of creating a new program or of abandoning an existing program that no longer meets expectations.

The Special Position of Adults

The facts put forward up to this point become even plainer in the case of adult students. In the past twenty years, Québec universities have seen enrollment in the adult education sector increase at an accelerated pace. Those responsible for this sector, more sensitive to the problems of students whose academic background differs from that of others, have sought to establish conditions favourable to adult students in various areas of university life.

9. Comité d'étude sur l'organisation du système universitaire, op. cit., pp. 44 ff.

However, despite the efforts that have been made and despite forecasts of increased adult university enrollment, adult education still remains a marginally developing sector in more than one case.

The Conseil already emphasized in its 1975-1976 report how Québec universities as a whole are primarily structured to deal with young "regular day students" who have just completed their college studies and who are studying full-time¹⁰. Likewise, Cultural Development Minister Camille Laurin told the 1977 convention of the Association canadienne des dirigeants de l'éducation des adultes de langue française that: "Continuing education too often continues to be a 'sideline' of the real university, the real university being that of so-called regular students and so-called career professors."

If one looks at the type of reception adult students get from the university when they are admitted, one must acknowledge that to a large extent adults are still treated as marginal students, both in programs and in services. One may wonder whether the university is capable of meeting the needs of adult students if its general operations remain geared to "a certain type of student". In preparing programs, for example, some institutions have taken adult needs into account in a very specific way, but in many cases, adults are enrolled in programs designed exclusively for young people. This situation can especially be seen in universities which attempt to integrate their adult enrollment with regular "day" students.

Adult education still continues to run up against administrative resistance and entrenched mentalities, to the extent that two attitudes have now developed among those responsible for adult education. Some who are a little disillusioned by their difficult experiences are inclined to give priority to institutionalizing this marginal status by developing parallel services geared to adults. At

10. Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, L'état et les besoins de l'éducation. Rapport 1975-1976, Québec 1976, p. 101.

the same time, other people who have kept the faith and retained their hope in the university institution, are relying on gradualism and step-by-step integration of the adult sector. It should be recognized that we are still far from the day when continuing education will be seen as "the main organizer of our educational system as a whole and particularly of higher education", as the Conseil des universités recommended in its 1973 report on the general objectives of higher education.

The case of adults illustrates what we have been able to gather up to now with regard to university structures, university accessibility, teaching and programs - the students do not occupy the place in the university's preoccupations to which they are entitled.

Two Analytical Aspects

The preceding section did not limit itself to indicating a few of the anomalies of a system which to all practical purposes does not provide students with the attention they require, despite the very educational objectives pursued by the university. It also suggests some aspects for analysis, two of which will be dealt with here.

The university finds itself confronted with the same problems as other large modern organizations, and it ends up only being concerned with the difficulties engendered by the very dynamics of its development. The attention paid to administrative aspects, the importance accorded to labour relations and to negotiation of collective agreements, the virtual anarchy which has presided over the proliferation of programs and the consequent decline in the motivation of students to participate in university structures, and the lack of consideration for student issues and student services are only manifestations of the fact that *the university has become a vast bureaucratic enterprise.*

Likewise, the orientations which guided the designers of the programs, the choices students have made in terms of programs, the promotion criteria for professors, the approaches adopted by university services and especially by services

to students, and the students' lack of interest in participation can partially be explained by the fact that the university in the past and present decades is a product of a consumer society, like the students who attend it. Lacking either critical sense or clearly defined policies, it behaves like a well-integrated subsystem of a system geared to consumption of goods and services: *it has become a consumer university.*

The Bureaucratic University

A COMPLEX ORGANIZATION

The university has become a complex enterprise. As it expanded, it had to create more specialized functions and develop management tools that would permit adequate planning and evaluation but which also increased the number of intermediate managerial levels.

At the same time the university has encountered an incalculable number of problems linked to its own functioning and development - material problems like construction, building maintenance and security; budgetary problems; personnel management problems like negotiations and distribution of workload; and problems of pedagogical management like programming and evaluation.

The administrative function has developed considerably, requiring a much larger complement of personnel. The various support services for teaching, research and administration have been the object of major investments. The obligation to coordinate all resources and to ensure that they serve the purposes for which they were authorized has led to centralization, so that professors and faculties have seen themselves gradually deprived of a significant share of their traditional responsibilities. It is no longer up to them to guarantee the quality of the teaching they provide; administrators higher up in the academic hierarchy now have to answer for the quality of pedagogical activities.

Two types of problems then spring up. Administering a university is a heavy task, and pedagogical activities these days are only one aspect among others in the management of an institution on this scale. Attention also must be directed to such important issues as the buildings and grounds development plan, purchasing policy, budgetary estimates and the university's financial position, food services, parking lots, structures, election procedures, and gathering of all kinds of information.

Furthermore, the number of programs, faculties and departments, the size of the budgets, and the wide range of intermediaries that have to be taken into account - the Ministère de l'Éducation, the Conseil des universités, unions and professional associations, corporations, etc. - render the administration of a university so complex that it becomes extremely difficult to satisfy the requirements of management and of bettering the condition of students at one and the same time.

The standardization that results from centralization often renders the university insensitive to the needs of a program or of a particular group of students and professors. The decision is made far from the scene of the action, and the gathering of information necessary for evaluating the effects of a decision relies on instruments the inefficiency of which is often only equalled by their unwieldiness. Control can no longer be based on direct knowledge of the teachers, of their concerns and of their work methods. The network of communications has also had to branch out to the extent that those who have to answer for whether objectives have been reached can only do so by trusting in reports, surveys and studies.

GOVERNING THE UNIVERSITY

Furthermore, if one were to scrutinize the relationships sustained by all the actors which attempt to regulate and determine the activities of universities on the basis of ends that are more or less in conflict, according to an analytical model established by Vincent Lemieux and Pierre Labrie of the Laval University Political Science Department,

one could easily arrive at the hypothesis that students are dominated by other groups. For the sake of simplicity, let us only look at a few main actors in this structure of influence: the Ministère de l'Éducation, the universities as autonomous corporations, the professional associations and the students.

The Ministère has a privileged position due to the fact that it is at the source of a process of influence that impacts on the other three actors in the structure, and thus gives the impression of being the governing force. The universities, by the fact that they receive the resources they need from the Ministère as well as a certain volume of information in terms of policies and directives, occupy the position of a subject in relation to that body. But since they in turn influence the students by the fact that they convert the resources received from the Ministère into services, the universities are authorized, within their field of competence, to set in motion a process of influence over their clientele, and thus occupy a governing position in relation to the students.

The professional associations are certainly subject to the influence of the government that regularized their corporate status, but they have the power to influence the universities and the students by determining the conditions for practicing a profession, for example.

Finally, only the student does not occupy any other position in the structure than that of subject. It may certainly happen that a student protest can modify a decision, but this is not part of the rules of the political game from a purely institutional or operational standpoint. The student is thus dominated by the three other actors we have mentioned, and is dependent on the Ministère, the universities and the professional associations.

One would be justified to wonder how it is that, despite everything, both employers and students have a fairly favourable view of the training and instruction dispensed in the universities. According to the Dandurand-Fournier study, for example, students are satisfied, when all is said and done, with their assigned lot in Québec universities¹¹.

11. P. Dandurand et al., op. cit., pp. 184 ff.

We can opt for two possible explanations. While the universities may claim to plan, control and evaluate student activities, it remains that the student is the primary agent of his own education, which depends on the quality of the relationship he sustains with his teachers. The student may thus make relatively major progress that bears no relation to the administrators, corporations or unions which entertain other preoccupations, though their participation is eminently desirable.

In other words, one can say that the university is made up of parallel worlds with ends that all too often are different. The administration, the unions the departments and faculties, and the student body, though sometimes exerting positive or negative influences on each other, have succeeded in developing independently of one another. Even if the administration first has to solve complex management problems, and even if the unions have to oversee the application and renewal of their collective agreements, these two worlds do not have a day to day influence on the student-teacher relationship in the office or in the classroom. Despite the other actors' lack of pedagogical will, the students, along with their professors, have succeeded in making satisfactory progress. The situation is not catastrophic even though the public would be right to raise questions about the waste of resources that is a characteristic of modern bureaucracies.

A second factor that could explain the level of satisfaction expressed is that the university, within the constraints we have just emphasized, has succeeded in meeting the expectations of students who primarily are only seeking to obtain a degree that will give them maximum assurance of quick access to a job on the labour market. The university does a fairly good job of assuming this role and offers services to this end that are sufficiently effective from the standpoint of the student as consumer.

The Consumer University

Our liberal society, in which the economy is based on the law of supply and demand, has invented all kinds of sophisticated instruments to free the individual from the exacting

tasks of everyday life. This at least is the position generally upheld by the producers and sellers.

Our consumer society has proliferated the number of specialists who all have the noble aim of helping the individual. You no longer need to fill out your own income tax return. You no longer need to communicate because many specialized firms offer to help you do it. We are taught how to cook when others do not do it for us. Everything is taken care of. In the long run the individual finds himself drained of his capacities. Private enterprise, the State and parapublic institutions have perfected a vast range of services from which the individual can benefit while remaining virtually inactive.

The universities have obeyed the laws that govern this system. They have adopted the same behaviour pattern as the coffee company which has understood that their business profitability and development are based on marketing the same product in a range of different formats. Often all that this entails is a mere change of label and the consumer is completely taken in. It is enough to list the programs offered by Québec universities to observe a proliferation that is hard to justify. While in the recent past the physical educator was lord and master in his field, nowadays we have to choose among physical educators, recreologists, recreation technicians, sports animators, ordinary animators, genagogists and more. This diversification of physical education programs is not without its analogy in the altered formats of a single product.

In the development of the programs, one can observe a form of entropy characteristic of the law of supply and demand. Efforts at planning have not prevented the universities from wanting to develop, take on importance, compete with other institutions and attract more students so that they can automatically be allocated higher budgets.

On the other hand, students ask no more than to believe in the existence of new and as yet unoccupied jobs on the labour market. Thus, they will offer the public a new

service and a new product, and are able to guarantee their livelihood, just like everyone else, by convincing the customers that they can't do without them. Studies which have sought to confirm whether the university had in fact become more accessible have found that students from lower income backgrounds, while constituting a large part of university enrollment, in the majority are in utilitarian fields of study. Many students hold a full-time or part-time job while pursuing their studies. They spend less time on campus, and look for fast solutions to any administrative and pedagogical problems confronting them. To feel a relatively high level of satisfaction, all they essentially require is that the university provide a program that will assure them of a job, present pedagogical and administrative requirements that will enable them to obtain a degree without too much hardship, and offer services which are able to respond fairly quickly to their particular problems. They have little time to devote to participation, criticism and change. First and foremost they are consumers of diplomas.

Similarly, the orientation of professional services offered in university is often tinged with a concern for finding some expedient that will enable the student to continue to function properly within the system. For example, the university sees student services as being recuperative rather than formative. This is the price that it has to pay to be able to channel the overly burdensome requests of student associations elsewhere and to be able to keep students who encounter difficulties capable of functioning, whether these problems are tied in to examination periods or to an overly restrictive quota. It would seem that this category of services is only recognized to have a secondary role, whereas they could intervene in educational activities.

Too often the university limits itself to short-term solutions. Health services, for example, can give priority to heavy medication to provide a quick cure to an immediate problem. The long-term solution has not been found by doing this, however, and the student will have to resort to these services once again when the problem recurs. It then becomes easy for these services to show that they have a numerous clientele and need other resources.

It would be suitable for the university to do a closer evaluation of the effects of its pedagogical and administrative practices on the students, while acknowledging that the student is wholly involved as an individual in the educational process. An overall approach from the standpoint of education could lead the university to be more attentive in the way it considers the role assumed by professionals other than professors.

Furthermore, these professionals could focus more on long-term intervention by giving priority to a preventive approach and by showing more confidence in student capacities. Students should be compelled to take charge of all areas of their lives, both by the professors and by other professionals. The professionals themselves should work together more closely to integrate their interventions into the framework of an overall approach of educating the student.

The university is not sufficiently critical of the expectations expressed by employers and corporations, by the Ministère, and by the students themselves. It supplies mechanical answers that do not derive sufficiently from a comprehensive view of the student's education. Under these conditions, the university becomes a "shopping and service centre" and no longer plays the role that it should as an agent of change at the individual and collective levels. It would be desirable for the university to devote more attention to its mission of being a critic of our society, of the various authorities that govern it and of the students that it governs itself.

Conclusion

Whatever the efforts of university establishments to alter the course of their development, it has been difficult for them to disobey the implacable laws of the wider system in which they are only a subsystem. The improvement of the quality of student life on campus requires that the university be capable of being constantly aware of the conditioning to which it is subject and that it undertake certain actions.

This is why the university has to innovate. For example, it could mount a realistic opposition to the gigantism that now characterizes it by deconcentrating its administrative and pedagogical responsibilities to the departmental and modular level. Through such an initiative, it would make student participation more worthwhile, since students are more interested in what immediately affects them.

The university could also seek to improve the quality of pedagogical life. The hypothesis that professors can devote themselves either to teaching, to research or to both, ought to be considered. This would presume that the university would recognize the successes of professors responsible for teaching and pedagogical guidance of students, just as it does in the case of research. Pedagogical assistance services should also be available to professors, so that they are particularly used by those who most need them.

Finally, education should be brought closer into line with the needs of the students. The university could systematically assure itself by consulting the students when elaborating programs. As well as a general view of what education should allow a student to better situate the role of professionals other than that of professors, in keeping a better collaboration between them.

Part two

THE STATE OF EDUCATION

IN THE SCHOOLS AND IN ADULT SERVICES

1. THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

The 1979-1980 school year could be characterized by one fact and one need insofar as Catholic education is concerned.

The *fact* was the *growing politicization* of the Catholic school question. Throughout the year this issue remained in the education news spotlight and increased in scope, with justifications and attacks in the newspaper, continual new developments in the case of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges school and the Superior Court ruling on this matter, positions and declarations by organizations like the Commission des droits de la personne and the Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec, repercussions of the denominational schools issue on school board elections in the Montréal area, and the announcement of a priority in-depth study by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation and the Fédération des commissions scolaires catholiques du Québec. All this gives the impression that the matter is coming to a head. The issues at stake are still very complicated, but the battle lines are being drawn. In short, the question of denominational schools seems on the way to becoming an important social, educational, legal and political "problem".

Simultaneously a *need* was expressed - the need to *examine the denominational aspect of the school experience*. This clearly means that many schools feel the need to examine what the school's denominational nature concretely means in everyday life. In the vast majority of cases this objective in no way means putting the school's denominational status into question, or "deconfessionalizing". The need for examination primarily stems from the contemporary movement which has led teams in many schools to examine how they function and review various aspects of academic life (objectives, regulations, teaching methods, management systems, etc.) in order to adopt an "educational project" to mobilize and coordinate their energies. As part of this process, educators and parents also want to shed some light on the school as a denominational Catholic institution and on the moral and religious education it

provides. This concern with examination is legitimate and healthy, and primarily reflects a search for truth and an attempt at coherence.

TENSIONS AND APPREHENSIONS

The politicization of the denominational schools question has provoked tension, unrest and sometimes active opposition among those involved in education and among Catholics themselves. Talk of "wrangling among Catholics" follows from confused and agitated public opinion. People wonder just what a denominational school is, and especially where the Catholic schools are heading. In this context, it not only becomes difficult to catch a glimpse of the future of the Catholic school, but it even proves difficult to interpret the most minor events, which can take on considerable and inordinate significance. Some school principals have been seen to take alarm because two or three parents requested that their children be exempted from religious instruction. And the public has especially been aware of the major eruptions caused by the evolution of one elementary school on the mountain in Montréal.

The need for examination of the schools' denominational experience has also given rise to apprehension. Since there is a lack of means or practical instruments to analyze this experience, there is some fear of letting it emerge into the light of day. Questions make people fearful, especially that this issue may become political. What concretely does the denominational nature of the school mean? Is denominationalism a reality or a myth? Does it flow through all school activities like sap through a tree, or is it like perfume residue in an empty bottle? One can guess that the answers to these questions may sometimes be embarrassing, and often demanding. But a central issue is at stake. The truth about the Catholic school experience has to be told, and the Christian education provided in these schools has to be made real, by measuring and reducing the distance that exists between intentions and reality, between a school's official status and its common practice.

A DUAL OBJECTIVE

Given the present politicization of the question, the Comité catholique feels that it is essential to disentangle and understand the issues at stake. The first part of this report will make this attempt at clarifying and comprehending the present situation of Catholic schools in Québec. More specifically, we will try to identify the social and political forces that have come into play, and to indicate the options open to Christian education in the schools. We also hold the modest belief that this review of the situation can serve to enlighten the discussions and contribute to alleviating the tensions and apprehensions by helping each individual to better situate his position in the overall landscape of the denominational schools debate.

In the second part of this report, we will propose a set of guidelines to allow evaluation to some extent of a Catholic school's denominational quality. We have intended these guidelines to be simple, concrete and easily verifiable. They are not as exacting as a scientific evaluation grid, but tests show that they are good indicators of a Catholic school's quality. In proposing these guidelines, the Comité Catholique wants to support and encourage the effort now getting under way to verify the value of the denominational experience in the Catholic schools. Such an effort can be beneficial. By revealing strengths and weaknesses it can release the schools' vitality, and it can also free people from illusions.

Both through their tone and their content, the two parts of this report run the risk of appearing somewhat dissimilar. The first section is more analytical and deals with issues that have recently made the news; the second section is more pragmatic and is presented as a working instrument, so to speak. But beyond these obvious differences, we should emphasize that these two parts are fundamentally complementary. They should even be read so that they draw upon and shed light on each other. Here is why.

A DICHOTOMOUS SITUATION

The fact of politicization and the need for examination are at present developing as if they were on two parallel tracks, or in any case without enough of a connection between them. This situation must be deplored. For its part the Comité catholique intends, in this report, to closely link together the fact and the need that it has observed, and it would like to invite those responsible at all levels not to dissociate them. Indeed, the politicization of the issue mainly appears to be the doing of individuals and organizations which are often distant from the schools, while the need for verification is mainly manifested by those who spend their time in the school every day. We thus find a dichotomous situation where the protagonists of the debate on the one hand and the practitioners and users on the other are not speaking the same language. Sometimes they are not even talking about the same reality. The debate is thus ill-founded from the very start.

This is why one can already hear and read the generalizations and abstractions concerning the Catholic school that inevitably lead to the politicization of an issue. Everyone knows that politically motivated interventions quickly overlook the reality, depth, complexity and human aspect of a problem. In the denominational issue, as in others, there is a risk that the human reality of the situations (since they are always special cases they often give the appearance to be without interest, or threaten the views that one defends) will very quickly become obscured. The experience is oversimplified, or it is hidden, along with its true possibilities and its limits that are no less real; the shutter is closed on the reality so that one can comfortably expatiate on the principles and "general solution" that one believes to hold true.

The antidote to this theoretical politicization is attention to the human realities of the schools and their communities, the realities of the situations, and the concrete experience of the schools, an experience that is

observed and evaluated, and not falsely idealized nor falsely caricatured. Politicization and verification of the experience should go hand in hand, as complements or as counterweights to each other. The more the denominational question becomes politicized, the more important it is to stick closely to the concrete aspects of the situations.

THE NEED TO DEEPEN THE DEBATE

Let's not beat around the bush: hasty judgments and solutions abound on the denominational schools issue, both favourable and unfavourable. There is also an abundance of principles, but for anyone who knows the unprecedented difficulties of certain situations, a simple recalling of principles sometimes appears to be a little easy. Any effort, no matter how limited, to go beyond the usual pronouncements and clichés and to see the realities as they exist, would prove useful. No progress and no solution is possible without this effort to take a slightly wider and slightly longer view than the familiar positions.

This is why the Comité catholique insists that the discourse on the Catholic school not be separated from the practical experience of verification. If there has to be a debate on the denominational issue it is important that it not unfold solely on the Mount Olympus of principles and ideologies or in the rarified atmosphere of legal codes, but that it take the real life of school communities into account, as well as the viewpoints of the people involved directly in the school. Likewise, if one wishes to prevent the degeneration of the examination of the denominational experience into a "crusade of intransigence", it is essential that one clearly specify this operation's intent, and show that one is wide awake to the forces and currents of opinion on the scene.

A. The Growing Politicization of the Denominational Question

What does one mean in speaking of "growing politicization"? The word "politicization" is primarily used to refer to the multiplicity of positions adopted and the doctrinal conflicts on the Catholic schools issue. It is obvious that the number of interventions and intervenors on this question has risen during the year, so much so that today the divergences, and indeed the divisions, have burst into the open. The press clippings on the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges issue alone already fill three scrapbooks! One would have to look back to the years 1960-1964 to find similar ferment.

The word "politicization" also indicates that there is more and more of a tendency to treat denominationalism like any other social problem, according to political procedures: debates, surveys, consultation, pressure, legislation. On several occasions recently, the government has been directly petitioned to amend or transform the existing legislation governing denominational education. There is a risk that the ball will end up in the National Assembly's lap one of these days, despite the obvious reluctance of politicians and parties to open this Pandora's box.

If this politicization is to result in anything other than a difficult and bitter debate - as the examples of neighbouring Canadian provinces and of France and the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries attest - it is of capital importance that each individual strives to develop a full awareness of the political reality of this question as it is presented today. This is why the Comité catholique believes it useful to summarize what forces are now in play and their relative positions. We will seek to determine their constituent parts and measure their intensity, their resistance and especially their orientation.

There is an analogy to illustrate what we are saying. When a tropical storm is brewing in the West Indies, American meteorologists nowadays seek to enlarge the

"eye of the hurricane" by seeding it with silver nitrate; they thus count on reducing the force of the winds at the centre of the cyclone, influence its trajectory, and reduce its destructive power. By seeking in this report to enlarge our view of all the forces in orbit around the denominational reality, we are daring to believe that it is still possible to avoid a sterile and corrosive debate, or at least that it is possible to steer it in a positive direction and mitigate the damage it may cause.

1. The Strength of Principles

The strength of principles is often rightly invoked in the Catholic school debate. The Catholic school was not invented yesterday, but is based on a secular tradition, on the experience of the Church here and elsewhere. It defines itself on the basis of principles, which have often been set forth and reiterated in the Magisterium's documents. Among these source documents we should especially cite the Declaration of Vatican Council II on Christian education and the Québec bishops' Message to those responsible for education, published in October 1978.

We do not intend to repeat this ecclesiastical teaching here - it is already widely known and was the inspiration for the Comité catholique Regulation concerning Catholic schools. We will limit ourselves to emphasizing two points capable of shedding some light on the present debate.

TWO WAYS THE CHURCH IS PRESENT IN THE SCHOOL REALITY

With regard to principles, it is appropriate to observe that the Church's universal doctrine on Christian education contains the affirmation and recognition of two ways of being present in the reality of the schools.

The first way the Church is present in the life of the school is through *the testimony of Christian teachers and pupils* in non-denominational schools. In mentioning this type of presence first, the conciliar document on Christian education takes cognizance of the fact that a large part

of the school population, at least in the West, receive their education in non-Catholic schools. It notes: "The Church is conscious of its grave duty to be present with particular affection and assistance for the very many who are not brought up in Catholic schools - through the testimony of the lives of their teachers and principals, through the ministry of the priests and lay people who transmit to them the doctrine of salvation"¹.

It must thus be understood that the Church appraises the value of the Christian education that can be provided in non-Catholic schools. It also insists the parents demand when necessary that their children receive a course in religious education in accordance with their beliefs in these non-denominational schools.

"The Church also congratulates the civil authorities and societies which, given the pluralistic character of modern society with its concern for just religious freedom, help families so that they can assure their children in all schools of an education that conforms to their moral and religious principles"².

The Church also ensures its presence in the educational reality through another means, *the Catholic school*. The conciliar document says this presence "with special status" is a preferential and privileged means. This preference is explained by the very intention of the Catholic school, which has adopted the project of creating "an atmosphere buoyed by the evangelical spirit" and helping young people develop harmoniously as human beings and Christians, by enlightening through faith their gradual discovery of themselves, of the world and of life. When it defines the Catholic school in this way, the Council's document clearly

1. Déclaration sur l'éducation chrétienne, Novembre 1965, in Vatican II les seize documents conciliaires, Fides, Montréal, p. 540. (Translation of quotation). Also see Pope John Paul II's exhortation on the catechism in our time, October 16, 1979, No. 69, pp. 95-97.

2. Ibid. (translation).

lets it be understood that it is referring to schools instituted by the Church of which "one way or another depend on the Church"³. One can think, for example, of the "parochial schools" in the United State, the free (Catholic) schools in France, and those private schools in Québec which belong to a religious congregation or a diocese.

In this respect we should note that the Catholic public schools in Québec are a special type of Catholic school, since they are not dependent on religious or ecclesiastical bodies. As we know, they are legally responsible to public corporations made up of commissioners elected by the population. These corporations are "established for Catholics" in the meaning of the law, which means that they have to ensure educational services to Catholics that respect the pastoral responsibility of the Church, but they also remain bound to receive all children in the territory they serve. This means that when one talks about Catholic public schools in Québec, one must note the special circumstances⁴.

This affirmation of the Church's dual presence in the educational field may appear self-evident. It may seem banal. However, it is not. Indeed, here in Québec, history and practice have ensured that only one of these modes of intervention has been realized up to this time - the Catholic school. Many people see this as a desirable and preferred choice, and the Comité catholique deems that it must continue to support it and give it preferential treatment. But it also believes that the growing diversity of the population makes it appropriate to take cognizance of the universal Church's broader tradition concerning the

3. Ibid., p. 542 (translation).

4. The conciliar document also notes that Catholic schools, "depending on local circumstances", can "don different forms" (p. 542, translation). We should note that considering these local circumstances requires many nuances when one compares the Catholic schools and school systems in different countries.

reality of the schools.

This is why a clear affirmation of principles and gradual recognition in practical terms of a diversified ecclesial presence seems to us at the present time to be an exigency of the Québec school situation. The principle that the Church should be present in a diversity of ways in education can be of help in finding varied solutions to situations that become more diversified each day. The Comité catholique already wrote in 1974 in reference to this dual form of presence, that; "A presence based solely on one model runs the risk of sooner or later proving incapable of accounting for all contingencies. Or else the model will become so elastic that it ultimately loses any colour or identity"⁵.

This principle of diversity then makes it possible to recognize a stream of thought which has been expressed by one part of the Catholic population for more than fifteen years, advocating a Church presence that makes an appeal "to testimony by Christians and to their organization and free activity" in schools that are legally non-confessional⁶. Though this current is in the minority, it has every democratic right to manifest itself, and what's more, it finds its legitimacy in the very doctrine of the Church, particularly in *Gaudium et Spes*, and in the experience of church communities in other provinces and countries. The Comité catholique, one of whose functions is to represent the Catholic population, believes that it would be unhealthy to ignore this current. On the contrary, equity and especially the will to ensure not just one but several paths to the future for Christian education in Québec, give it the incentive to recognize it explicitly instead.

Recognition of this kind is likely to considerably defuse the debate. Indeed, once the principle is accepted that the Church should be present in various ways in education, there is no longer any fundamental or doctrinal reason

5. Voies et impasses 1, No. 18, p. 13 (translation)

6. See Voies et impasses 1, *ibid.*

that could fuel a quarrel among Catholics". Of course, the two modes mentioned in the conciliar document should not be placed on the same footing, since one of them is clearly to be preferred to the other. Timely judgments should be made in each concrete case on the type of presence that seems viable for a given milieu. At this stage, conflicts of opinion are still possible, and indeed inevitable. But at least no option could be spurned at the start because it is presumed to be condemned or condemnable.

Thus, while the Catholic school remains the favoured means of ensuring Christian education for children of the Catholic faith, a non-denominational school which makes a place for religious education cannot be an object of suspicion. It undoubtedly presupposes vigilance by the parents and by those active in education to avoid a slide towards indifference, but it would be unfair to solely depict this school's "diabolical" traits or to subject it to systematic denigration. For its part, Vatican II refers to this school "with special assistance and affection". It asks that "the cooperation required by the common good be developed between the Catholic schools and the other schools", while reminding Catholic parents of "their duty to entrust their children to Catholic schools where and when they can"⁷.

In the present context of politicization, we feel it is very important to maintain in the broad perspective that can be found in the Vatican II Declaration on Christian education, as echoed by the Québec bishops in their 1978 Message on education. "We feel it is necessary, and indeed urgent," they wrote, "to seek to gradually introduce greater diversity into our school system. Different types of schools are especially imperative in cosmopolitan communities where a single educational model does not manage to satisfy

7. Ibid., p. 545, No. 12 and p. 542, No. 8 (translation)

the expectations of the population"⁸.

PRINCIPLES AND REALITY

We should make one more comment concerning the principles that govern the Catholic school. These principles are important and deserve to be brought back to mind if they are really intended to provide the inspiration for the educational experience⁹. But the dissertation on principles must continuously consider the special situation of Catholic public schools in Québec, which face the redoubtable challenge of being both *common* schools, open to everyone, and *Catholic* schools, which pursue a design characterized by the Christian faith. One must not hide from the difficulties represented by this sort of dual allegiance.

Any discussion of principles should be equally attentive to the real experience of the schools. Otherwise, there is a risk of painting such an idealized and abstract picture of the Catholic school that it might be hard

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8. p. 30 (translation). On this issue also see the Déclaration sur l'éducation et la foi issued by the French episcopate in November 1969, as well as two communications published simultaneously, one "relative à l'enseignement public" (concerning public education) and the other "relative à l'enseignement catholique" (concerning Catholic education), Documentation catholique, Decembre 1969, No. 1552, pp. 1070-1074).
 9. In recent years, the Comité catholique itself has often coined and re coined the principles governing the Catholic school and its own character. Particularly see the chapter on Catholic education in the 1977-1978 and 1978-1979 reports on L'état et les besoins de l'éducation. Also see the Voies et Impasses series, the fifth volume of which deals with pastoral animation and appeared in 1980.

to realize even in a private establishment controlled by a religious community! Principles are stated more soberly and more effectively when the difficulty and poverty of many situations is kept in mind.

In the present politicized context, a sort of inflation has developed in the vocabulary relating to the design for Catholic schools. Let us venture to affirm that the Catholic school is not primarily the object of discussion but a reality to be experienced. It is born out of the will and the generosity of those who make the school what it is every day. This will and generosity ought to be encouraged, supported and given new impetus. But we must not let ourselves believe that speeches can fill the vacuum that exists in some situations. We would be deluding ourselves by filling the void with sound to prevent it from being so dreadful.

Principles thus have their importance, and also their limitations. As necessary as they are to correctly conceive the forms in which the Church should be present in the educational reality, principles alone, for example, cannot suffice to define the present and future of the Catholic school in Québec. A thoughtful examination of the Québec school situation remains necessary, since other forces are coming into play that have to be considered.

2. The Power of the Law

Denominationalism is solidly enshrined in law. First of all, it is entrenched in the Canadian constitution, specifically in Section 93 of the British North America Act, which guarantees the rights and privileges pertaining to confessional schools that were contained in the

education act in force at the time of Confederation in 1867¹⁰. According to the Court, in the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges case, this Section guarantees denominational Catholic and Protestant schools at the elementary level in Montréal and Québec City, and the right of dissent everywhere else in Québec. This case has been taken before this Court of Appeal, which will have to rule on the extent of these constitutional guarantees.

Denominationalism was also built into the 1964 Acts establishing the Department of Education and the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. The common preamble of these two Acts explicitly acknowledges that "the parents have the right to choose the institutions which, according to their convictions, best ensure respect for the rights of their children"^{10a}. Several provisions in these Acts ensure the existence and functioning of denominational schools, particularly those which define the function of the associate deputy minister and the powers accorded

10. Here is the wording of the preamble and first paragraph of Section 93: "In and for each Province the Legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education, subject and according to the following Provisions:

(1) Nothing in any such Law shall prejudicially affect any Right or Privilege with respect to Denominational Schools which any Class of Persons have by law in the Province at the Union."

10a. Translation of "les parents ont le droit de choisir les institutions qui, selon leur conviction, assurent le mieux le respect des droits de leurs enfants."

to the two confessional committees¹¹. We should also mention that several articles of the Loi sur l'Instruction publique have denominational implications, notably Article 189 which charges the commissioners with overseeing the application of courses of study and regulations for the Catholic, Protestant and other schools, as applicable¹².

All of these legal provisions have an important role in the present discussions concerning the Catholic school. This is why their scope and relevance need to be properly assessed.

A RESISTANT LAW

First of all it is important to recognize the strength of this law. Certain people sometimes seem to think that denominationalism could be easily made to collapse like a house of cards just by pushing on it, or that the present legal situation could easily be modified with a smidgen of "political will". Unless we are mistaken, the reality is not that simple.

On the one hand, one cannot underestimate the affirmative strength and resistance of a law like this one, which is deeply rooted in profound convictions, based on secular practice and, in addition, entrenched in the constitution. It cannot be treated lightly and it will not be altered without difficulty. The attachment to this legislation should be considered as justified, legitimate and tenacious as the attachment to language legislation.

11. See La Loi sur le ministère de l'Éducation, L.R.Q., Ch. M-15, Articles 7 and 8, and the Loi sur le Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, L.R.Q., Ch. C-60 Articles 15 and 22.

12. L.R.Q., Ch. 1-14, Article 189.

On the other hand, the existing law and the accompanying jurisprudence leave the politicians little room to manoeuver. The successive attempts and repeated failures at restructuring the school system on the Island of Montréal provide adequate illustration of this. Nevertheless, the situation is not completely blocked. The present legislation provides for a channel for evolution, and it is important to keep this open.

A LAW THAT IS STILL RELEVANT

We believe that the essential lines of the legislation pertaining to the Catholic schools still remain largely relevant. It seems to us that the law is in tune with the living and active expectations of an important part of the Catholic population, as revealed by contacts with the educational community in the four corners of Québec and as confirmed by the surveys which will be discussed later.

We are not unaware of the criticisms that have been formulated concerning this legislation. It is accused of being anachronistic and outmoded by events. It is even said to be discriminatory, because it has the effect of placing Catholics and Protestants in a position of power over citizens of another religious affiliation or without religious affiliation. These criticisms are not unfounded, especially to the extent that up to now certain measures for accommodation and flexibility contained in the existing legislation have often been ignored and sometimes badly applied. We are not ignorant of the practical difficulties and of the constraints that result from a public system of denominational schools. We know that in education, as in so many other fields, it is not always easy to reconcile individual rights and collective rights. Here as elsewhere, a fair equilibrium is never found once and for all; it must unceasingly be adjusted and readjusted as the communities evolve. But with regard to popular expectations in most regions, we feel that the present legislation concerning the Catholic schools has fundamentally kept its reason for existing.

A FAIRLY FLEXIBLE LAW

Everyone recognizes that the Québec population has become diversified in terms of its religious options, that it is no longer unanimous as it might have been a hundred or fifty years ago, and that some urban neighbourhoods and some suburbs are in fact quite cosmopolitan. Thus, the will to or mere fact of maintaining a rigid, impervious and universal denominational system cannot but provoke tension and severe rifts. The legislature already understood this in 1964 when it initiated the reform of education and proceeded with the creation of the Department of Education and the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation.

While maintaining the dual confessional system and the network of private institutions, the 1964 legislation first provided for the presence of two confessional committees on which it imposed the duty of "recognizing and revoking the confessional character of educational institutions"¹³. It also provided for the possibility of schools "other than schools recognized as Catholic or Protestant"¹⁴ in which religious education could be provided¹⁴. Four years later, in 1969, after the failure of two bills that aimed at restructuring the island of Montréal school system, the government added to the powers conferred on the commissioners and school trustees one of administering schools "other than Catholic or Protestant, as applicable"¹⁵. For its part, the

13. Loi du Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, S.R.Q., Ch. C-60, Article 22. (Translation).

14. Ibid., Article 22, paragraph f. (Translation).

15. Loi de l'Instruction publique, S.R.Q., ch. 1-14 Article 189, paragraphs 3 and 4. Following the judgment of the Superior Court in the case of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges school, this power to administer "other" schools would be inoperative in the school corporations of the Cities of Montréal and Québec, because of the special educational status of these two cities before 1867, which is guaranteed by Article 93. Seen from this angle, the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges case is more exceptional than typical.

catholique included a clause of exemption from religious instruction in its 1967 regulation. It thus gave official status to what a celebrated 1957 court ruling had already declared to be not a "privilege" granted to non-Catholics but a higher right taking precedence over any formulation of positive law - the right to freedom of conscience¹⁶.

Given these provisions, one can say that the law governing denominational status is flexible and that it permits varied adjustments. However, it must necessarily be observed that because of the vicissitudes experienced both by the exemption rule and the establishment of non-denominational schools, it is the contrary impression that prevails in public opinion. The law seems obsolete and rigid. But before concluding that the law is out of phase with reality, we should ask ourselves under the circumstances whether it is rather a matter of attitudes lagging behind the existing legislation. Let us look at the two major points of difficulty in this perspective.

THE EXEMPTION CLAUSE

After the controversies which have sprung up here and there concerning the exemption clause, the very word "exemption" has almost become a synonym for *exclusion*. One only has to go a step further to conclude from this, as some do not hesitate to do, that the exemption rule is fundamentally unjust and discriminatory. Perhaps this step is being taken a little too quickly. We concede that in some places the exemption clause has been applied in such a tightlipped and cantankerous manner that ultimately the exempted students found themselves to be effectively "excluded" at the end of the corridor, or "invited" to go to another school. These are niggardly and fearful practices that we have ourselves denounced on several occasions.

16. Chabot vs Les Commissaires d'école de la Morandière, 1957, B.R. 507.

In spite of these practices, and despite the objective difficulties it runs up against, it is an exaggeration to say that the exemption rule is in itself discriminatory. Recourse to exemption is too frequent in the day-to-day administration of public and private affairs for this rule to be declared discriminatory at the outset. One could think of income tax exemptions, dispensation from military service, and the age dispensation for certain functions or certain civil obligations. Like any other administrative rule, the rule on exemption from religious instruction has its constraining and bureaucratic aspects. When poorly applied, it can allow discriminatory behaviour to take hold. But we feel it is excessive to say that the rule is discriminatory in principle¹⁷.

To the extent that a student exempted from religious instruction receives adequate substitute services, it is false to say that he is a victim of discrimination, even if he is the only one to receive this service, just as students are not victims of discrimination when they are exempted for English or physical education classes because of their ethnic origin, health or some other reason, and end up in the library while their classmates go to the language lab or to the gym. Since the Act and the constitution provide for denominational public schools, we find it hard to see how an internal rule with the aim of ensuring the freedom of conscience of each individual can be declared to be fundamentally discriminatory. When has anyone heard citizens exempt

17. It will be noted that the Commission des droits de la personne does not fail to establish some nuances in its December 7, 1979 statement on freedom of religion and denominational schools, "Liberté de religion et confessionnalité scolaire". Referring specifically to the concrete context in which public Catholic schools operate in Québec and the practical application of the exemption rule, the Commission speaks of a situation that is a "carrier of discrimination", specifying that "this discrimination is not illegal since it is authorized by legislation that predates the Charter" (p. 20). (Translation)

from taxation or military service complain that they are being considered as second-class citizens? Differences must not be confused with discrimination. Someone who affirms that he is different cannot claim discrimination at the same time. You can't have your cake and eat it too.

Similarly, one can certainly criticize the obligation to sign or check off an exemption request form. But bureaucratic practice should not be confused with fundamental rights either, though some are now vainly trying to make people believe that their right to freedom of conscience or to denominational schooling is completely condensed into a single tick mark, either for exemption or for the option!

We would also suggest that the exemption rule should not be inordinately singled out. The school as a whole promotes principles and practices that have the effect of establishing differences in students' treatment and academic progress. One can think, for example, of individualized instruction, subject promotion, options at the end of high school, and remedial teaching. These principles and practices lead to distinctions between the students and sometimes to their being regrouped so that their interests or rate of learning can be better considered. Doing this does not automatically lead to discrimination. Discrimination begins when one person or group is separated from the others and given worse treatment to its detriment. The aim of the exemption rule is to effectively respect freedom of conscience for the children and their parents.

Some people would still maintain that the exemption rule has shown itself to be inadequate in any case, since even when exempted from religious instruction, students continue to be steeped in the "overall atmosphere" of the Catholic school. Once again, a number of factors must be taken into consideration.

First of all, we should define what is meant by the "Christian immersion" that is being denounced. A Catholic school is nothing like a church vestry where

one can breathe the odour of incense at any time. First and foremost it is a school, with an educational design that implies respect for human values, values which are imperative for everyone and on which no person, believer or nonbeliever, can claim to hold an exclusive monopoly. We can think of honesty, respect for other people, high intellectual standards, a sense of discipline, teamwork, responsibility, a sense of one's inner self, respect for one's country's cultural heritage, etc. This is what everyone hopes to find in the overall atmosphere of a school, any school, and all the more so in a Catholic school.

In the latter case, these common values as well as more specifically evangelical attitudes are mainly displayed and implanted in religious education courses and pastoral activities¹⁸. These will or should radiate throughout the school, contributing implicitly or explicitly to establishing the "climate", the atmosphere, and one could also say the "cultural context" of a Catholic school. But at this stage of the report, we have arrived at the frontier between the religious, or "cultuel" and the cultural, or "culturel".

It is important to make a distinction between that which is "cultuel" and that which is "culturel". The "r" in the French word makes a major difference. The exemption clearly entails that a student is excused from any liturgical celebration or worship which calls for a profession of the Christian faith. But the exemption rule will never be able to have the effect of isolating a child from the Québec cultural environment. For example, at Christmastime, whether one wishes it or not and whether the school is denominational or not, one should not be astonished to hear carols in the school and see decorations, symbols of religious mystery to some, elements of folklore to others. Even passersby on Saint Catherine Street cannot be "exempted" from the atmosphere of Christmas or of

18. See L'école québécoise. Énoncé de politique et plan d'action, Gouvernement du Québec, 1979, pp. 27-30.

Yom Kippur, from the sight of the portico of the Church of Christ or the doorway of the Café chrétien, or from the call of the Hare Krishnas or the Salvation Army. There is no rule that can create a cultural vacuum around children, or consign them to a Swiss Family Robinson existence. And who would want this in any case? For a good part then, Christian immersion depends less on the school's denominational nature than on Québec's culture and overall society.

Having said this, we must add that the exemption rule is clearly not a dogma. It is a practical organizational rule, the usefulness and relevance of which the Comité catholique means to verify, since it is undeniable that there are difficulties applying it. This is particularly the case in elementary school where in certain situations, for example an unexpected visit by the pastoral animator, one would feel uneasy inviting exempted pupils to leave or telling them to stay. The exemption rule is not perfect. But no rule is perfect. Any rule will prove to be inadequate where the spirit of understanding and tolerance is lacking. If the exemption rule has to be changed some day, it will be to facilitate pedagogical and administrative practice, and not to give credit to debatable ideological objections.

NON-DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOLS

We have indicated that the laws governing education empower the existing school commissions to administer schools "other than Catholic or Protestant, as applicable". The qualifier "other" is concise, but it says what it means. In using this indefinite adjective, the legislator did not lack precision but took a position of not closing any doors; the legislator thus wanted to allow the school commissions to open any type of school that would appear to be desirable for a given community. The law is thus not deficient on this point. It is deliberately open to many types of school.

There is no need to insist that this power has been very

little used up to now by the school commissions. There is a risk that it may even frighten some of them in the wake of the dramatization of the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges case. However, against one case that has been a stumbling block in Montréal and on which the Court of Appeal will rule, one could cite other cases, in Québec suburbs and in Northern Québec, where schools "other than Catholic" exist by the will of the commissioners and without opposition from anyone.

Sometimes one seems to believe that non-denominational schools will only be able to appear through the magic of new legislation. Yet the existing law is enough for them to spring up where local authorities, aware of real needs, endeavour to find solutions adapted to their community. In the range of solutions which may be envisaged, there is the possibility of instituting a non-denominational school which provides a religious education course, and eventually even a pastoral service, to those who want it. We should specify that a non-denominational school is not necessarily the product of a movement for deconfessionalization; it can emerge in other ways, for example through a reorganization of existing establishments, or through the desire to assign a new pedagogical vocation to an existing school, etc. However, it appears inevitable that in certain communities people will have to resort to the deconfessionalization process. While one can rightly hope that the stages of this process are better defined, particularly insofar as consulting the parents is concerned, we feel that it would be ill-considered to systematically oppose such evolution on the pretext that it represents a form of "betrayal" or "failure" in itself. Once again, as we have said, such exclusivity is not sanctioned by Catholic doctrine¹⁹.

19. See L'école québécoise. Enoncé de politique et plan d'action, Gouvernement du Québec, 1979, pp. 20-23. Also see "critères concernant la révocation de la reconnaissance d'une école catholique", recommendation of the Catholic Committee published in L'état et les besoins de l'éducation, 1978-1979 Report, pp. 319-322. Also see the 1976-1977 Report, pp. 243-248.

A THIRD SYSTEM?

Among the forms of resistance that have manifested themselves on the issue of non-denominational schools where the need exists, we must take note of one stream of opinion which advocates a third neutral school system. Proponents of this option, opposing the existing law, reject the idea that school commissions established for Catholics administer non-Catholic schools, and instead call for addition of a third system of non-denominational schools and school commissions.

What this hypothesis has going for it is the clarity and purity of a theoretical solution: Catholic schools for Catholics, Protestant schools for Protestants, and neutral schools for the "others", with distinct school commissions for this threefold system.

While this hypothesis may be seductive at first glance because of the logical demarcation it establishes, it raises considerable objections that people other than ourselves have not failed to raise²⁰.

Even supposing that this hypothesis of a third system is achievable, we cannot avoid noting that it comes far behind other hypotheses that have been more widely promoted and are more plausible. For example, we can

20. Interventions and articles on this issue mainly object to the following difficulties: new fragmentation of school systems; religious division of a population accustomed to attending the same school until now; division of neighbourhoods; forces migration of students and increase in school busing; regrouping of most immigrant children in schools of the third type; expurgation of elements deemed to be "disfunctional" in the present Catholic schools. It also seems unthinkable to some people that we engage in multiplying or dividing existing schools and structures, given the present context of declining school enrollments.

cite the hypothesis of school commissions unified without regard to language or religion, and the hypothesis of school commissions divided on the basis of language rather than of religion. This is why, in the Island School Council's report on restructuring the Island of Montréal school system, these two proposals are put forward by two dissident commissioners. The report's majority recommendation, however, goes in the direction of the present law and proposes that the existing school commissions open a non-denominational sector²¹. The hypothesis of a third, neutral system is not mentioned. This hypothesis is mainly put forward by groups of Catholics who believe that they can better ensure the future of Christian education in this way. But there is one snag - this hypothesis is not supported by those who would be going to these schools. How can it be seen as a solution to the present problem?

In the debate on this point, it must be understood that everyone would like to see denominational diversification of the school system, and nobody is opposed to the establishment of so-called "other" schools. The division arises as soon as one asks the question: How will these schools appear? To whom will they be accountable? Those who advocate a third system here reject the economy of the present legislation, which provides for the possibility of these schools being accountable to existing school structures; they call for new legislation instituting non-denominational school commissions.

The Comité catholique believes that the evolutionary pattern contained in the existing law offers the most viable solution. Even though this pattern does not have the linear purity of the other hypothesis, it nevertheless has the merit of making tightly-focussed evolution possible for specific communities. This evolution can occur at the local level, as the need arises

21. See Rapport du Conseil scolaire de l'Ile de Montréal au ministre de l'Education sur la restructuration scolaire de l'île de Montréal, May 1977, p. 45.

and as diversity increases, without all of Québec having to engage in a thorny debate on denominational school structures. This is the pattern which legislators from 1964 until now have deemed to be the most economical and least onerous. The Comité catholique considers that this pattern is still the most reasonable one today. This is why it reiterates that it is better to put the existing law honestly to the test and seek to deploy its possibilities than to try to redraw the educational map of Québec on the basis of an artificial trinity.

Through the two points we have just briefly discussed - the exemption clause and the advent of non-denominational schools - you will have observed that the legislation governing denominational schools is not as anachronistic as some would like to say. It could even be maintained that this legislation sometimes appears to be in advance of the outlooks and wishes of the school communities. The problem is thus not caused by the gap between law and reality. The differences between outlooks is much more responsible for provoking the current conflicts. This is why it is necessary to go beyond the law, beyond any law, and act on attitudes and mentalities with means that will knock down apprehensions and fears, whether unfounded or not.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEE

Some quite recent developments oblige us to raise a more sweeping question. How solid is constitutional law on the denominational schools issue? Can the guarantee contained in Section 93 of the British North America Act be considered an immutable bulwark?

We should first observe that the debate on denominational schools has caused the emergence of a rights conflict of fundamental importance. One side, basing itself on the Canadian constitution, affirms the right of Catholics and Protestants to denominational schools, or at least to dissenting schools. The other side, basing itself on the Charte des droits et libertés de la personne, Québec's human rights charter, and on international Charters,

propounds the right to public education that is open to everyone, without discrimination based on race, class, sex or religion. How can these two rights be reconciled? Which can take precedence over the other?

In strictly legal terms, there is no opposition between the two rights, since it is clear that the Charte des droits does not take precedence over laws in force prior to its promulgation, any more, obviously, than it does over the constitution. The question of a conflict of rights is raised here in the perspective of eventual amendments to Québec school legislation, and especially in the perspective of a possible rewriting of the Canadian constitution.

The Parent Report already provided a clear answer in one respect: the obligation incumbent on the State to ensure public education for everyone takes precedence over the duty that might be attributed to it of authorizing religious education for groups of children in its schools²². In its December 1979 declaration, the Commission des droits de la personne was entirely of the same opinion. This then is the view of two organizations of a non-judicial and non-legislative nature.

How will lawmakers and jurists answer this question? This is what will have to be clarified one of these days. In the constitutional talks in the summer of 1980, the issue of Section 93 was not mentioned (though the discussions on whether or not it was advisable to entrench language rights in a charter of rights certainly have an impact on the point being raised here). If these talks result in a draft constitution, the question will have to be asked. Québec Catholics and Protestants will then have an essential choice to make. Will they insist that Section 93 be included unchanged in a new constitution? Or will they accept that the guarantees of 1867 be modified, and if so, in what way?

22. Op. cit., p. 34.

Obviously it is not possible to picture the possible outcome of these negotiations. The religious, social and educational repercussions can be measured, however. Insofar as principles are concerned, the order of priorities suggested by the Parent Report has every chance of prevailing. But as we know, political reality is made up of compromises. Whatever happens, entrenchment in the Canadian constitution will always ensure that denominational schools will be on a firm footing, even though in the past few months it appears that this foundation could shift and eventually invite different arrangements.

THE POWER OF LEGAL CONSTRAINTS

The law has a constraining power, and this constraint is not to be challenged. Upon occasion it may provide an effective reminder of the requirements of denominational schooling. But it would be insufferable for denominational schooling to impose itself as a constraint. Denominational schools are only conceivable and attainable with the deep-seated backing of those primarily involved in it - the teachers and school principals - in agreement with the wishes of the parents. Ultimately, confessional schooling imposed by force would bear no relation to the evangelical spirit.

There are some people who sometimes advocate a policy of compulsion on the issue of denominational schooling. Anyone who does not acquiesce to their views is considered to be spineless! We nevertheless feel it appropriate to reiterate that a policy of compulsion in this field, even if it is the compulsion of the law, can only render a disservice to the design for Catholic schooling and contribute to giving Christian education a forbidding appearance. The more that it appears necessary to rely on the will and the participation of the community to give life to a Catholic school, the more it would be ill-advised to resist a clearly expressed will to pursue another project. A denominational school will not be made to work by force.

THE RISE OF LEGALISM

The intent of the law is distorted when people drift into legalism, and it is appropriate to be concerned about the current rise of legalism in the debate on denominational schools. Arguments are increasingly being made solely on the basis of rights and demands, as in collective bargaining and pressure group politics. People should know how to go beyond asserting the rights of their particular group and affirm their obligations to other groups. Who will state the duties of Catholics and Protestants to those who belong to another faith or have no explicit religious affiliation? And who will affirm the obligations of the latter group to the Catholics and Protestants?

Beyond rights and obligations, one must above all adhere to the spirit and truth of education in accordance with the Gospel. It would not be inappropriate here to recall Solzhenitsyn's words in his speech at Harvard: "A society which has based itself on the law without seeking to go higher only makes feeble use of man's highest faculties. The law is too cold and too formal to exert a beneficent influence on society. When all of life is penetrated by legal relationships, an atmosphere of moral mediocrity is created which asphyxiates the best impulses of man"^{22a}. While the law guarantees denominational schooling, legalism could stifle it.

Out of all these considerations on the power of the law, we should remember that the legal argument is both indispensable and useful in the debate on denominational schooling, but no more so than theological principles, and cannot be allowed to monopolize the field. The law is being applied here to a complex reality of an order of values that are both permanent and changeable. It must be maintained in the service of an education that chooses to be Christian, and that instinctively knows that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life"(2 Cor. 2:6).

22a. Translation.

3. The Strength of Numbers

In addition to the strength of principles and the power of the law, there is another force which carries fairly heavy weight in the debate on Catholic schooling: the strength of numbers. Many arguments are made on the basis of figures and statistics drawn from the many polls and surveys conducted in the past few years among parents and the general public²³. There is no need to say that these polls and surveys give grounds for varied interpretations, each endeavouring to use them to confirm the thesis it is promoting!

With or without the support of figures, people are also increasingly resorting to the argument of majority rule. "The majority wants Catholic schools and it is entitled to them". This is supposed to be unanswerable argument in a democracy! However, the minorities reply: "We are victims of discrimination". This is an equally effective argument in a liberal democracy in the late twentieth century, where, as one person wrote with a touch of humour, "one has to be a minority to have power"! While the noisy minority claims to be reduced to marginal status, the silent majority feels threatened. This is the way such debates usually escalate. How can one avoid being drawn upward into this spiral?

23. We should particularly cite: Bouchard, P., L'éducation et la population québécoise, survey report, Ministère de l'Éducation, 1978; Centre de sondage de l'Université de Montréal, Les attentes des parents vis-à-vis de l'école, research conducted for the C.E.C.M., 1976; Wener, N., Les aspirations des parents de l'Île de Montréal face à la religion et l'école, 1975; Cormier, R., Lessard, C. and Valois, P., Les enseignantes et enseignants du Québec, socio-pedagogical study, Ministère de l'Éducation, Québec 1979

First of all it is important to establish control over the numerical argument by studying the available statistical data. There is no doubt indeed that the surveys and consultations which were conducted recently can shed some useful light on the expectations and aspirations of the public regarding religious and moral education in school. Still, the conclusions drawn from this data must be carefully examined and one must show care not to isolate a few figures while ignoring the overall picture that stands out.

The overall picture that emerges from these pools and surveys has characteristics that are fairly clearly defined. A number of trends that appear hard to challenge stand out on their own. We will limit ourselves here to four major observations.

1. A very large majority, or more than three-quarters, of the Québec population wants moral and religious education to be provided in school. This means that there is a very widespread desire in the Québec public for moral and religious instruction courses to be given to young people at the elementary and secondary levels.
2. A goodly majority of the population, or about two thirds, declares itself to be "satisfied" or "fairly satisfied" with the moral and religious education provided in school. This rate of satisfaction is higher for elementary schools than for high schools.
3. For a relative majority of parents with school-age children, the Catholic school remains the type of school most favoured. The parents want a Catholic school that is consistent with its principles but also open to the fact of religious diversity.

4. However, the surveys show that there is a real inclination among at least one third of the population towards multid denominational schooling, which is understood as being an institution that offers diversified religious teaching (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Orthodox, etc.) to those who want it, as well as a moral education course for other students.

It would take too long to back up these statements here with the help of the data presently available, but we will do it elsewhere²⁴. Let it suffice the reader to note these four traits that characterize the major contours of public opinion concerning denominational schooling. We will only specify that the first two statements, which are based on some eloquent figures, can be made confidently. The same does not apply for the third and fourth statements, which call for treatment with considerably more nuancing, because the variables on the origin, age and conditions of the respondents play a considerable role. Thus, for example, the Catholic school remains the preferred choice of the vast majority of parents in small towns, while in urban or metropolitan areas the options appear to be fairly widely diversified, particularly at the high school level. These last two statements therefore do not provide authorization for any telling statements whatsoever.

24. In a dossier now in preparation which will appear some time in 1980-1981, the Comité catholique will analyze the recent polls and surveys on expectations regarding denominational schooling, and will extract the elements it considers most significant and explain its reading of the situation.

MAJORITY RULE

The democratic system essentially means government by the majority. Again, means have to be found to identify and express the will of the majority. On the denominational schools issue, surveys are one means among others to determine majority and minority choices.

Majority rule poses particularly difficult problems when it is applied to matters where values are at stake, since the number of votes is not then a determining criterion. For example, even if a citizen were alone in defending justice or opposing racial discrimination, he would nevertheless have all rights on his side against the majority. It may thus happen that a minority and even a single individual can be justified over everyone else. Joseph de Maistre went so far as to say that "the minority is often right" and Simone Weil said that "justice does not long remain in the camp of the victors".

The school as an institution does not escape being governed by the majority even if it has to surround itself with special precautions, given that the school is one of the places where values are more directly exposed and that merely adding up votes is not a finely-tuned enough means of ensuring that these values will be respected and flourish.

It is normal that the schools' denominational status continue to apply as long as the majority wants it. On the other hand, the vary nature of faith demands that it not be imposed on anyone. This is why the majority in a Catholic school has to show respect for students who do not want or whose parents do not want religious education. Numbers here lose their importance before the respect necessarily owed to individual conscience.

A RULE TO BE REFINED

In liberal democracies, raw majority rule shows itself to be insufficient. In *The Third Wave*, Alvin Toffler

notes that Western countries are in the process of transition from a democratic system based on majority rule to a system that is more and more attentive both to the majority and to minorities. This observation can also be valid for the school, and particularly for the denominational school. It would be insufficient for this school to "rest" - in both senses of the word - on a statistical majority; indeed, it is incumbent upon it to seriously take the minorities it admits into account. Otherwise, its very attitude will provoke an upsurge of radical groups.

In return, we feel that equal attention should be paid to the situation of the Catholic majority. This majority sometimes has trouble recognizing itself in the "position of strength" that some depict and denounce. Certainly the Catholic school can count on important legal backing, but this does not prevent its "real position" from often remaining difficult, sometimes uncertain and in certain cases even inadequately assured. It cannot be denied that there are some deep currents challenging the Catholic school and its specific aims; we can think of the secularist mentality that relativizes any religious resolution, the bureaucratic influence that accommodates itself poorly to denominational "differences", and the religious disaffection among one segment of the teaching staff and the public. While some Catholics have shown themselves sensitive to the risks and fortunes of this real situation, others primarily see hindrances and threats in it for the Catholic school. This is also part of the reality, and should not be forgotten. When Québec was discussing language legislation, wasn't the argument of "the majority that feels threatened" widely invoked? It also deserves to be taken into consideration when denominational schooling is the issue.

Concerning the argument of figures and the majority/ minority ratio, remember that attention must be paid to the nuances in using statistical data on confessional schooling and on the power of the majority. Indeed, placing too much reliance on the strength of numbers could lead to the practice of "sledgehammer democracy": we have the majority,

so let the others get in line or go elsewhere! This perhaps was the democratic rule in the last century, but it can no longer be the democratic rule in a fragmented society. It is therefore appropriate to pay attention in the polls not only to the majority that emerges but also to the minorities that can be seen. This will be an incentive to look for ways to a consensus, rather than those leading to ruthless self-assertion by the majority. This especially means a commitment to finding means to ensure respect for diversity.

4. The Force of Circumstances

In any situation, there are factors that can be controlled and oriented, and there are others on which one has no grasp and which intrude as a necessity, by force of circumstances. The issue of denominational schooling is no exception. It is true that there is often a tendency to situate it almost exclusively in the realm of intentions and desires, where everything seems possible. This is to forget that denominational schooling is part of dull reality and that it also bears the weight of the force of circumstances. De Jouvenel's maxim is applicable in this case too: "Many decisions are never made; they forge themselves by the force of circumstances".

To illustrate this obscure force of circumstances and situations, let us briefly cite four factors of very different orders that partially condition or determine choices and efforts in the matter of denominational schooling.

DECLINING ENROLLMENTS

We know that the complex problems that result from the declining birth rate and the drop in school enrollments: surplus of teachers, underuse of facilities, etc. The repercussions of this demographic phenomenon also affect denominational schooling. Let us cite one case in which these consequences are very apparent - the English Catholic

schools. A recent study of the Anglophone population living outside the Montréal region not only shows "that there are more and more Anglophone Catholics in the Protestant schools", but observes "with astonishment that the number of Catholics has dropped by almost 40%" in total first-year elementary school enrollments from 1971-1972 to 1977-1978 in the Anglophone Catholic sector²⁵. Even on the Island of Montréal, cases of Catholic and Protestant school mergers are beginning to appear, and it can be foreseen that they will multiply. When such an eventuality arises, the denominational dimension is not ignored, and arrangements are sought that can satisfy the two parties; in most cases and for a variety of reasons, this does not prevent the choice from finally being made on the basis of the school's language rather than on its denominational character.

In the Francophone Catholic schools, declining enrollments have also raised unanticipated problems. For example, at the elementary level, where more and more "multiple division" classes have been instituted, how can moral and religious education programs be presented to pupils of different ages and from different grades? In high school, how can electives in moral and religious education be offered when the number of students and teachers is declining?

Another repercussion is that the reduction in the number of students forces administrators to regroup and concentrate classes. This accordingly makes it hard to envisage any possibility, even for denominational reasons, of proceeding to subdivide populations and facilities in order to establish a third, autonomous system of non-denominational schools. In another time, perhaps, particularly during the period of demographic growth and school construction, this hypothesis

25. See Caldwell, G., Le Québec anglophone hors de la région de Montréal dans les années soixante-dix, Dossiers du Conseil de la langue française, Québec 1980, pp. 60-61.

seemed conceivable. But today it appears to be physically unattainable in most school communities. The demographic, geographic and economic reality is imposing severe limitations.

RECEIVING IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

Catholic public schools in Québec are receiving more and more young people from different cultural and religious traditions. This is a new situation resulting from the constant flow of immigration to this country. We know the figures: nearly one million immigrants have come to Québec since 1945, about 400,000 of them since 1965. And they are continuing to arrive in number every year: 29,282 in 1976, and 19,522 in 1979, for example. About 20% are school-age, which means that each year, depending on fluctuations, there are about 4,000 young people, more or less, who are integrated into the Québec school population²⁶.

Yesterday it was mainly the English schools, both Protestant and Catholic, which took in children of immigrants. Today, because of Québec's social and political evolution and mainly because of Bill 101, French language Catholic schools are in their turn being called upon to develop a tradition of welcoming these new arrivals. From now on this question will be put to the social and Christian conscience of those responsible for or involved in Catholic public schools: Do they want them to be open to the children of immigrants? Or will they leave them to understand that it would be better for them to go elsewhere?

26. For more complete data, see Dans ce pays, a brochure published by the Comité catholique in 1978 which deals with the Catholic school system's reception of children from various cultural and religious traditions. The brochure notes that 80% of the immigrant settle in the Montréal region; the remaining 20% settle in other Québec regions.

The answer seems obvious, but it does not appear to be taken for granted everywhere. This is why the idea has been raised of establishing "designated schools" which would bring together non-Catholic children and those requesting exemption from religious education. The idea awakens some suspicions, in the sense that it appears to be motivated not only by the desire to grant these young people better services, particularly in the area of moral education, but also by the desire to keep this clientele at a distance from the Catholic schools. We do not reject the possibility that certain schools already receiving a high proportion of children from ethnic groups could specialize in welcoming these young people with appropriate teaching methods, promotion of languages and cultures of origin, and a staff that is sensitized to the requirements of intercultural education; this would be like extending the principle of "welcoming classes" to a whole school. But we believe that primary emphasis should be placed on all Catholic schools developing a real capacity to welcome these students.

The Catholic Committee has already clarified its thinking on the issue in the brochure entitled *Dans ce pays*. It intends to discourage any inclination to return to the not too distant past when Catholic schools showed themselves to be exclusive and closed to anyone who was not a Catholic, thus incurring reproach for having committed an historic error. The same error should not be repeated. Given the alacrity, for example, with which the Québec public in general, and the parish communities in particular, welcomed the refugees from Southeast Asia this year, how can anyone believe that they would want to advocate anything less than an open-door policy when the time comes to welcome immigrant children in the Catholic schools?

THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

This is another determining factor, perhaps even the most important one, for everything that happens in the schools. The schools find themselves effectively defined or

redefined to a large extent every three of four years in the union-management power relationship crystallized in the many clauses of the collective agreement. The Catholic public school, which does not exist in the abstract, is itself determined by this balance of forces, and it is heir to the possibilities and limits contained in the agreements. Thus, for example, the agreement established in 1980 provides for religious and moral education to constitute a specific field of teaching for the purposes of applying the job security clauses; this is a positive point, which will contribute to ensuring greater stability within the team of moral and religious education teachers at the high school level. However, this accord does not make it possible to lighten these teachers' workload, which remains proportionately heavier than that of most teachers in other disciplines.

One can criticize the overly rigid framework imposed by the collective agreements, and one can deplore that they give very little consideration to the requirements of a denominational school. But one cannot hope that a public Catholic school can be totally exempt from rules and constraints of this kind. There is thus a connection to be established between a Catholic school's statement of pedagogical projects and the working conditions effectively negotiated and finally endorsed by the union and management parties.

BUDGETARY RESTRICTIONS

The attempt to compress school budgets is now intervening in all administrative choices and is inevitably leaving its mark on the deployment of pedagogical activities. It is particularly making itself felt in reductions in the administrative and professional staff, including members of the pastoral service at the high school level.

When the time comes to make decisions on Christian education, it is inevitable that economic considerations come into play. These sometimes have a preponderant, and even exclusive influence, which appears to be less

acceptable. Some then make the criticism that "money is coming before principles", while the administrators retort, "We'd like to do better, but..." To tell the truth, to be fair and realistic one should try to join together these two types of considerations, rather than opposing them to each other. This is still the best way to avoid short-sighted administration and guard against overly ambitious projects.

The four factors outlined above illustrate the "force of circumstances" that conditions choices and limits achievements, in Christian education as in other fields. Everyone could easily add other more important or more prosaic "necessities" that exert a real form of pressure or constraint in their circles.

It is useful to name these objective constraints, which often are resistant to anyone's best will. While some can be reduced, evaded or outstripped, others compel recognition as a sort of threshold that is difficult to cross. This perhaps is the case with the necessary link between the Catholic school and its surrounding Christian community, and which is sometimes evoked by the following question: Can the students and teachers demonstrate a faith that is so much more explicit than that which is manifested in their homes and in the parishes they come from? A river can be converted into hydro-electric power, but the nature of things dictates that the water in a dam will never be higher than its sources.

5. The Power of Pressure Groups and Established Bodies

To understand the evolution of the denominational situation in Québec, one must again consider the strength of the groups and organizations that are intervening in the debate.

First of all there are the pressure and interest groups. Through their presence, their action and even their opposition, these groups convey expectations and ideas which take root in the population and which deserve to be taken into consideration. Let's cite the groups whose influence is obvious.

L'Association des parents catholiques du Québec (APCQ)

This Catholic parents' organization has been involved for more than ten years in various school struggles, and especially in promoting Catholic schooling. It brings together parents from both the private and public school sectors. This Association defends widely known positions, particularly in opposing any form of deconfessionalization of public schools and advocating the establishment of an independent system of neutral school commissions. It represents a current of opinion which varies in importance depending on the region, but which indisputably reflects one segment of the Catholic population. However, it does not represent all Catholic parents in Québec, since other currents of opinion and other tendencies certainly exist within the Catholic population.

L'Association québécoise pour l'application du droit à l'exemption de l'enseignement religieux (AQUADER)

This Association has considerably less members than the one above, but it is equally active. Until last year, the Association sought to promote effective application of the right of exemption provided for in Articles 14 and 15 of the Comité catholique's Regulation. At its last convention it chose to enlarge its objectives and carry on the work of the Mouvement laïc de langue française of the 1960's, by advocating a universal system of neutral public schools.

While supporting opposing points of view, these two Associations have served to shed some light on a number of real deficiencies in the schools - the casual attitude to religious education as well as the insensitivity to the situation of students who are exempt from religious instruction. They are the spokesmen of sectors of public opinion. It is our conviction, however, that the majority of the population, and of the Catholic population in particular, adheres to positions that are less clear-cut and more conciliatory than those advocated by these

two associations.

La Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec (CEQ)

At its June 1980 convention, the CEQ adopted a resolution calling for the abolition of the dual denominational structure, demanding a unified school system and the institution of a single public school offering moral or religious education to those who wish it. This position represents a "softened" version of the resolution proposed in the convention's preparatory documents, which suggested that the Churches and the families be given back exclusive responsibility for religious education. Even though, in our view, the resolution adopted still appears to be far from where the parents, the children, and also, according to consultations and surveys, even many of the teachers are at, we must expect that teachers' union pressure will henceforth be in the direction indicated.

Le Regroupement scolaire de l'Ile de Montréal (RSIM)

This organization was established during the past year. In its manifesto it advocates "community" schools accessible to all children in a neighbourhood without discrimination based on sex, race, language, religion or social or cultural level²⁷,

Aside from these pressure and interest groups, we must mention the bodies which exercise general or special responsibility over the school under the terms of the law and whose decisions, orientations or work directly or indirectly influence denominational schooling.

27. See L'école que nous voulons, Manifesto, April 1980
11 page.

La Fédération des commissions scolaires catholiques du Québec (FCSCQ)

This Québec federation of Catholic school commissions has already stated its position in the white paper it published in March 1978: "The school commissions want public denominational schools open to everyone. For this purpose, they undertake to consider the necessity of adapting these schools so that they are accessible to everyone everywhere, including those who do not share the religious preoccupations of the majority of the parents"²⁸. The Federation has announced that it will conduct an in-depth examination in 1980-1981 of all aspects of the denominational schools question.

Le Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (CSE)

The Conseil, which according to the Act constituting it has the power to submit recommendations to the Minister on any question concerning education, has announced its intention to conduct a study during 1980-1981 on confessionnalism in the Québec school system. In its 1978-1979 report, the Conseil supérieur already submitted a certain number of recommendations concerning the expectations and aspirations of religious and ethnic minority groups²⁹.

The *Comité catholique* of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation is entrusted with direct responsibility for recognition and revocation of the denominational character of the Catholic Schools, as well as for regulation of the main aspects of a Catholic school (moral and religious education, pastoral service, qualifications of teaching

28. See Livre blanc des commissions scolaires, March 30, 1978, p. 5 (Translation).

29. See "L'école et les enfants de divers groupes ethniques et religieux", 1978-1979 annual report, L'état et les besoins de l'éducation, pp. 285-294.

and administrative personnel). The Act also makes it responsible for approving teaching materials for the Catholic schools and for adopting regulations concerning the qualifications of teachers called upon to provide Catholic religious instruction in non-denominational schools³⁰. The very composition of this body makes it a sort of hyphen between the Catholic population and the ministère de l'Éducation.

Conclusion

We have just reviewed the forces that have an impact on denominational schooling and which combine to increase the present politicization of this question. Our intention was to name all the forces at work: the strength of principles, the power of the law, the strength of numbers, the force of circumstances, and the power of pressure groups and established bodies. Naming them already means putting them back in perspective and establishing their relative positions. This makes it possible to see more clearly in the debate, and helps each individual discern what is at stake and situate his or her option or interventions better. We hope this will also encourage them to come to terms on and reconcile their differences.

At the end of this exercise, one question naturally comes to mind: What will result from the interplay of these forces? In another form, this is a restatement of the question raised in the introduction: Where is the Catholic school heading?

It will be understood that no one organization holds the answer to this question. The answer will stem from the influence and interaction of all the forces mentioned here. It will also flow from the foresight or lack of foresight of those making small and large decisions,

30. See Loi du Conseil supérieur de l'éducation S.R.Q., Ch. C-60, Article 22.

both in individual schools and in the responsible organizations. Let us be permitted in conclusion, however, to formulate a long-term wish and propose two concrete short-term orientations.

CHOOSING THE FUTURE

In the long term, we must ardently hope for progress towards a future that is *chosen* and *wanted*, that matches the expectations of the population, and that is not merely the result of chance or of the interplay of obscure forces, and still less of a test of strength.

For the Comité catholique, this chosen and wanted future can be reached by recognizing the meaning and relevance of a coherent and open Catholic school, which remains the expectation of a large part of the Catholic population. Inseparably, it will be reached by acknowledging the religious diversity of Québec in the Eighties, an acknowledgement which can no longer remain theoretical and which must become concretized through gradual and specific implementation of a real diversity in types of schools, as the communities evolve demographically, socially and religiously. It is within this perspective of a diversified school system that the Comité catholique to continue promoting the appropriate place and role of the Catholic school.

In the short term, during the debate now in progress, we feel it is important to challenge the political illusion and place our reliance on community responsibility.

CHALLENGING THE "POLITICAL ILLUSION"

The politicization which developed during 1979-1980 on the issue of Catholic schooling risks creating the belief that the "problem" of denominational schooling can be solved by political intervention, and specifically by changes in the legislation (that each group imagines to be favourable to its point of view).

To believe this is to fall victim to the "political illusion", namely the illusion that a legislative act, whatever it may be, can nullify a debate which involves so many ramifications. After the examination we have just completed of all the forces present and issues at stake, it can easily be predicted that any change in the legislation that is not accompanied by a change in outlook simply risks aggravating the debate and widening the rift between the groups.

We must therefore reject the "political illusion" and work to enlighten public opinion on the major ins and outs of this highly complex question. The Comité catholique has sought in this report to sketch a sort of outline on the basis of which it feels the effort at understanding should be pursued.

At least let this be used as a chart to avoid foundering on the rocks. "It is essential to avoid that the debate, which is already sufficiently impassioned, crystallizes into militant attitudes and finally turns into sterile bickering"³¹.

RELYING ON COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

We believe that the most essential support for denominational schooling resides in the will of the parents to ensure Christian education for their young ones and in the capacity of believing communities to give rise to educators who are equal to these requirements. This is where the Catholic school finds its foundations, its wellsprings, its vital roots. As the educational system increasingly talks about "decentralization" and the "educational project" to be developed in each establishment, we believe that the fate of Catholic schooling will be played out tomorrow as it was yesterday, at the school level. It will live by the concrete and personal commitment of

31. Bishops' message to those responsible for education, page 30 (Translation).

parents, teachers and the students themselves. It will not be made to live by decree or by artificial respiration.

To say this is basically to remember the existence of a primary and absolutely decisive force - the force of life itself.

We will try to evaluate this life force in the second part of this report.

B. EXAMINING THE DENOMINATIONAL ASPECT OF THE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

While the debate on Catholic schooling has developed outside, the front-line agents within the school, as we said in the introduction, have felt the need to verify what the school's denominational nature means in concrete terms, in day-to-day practice. We noted that this need coincides with the work initiated in many schools to define an "educational project", which in particular leads to a closer evaluation of all educational activities, including the activities linked to Christian education.

This need is considered in the present research in order to ensure what is referred to as the "quality of education". The priority given to this theme in the overall educational effort shows that it corresponds to active expectations and to widely-felt needs. In the specific field of Christian education, it is good and useful to try to verify what is really being accomplished in the Catholic schools. This is not only a question of truth - verifying means demonstrating the truth - but also a question of justice for the Catholic population.

However, the very expression "quality of education" still has to be clarified, both for education in general and Christian education in particular. Otherwise it risks remaining a catch-all formula, which is surely seductive and loaded with many hopes, but denuded of any specific meaning. To give it content and render it operative, one must first, as the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation noted in its 1978 report, determine what elements constitute quality in education; one must then find points of reference or indicators that will make it possible to verify whether or not this quality exists in the schools³².

32. L'état et les besoins de l'éducation, 1978-1979
Report. Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, pp.7-19.

This specific task with regard to Catholic schooling is the subject of the second part of the Comité catholique's report. The Comité also wants to provide some answers to the need for verification that has appeared, and to support the initial efforts that have been made in this direction. It also wants to extend and complete the reflection it proposed last year on the specific nature of the Catholic school³³.

1. Reference to Criteria

To judge quality, one must have criteria, for an appraisal must always be made on the basis of implicit or explicit criteria. What criteria or scales will be used to judge the quality of Christian education in the Catholic schools?

In its reports for previous years, the Comité catholique has isolated and developed the three following elements that characterize the Catholic school³⁴:

- . an explicit and respectful presentation of the Christian faith,
- . priority attention to the human relations climate,
- . the will to educate the total individual.

In their very formulation these three elements contain nothing new or exclusive. Nevertheless, it is always through them and through their synthesis that the particular nature of the Catholic school is fostered. They are natural and necessary expressions of a design for education that seeks its inspiration from the Gospel.

33. Ibid., pp. 33-44

34. See L'Etat et les besoins de l'éducation, 1978-1979 Report, pages 36-37; also see the Report for 1977-1978, pages 202-204.

So it is on the basis of these three constituent elements that it is suitable to undertake the examination of the denominational aspect of the school experience. To reach a judgment on the quality of Christian education provided in a school, one must therefore try to measure the degree to which each of these three elements has been achieved.

2. Reliance on Guidelines

To judge quality, it is not enough to state criteria. One must verify whether these criteria are realized in concrete terms. This examination can be conducted in various ways - through analyses, surveys, or polls. One can also make use of guidelines which have been carefully selected and which can play the role of soundings or samplings of reality. This is why, in order to verify the quality of Christian education in the school, we propose to rely on a set of guidelines drawn from life in the schools. These guidelines will serve as points for verification, chosen on the basis of their significance with respect to the criteria mentioned above, and also on the basis of their ability to reveal the denominational aspect of the school experience.

One analogy will make it possible to better understand the important role of guidelines. Medical doctors use precise guidelines, like blood pressure and rate of heart beat, to verify criteria of good physical health. The same principle applies in economics where, on the basis on criteria for the functioning of the economy, a set of indicators have been established to provide information on the expansionist or recessionist state of the national economy. Similarly, ecologists know how to recognize certain telltale plants which reveal whether soil quality is clayey, sandy or alkaline.

In education, especially in Christian education, it is obviously not possible to measure in the same way as in economics or botany. Not everything is equally measurable.

But once the quality of the denominational aspect of a school's performance has been evaluated, we must rely on guidelines or points of verification.

One dictionary defines "guideline" as an apparent sign that provides a probable indication. We will present a set of factors that constitute apparent signs which provide a probable indication of a school's situation from the denominational perspective.

Let it be understood that we are using signs, namely facts or situations on the basis of which the existence of a certain quality of denominational school experience can be induced. These are apparent signs, which means that they should reveal themselves clearly and quickly to any observer. Finally, these are signs which provide a probable indication, not evidence that would allow a sure conclusion to be drawn, but guidelines that make it possible to conjecture a school's confessional situation with adequate assurance. Guidelines are used to indicate and demonstrate.

The Comité catholique has drawn these guidelines from its members' knowledge of and practice in the educational field. More specifically, it has drawn them from the experience of its own school visits. As we know, Article 22 of the Loi de l'Instruction publique authorizes the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation and its agencies to visit the schools, this power being linked to the Conseil's main task of producing a report each year on the state and needs of education. By virtue of this power and in carrying out the tasks within its competence, the Comité catholique visits nearly ten schools each year, which gives it the opportunity to meet a certain number of students, teachers, principals, parents and commissioners in the concrete context of the school. By increasing the number of visits, the Comité is able to take the pulse of an institution, read between the lines and between the groups, and see what often escapes the notice of front-line agents who are too close to the scene.

It is thus, mainly on the basis of observations gathered in the field, illustrated with real experiences, that the Comité catholique is proposing the following guidelines to judge the denominational quality of a Catholic school.

3. Ten Guidelines

Here is the list of ten guidelines we have selected and which will be presented one by one in connection with the criteria mentioned previously.

1. Explicit and respectful presentation of the Christian faith

Guideline 1: pedagogical support to religion education and pastoral animation

Guideline 2: cooperation between moral and religious education teachers and pastoral animators

Guideline 3: the degree of satisfaction with religious educational and pastoral activities

Guideline 4: the manner in which course choices and the exemption question are handled

II. Priority attention to the human relations climate

Guideline 5: the capacity for welcoming new arrivals

Guideline 6: the place made for minorities

Guideline 7: the sense of participation

III. The will to educate the total individual

Guideline 8: the existence of certain poles of integration

Guideline 9: times for awakening to the inner self and to celebration

Guideline 10: the links with the surrounding community

1. *Explicit and Respectful Presentation of the Christian Faith*

Catholic schools openly take the spiritual, moral and religious growth of young people into consideration and integrate this into their design for education. To this end, they offer religious education courses with the aim of giving young people the possibility of thoroughly studying the message of Jesus in the Gospel, while developing their moral sense and religious culture. In addition, the Catholic schools offer them, in the framework of pastoral animation, concrete experiences in evangelical practice and a life lived and celebrated under the theme of faith. These courses and activities respect the progress of young people in faith and freedom of conscience.

What guidelines can be used to verify whether this first constituent feature of Catholic schooling is objectively realized? Obviously one could look into the results of the planning and evaluation that is being carried out more and more in religious education and pastoral animation. One should also consider the personal quality of the teachers and animators assigned to these tasks. However, we have chosen to pick out broader signs that are more immediately visible and that continue to have a decisive influence in many respects.

Guideline 1: Pedagogical Support to Religious Education and Pastoral Animation

The quality of religious education and pastoral animation is largely a function of the backing and support provided by the Christian education counsellor or pedagogical counsellor and by the school administration. It is not an exaggeration to say that on a regional scale and over a longer period of time, the better the pedagogical support, the better the religious education and pastoral services.

Elementary school A is located in a metropolitan area and has a fairly diversified student body. When we met with the teachers they said they were not having trouble coping with the task of religious instruction. Certainly there are difficulties, but one gets the feeling that this community is capable of taking itself in hand and confronting these problems. Provision is made for professional upgrading periods; unsuitable teachers are encouraged to request exemption; parents' groups are being formed to support the efforts of the assigned teachers, especially when the pupils are about to receive their first sacraments. In this community one feels the presence of animation and of real support from the pedagogical counsellor in religious education.

In comprehensive school B the administrative staff clearly is assuming the real leadership. The principal sees the pastoral animators and moral and religious education teachers as key people to give inspiration to the school's climate and to implement the educational project. To do this, the administrators periodically meet with the team of moral and religious education teachers and pastoral animators. Since they share the same objectives, they work together on the program of activities and on the high points of student life in the school. The administration is also present when the team renders an account of its evaluation. The team of teachers and animators not only feels supported, included and encouraged in

difficult periods, but confirmed in its mandate by the top authority in the school.

Without a form of pedagogical support, it is hard for moral and religious education teachers and for pastoral animators to hold out for long. Their job is demanding both in professional and in personal terms. It presumes a constant adjustment to the expectations of young people and constant upgrading and resourcefulness. When support is not offered, when each individual can only rely on his own resources and personal reserves, quality quickly fades. Pedagogical support is like a key that opens the door to many initiatives: retraining, professional upgrading sessions, sensitization of the people responsible, participation by parents, etc. It is because of this pedagogical support that religious education teachers have been able to carry out an important effort at evaluating their teaching in recent years, and that the same initiative is now being applied in the pastoral animation sector.

We should emphasize that pedagogical support can itself vary in intensity and quality. This particularly depends on the quality of the persons responsible for ensuring animation and coordination, and their competence, availability and ability to answer the real questions that are asked of moral and religious education teachers and pastoral animators. Given the importance of the positions of Christian education counsellor or pedagogical counsellor, the most minor failings in those holding these positions become very "visible" and have a considerable effect on the quality of the support that is in fact offered.

Guideline 2: Cooperation Between Moral and Religious Education Teachers and Pastoral Animators

One can also measure the quality of a Catholic school by the degree of cooperation that exists between the moral

and religious education teachers and the pastoral animators. When this cooperation is established in a sustained and functional manner, its beneficent effects are quickly perceived, first on these two activities themselves, religious education and pastoral animation, then on the perception of these activities by the students and the other teachers, and finally on the general atmosphere in the school. When this cooperation does not exist, there is still room for individual goodwill and competence, but there is a risk that such efforts will remain without an answering echo.

At school C at the beginning of the year, the two pastoral animators and the moral and religious education teachers got together for three days to finalize their objectives for the year and their respective programs of activities, as well as the major pastoral projects with which the moral and religious education teachers would be closely associated. The same individuals provided their own backup on several occasions during the year with evening and daytime spiritual renewal sessions. "During these meetings we didn't focus on the job but on the One who is both Light and Life".

A number of "high points" or peaks are planned during the year, like Friendship Day, Christmas and Easter festivities, and the beginning of Lent. These activities create a spinoff effect and set the tone for the whole school. On the basis of this modest cooperation by the pastoral and religious education team, the other members of the staff more readily agree to participate and get directly involved when one manages to appeal to them to contribute their skills or their testimony. Pastoral activities are no longer the business of a small specialized group, but have an effect of drawing people in. "There's some resemblance in this to the communal work parties popular in some regions. Sure it's hard work, but what bonds it creates and what possibilities of showing yourself in another and often truer light!"

The cooperation between moral and religious education teachers and pastoral animators is often the first link in a longer chain. Without this basic kind of concerted action, any speeches about everyone working together for Christian education in an overall design for education have a terribly hollow ring. When this first nucleus of cooperation exists, there is a good chance that the school's denominational nature will be effectively affirmed and experienced.

Guideline 3: The Degree of Satisfaction with Religious Education and Pastoral Activities

A product's quality is revealed by the attitudes and testimonials of those who use it. To judge the quality of Christian education, it is enlightening to look at the attitudes and testimony of students, teachers and animators, as well as of parents, concerning religious education and pastoral activities. Their degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction is certainly worth recording among other quality indicators.

The administrative team at school D is aware of and has informed us of the fact that the group of religious education teachers in their school has been thrown into confusion in recent years by transfers and reassignments; there is a lack of competence, and especially of continuity. There have also been successive changes in the position of pastoral animator. The meeting with the students confirmed these weaknesses. "I have a good teacher this year," said one student. "I hope that he stays with us for two years". One of his classmates replied: "It's the opposite in my class. I don't want to be stuck with the same teacher for another year". In their own way, the teachers would also express their dissatisfaction with their heavy workload - an average of ten groups per week for a total of 250 to 300 students - and their feeling that their worth in the school is underestimated.

In school E, a group of students commented favourably on the religious education program and emphasized the interest generated by the pastoral activities. "It's important to be able to think about our reasons for living..." In another school a similar group of students chosen at random took a very unfavourable view. "If we had the choice, most students would drop out of religious education..."

When students, who are usually critical of all courses, comment favourably on the religious education they receive and like to participate in pastoral activities; when teachers do not nurture melancholy grievances about their workload, a load that is equitably distributed and that the administration is honestly trying to organize in order to make educational work possible; and when the parents themselves, informed of what is happening in class, say they are in favour of the objectives being pursued in Christian education, then one can believe that quality is present. This guideline of satisfaction, which is often included in survey questionnaires, has already shown up at random in the meetings and in the comments that were heard.

Guideline 4: The Manner in which Course Choices and the Exemption Question are Handled

In catholic schools, the way the Christian faith is presented should be both explicit and respectful. These two qualifiers are inseparable, first because of the fact that a Catholic public school is also a common school, which means that it is a school required to receive all students in its territory. One guideline of a Catholic school's quality is how it takes care to ensure this explicit proposition is applied while respecting individual thought processes and conscience.

This concern can be verified in the attention given to religious education, the way the exemption clause is applied, and the school's willingness to offer real

options to students in the final three years of high school. In some schools one can quickly reckon the degree of willingness to handle these questions in a positive way by the efforts undertaken to organize school activities so as to respect the choices made by parents, students and teachers. Elsewhere, one can also quickly perceive the lack of concern given to these questions, the fear of dealing with them or the attitude of obstructionism.

More specifically, success in applying the exemption clause equitably and without arousing controversy is also an indicator of a Catholic school's quality. We should acknowledge that it is still a complex matter to apply this clause. For the exemption to be applied without problems, it is essential that school authorities show evidence of openmindedness and democratic fairness. The information must also be provided at an appropriate time, without sour expressions, and that concrete steps be taken to find acceptable arrangements or solutions. Conversely, it is a negative indicator if a Catholic school lets difficulties concerning the exemption drag on and if in some cases it then has to cope with public protest.

The principal of school F sent the parents the following letter concerning the exemption. "Dear parents. Requests for exemption from religious education are for those who have renounced their baptism for themselves and for their children. It is therefore a serious gesture to make such a request. If any of you forward such requests to me, your children will be directed to one of the designated schools. I suggest that you carefully read the offer made to you in the event that you request exemption".

In school G at course selection time Denise, a student in Secondary IV, had opted for religious education. In September she received her timetable and found that she had been enrolled in moral sciences. At her first class, she learned that five students in her group were in the same position... The teacher

did not know what to answer and was perplexed. The director of studies explained that there were schedule conflicts in the computer and that it had proved impossible to respect all the students' choices. In the face of the insistence of Denise and her parents, however, the school succeeded in finding a more acceptable course arrangement: Denise was able to keep her elective in religious education taking the French course in the regular stream rather than in the enriched stream.

In the case of the first school, the principal clearly appears to be ill at ease with the question of exemption and interprets it in a meddlesome and restrictive manner; in the second case, the school does not seem to be making much of an effort to respect the students' course selections insofar as moral and religious education is concerned. These attitudes and behaviour patterns are significant! The way in which a school applies the exemption clause and the care with which it organizes the courses mock-up and timetables to take each individual's religious electives into account is a good indicator of its denominational quality.

Indeed, where the school fails to observe these elementary rules of organization, it risks establishing few concrete requirements for quality religious education. Particularly in high school, the teachers note that the religious education course acquires more validity when the groups no longer include students with little or no interest in the subject. In elementary school, the application of the exemption clause for students and teachers is a tell-tale sign of the quality of the school's staff, since it often requires a collective assumption of responsibilities and a new distribution of workload among the teachers. Where a real school staff team exists, it is not too hard to take charge of students who are exempted; on the other hand, in schools where there is not much cooperation among the teachers, the difficulties will appear to be insurmountable.

II. Priority Attention to the Human Relations Climate

The Catholic schools have always placed emphasis on the climate of relations between students and teachers, and between teachers and the administration. In the educational perspective of the Catholic school, the quality of education particularly resides in the quality of human relations within the school community. For young people and for educators, these relations are both the focus and the sign of potential growth as human beings and as Christians.

What guidelines can be used to verify this second constituent feature of Catholic schooling?

Guideline 5: The Capacity for Welcoming New Arrivals

Whether a school is Catholic or not, a lot is indicated about its quality by its capacity for welcoming new arrivals. Indeed, it is by the way that a school receives or welcomes people, whether they are regular students or passing visitors, that one can obtain the best indication of the quality of life that prevails within its walls. This can become glaringly apparent in five minutes.

The date and time of our meeting with the administrative team at comprehensive school H were agreed upon and confirmed by both parties. Our group showed up at the school at the appointed time. We checked with the receptionist when we came in to find out which room the meeting was to be held in. We proceeded to the designated room by ourselves. We unstacked the chairs so that we could sit down, and we arranged the tables. After a fifteen minute wait, the members of the administration arrived one by one. The meeting proceeded in correct fashion, but there was an absence of any warmth. The chairs were uncomfortable. Everyone had to take care of his own cigarette ashes, since there

weren't any ashtrays. There was no coffee break. Each member of the administration was visibly very engrossed in his huge workload. The lack of any climate of hospitality was also reflected in the student's assertion that: "We don't know each other. We stick to impenetrable little gangs. There's no communication in this school".

Communication starts at the moment of greeting, or it dies right there. A school shows its administration's capacity for hospitality in the welcoming gestures that people take the time to make at the opening of the year, at the start of each day, and at the beginning of each class. "We'd like the teachers to take the time to say hello to us when they start their classes," the students say.

The enormity of the administrative staff workload, the lack of communication between students in different sections, the very condensed schedule of classes, and the immediate departure of everyone by bus after class are all factors that "explain" the situation in many schools and give them the aspect of a factory in which everyone is in a hurry or running around in circles.

Despite the existence of so many apparently insurmountable constraints, we must venture to reiterate that a Catholic school should distinguish itself by the attention it pays to the individual. Certainly every school is called upon to develop its attentiveness to people, but by its very inspiration the Catholic school has an additional reason to do this.

The bus has made the school physically accessible. Only people can make the school psychologically accessible, by organizing it in such a way that it presents a welcoming appearance. How can the teachers' essential availability to students be concretely expressed without the possibility of communication outside of formal class periods? When the school works out the timetable for

teachers, students and buses, and when the school calendar is being planned, is first consideration given to shortening the staff's working day and year, or is the priority to organize time so that each individual can live in a relaxed climate which favours communication, without having the feeling that one always has to run from one classroom to another or from class to the school bus?

Guideline 6: The Place Made for Minorities

It is often said that a society is particularly judged by the way it treats its minorities. This adage can also apply to the school. A school is judged, among other things, by the way it treats its minority groups. In concrete terms this means the way it treats students in vocational courses, or students with learning or adaptational difficulties, or students whose ethnic, religious or cultural affiliation differs from that of the majority. This is particularly true for Catholic schools, which should distinguish themselves by their refusal to create "outcasts" or to judge and divide students on the basis of appearances. This does not mean that the school should be an agglomeration or an indistinct amalgam, but rather a place where diversity is recognized and accepted in a positive way.

Comprehensive school J has relatively important vocational and remedial sectors. The pastoral animation program takes account of this. It has developed activities with the aim of promoting integration of vocational and regular students. It places particular reliance on teams or cells of young people grouped according to the life preparation service (S.P.V.) formula and on the JOC (the Catholic youth group).

School L has a relatively large number of native Indian students. It was noted that these students stick to their own group in the cafeteria, in the halls and in the classrooms. This school does not have a single native Indian teacher or animator, while the presence of a Montagnais teacher in a neighbouring school has made a profound change in outlook possible. "They don't mix with the others," said the white students. But

when the white students expressed the wish to be able to learn a third language, none of them thought of mentioning that it might be useful to institute a course in Amerindian languages.

A Catholic school which really means to be concerned about justice seeks to go beyond existing cliques and tries to break down the barriers that have arisen between groups or between "streams". It endeavours to acknowledge and deal with the differences and divergences that are manifested in its midst. We believe that this is an important indicator.

A Catholic school may be judged by the initiatives it takes or does not take in fields like: integration of children in difficulty, welcoming of immigrants, and relations between groups or cliques based on village, neighbourhood, language, culture or social class. These are the signs by which one can see whether a school is a truly educational environment rather than a cold and indifferent milieu.

Guideline 7: The Sense of Participation

Another guideline of a Catholic school's quality is the sense of participation it succeeds in developing among the students and within the group of educators. This sense of participation manifests itself in various ways: the manner in which young people talk about their school, the initiatives and "projects" that spring up, and the interest aroused by certain cultural, sporting, social and religious activities.

One may ask how this sense of participation is characteristic of a Catholic school? Isn't it a common aim of all schools? Yes, but let us reiterate that a Catholic school itself is - and before anything else remains - a school! It can also be evaluated by its ability to arouse a sense of participation and solidarity among those attending it. Its evangelical inspiration should also give it an incentive to attribute even more importance to this community dimension,

for the Gospel, which the Catholic school relies upon as its authority, is not neutral on this subject.

In comprehensive school M the principal has lunch with the students two or three times a week. He is well known among the students and thus has imprinted his own style of human relations upon the school, influencing the teaching staff and contributing to the creation of a feeling of belonging in the school.

It was a breath of fresh air to hear the student council members in high school N speaking with pride and enthusiasm about their school, its achievements and the activities of the various student committees. It was another breath of fresh air to meet the team of young people working with the pastoral program, who talked about their best projects and their experience as a Christian community bringing together young people and adults.

It was therefore not purely coincidental to observe the cleanliness of the premises and the good condition of the furnishings, particularly the lockers, when strolling about the school. The walls and classrooms had been tastefully decorated by the students. There is a sense of belonging and a feeling of pride among the students in this school. A way has been found to get them to participate. They give the impression of being relaxed and of having a good relationship with the staff. The first-name greetings exchanged when they meet in the halls attest to this.

Where it exists, the sense of participation leaves its mark on and facilitates interpersonal relations. But it also goes far beyond them to inspire the way the school itself is organized: regulations, scheduling, the way the collective agreement is applied, etc. "If you succeed in creating a sense of participation", said one teacher, "then you've freed people from the straitjacket of the collective agreement. Once I'd agreed to help the kids prepare for "Génies en herbe" (the French T.V. equivalent of "Reach for the Top") I stopped counting my time."

Participation engenders a sense of belonging, which should not be confused with complacent and comfortable optimism. It exists in and is even expressed by the test of conflict and opposition. One knows all too well that no school can escape these. It is in the crucible of conflict that a school community reveals whether it has and wants to keep a common inspiration. One obvious fact compels recognition: today's school is partially the result of a balance of power from which the academic and confessional experiences cannot be considered apart from this. But there is one other obvious fact: if the school is not also the result of a relationship of belonging, it runs the risk of being shabby in quality.

111. The Will to Educate the Total Individual

This third constituent element of Catholic schooling means that it does not limit its role to formal instruction or to juxtaposed courses. The Catholic school wants to take all aspects of the life of young people into consideration and favour their growth in all areas. This is why, without seeking to do everything, it does not exclude more "personal" and controversial questions from its educational preoccupations, questions for example, that relate to emotional education, the learning of values, and the fundamental options that young people rough out with regard to life, their family, society and morality. The Catholic school does not claim to be the only institution to be concerned about the complete development of young people, but in its design for education it attests to a special concern for consolidation and synthesis in training.

Here are three guidelines which demonstrate this will to educate the total individual.

Guideline 8: The Existence of Certain Poles of Integration

A school's quality can be judged by the points of reference or poles of coherence that it gives itself. When these points

are openly recognized and proposed for use in the common effort - they can be clearly advertised objectives, values to be pursued, pedagogical watchwords, disciplinary options, particular types of guidance, etc. - they make it possible to gradually integrate activities of various natures that are carried out within the school, and also to interpret and tie together everyday events and new facts. Anyone who visits a school quickly picks out the minor or major "projects" that leave their stamp on this school in the form of a current, a direction, vitality, and coherence.

According to one teacher: "During two pedagogical days at the beginning of the year, we agreed on three values to be given priority attention in all school activities: correction of language use, student participation, and punctuality".

A student in Secondary 111 said: "There's no justice here. The teachers don't respect the requirements they impose on us, like showing up on time, for example".

A school principal said: "We didn't want the 'educational project' to be perceived as a big deal, a big machine. We began modestly by reviewing the school regulations with the participation of representative groups made up of 30 students, 30 teachers and 30 parents. We're putting the final touches on a plan for pedagogical days for the coming year. The objective will be to determine how we can instill more continuity into students' learning processes and teachers' pedagogical approaches.

At the present time in the educational field, the "educational project" concept conveys this idea of the need for cooperation and coherence in the schools. Children need physical, psychological and educational consistency. Sometimes, however, schools surround their "educational projects" with a lot of flowery verbiage, though the finest achievements are often clothed in modest plumage.

In a Catholic school the development of the educational project, which makes it possible to review the main aspects of life in the school, should normally lead to an examination of the concrete place of moral and religious education and education in values in the school. The way in which these questions are approached and the interest they receive say a lot about the quality of the school's confessional experience and the practical support that one is prepared to give it, beyond the speeches and protestations of goodwill.

Guideline 9: Times for Awakening to the Inner Self and to Celebration

A Catholic school is also judged by its capacity to open up some free time in an overload schedule, time for reflection and exchange of views, and time for prayer and celebration. These moments, like oases or quiet beaches in the academic program, open young people to the world of conscience, to their sense of inner self and to their capacity to celebrate life. A concern for training the total individual has impelled the Catholic school to develop its design for education to this level. All educators ought to share this concern.

In comprehensive school P, in good years and bad, staff members and students experience a certain number of celebrations together. The friendship day at the beginning of the year, the Christmas festivities, the period leading up to Easter, the sports day and the student festival each bring together the whole school for a long-prepared program. On other occasions certain groups meet together to mark the funeral of a student or of a student's relative, or to celebrate any other event that affects them closely.

In one private school, students voluntarily start their day each morning in their first class either with a moment of prayer or by taking time for meditation.

It is normal for a Catholic school to reveal its identity in this way by these moments of awakening to the inner self and to celebration. Delving deep within oneself, looking back over the events which never fail to mark a school year, and celebrating the high and low points of life are irreplaceable educational experiences that are characteristic of Catholic schooling.

A school community which means to take its direction from a vision of humanity and life inspired by the Gospel will naturally wish to collectively affirm its faith on certain occasions. Celebration, and more specifically the celebration of the Eucharist the "Je me souviens" of Christians, the way they remind themselves who they are. Even when there are few of them during the year, these gatherings and festivals have an exceptional value in enabling the whole school community to bear witness and engage in self-revelation.

Guideline 10: The Links with the Surrounding Community

Finally, a school's quality is revealed in the links it succeeds in creating with the surrounding community: ties with families, with the local community and the neighbourhood, links with the parishes especially when pupils are being initiated to the sacraments, and ties with regional organizations. Through these bonds, the school keeps itself open and sensitive to other educational influences, in order to pursue a design for education that takes the overall environment of young people into account. It is these links that make the school exist for those outside of it.

An appeal was published in a local periodical: "Refugees need your friendship..." To concretely prove their desire to come to the help of the refugees, the parents' committee in school X organized mass distribution of clothing to refugees from Southeast Asia. Three parents, assisted by people from the parish, ran the operation. The clothes were collected by children and parishioners. Next they had to be sorted, repaired, cleaned and put in order. Contact was then made with refugees whose

children attended school X and neighbouring schools. And this is how more than three hundred new friends showed up one fine Saturday in March at school X and left with their arms full of clothing.

At school Y the sports centre is open every Wednesday night for the parents of the pupils, as well as for former pupils. Occasionally there are sports meets between the adults and the children.

At school Z the pastoral room serves as a gathering place for a Christian community bringing together pupils, teachers, parents and former pupils. The celebrations are diligently prepared by teams which take over from each other every Sunday.

All these initiatives originate from the conviction that the school ought to seek to unite its educational efforts with those of other milieus, and particularly with those of the families. This is because education, particularly Christian education, begins outside of the school and extends well beyond it. There is also a willingness in Catholic schools to let themselves be challenged by the community, and an acceptance of being disrupted and of breaking with routine. This is often the first threshold of catholicity.

It is a sure thing that building bridges and letting down the barriers in this way entails a risk of being invaded from all quarters. We believe that this is the price of life. A school which is closed in within itself and its internal organization would be doomed to slow asphyxiation. Christian education, and just plain education, cannot operate on closed circuit.

Conclusion

These are ten guidelines which can be used to verify the denominational or confessional experience in the Catholic schools. On the basis of these guidelines which undoubtedly will have to be adjusted as needed, we believe that it is possible for school communities to "calculate" the quality of their performance or their state of health in denominational terms. The test still has to be made in each school, starting from these typical facts and situations which reveal the overall fabric of life in the school.

In this exercise of verification, however, it should be remembered that quality is the result of a thousand different things. The quality of a quilt, for example, is not only due to the selection of each small piece but also to the composition and arrangement of all the pieces. The same applies for the fabric of a school: its quality can be judged not only by looking at the details but also at how everything fits together. Real artisans know that quality can vary from one piece of work to another. The quality of education acknowledges differences between schools for the same reason.

Let us remember in conclusion the following words of healthy realism: "It is excessive to expect men of faith to give proof day and night of the sincerity of their commitment" (J.-M. Domenach). Isn't what is being asked of the Catholic school also sometimes excessive? What is required here is that it gives certain proof of its sincerity in pursuing a design for education enlightened by the Gospel.

2. THE PROTESTANT SCHOOLS

During the examination of the state and needs of education in the Protestant sector in 1979-1980, the Comité protestant considered the school community in terms of its human components, pedagogical interests and political interests. It also noted some questions specifically linked to the Protestant character of the schools. For each of these points it attempted to deal with the conditions necessary for creating and maintaining an educational community with full participation by all those involved in it and with adapted structures.

THE COMPONENTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

1. From the beginning of its existence, the Protestant school community in Québec has been very diverse in nature. People of a wide range of nationalities, social groups and affiliations, adhering to different religious and educational values, have participated in a common design for education. The approach that was developed had as its central point of reference the importance of the Bible, individual freedom of conscience and respect for the opinions of others, without giving privileged status to a particular doctrine, but without excluding the dimensions of moral and religious life either.¹ At the same time, it must be emphasized that this understanding has not been subject to Protestant church authorities in any way since 1846.

When the limits of a school are expanded in a society that is increasingly pluralistic, its clientele no longer feels tied to a clearly identified community. In the absence of a natural educational community or in the presence of a very scattered clientele, how does the school effectively engage the parents in an educational project?

1. See Nathan H. Mair, *Quest for Quality in the Protestant Public Schools of Québec*, Comité protestant, Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Québec 1980, 181 pp., Chapter 2, "The Makers of Protestant Education in Québec".

How do students who come from different communities and various social and cultural groups adapt to the school and its structures? Because attendance is compulsory for all children, a very high degree of diversity exists in the school. Despite the risk of conflicts, this situation provides opportunities for better understanding of multiplicity and pluralism. But an instrument for this is needed. In the view of the Comité protestant, the best contribution to developing respect for various religious and cultural traditions among young people is the moral and religious education program. The Committee also feels that it is appropriate to continue providing teachers with adequate training so that they can adapt to this diversified student body, for which they will have to find work methods conducive to harmony within the school.

2. The decline in school enrollments and the formulae for regrouping pupils are posing problems in several communities. Parents are increasingly apprehensive about forced school closings, changes in the schools' functions and the many problems related to transporting their children. These fears often have consequences for the relations between the school commissions and the communities they serve. The school commissions become or seem to become less sensitive to the needs of particular communities, even if they are motivated by the requirements of the general public.

The parents ask that the decision to close a school be based on criteria other than solely financial preoccupations. Such criteria could include the cost of transportation to and from school, the expenses of maintaining an unoccupied building, and hidden costs. This last category includes social and psychological effects from various points of view: busing pupils, vandalism in empty schools, the living conditions of a community centre, and the danger of a decline in community participation.

3. It is also important to use more innovative means to respond to the needs of small schools with multiple division classes. On several occasions the Committee has emphasized that this problem would become more acute in the Protestant

sector. The effects of declining enrollments and the tendency of some parents to send their children to French immersion classes² or to French-language schools are placing more and more schools in this category. The problem of the small school is common both in the country and in the city.

4. The Committee deplores the rise in the incidence of theft, violence and vandalism in the schools. It seems that there are more conflicts between groups of students, and that there is less respect for property, for authority and for the persons of others in general. Is there a relationship between the way authority is exercised and the incidence of vandalism? Do the members of the community feel that the schools no longer belong to them? Are schools ransacked as an expression of aggressive feelings against authority figures? Is there a link between rising violence and the fact that students are not sufficiently consulted about the way the school is organized as an educational environment or about how they are required to behave? There is a feeling of disaffection on the part of students and an apparent absence of respect for the rights of these same students. There is also an increase in the number of outsiders of "drop-ins" who come into the schools and incite violence.

5. Since the adoption of Bill 24, young delinquents have been provided with many defenders of their rights. While seeming to provide desirable safeguards for their rights, the reintegration of delinquents into a system without the resources necessary for their rehabilitation presents disadvantages for the welfare of the majority of the clientele. In most regions, the lack of personnel who speak the clients' language is one factor that works against the social services being offered. Adults who work in the educational field believe that there should be diversified means at their disposal to respond to the needs of young people who refuse to conform to the school's standards. There are some youths whose presence cannot be tolerated in a regular school because of their harmful effects on the whole environment; these young people should be offered another form of public school.

2. Pupils in immersion classes receive more than half of their instruction in French.

6. The Committee wants to draw attention to the phenomenon of "teacher burnout", which seems to be an indicator of school unrest. Many teachers do not feel involved in the process of planning education and developing curriculum. A great many suffer from a feeling of insecurity, in the fear that they will lose their jobs as the school population declines. This insecurity has become more accentuated since a larger number of parents now want to entrust their children's education to French-language schools. Some teachers function as individuals, without the feeling of being members of a team in the school. Some teachers, having a presentiment that they will not be backed up or supported, have become discouraged and withdrawn into their classrooms, refusing, for example, to bother themselves with what is happening in the corridors. What's more, the requirements of busing hardly favour the establishment and maintenance of teacher-student relationships outside of class time. Other teachers have problems reconciling to the public the two roles they have to play, either as professionals with educational responsibilities, or as members of a union that establishes standards which also have to be respected. It follows that they find it harder to establish good human relations with the parents and administrators, and their participation in the life of the educational community is lessened.

7. In spite of a long tradition of participation in the educational community through the Home and School Associations, volunteer groups and now the school committees and parents' committees, many parents are disoriented by the proliferation of consultative groups at the school and school commission levels. Bill 30, which provides for the designation of parent representatives on the school commission, and Bill 71, which establishes the Orientation Council at the school level, raise some questions with respect to the number of consultative agents and the means for favouring effective participation. To what extent and with what degree of enthusiasm will the teachers participate? Several of them take umbrage at parental participation that almost only manifests itself when problems arise. School principals, even if they want to cooperate and be available, find that a lot of their time is required for

consultation, sometimes to the detriment of their usual tasks. Besides, how does one distinguish the caprices of a public meeting or the tactics of a small pressure group from a real interest? Can a group be responsible for its decisions?

It ought to be emphasized that the design for an Orientation Council is not the only solution to the problem of parental participation, and that this can be a source of conflict among the various consultative levels. In cases where parental participation is already in good shape, there is no obvious need for a new consultative group.

THE PEDAGOGICAL INTERESTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

1. In general, the policy statement and plan of action on the *The Schools of Québec* has been favourably received in the Protestant sector. Along with a good appreciation of the fundamental objectives, however, there is some uneasiness about the centralizing approach to developing curriculum. Since its origins, the Protestant sector has accented the right and responsibility of the school commissions to decide on any educational question without the imposition of a particular theory.

Because of a tradition of local development of programs and the increased participation by those active in education as recommended by the *Plan of Action*, many teachers and parents find that such an approach does not suit the educational community. Furthermore, they fear that the process will take too long. The Anglophone community is interested in the problem of translating and adapting programs. The fear stems from the fact that the new programs, on the one hand, have a weak minimum content that is not up to the standards of current teaching, and on the other hand, that the new programs leave no room for enrichment. In addition there is concern about the evaluation of the programs; it may be that some teachers will only teach the minimum or feel obliged to restrict their teaching to what will be evaluated. Other new causes for anxiety are the changes in the student timetable and the plight of those who do not match the profile envisaged. Several individuals have expressed the opinion that

the Ministère should establish the major objectives of the programs but that it should give evidence of much more flexibility in implementation, adaptation and evaluation at the local level.

2. The present policy concerning welcoming classes has focussed attention on the preschool level. Since these classes function in the context of the public school, they give rise to growing pressure for an experimental all-day kindergarten and nursery. Would it be possible to extend the Ministère's policy, which now applies to children from low-income backgrounds and children in welcoming classes, to all children whose parents make the request?

THE POLITICAL INTERESTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY

1. The Committee deeply regrets the fact that the collective bargaining process has once again proved to be inadequate and defective. Despite all the resources that have been invested, the conflicts continue. Parents feel frustrated and teachers are often disenchanted in the face of the lack of information concerning the negotiations, which do not seem to improve the educational act in the classroom. The collective agreements which are concluded do not prevent the climate of conflict in the schools from being perpetuated. The education sector could further explore the means suggested by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation in 1977³.

3. See L'état et les besoins de l'éducation. Rapport 1976-1977, Québec 1978, pp. 31-39.

2. French Protestant parents have drawn attention to their problems obtaining services in French in several school commissions and the impossibility of electing their own commissioners when they are scattered through the whole region served by the school commission. They also demand pedagogical services for their schools. In order to receive French Protestant students and their parents, it is to be hoped that the school commissions articulate a policy with the aim of providing the required services in French and establish adequate mechanisms for participation by the parents.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO DENOMINATIONAL STATUS

1. It should be emphasized that real gains have been made in the past two years at the elementary and high school levels with regard to the place granted to moral and religious education in the Protestant schools. It is essential that an effort be made to hold on to and consolidate these gains in the year's to come.

At the high school level, there seems to be a temporary problem of job instability among the teachers responsible for moral and religious education. Too often it is the teachers without much seniority (less than five years of employment) who are the instigators of these programs and who have agreed to be retrained; but when school enrollment declines sharply, and when the compulsory moral and religious education program has not been introduced at all levels, these teachers are among the first to be placed on standby or assigned to another subject. As a consequence of this, the program lacks continuity and the teachers themselves take less initiative. If the program were introduced at all levels by 1985, it should be possible to keep the teachers who are presently assigned to it. In their long-term planning and in their negotiations, the school commissions and the unions ought to show themselves more sensitive to the requirements of this program and set forth some priorities that consider the teachers' need for adequate preparation, the compulsory nature of the program and the necessity of keeping the teaching personnel responsible for moral and religious education in service.

2. The Committee commends the efforts of the universities to provide retraining courses for moral and religious education teachers. The teachers themselves have shown initiative by informing themselves about these courses, and the school commissions have given their backing. It follows that there has been an increase in the number of courses available and the number of teachers enrolled. The summer workshop sponsored by the Ministère was also well received and should be continued.

3. Some people are worried about the compulsory nature of moral and religious education. Some think that the teaching of religion is the business of the Church and the home. Either they are afraid of the formative aspects that go along with Bible study, or they prefer that the Bible be taught in Church to avoid it being considered a book like any other. French Protestants of European origin are familiar with schools where only moral sciences are taught, and they have definite opinions on the role of the school. However, few people request that their children be exempted from moral and religious education. On the other hand, because of the presence of non-Christian students along with Christian students in the schools, it is often debatable whether the Bible should be taught. Thus, there is a need for a moral education program for exempted students.

4. The additional personnel allocated to the Service de l'enseignement protestant ensures that the programs are subjected to the necessary revision. The Committee also would like it noted that the Service's information bulletin, mailed to teachers and other individuals, is greatly appreciated.

5. In conclusion, the Comité protestant wishes to emphasize that the position of Vice President of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation is still vacant. Because of this vacancy, there is one Protestant less on the Conseil than the minimum stipulated in the law.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the year 1979-1980, the Comité protestant occupied itself with the consultations on revising its *Règlement* and on drafting the document entitled *Recherche de la qualité à l'école publique protestante du Québec*. The above outline of the state and needs of Protestant education will serve as a basis for the Committee's program of activities in 1980-1981.

3. THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The year 1979-1980 featured the *negotiations of new collective labour agreements* for the staff members of various educational organizations. There is no way this backdrop could have gone unnoticed. The main focus of attention in the foreground was the implementation of the *government's plan of action* for Québec schools, with respect to *introduction of new programs* of instruction and particularly with respect to *application of a new school adaptation policy*; there was also considerable interest in developing *parental participation*, after proclamation of Bills 30 and 71. These are the main features of the state of education in the schools that the Commission de l'enseignement primaire has chosen to consider, basing itself on the observations of its members in their different communities and in the establishments they visited. The Commission has added two notes, one on *sex education* in the schools and the other on the *funding of local projects through specific allocations* by the Ministère de l'Éducation¹.

1. Also see the March 1980 publication of the Commission de l'enseignement primaire, Le passage des élèves du primaire au secondaire. Réflexions et propositions, Québec 1980, 31 pp.

Negotiations

The Commission's limited means hardly allow it to make any forays into the complex field of labour relations. At the time it completed its report, neither was it able to fully size up the 1979 round of contract talks, since the provincial agreements had just been signed and there had been few local agreements concluded. Why dwell on this subject then, rather than on other major factors like the stabilization of elementary school enrollments in most regions, the slowing of the rise in education costs, and the important legislative interventions in the field of education? The Commission is concerned about three aspects which, from its point of view, should give rise to thought: the plight of teaching, the length of the negotiations, and the time taken from the children.

THE PLIGHT OF TEACHING

In observing the progress of the negotiations for the present teacher's collective agreements, the Commission found a certain analogy with what happened in 1976-1977: the framework of the pedagogical relationship between the teacher and the students was significantly affected. Last time it was necessary to amend Regulation 7 to take the agreements into account, but on this occasion certain pedagogical orientations of the government's Plan of Action had to be negotiated, if not modified, thus delaying the advent of the new pedagogical regimes stemming from these orientations. In emphasizing the intrusive nature of the labour negotiations, the Commission deplores a clear tendency to subordinate everything to them, to the point that the foundation stone of the teaching field, the relationship between teacher and pupils, is being worn

away by mechanistic hammer blows instead of becoming increasingly well polished through relationships with a personal touch.

"Pedagogical" matters are certainly not immutable and cannot really escape negotiation. But it is appropriate that the changes affecting them be primarily justified by imperatives or considerations of the same nature, whether or not this is within the framework of negotiations. This does not mean that there can be no discussion of the meaning of or place for implementing certain changes required of the educational field by a Ministère de l'Éducation which is actively advocating major reforms. Neither does this mean that the decline in enrollments and the ceiling imposed on revenues do not make it imperative to reduce certain expenditures or put the brakes to development of certain programs, or that laws and regulations cannot be invoked to demand new provisions.

But if greater care were taken to bring the teachers closer to the places where decisions are being made, particularly during the bargaining period, it is not a certainty that there would be such a continuing escalation in the division of tasks, the fragmentation of time on the job, and the complexity of professional relationships. The Commission is well aware, however, that these are huge problems which affect any enterprise of this size. It sees no other solutions than ones which could inspire an increasing interest on one side in the matters that concern them and a constant concern on the other side for adhering to the will of the people they represent.

THE LENGTH OF THE NEGOTIATIONS

Negotiations take time. They are well on the way to becoming perpetual. A three-year provincial agreement is concluded after a year of bargaining; its effects are subject in each school commission to the signing of a local agreement which can also be negotiated throughout an entire year; the final year of a contract period is devoted to preparing drafts of the new agreements and to exploratory meetings. Then the cycle begins again. This scenario is of course repeated for each of the professional groups, without any synchronization of these proceedings. And then the accumulated grievances and any disputes that spring up have to be dealt with as well. Educators thus find themselves caught up in an endless labour relations square dance, and pedagogical performance as such feels the effects.

THE TIME TAKEN FROM THE CHILDREN

It is the children's time that the adults are ultimately taking. Energies are wasted. To put it bluntly, schools are shut down as well, either because of strikes or due to lock-outs. Some people refuse to make more of this than in years shortened because of special events, as when class rooms are reserved for the Québec Games, for example. But the discussion cannot solely focus on comparing the results obtained in such cases, or on the exceptional nature or different scope of one situation compared to another. What is important to consider is the delay caused in completing the courses. The school is certainly not the only educational path for children, but it attempts to offer the same services to everyone, which their respective back-

grounds are often incapable of doing. Some students, either alone or in groups, will of course continue to do some academic work during their absence from school, and of course it is possible to catch up, but the sacrifices that are made necessarily reduce the value of this. While students can make up for delays in certain aspects of French and mathematics, this is almost always at the expense of so-called secondary subjects and to the detriment of slower learners or less motivated children.

School communities already complain that they are unable to cover the full extent of each program in the regular time allotted. If it is also necessary almost every year to subtract more time because of more or less exceptional circumstances, one cannot avoid flinching at the backlogs that will have accumulated in the various programs by the end of elementary school.

Implementation of the Plan of Action

In February 1979, the Ministère de l'Éducation published *The Schools of Québec*, its policy statement and plan of action. The Commission de l'enseignement primaire during the past year has sought to learn how this document was received in the various communities. It has attempted to identify the initial stages of implementation of the Plan of Action and of introduction of new programs.

How the Plan of Action was Received

WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE

Generally the Commission did not sense any eagerness or feverish preparation to apply the government's Plan of Action. As strange as this may seem after the interest generated by the Green Paper on elementary and secondary education, this situation can be explained in a number of ways. First of all, the tenor of the Plan made it a very conspicuous target for the various unions which had to open a new round of

negotiations this year. Secondly, various professional associations of teachers were not going to be so quick about abating the resistance they had already begun to mount to the government's project for all sorts of reasons. Thirdly, persistent imprecisions, forms of assistance promised by the government but slow to come, and budgetary restrictions that had already been decided upon, made some provisions difficult to apply. Under the circumstances, how could one hope for any real adherence to the government's Plan?

FEAR OR ANXIETY

Instead the Commission has perceived some signs of fear or anxiety with respect to *The Schools of Québec* to varying degrees throughout educational circles. Thus, school commissions have seen the eventual proliferation of orientation councils and educational projects at the school level as a final threat, now that the fiscal reform had already, so they said, substantially weakened them. The government's project as a whole thus aroused fears of an inopportune power struggle between groups that were still poorly identified. Administrators, school principals and teachers in general, apart from fearing that the efforts demanded of them would in reality only result in minimal benefits for the children, displayed a lot of anxiety about the requirements of a new power-sharing arrangement in the schools and more rigorous accountability. Teachers in particular retained the disturbing impression that they would be alone in bearing the costs of the recommended efforts at rectification. Several provisions were pointed out as being particularly aggravating: providing the parents with the lesson plans at each stage; submitting six report cards a year and establishing informal monthly communication with the parents of pupils in difficulty; integrating "difficult" pupils into their classes; and once again saddling themselves with responsibility for introducing new programs for years to come, though these had been eagerly awaited for a long time. Finally, some parents who had been able to read the government's Plan of Action said they were afraid they lacked the availability or all the interest necessary to take on the whole role that was being offered to them from now on. In short, when an often patent indifference is added to the

picture, it is easy to conclude that the interest perceived almost everywhere during the consultation on the Green Paper has been dissipated. What are the main reasons for this?

CONTACT BROKEN WITH THE GRASSROOTS

There has been some surprise expressed in educational circles that the Ministère has done so little marketing of its product with the main actors, and this despite the negotiations or despite the reticence of the professional associations, when this would only have been to inform them of the progress of the operation. The Ministère has undoubtedly held meetings with those responsible at the local level, but information and sensitization on the content and implications of the Plan of Action unfortunately do not seem to have reached many interested parties at the grassroots. The consultation period on the Green Paper had been the occasion for an unceasing dialogue with those involved in the schools. Since there was a firm intention of reforming the school, stemming from profound changes (educational project, new programs, integration of students in difficulty, etc.), it would seem that no effort should have been spared to maintain contact with the base, which in the final analysis will make or break the changes. In any process of change, before approval of a new plan and of the action to be taken to implement it, there must first be information, responsibility for which is incumbent on the promoter of the project. In the case of the renewal of the school system, the evidence at the grassroots would incline us to believe that the information available to it at this time is quite deficient. Did negotiations for the collective agreements and the necessity of putting teams to work to prepare new laws and new regulations force the government to break off the contacts that were observed this year? The Ministère will have a second change during 1980-1981, and it is important that it then devote itself to informing the public and to preparing the people in the educational field and the parents of the pupils if it is counting on getting away from the status quo in 1981-1982. With the resources at its disposal and the experience it has already gained, we do not see how an operation reaching both the school staff teams and the school committees could not be brought

to a successful conclusion by the Ministère.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, The Commission hopes

- that the Ministère, in resuming its dialogue with the people at the grassroots of the education field, will endeavour to eliminate ambiguities, dispel anxieties and specify the forms of assistance promised in relation to the implementation of the Plan of Action;

- that within the framework of an information plan that will be decided upon and put into effect as soon as possible, all education personnel and parents of pupils be sensitized to each of the major changes stemming from the Plan of Action and invited to assess the implications for their professional practice or for their involvement in the school.

Introduction of New Programs

As in the case of the Plan of Action as a whole, the Commission would like to know the reactions of those involved in the schools to the announcement of new teaching programs and to the quality of their preparation. Those most directly affected, namely the teachers, have not shown themselves to be in any great hurry. It isn't that they are waiting for the new programs, which are hardly any more perfect than their predecessors and which will have to be replaced in their turn sooner or later. Rather it is that they do not yet know what these programs will be, nor what they will have as content, nor when they will come into force. It is true that copies of the new French program have started to circulate, but not everything is clear for all that.

TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS

There are several factors that explain why the teachers have not yet been reached: contract negotiations, production delays at the Ministère, the need to give priority to ensuring preparation of pedagogical counsellors who will then take over. The teachers nonetheless hope that the people responsible for their own preparation are still aware that the bulk of the elementary school teaching load falls on them, most of them being generalists², and that they will certainly be incapable of absorbing all the new features at the same time. What's more, since they have already had to learn the details of new programs in the past few years, and since these programs will be revised again, many of them say they are saturated with their customary activities like information sessions, short courses of study, and so on, and they hope that another way can be found of arousing their interest by allocating the necessary time on suitable occasions.

Still others do not like to have to leave their environment for retraining, but do not find it any more acceptable for someone to come into the school to direct their training without knowing the specific features of the milieu. While the majority of them acknowledge that they are disposed to approve of new programs with conceptual contents that are more detailed and specific, it is in the hope that they arrive at some stability "this time for some time to come" and that this gigantic operation will have made it possible

- to adjust programs among kindergarten and elementary school teachers, and among elementary and high school teachers;

2. Specialists in certain subjects currently account for a little less than 14% of elementary school teachers.

- to create pedagogical tools which respond more effectively to the need children feel to be active;
- to ensure production of school textbooks that have been in demand for a long time;
- to assist teachers of multigrade classes with appropriate pedagogical materials.

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY ROLE FOR SPECIALISTS?

Teachers who are specialists work under special conditions: the obligation to see numerous groups of pupils every week, sometimes scattered among different small schools that are more or less remote from each other, and the difficulty of really integrating into staff teams in several schools.

The revision of teacher training programs³, the introduction of new curricula, the emergence of the school's "educational project", and the rise in the number of schools with low population density are all factors that beg the question of whether it would be a good idea for specialists to master more than one discipline, so that they could concentrate more on teaching a smaller number of class groups in fewer schools. Pairing certain subjects according to the teacher's abilities and interests should in any case appear to be no more unreasonable than a home teacher handling several completely unrelated subjects. This idea should be given more thorough consideration, though positive results cannot be anticipated for most specialist teachers in the near future.

3. See Ministère de l'Éducation. Direction générale du développement pédagogique, *La formation initiale des enseignants spécialistes au primaire et au secondaire en arts, en langues secondes et en éducation physique*. Orientation document, February 1980.

The introduction of a program for teaching the arts in four sectors or disciplines supplied the Ministère with the opportunity to formulate the following guideline: "Teachers specializing in the arts will have to be prepared to teach two artistic disciplines in elementary school"⁴. It specifies that the teacher's training should include the study of a "main discipline" and a "complementary discipline", the first being "that in which the teacher will have acquired a certain degree of preparation, through his personal training or through the electives he has opted for in his college curriculum", the second being one which "may be chosen on the basis of the candidate's aptitudes"⁵. It will soon be possible to see whether attitudes can evolve in this direction, especially insofar as the artistic disciplines are concerned.

THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF PEDAGOGICAL COUNSELLORS AND SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Pedagogical leadership in the introduction of new programs is the responsibility of two clearly identified groups, depending on whether one is working at the school or school commission level: the school principals and the pedagogical counsellors. Saying this is one thing, but ensuring that this essential role in dealing with the teaching staff is assumed in a satisfactory manner is another. Unrest on this matter can quickly be discerned in several school commissions. On the one hand the credibility of the pedagogical counsellors is undermined in the eyes of the teachers by their distance from the line of fire, the rarity of their presence on the scene in the school and their ardent zeal for tasks, the appropriateness of which is not always clear; on the other hand, several schools find themselves without pedagogical animation when this essential function of the principal has to give way to so-called administrative tasks⁶. It

4. Ibid., No. 4.5, p. 14

5. Ibid., No. 5.6, p. 17

6. See "Le directeur d'école", in Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, L'état et les besoins de l'éducation. Rapport 1978-1979, Québec 1979, pp. 62-65

would seem that the educational milieu, whose reason for being is pedagogical service, should have pedagogical counsellors and school principals at its disposal to establish organic links with the teachers placed under their responsibility rather than revealing themselves to be available "only on call". Teachers cannot be prepared for new programmes without an immediate improvement of this situation. Insofar as the introduction of new programs is concerned, the Plan of Action also emphasizes that "information, animation and technical support by pedagogical counsellors will be provided as needed in each case, and as near as possible to the concrete activity, at the level of the school administrators and teachers"⁷.

GUIDES FOR PARENTS

The advent of more precise programs and especially of a manual for each subject will give rise to very great satisfaction among the majority of parents. Undoubtedly no longer remembering that the Ministère had already promised to prepare "guides aimed at parents"⁸. in its Plan of Action, someone suggested during the Commissions's visit to one school that the documents accompanying each new program should include an explanatory booklet which could deal with the knowledge or attitudes that the child should be able to master, the forms of learning prioritized by the school, the various kinds of help parents could give their children to help them succeed in a program, etc. As *L'École québécoise* indicates, such documents "should facilitate (parental) participation in their children's educational process in the school environment and dialogue with other agents of their children's education".

7. L'école québécoise, No. 7.1.16 (translation)

8. Ibid., No. 7.1.14 (translation)

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the Commission hopes

- that those responsible for introducing new programs clarify them to the teachers as soon as possible;
- that the reactions of the teachers be taken into consideration with regard to the preparation of the new programs and the order or rhythm of their introduction;
- that the intention of ensuring successful preparation of teachers to master the new programs be concretely expressed through the establishment of the best possible organic links between the pedagogical counsellors and the different groups of teachers, with the participation of the school principals who will have to look after follow-up on a daily basis.

A Look at the Teaching of the Arts

The revision of all programs and the preparation of a new pedagogical regime give the Commission an opportunity to pass on its observations on the teaching of the arts, which, it should not in the least be doubted, has developed less rapidly than wished in the Rioux Report and the Conseil's pertinent Opinion of eight years ago⁹.

9. Rapport de la Commission d'enquête sur l'enseignement des arts au Québec, Québec 1969; Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, "Avis concernant l'enseignement des arts au Québec", in Rapport annuel 1971-1972, Québec 1973, pp. 83-124,

THE NEED TO STILL DEMONSTRATE THE COMPLEMENTARY NATURE OF HUMAN ACTIVITIES

Rare indeed are the places nowadays where the teaching of the arts is treated as a priority in the curriculum. Often this type of education simply doesn't occupy the place it deserves. More frequently it arouses less interest than other disciplines, though it benefits from an equivalent share of the timetable. Why? The teaching of the arts still too often takes the form of traditional solfege or drawing courses. It is sometimes perceived as just being a rest period granted to the students for drawing, singing or music after demanding learning activities in the so-called fundamental disciplines. Occasionally it appears to be like a concession to the "different" tastes of certain children. In the final analysis, few parents, teachers or administrators are currently sensitive to the value of a good initiation to the artistic disciplines for the children's integral training. The status of the teaching of the arts in a school with a mechanistic approach and utilitarian aims is fairly similar to the status of the arts in general in a society that puts productivity and profit before everything else: it's a diversion, an extraneous matter. In our society as well, some people cast a disapproving eye on the fact that leisure is gaining ground on working time; in the field of education, some deem that the proliferation of so-called personal, cultural or social disciplines takes away time from "important subjects". In the face of such a reality, one understands why those who are more interested in the arts want to entrust their teaching to specialists to ensure not only the quality of this instruction but its existence.

KNOWN FACTS

For some time now, the Ministère de l'Éducation has declared the development of the teaching of the arts to be a priority. Special measures, which perhaps are lacking in originality, have been taken to promote this: hiring of pedagogical development officers, development of a new program, support

for research and experimentation. It would undoubtedly be interesting to evaluate the scope of this soon. Contacts have also been established with the universities to renew teacher training and upgrading, and a program has been planned to sensitize parents to the importance of the arts in their children's education. This is all very well. But the new arts program is supposed to be made up of four sections: music, plastic arts, dance, and drama. This, one may discern, is where the shoe pinches, for all sorts of opposition has quickly arisen among those who are most directly concerned. Their reasons are many: all these arts, they say, cannot be given the same importance in the elementary school curriculum; the program is unattainable, they maintain, because there are still too few artist-educators 2.6% of the teaching staff at the elementary school level¹⁰, and the initial training of generalists teachers does not provide for the necessary initiation to teaching artistic disciplines; the Ministère and the universities have yet to reach an agreement on revising the training program for the arts specialists made necessary by the emergence of the four projected sections; artist-educators would not be very open to teaching more than one artistic discipline; and so on. So how can there be any hope for perceptible progress in the coming years unless all efforts converge in the same direction? Maybe through Mission Impossible.

10. According to recent figures released by the coordinator of elementary school level arts programs, compared to 2.45% in 1977-78. See La formation initiale des enseignants specialistes...)

THE COMMISSION'S VIEWS

The Commission considers it useful to restate its faith in education that favours the development of the individual as a whole, which obviously makes room for the teaching of the arts in the elementary school curriculum. The Commission also believes that it would be feasible over a six year period to *initiate* each child to music, the plastic arts, dance and dramatic expression, if the school system really wants to provide itself with the means to ensure the child's complete development. Finally, the Commission believes that the proliferation of school educational projects could have a beneficial effect on the introduction of new programs, particularly the arts program, given the concern they generate for greater coherence among the various interventions affecting the child. Most of the members also wish to add in their opinion there is good reason for the continued existence of schools that devote almost half their timetable to teaching the arts to children who display particular interest and talent.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the Commission hopes

- that the teaching of the arts at the elementary school level will really be given the place it naturally deserves in any educational project that has the child's complete training in mind;
- that all forms of cooperation needed to sensitize people to the benefits of initiating the child to different artistic disciplines and to setting aside the many obstacles that hinder the development of the teaching of the arts in the school system be established to this end among those most directly concerned.

Application of the New School Adaptation Policy

After having commented on the ministerial policy concerning children with learning and adaptational difficulties at the time of its publication¹¹, the Commission was certainly not going to show itself any less interested in observing what would come out of its application in the school communities. The observations of each member in his or her own milieu, the feedback received in the establishments that were visited, the opinions of the specialists encountered and the study of the available documentation¹² allowed it to get a good idea of the degree to which "special education" had evolved in Québec.

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11. "La politique du ministère de l'Éducation à l'endroit des enfants en difficulté d'adaptation et d'apprentissage. Commentaires adoptés à la 219e réunion du Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, le 9 février 1979", in L'état et les besoins de l'éducation. Rapport 1978-1979, Québec 1979, pp. 269-275
 12. In particular see Gisèle Gingras, Étude exploratoire de l'intégration des enfants en difficulté d'apprentissage et d'adaptation au milieu scolaire normal dans les commissions scolaires de l'Île de Montréal (provisional report), Service de l'adaptation, Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal, June 1979, 54 pp.

One Picture, Three Colours

Putting our school communities under the spotlight of the policy for integrating pupils with adaptational and learning difficulties has meant recognizing three different attitudes, with nuances in terms of the degree of prudence applied in taking action. There are schools which have not done anything yet, others which had taken action before the policy statement came out, and finally those which are losing no time getting started in the wake of the policy statement. It can easily be guessed that the situation is quite different depending on which of these groups is observed.

SCHOOLS THAT ARE STILL WAITING

In the case of the first group, which is justifying its position on the basis of prudence, the policy statement has changed nothing in terms of the services already in operation. Special classes for varied categories of children are being maintained and the specialized staff members are working accordingly. Neither the staff nor the parents have begun to be sensitized to the new policy, the administrators of these establishments preferring to wait for concrete gestures from the Ministère to promote implementation.

SCHOOLS THAT HAVE TAKEN THE LEAD

In the second group, which was already engaged in integrating pupils in difficulty into the most normal possible school context before the policy was announced, some say that these pupils and the community itself are beginning to reap the fruits of the operation that has been initiated. We would like to add that the successful experiments were the result of the outstanding goodwill of the staff and the effective contribution made by the parents.

However, it is important to clearly identify who is judging a given situation since, according to the report prepared for the C.E.C.M. by Gisèle Gingras, "the farther one is from the project, the more one is inclined to talk about the success of integration in one's school commission, but analysis done in the school quickly causes us to revise our position with regard to the practical meaning that is given to integration in the schools"¹³. We also were able to determine that some of the problems experienced by the teachers involved can easily be underrated, and the sign of an experiment's success may sometimes be interpreted solely from the absence of opposition by parents or teachers.

SCHOOLS IN A HURRY TO CHANGE

Finally, the third group is the one which has been in such a hurry to bring the ministerial policy into being that the organizational changes and workload readjustments necessary for its application have often been enacted with varying degrees of explanation. Worried about several such cases, the C.E.Q. issued a warning at the start of the school year against what it called "precipitous integration"¹⁴. But already, teachers who in their own words were afflicted with problem students in their class", were confessing that they felt that they were being treated uncivilly because they more or less have the choice of accepting or refusing, and that they felt overworked because they had to prepare each class more than once, for the "regular students" and for those with "reduced load", and often at a loss because they had to note that some pupils had fallen irreparably far behind despite sporadic assistance from rare resource people. Implementing an integration policy

13. Op. cit., p. 11 (translation)

14. Centrale de L'enseignement du Québec, Les enjeux d'un Livre orange, October 1979, pp. 15-19 (trans.)

under these conditions, namely without more discernment or appropriate support, meant putting some pupils in a position of failure and slowing the progress of others, these teachers said. They of course called for help in the form of a reduction in class size, determination of a class group's threshold of tolerance¹⁵ and a gradual approach to integration, meaning integration into a regular class for a few subject periods to start with, and then on a full-time basis.

FROM ABSOLUTE NORMALITY TO RELATIVE NORMALITY

We should not be extraordinarily surprised at this tendency of maintaining the still pronounced internal boundaries in the field of education, or at the rather cool reactions to the policy. They can be attributed to the difficulty of believing that what previously served as the rule no longer holds and that normality is understood differently nowadays. In effect, a child who was free of any disability or defect, even a minor one, used to be considered normal; this is how one category of pupils was selected for regular classes and various other categories for so-called special classes. The new policy invites substitution of relative normality for this virtually absolute normality, so that pupils admitting to minor disabilities or defects can be integrated into the usual school context, provided that they are given appropriate assistance. The child's welfare is now the justification for believing in the virtues of integration, just as it was used to demonstrate the opposite position only a short while ago. Undoubtedly not everyone is endowed with the ability to accept such a rapid about-face with conviction.

15. The Conseil had emphasized the need to answer this kind of concrete question in its "Commentaires sur la politique...", op. cit., p. 273.

The Need to Adapt School Structures

Assuredly no true integration is possible unless the school structure in general and all its agents in particular first endeavour to understand the meaning of the objectives being pursued and then to adjust to it.

UNDERSTANDING INTEGRATION

According to Gisèle Gingras, in the study we have already mentioned, a succinct analysis of the definitions of integration shows that 55% of those involved conceive of it as an attempt to teach children in difficulty to function like any other children in academic and social terms or to require them to function in this way¹⁶. According to the last agreement reached with the C.E.Q., however, integration is the process whereby a child no longer participates, in whole or in part, in all the courses and learning activities of a group of children in difficulty, a process set in motion by a decision taken after consultation of the teachers concerned¹⁷. Finally, to Normand Giroux, who submitted a study on the question to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education 1972, integration would be "all the means implemented to direct the special education provisions they need to children in difficulty who are placed in regular classes"¹⁸.

16. Op. cit., p. 24

17. Entente intervenue entre le Comité patronal de négociation des commissions pour catholiques et la Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec, 8.12.03 and 05

18. Quoted in Mario Laforest, "Mainstreaming" et "perfectionnement" des enseignants (unpublished), Université de Montréal, October 30, 1979, 10 pp. plus bibliography. (Translation)

While many people can use one or another of these definitions as their authority to say that they are engaged in integration, the Commission opts for the Giroux definition, which implies a reorganization of the educational environment and real individualization of teaching. It thus feels that very few schools can claim to be practising integration at this time. Giving a pupil in difficulty who is maintained in or reintegrated into a regular class about the same educational services as all the other children in the group is not integration. More is at issue than where the chair occupied by a pupil is located; specific efforts are needed to respond to the special needs that could be discovered by giving the child some careful attention.

THE MODIFIED EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

More than any change of a material nature, including the elimination of architectural barriers, it is the slow evolution of attitudes that transforms the educational environment. It is important for everyone occupying space in the school to no longer see children in difficulty as patients who are powerless objects of interventions but rather as active elements who are helped to take responsibility for themselves within their means and limitations and to surmount each difficulty they encounter. Furthermore, the educational environment is adapted to integration when the staff can be sure that the other pupils will be more of a help than a hindrance. The approval of the parents is also necessary: one will of course expect to find parents of children in difficulty to be particularly cooperative, but clear support is needed from all parents for the school's efforts. As for the staff, it should be able to count on a wide range of complementary resources; teachers should have become convinced that they can overcome any difficulties with their science, their art, the help of a few new techniques and the support of specialist colleagues; clear relations should be maintained between the teachers and the various psychological, remedial education and rehabilitation specialists; and the specialists' responds to the needs of pupils in difficulty should

not be inconsistent with the teachers' usual actions.

We should give passing emphasis to one problem which affects the professional non-teaching staff: certain budgetary and administrative rules are making it difficult to maintain their numbers, which are already insufficient almost everywhere. As one interdepartmental committee observed, this situation in the public school system is disadvantageous "for personal services to pupils in difficulty, since these services are not protected in the same way as teaching services". The committee explained that, "in the private sector, non-teaching staff members are protected by standards and can even be hired as part of the teaching staff in certain cases". It concluded that under these conditions, "the right of pupils in difficulty to receive appropriate re-education and rehabilitation services has found an acceptable response in the private sector"¹⁹.

It is easy to suppose from this that the public sector's response to the needs of pupils in difficulty is still less than acceptable, given the conditions prevailing in this sector and especially because of the difficulties retaining the services of diversified non-teaching professionals. It is apparently only in 1981-1982 that "it will be possible to place the accent on the development of various human resources for assignment to pupils in difficulty"²⁰. But in the meantime, what should the school commissions do?

19. Comité sur les services de santé et les services sociaux, y inclus les services de réadaptation, Rapport aux sous-ministres des Affaires sociales et de l'Éducation, December 1979, pp. 153-154; 170; 176 (Translation)

20. Ibid., p. 170 (Translation)

It is clearly perceived that the main strength of the educational environment rests in its human resources. The attention by all involved personnel to the specific needs of children in difficulty and to the means of responding to them is matched by the regular class teacher through individualized instruction²¹.

ADMINISTERING SPECIAL SERVICES AND PEDAGOGICAL ORGANIZATION

The administration of special educational services and the adjustment of school structures should be based on considerations that are both administrative and pedagogical in nature. It's one thing for a school to go looking for resources to which it is entitled by the standards in the field of "special education", and it's another to distribute these resources wisely with the concern of ensuring the best possible response to the particular needs of the pupils. The purely administrative approach of obtaining all the resources available under the circumstances is more than legitimate. However, once the resources have been acquired, the matter at issue is no longer a simple equitable distribution of clients among the professionals who are hired, but rather the assignment of personnel on the basis of the children's individual needs that have to be met. Criteria of a pedagogical nature should then prevail over administrative imperatives. In other words, it would be improper to try to fill up a professional's workload by adding another pupil rather than endeavouring to meet this pupil's particular needs with appropriate services from some professional. Could consideration be given to a sort of local annual plan for allocating resources on the basis of the personal needs of the children and not on the basis of the composition of labelled groups, to establish the rationale for this operation?

21. See "Le titulaire", L'état et les besoins de l'éducation. Rapport 1976-1977, Québec 1978, pp. 86-89.

OTHER OBJECTS OF CONCERN

In commenting on the Ministère's policy statement, the Conseil asserted that it was appropriate to "rejoice that non-teaching professionals will henceforth be able to devote less time to administration and more to personal services to pupils"²². There is now cause to fear that this hope will be disappointed. While the ministerial policy recommended recognizing five categories of maladjustment, the collective agreements from now on will distinguish seventeen²³.

The classification of the children according to these categories, on which the calculation of the number of teachers in the school commissions depends, is entrusted to non-teaching professionals who are already few in number and who will have to devote precious time to this task, time that will no longer be available for the types of direct or indirect help to children which these professionals are competent to provide.

LACK OF MANAGEMENT TOOLS

After having seen the Government establish some generous orientations in a policy statement and conclude agreements

22. Op. cit., p. 272, No. 43 (Translation)

23. See Ministère de l'Éducation, L'École québécoise. L'enfance en difficulté d'adaptation et d'apprentissage. Énoncé de politique et plan d'action, Québec 1978, p. 28; Entente intervenue entre le Comité patronal de négociation des commissions pour catholiques et la Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec, Appendix XXIII.

with the various unions of education professionals, those involved in the schools are assuredly expecting something more from the State to guide them in their practice than vague speeches about the welfare of the child and the art of the possible. It is one thing to respect the administrative autonomy of the school commissions; it is another to resolve that they will have to shift for themselves for awhile yet in this complex field of services to children in difficulty, guided only by a flow chart on the one hand and by the collective agreements which have established a certain number of rules for administrative management. A few management tools inspired by pedagogical concerns would seem to be the missing factor up to this point.

ROLE OF PARENTS

The Conseil's examination of the policy statement made public in November 1978 led it to make the following comment: "After a recent past history of overspecialization had led to a belief that ordinary teachers, and parents all the more so, were incompetent in so-called special education, it is good to see recognition of their right to information, consultation, participation, evaluation and decision-making when the orientation or placement of their child is in question"²⁴.

We should be glad that the draft Regulation concerning the pedagogical regime for elementary schools and the rules pertaining to preschool education continue to recognize the parents' right to be "consulted on the special measures that the school proposes to adopt"²⁵.

24. Op. cit., p. 272, No. 5.1 (Translation)

25. Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction générale du développement pédagogique, Document de consultation, No. 16-003, March 1980, Nos. 2.1.2.2.4 and 2.2.1.1.7

CONVERGING APPROACHES

There is one encouraging perspective. The Commission, in observing the concern various organizations have expressed in similar ways to provide the most adequate possible response to the needs of "persons in difficulty", notes their insistence that procedures or approaches entail establishment of a "service plan"²⁶, an "individualized program plan"²⁷ or a "personalized educational program"²⁸. In the social sector, it even seems that determining a personalized service plan is a prerequisite for the allocation of the necessary resources. The Commission is certain that this is a good way to ensure better use of the funds distributed and hopes that preparation of a personalized educational program will be made compulsory in the education sector as well.

26. Office des personnes handicapées du Québec; see Loi assurant l'exercice des droits des personnes handicapées, L.Q. 1978, c. 7, a.45 (Translation)

27. Conseil de la santé et des services sociaux de la région de Montréal métropolitain; see Planification des services aux personnes déficientes mentales avec ou sans surhandicap physique et/ou sensoriel (draft), December 1979, p. 6 (Translation)

28. Various school commissions

One Policy, One Law

The Commission has been able to gather critical information on the American law PL 94-142 which since 1975 has guaranteed appropriate educational services to children with adjustment and learning difficulties²⁹. This law, like the Québec policy, particularly recognizes the right to education provided in the least special school environment possible. Despite the controversy it still arouses³⁰, it may be useful to stress some aspects that Québec would do well not to ignore in improving its policy.

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29. The Commission particularly benefitted from the cooperation of Gilles Bouchard of the Sault-Saint-Louis school commission, and Professor Madeleine Thibault of Université Laval.
30. See Time, Vol. 115, No. 24, June 16, 1980, p. 59: "The law is theoretically useful and just (...). But in practice it often puts an overwhelming strain on the teacher (...). These children need a disproportionate amount of the teacher's time. It's a teacher's nightmare - she can't help them, but she never forgets them." See R. Tremblay, Rapport, a report on comments made on Law PL 94-142 during the 58th international conference of the Council for Exceptional Children (Philadelphia, April 1980), unpublished, La Jeune Lorette school commission, 6 pp.

PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Law PL 94-142 requires preparation of a personal educational program³¹, revised at least once a year, in which the objectives within the child's reach and the resources necessary to help him are determined. Some people consider this the cornerstone of the law and the effective rendering of a true individualization of teaching, making diagnosis and prescription possible. When the Québec Ministère de l'Éducation spoke of a "functional balance-sheet"³², was it hoping to open the way to a personal educational program?

PARENTAL RIGHTS

The same Law gives the parents the right to require that they be consulted and that they give their consent to the educational services planned for their child. Another law

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31. Individualized Educational Program, which now tends to be referred to instead as Personalized Educational Program.
 32. L'École québécoise. L'enfance en difficulté..., op. cit., p. 34. (Translation).

passed not long before this recognized their right of access to their child's school file³³. It must be noted that the Québec policy will have to become more and more resolutely open to consulting parents about the orientation of their children towards appropriate services, despite the fact that several educational milieus do not have a very long tradition of parental consultation.

UPGRADING PERSONNEL

It is interesting to take note of a few constants in the American staff upgrading programs, which were made necessary by the integration of children in difficulty³⁴. There as in Québec, the training of staff members profoundly conditions the way the law or the policy is applied. Here are these constants, which could serve as an inspiration for those revising training and upgrading programs for school personnel in Québec.

1. The programs seek to convince the staff of the necessity of individualizing teaching, and provide them with instrumentation to this effect.
2. The programs provide information about exceptional children and the services that can be offered to them.

33. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 1974

34. Mario Laforêt, *Op. cit.*, pp. 7-10

3. The programs develop knowledge of educational techniques to facilitate interventions.
4. The programs make a special effort to develop the skill of working as part of a team.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the Commission hopes

- that the Ministère will quickly make the tools available to the school communities that will enable them to more efficiently manage the resources allocated to satisfy the specific needs of children in difficulty;
- that the Ministère will also make the means available to parents to ensure the effectiveness of their activities complementary to the special educational services provided to their children;
- that the school commission conduct experiments in the immediate future with the aim of diversifying the human and physical resources made available to pupils in difficulty, so as to look for ways of adequately responding to their various needs;
- that the school staff upgrading programs draw their inspiration from the constants isolated in the programs now in use in the United States, with the objective of meeting the expectations they will have specified, on the basis of the evolution of their competence and attitudes;

- that the Ministère envisage eventually going beyond the policy statement to guarantee, in the Loi sur l'instruction publique, the right of children in difficulty to an education in the most normal school environment possible.

Parent Participation

CLEAR PROGRESS

All the Commission's members have the feeling that parental participation in the schools has made progress this year. Bills 30 and 71 have of course been adopted and are now in force³⁵. But the feedback received in the schools we visited also attests to an evolution in outlook, without which it is hard to make any advances. Last year the judgment was less favourable: there was opposition expressed to the new conditions proposed for parents in the Green Paper entitled *L'enseignement primaire et secondaire au Québec* and then in the policy statement and plan of action, *L'École québécoise*; the groups could also be seen to have problems communicating with each other³⁶. This year, the Commission feels that there are less people who still have a grievance against the Ministère for directing so much of its attention to the parents or who object to parents participating in school affairs, though this does not at the same time eliminate all problems from the relationship. In the opinion of many parents, their role in any significant consultation in various fields, including administration and teaching, is in the process of being created.

35. Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'instruction publique (L.Q. 1979, c. 28) and Loi modifiant de nouveau la Loi sur l'instruction publique (L.Q. 1979, c. 80).

36. See Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, *L'état et les besoins de l'éducation, Rapport 1978-1979*, pp. 65-67.

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION AND COLLECTIVE PARTICIPATION

Last year the Commission discussed the relatively good individual relationships between the parents and the various actors on the educational scene, and the more difficult group relations. Parental participation is in fact expressed both individually and collectively. The Ministère de l'Education's television advertising has undoubtedly been inviting both forms of participation for some time now, trying to make parents understand that their children need them "in school too".

INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION

Many parents do not feel at ease in school except under certain circumstances: if they meet the teachers at report card time, or if they do volunteer work, by accompanying a group of pupils on an outing, for example, or helping out in the library. By doing this they show their interest in their children's school activities and their availability for certain forms of cooperation. Parental participation in the school is most often expressed in this way.

COLLECTIVE PARTICIPATION

But the present context provides an incentive to focus attention on structured forms of parental participation: the School Committees and Parents' Committees, which have existed for nearly ten years and have been updated by Bills 30 and 71; parent representation on the school board (Bill 30); and the school's Orientation Council (Bill 71). Parents clearly perceive that the government wants to give a new impetus to their collective participation.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEES

It was of course too soon this year to gauge the overall effect of the new legislation on the functioning of school

committees, and particularly to assess a measure like the determination of a large number of issues subject to compulsory consultation. This is perhaps why parents have again complained about the inadequate information provided to them or the lack of consideration they were sometimes given. However, more often than in previous years, many parents, teachers and school principals have fairly spontaneously shown their appreciation for the school committees' effective work.

Educational authorities have also chosen to leave it to each community to solve the problem of continuity in the composition of the school committees. Strengthened by their past experience, the communities should not have to invest too much time in overcoming this difficulty.

THE PARENTS' COMMITTEES

It has been no more possible to assess the effects of Bill 30 on the parents' committees during the past year than in the case of the school committees. In general, however, the Commission's members have again clearly perceived various procedures, concerns and group relations at the school commission level that were quite different from those they were able to observe at the school level. There are certainly many other considerations to be examined with regard to the experience of the parents' committees whose members we met; but their difficult relations with the school boards are clearly in the foreground. Since both the parents' committees and the school boards are supposed to provide the best service they can to the consumers, it would appear important to emphasize that, since their rights to existence have been given equal recognition, their professional relations should bear the stamp of a greater interest in working together, which does not necessarily require the elimination of frank discussion and divergent positions.

The fact that more and more parents are showing interest in holding a seat on the school board after having been a member of the parents' committee is interpreted in some circles as the sign of a new era of more functional relations. This is certainly possible, but while admitting that the two parties have two distinct kinds of preoccupations, it must be seen that the objective could be attained differently than it is now, if only by finding new occasions for meetings and exchanges.

THE PARENTS' REPRESENTATIVE ON THE SCHOOL BOARD

Last year we were able to establish contact with a number of parent representatives on the school boards. Even though the experiment is quite new and our sample is very limited insofar as this provision of Bill 30 is concerned, we feel it would be interesting to summarize some of the comments of the people we talked to on two issues. On the one hand, even though the parents' representative's documentation for meetings may sometimes differ slightly from that of his or her colleagues, he or she has much more consistent and better information than is available to the parents' committee. Better information often promotes better understanding, so the parent's representative feels duty-bound to let the parents' committee, which otherwise would be less well informed, benefit from this material. On the other hand, despite all the provisions of the law and all the efforts made by the school commission to consider the parents' representative as a full-time commissioner, he or she is still distinguished from the other commissioners by the fact of not being elected by universal suffrage and not having the right to vote at board meetings. We believe it possible to adjust to this difference, which has the merit of eliminating any ambiguity: the commissioners do not sit as parents but as elected public administrators, while the parents' representative does not sit as a public administrator but as a parent, as confirmed by the way in which he or she is appointed and participates in the deliberations without voting. These comments are rather brief to size up the real value of such a provision, but they make it

possible to see that a need has been satisfied and that the experiment may bring improvements.

THE SCHOOL'S ORIENTATION COUNCIL

Though it has not yet been established anywhere, the orientation council allowed in each school by Bill 71 has been subject to various interpretations. Some people are somewhat skeptical: how can a good "board of directors" be formed from people whose concerns differ so widely? What will be the role from now on of a school committee which is functioning better and whose efficiency is becoming increasingly significant? Others entertain the hope that the orientation council will finally represent decision-making power at the school level and that parents will finally have the right to participate in decision-making.

There is no doubt that the beginnings will be difficult. One need only look at the starting line-ups in one school commission, for example: on one side, administrators are maintaining that Bill 71 has gone beyond the wishes of the parents insofar as the orientation council is concerned, while on the other side, parents want to have a majority on the orientation council to escape the "extinguishing power" of the staff, which is always inclined to oppose their requests or suggestions with the line that "it's not possible because of this or that..."

A frank and open dialogue among all the groups that have to delegate representatives to the orientation council would seem necessary before it is established. It would be useful for each interest group to state at the outset how it intends to make the council serve the improvement of the school, what kind of procedural model seems desirable, and what relations should be established with the school commission and the surrounding community. The expression of these expectations can become the start of the school's educational project.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

Parental participation can express itself in still other ways: for example, by creating and sustaining so-called "alternative" or "optional" schools, or by rallying to the defence of the last school left in the village or neighbourhood. Paradoxically, parent groups appear to have some powers in the first case but to be doomed to impotence in the second case.

The Commission would also like to draw attention to the program for "animation of parent participation in elementary schools", which has the purpose in so-called underprivileged communities of facilitating the participation of parents who have problems banding together and getting organized. This form of support seems to have already had appreciable results, which obviously have something to do with the dynamic nature of the animator, his or her style of bringing the parents into contact with the school administrators, and the relations he or she maintains with the school commission's general administration as well as with the regional branch of the Ministère, which will thus be able to assess the value of these results.

Before concluding, we must admit, as do others, that the great "participationist dream of grassroots government"³⁷ does not ipso facto become a reality with a new legislative framework. This has been proven in the health and social service sector, as well as at various levels of the educational system where there are sometimes more positions to fill than volunteers, or where several positions are finally filled by the same person. Any society benefitting from services that are generally satisfactory undoubtedly is affected by this phenomenon. An overall analysis would be

37. J. Dumais, in Le Soleil, May 29, 1980 (Translation)

necessary if one really wanted to reduce its scope. And would such an attempt succeed in any case, given that it would certainly be necessary to delve into the deep-rooted motivations of each individual? Parents want to be concerned about the quality of educational services. But can and should they be required to deal with collective preoccupations against their wills?

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the Commission hopes

- that the school boards and parents' committees hold meetings more than once a year to exchange information and opinions, in an effort to understand their distinct roles and in a spirit of frank cooperation;
- that there be an initial evaluation at the local level shortly after the end of the coming year of the experience of parent representation on school boards;
- that the establishment of a school's orientation council be preceded by exploratory meetings bringing together groups which have to delegate representatives to this council, so that the main expectations and intentions of the various parties can be revealed and understood, if not shared;
- that there be a study of the effect of the Ministère de l'Éducation's television advertising urging parents to participate, and that this advertising be continued, in view of the positive results.

Sex Education in the Schools³⁸

Sex education in the schools has given rise to debate in many communities and the controversy has been fuelled by impassioned reactions as much as by arguments of varying value. The word "value" could well be understood in a different way, for the debate on this issue most often is a matter of values.

Simply indicating that the question is under study or that a project is being prepared can create a stir, provoking support or opposition from various quarters, and the media are quick to grab hold of the issue. Curiously enough, however, the school communities visited this year by the Commission did not have much to say spontaneously on the matter.

The following observations were noted: "Passe-partout" program is interesting a lot of people in sex education for children; efforts in this field by local social service and health organizations provide opportunities for discussion by school administrators, teachers and parents; a survey of parents or a school commission consultation meeting can generate real progress.

38. On this question also see Comité catholique, L'éducation sexuelle dans les milieux scolaires catholiques du Québec, Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Québec 1976, 44 pp.; Comité protestant, L'éducation sexuelle dans les écoles protestantes, Québec 1978

But we did not perceive a clear sentiment anywhere that the debate had last long enough, that unanimity was on the verge of being reached both on content and on means, and that all that still had to be done was to take action in the children's best interests.

Since it has found resolving this question to still be an uphill battle, the Commission is somewhat wary in considering the results of a poll conducted last year, according to which 96% of the people questioned said they were in favour of sex education in the schools³⁹.

RESPONSES OF THE VARIOUS GROUPS CONSULTED
TEACHERS MAINLY RETICENT

In each school that was visited, the Commission's members questioned the teachers on their attitude to sex education. At first they seemed to want to keep their distance from the debate. They generally showed themselves to be reticent about adding a new subject to the elementary school curriculum and many of them also said that they would feel a lot of embarrassment dealing with such a topic with the children. Apart from a few who already feel at ease with the question and have taken their own initiatives to stimulate the pupils or respond to their curiosity, the teachers think that this duty is the parents' responsibility and that if the school has to act in their stead it should especially not do so by means of a one-hour class per week for six or seven years but rather through specifically-oriented interventions.

39. Tremblay-Lévy-Dupras poll, Université du Québec à Montréal, cited in P. Lebrun and M. Roy, "Les enfants ont-ils un sexe?", in *Education-Québec*, Vol. 10, No. 4, January-February 1980, p. 20

*ADMINISTRATORS AND PARENTS CONFIDENT IN THE
MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION AND THE CLASS TEACHER*

If a program or pedagogical guide is needed, the parents and administrators we met unanimously hoped that it be prepared by the Ministère de l'Éducation. After all, they said, it is sex education in the school that is at issue. They also preferred action by the class teacher to that by the nurse from the local community service centre (CLSC).

*ONE OPINION: DISSOCIATE SEX EDUCATION FROM MORAL AND RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE*

Some people also hope that sex education in the schools will be dissociated from moral and religious education, not because the two have nothing to do with each other but because it is necessary to go beyond the stage where one is a surrogate for the other and indeed even has it under its wing. They believe that there is a healthy way, other than moral or religious, to consider sex education for children and that it should be introduced naturally and gradually, while respecting community values.

PUPILS FIND SEX EDUCATION A PROBLEM FOR ADULTS

The pupils questioned indeed wanted sex education in the school. They felt that they would thus be able to live better as boys or girls in their little society. However, they all more or less sensed their parents' and teachers' uneasiness about "talking about that". Under these conditions, it can be understood why they don't ask their parents or teachers many questions on this subject, and why they more or less consciously hope for their educators' attitudes to evolve.

IMPORTANCE OF AGREEING ON CONTENT AND APPROACH

*CONTENT: INFORMATION AND REFLECTION ON AFFECTIVITY,
SEXUAL IDENTITY, HUMAN RELATIONS...*

Everyone is wondering about the content of any sex education program in the schools. Some feel this should be information, while to others, it should be more than explanation of biological phenomena, and include reflection on social roles and male-female relationships. The feedback from the pupils gives a fairly clear indication that it would be hard to satisfy their needs solely through information.

Besides, as one specialist noted, "it would seem important to develop the emotional aspect in school... It is especially important to develop a feeling of identity, of sexual identity, at the elementary school level"⁴⁰. The Conseil du statut de la femme also made a plea for course content that would lead "young people to expand their concept of sexuality to sexual identity and to its consequences in terms of social roles"⁴¹. In its own recommendation to the Minister of Education on the issue of personal and social training in school, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation reported that a new demand was being made of the schools for education in emotional relationships and sexuality⁴². The legitimate nature of this appeal to the schools should be emphasized again today, and it is to be hoped that there will be an adequate response through sex education course content that is more than just informative.

40. Interview with Jean-Marc Samson, Director of UQAM's Sexology Department, in *Education-Québec*, Vol. 10, No. 4, January-February 1980. (Translation)

41. See *Pour les québécoises: égalité et indépendance*, Québec 1978, pp. 48-51. (Translation)

42. "La formation personnelle et sociale à l'école", in *L'état et les besoins de l'éducation. Rapport 1977-1978*, Québec 1978, pp. 130-133.

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH AND APPROPRIATE RESOURCES

As for the approach that should be given priority, some parents are of the opinion that sex education should be diffused among the school's various educational interventions. Some emphasize the class teacher's role in this respect, given this teacher's concern for the children's complete education throughout the sustained contact he or she maintains with them.

The Commission does not feel it appropriate to challenge this orientation of integrating sex education into personal and social training and deploying its objectives among the courses that already share the available time. This does not mean that the school should neglect the specific contribution "of the psychologist, the remedial education specialist, the nurse, the pastoral animator or the other professionals". Neither does this mean no longer seeing that "it is in his or her environment and family that a child's personal and social training takes root", or that "parental participation in this fundamental field has proven to be indispensable"⁴³. Besides, in several school communities nowadays, if not everywhere, doesn't sex education have a sort of special status according to which parents have to be consulted and give their consent before a project in this field can see the light of day in a school?

43. Ibid. (Translation)

*THE FIRST POSITIVE GESTURE BY PARENTS:
TALK ABOUT IT AT HOME*

The parents the Commission met acknowledged that they have to play their part. "The best way to provide sex education at home is to talk about sexuality in simple terms; the fact of talking about it makes the uneasiness disappear and provides some assurance as to its use or non-use"⁴⁴.

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44. Mary Calderone, President of the Sex Information and Education Council in the United States, whose comments at the Montréal "Childhood and Sexuality" Symposium in September 1979 are briefly summarized in these terms in an article entitled "La sexualité des sexologues" in *Education-Québec*, January-February 1980, p. 22 (Retranslation)

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the Commission hopes

- that the Ministère, in the context of its work on the personal and social training program, will define the objectives of sex education in the school;
- that the content of the program or pedagogical guide will be more than just informative and that an integrated pedagogical approach will be implemented, without neglecting the contribution that can be made by the appropriate resource people;
- that the Ministère de l'Education will establish a plan to prepare those responsible in the schools and the parents for the integration of sex education into the school's educational objectives in the near future;
- that popular education programs will be developed to provide parents with the skills in playing their sex education role with their children.

Granting Credits upon Presentation of Projects

The Commission feels it should add another few pages to pass on the repeated comments made by administrators in the past few years concerning the funding of certain local projects by means of specific allocations from the Ministère de l'Education. It is aware that this special problem falls into the much broader context of the overall funding of school commissions and that this field is currently undergoing some profound changes. A new method of allocating resources to the school commissions, the result of long consultation, should in fact come into force in 1980-1981.

There is every reason to believe that the new system will still include a form of funding known as "supplementary allocations" or "specific allocations". Since it cannot be assumed that all the pre-existing difficulties will be ipso facto overcome, the Commission believes it is useful to note the reactions of the school communities to the practice of the past few years in this respect.

TALKING ABOUT MONEY

Events have shown that this year was a good time to talk about transfers of funds between the Ministère de l'Éducation and the school commissions. However, the Commission only focussed its attention on the Ministère's practice of making supplementary credits available to the school commissions to implement certain projects, provided that they meet conditions determined in the framework of a research or development plan for a sector of activity. The Commission wanted to examine this aspect because it had already received some discontented feedback from various educational circles.

SATISFACTION

It must be acknowledged that some administrators expressed their satisfaction with a number of points: almost all school commissions succeed in obtaining allocations on the basis of some available program; this sort of competition among school commissions appears to be acceptable in the final analysis; the Ministère certainly was entitled to want to develop the sectors of activity it deemed to be priorities.

DISSATISFACTION

But there has also been dissatisfaction expressed for a number of reasons:

- experience shows that the needs the Ministère considered to be priorities do not correspond often enough to those of the communities;
- sometimes the conditions prescribed by the Ministère run contrary to a philosophy or practice preferred by a school commission;
- in all school commissions, especially those with smaller staffs, normal services, to an extent, have to be suspended for a while to examine the necessary documentation, draft the project and present it in the form and within the delays prescribed, sometime with little or no results;
- some projects receive generous allocations, while others obtain less abundant resources: in the first case there is some talk of waste, while in the second, some people denounce inadequate funding;
- some people have very little appreciation for this kind of "high pressure salesmanship", this form of "poorly disguised centralization", with its sometimes "debatable" selection criteria.

These comments undoubtedly will shed some light on the adjustments that could be made to various aspects of this practice.

QUESTIONS

Educational circles would also certainly be interested in looking through any evaluation reports that now exist or that should exist soon for the answers to the following questions they are asking.

- Are the elementary schools getting their fair share compared to other levels of instruction?
- Isn't the development of essential services sometimes subjected to this form of resource allocation, whereas all school commissions should obtain the means to this end on a statutory basis?
- Wouldn't control after the fact or evaluation reveal whether this practice is appropriate?
- Overall, isn't the total cost of energy expended in preparing the plans greater than the amount the Ministère agrees to invest in an operation?
- Don't medium-range projects have more chance of being better prepared when there is more time available for this purpose?
- Are two classes of administrators being created: the resourceful or astute operators who know how to obtain grants and those who are less anxious to profit from the Ministère's allocations?

It would appear useful to look for answers to all these questions, since the document entitled *La nouvelle méthode d'allocation des ressources aux commissions scolaires pour l'année 1980-1981* still refers to supplementary allocations and specific allocations⁴⁵.

In accordance with what it feels it has perceived of the aspirations of those involved in the schools, the Commission accepts the principle that the Québec education system can give itself national priorities and establish national development plans matched with specific resources. However, ensuring coherent linkage among national, regional and local needs should remain a preoccupation at all times.

SUGGESTIONS

If the Ministère maintains this practice, certain suggestions can be formulated. To do this we ought to overcome a number of misgivings due to the chancy nature of this form of funding combined with the essential character of the long awaited services covered. But in the anticipation that it will be possible to recognize the imperative nature of these needs and provide a complete and lasting response to them in one form or another, the Commission would like to specify the following, generally underdeveloped sectors to which the Ministère should pay particular attention:

45. Document 51-3629, Direction générale de l'administration, Ministère de l'Éducation, March 1980. (New method of allocating resources to the school commissions for the year 1980-1981).

- supervision and animation for pupils eating lunch at school;
- school libraries, with appropriate human resources;
- developing schoolyard facilities;
- transforming old schools to adjust them to the needs of new pedagogical regimes and new safety and environmental quality standards...

Conclusion

In concluding its report, the Commission would like to draw attention to one reality which already must be reckoned with and to which the school system has not shown many signs of adapting.

INCREASED NUMBER OF SMALL SCHOOLS

We want to discuss the increased number of small schools resulting from the decline in school enrollments, and the consequences of this phenomenon for administration and working conditions. A quick calculation allows us to see that in 1978-1979, out of a total of 1930 elementary schools, 502 schools had less than 225 pupils and 312 were known as institutional schools, meaning that they had a little more than 225 pupils spread among two, three or four physical schools⁴⁶. Five years earlier, out of a total of 2005 elementary schools, 397 had less than 225 pupils

46. Ministère de l'Éducation, Répertoire des organismes et des écoles, 1978-1979.

and 70 were "institutional" schools⁴⁷.

DIFFERENT TASKS

After suffering a considerable decline, school enrollment should remain stable for a while in most regions⁴⁸. This means that a large proportion of preschool and elementary school personnel is now working and, if nothing changes, could be working for some time to come, under conditions that are virtually not taken into account at all by existing management tools and pedagogical instruments. Two kindergarten teachers have very different jobs when one handles two groups of children in the same school and the other has to handle two other groups in two schools that are several kilometers apart from each other. A home room teacher with an average size class in a school that has one or more classes per grade has a quite different job from a teacher whose one small class contains children from more than one different grade. The same goes for the jobs of other school staff members (principals, specialists, etc.) and of the school commissions' administrative personnel.

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47. Ministère de l'Éducation, Répertoire des organismes et des écoles, 1973-1974.
48. See "Diminution de la clientèle scolaire", in Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, L'état et les besoins de l'éducation, Rapport 1978-1979, Québec 1979, pp. 53-58.

APPROPRIATE RULES AND STANDARDS

The Commission is concluding its 1979-1980 report by touching on this problem because it is sensitive to the problems of school communities that have to cope with such living conditions and because it feels that there is a certain urgency for those responsible for collective agreements and administrative specifications to endeavour to bring rules or standards more into line with the current context, by adding the particular provisions required by this transformation of our school system wherever needed.

4. THE HIGH SCHOOL

From the observation of its members in their own communities and in the establishments they visited in 1979-1980, the Commission de l'enseignement secondaire has reached the conclusion that Québec high schools are heading in a number of promising directions, making difficult progress over some roads still under construction, and also travelling towards a few probable dead ends¹.

Promising Directions

Some progress was made this year in the high schools, and a number of orientations make it possible to be optimistic about the future. Indeed, high schools are beginning to consolidate some of the gains resulting from their past actions, so that they can move ahead at a relatively safe cruising speed.

SPINOFF FROM THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD

In the wake of the International Year of the Child it is interesting to note that adults and adolescents, both officially and unofficially, have made some well-intentioned attempts at coming closer together in several communities. These efforts have of course not become generalized, but the movement towards focussing educational activities more on the student is expanding.

Young people themselves have sat down at the bargaining table: their Blue Paper, *Et après?*, vividly expressed their

1. Also see appendices, "Educators that young people need in high school", a draft policy document adopted by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation on May 9, 1980; "A new curriculum for students in the short vocational program", C.S.E. recommendation to the Ministère de l'Éducation, May 9, 1980.

thinking, revealing their feelings and their needs². "Kids are like kites. They seem to be free but they're always tied down... We want to be involved in everything that concerns us". It is in these terms that the young people summed up their thinking on their condition. These comments also confirm the statements made by student council representatives encountered during the Commission's visits in the schools.

Especially in the schools, students are very often ready to get involved and participate in educational activities. Their conditions are clear: student-teacher relationships must be frank and honest. A climate of mutual respect and trust is absolutely imperative, but this does not always prevail.

Young people would like their educators to be human beings *first*, people who are capable of listening to them and taking into consideration what they are thinking and experiencing. Next, they would like their educators to be demanding about what they learn in school and about the "rules of the game", on condition that these are respected by everyone; they also want them to be demanding about the environment, both educational and ecological, because youth today is increasingly sensitive to the quality of life.

Finally, young people want to receive relevant education. They want to know how to get ahead in the different fields of the social reality in which they live. They want to know their rights and their duties in the society in which they will have to live. They want to be given specific information about the issues that affect them personally in their intellectual, religious, social, emotional and biological lives. Issues like sex education cause them anxiety. They know that they don't know enough, while everybody fancies that they don't need to know or that they have already learned it somewhere.

2. Et après?, Québec Secrétariat of the International Year of the Child, Québec 1979.

The aptness and frankness of these comments pose a strong challenge to adults and open the way to the greater cooperation that is needed.

DEVELOPING NEW SUPERVISORIAL FRAMEWORKS

It is still too early to observe new formulae for supervising students within well-defined educational projects. But it is evident that educators are harbouring a concern for a framework that is more human and attentive to students. Many promising experiments could be noted.

Particularly in junior high school, for example, serious efforts are being made to favour better coordination and an easier transition from elementary school to high school³. However, the current trend in the school is towards the establishment of smaller administrative and pedagogical units. These units are often constituted on a grade-student relationship, providing more encouragement for appropriate educational activities, supporting the integration of weaker students, consolidating teams of teachers and reducing the number of people dealing with the same students.

Such measures undoubtedly get results: a decline in the absenteeism and dropout rates, an increase in interest in the school, and especially, satisfaction of the student's needs.

The schools and school commissions are also taking positive and beneficial initiatives that go beyond the ordinary services provided for in the administrative standards or in the collective agreements. The results is better human relations in the school and therefore an educational process that is better adapted to students, especially when it appeals to their effective participation. It is often during extra-curricular activities that students learn how to live and develop their personalities. Real educators know how to exploit this dimension of education.

3. See Commission de l'enseignement primaire, Le passage des élèves du primaire au secondaire. Réflexions et propositions, Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Québec 1980, 31pp.

SPREADING INNOVATIONS

All these initiatives are also being more widely disseminated and publicized, which does not fail to give rise to other projects or promote reflection on the experiments in progress. One cannot insist too much on the importance of making the results of pedagogical innovations, research in teaching methods and new structural or remedial models accessible, so that they can benefit the greatest number.

To give some examples, we should mention the inventory produced by the Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean section of the Fédération des commissions scolaires catholiques du Québec to provide information on educational innovations in recent years the publicization for the past two years of a compilation of the Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal; the articles in *Vie pédagogique*, a periodical published by the Direction générale du développement pédagogique of the Ministère de l'Éducation; the catalogue of educational research projects established by the planning sector of the Ministère de l'Éducation. One successful practice is becoming widespread in regional newspapers: a column dealing with events in the community's educational community. Finally, the Ministère's suggestion to the school commissions can be emphasized: by common consent reserve one or two pedagogical days during which the professional associations could hold their conventions or conference, to enable teachers to provide themselves with new pedagogical resources. These are a number of paths along which development should continue.

THE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

The idea of an "educational project", or design for education, is gradually making headway. Despite the skepticism of many, the contagion is slowly taking hold and the thinking on this issue is beginning to take shape. School administrators are being offered sessions by the Ecole nationale d'administration publique. Resource people from the Ministère are available to schools or school commissions that want to discuss the issue in greater depth or start up a project.

The orientation council is destined to support the educational project in the school. Despite the questions and reticence to which it gives rise, it enables communities that want to do so to take the lead. However, all the elements of this process still have to be domesticated and will require many discussions, which will probably be very beneficial to all participants.

PARTICIPATION BY PARENTS

While there has always been an active wish for parental participation in the schools, this participation has been strengthened as a result of the proclamation of Bills 30 and 71, through the introduction of better defined and more functional official structures. Administrative elements to facilitate this are in place, and effective parent participation now depends on the attitudes that will be adopted by the parents themselves and by their partners. School administrators and teachers, through their individual behaviour, will count for a lot in successful implementation of the various measures provided for.

THE POLICY OF INTERVENTION IN LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES

After *L'Ecole québécoise* and the policy statement on children with learning and adaptational difficulties, a policy statement was published on education in low-income communities, *L'Ecole s'adapte à son milieu*. Drawing their inspiration from a very accurate description of the problems, the government's orientations seek to strengthen local interventions that are more appropriate in principle to the needs of the school community affected.

By giving preferential treatment in high school to supporting adolescents in difficulty, prevention of drug addiction and early detection of students before they drop out, the government has chosen some good targets; but it should be aware that the interventions envisaged deal more with the

effects than with the causes. As long as the whole school does not adapt to the needs and situations of adolescents, the problems the government wants to overcome will continue to manifest themselves.

It is thus important to consider these eventual interventions as being preliminary to more fundamental changes in the school and society.

We should recall, however, that the school's ability to act is limited with respect to certain realities that adolescents have to live with outside of its walls. There is need for more and more cooperation between the Social Affairs and Education departments, and more specifically between the local community service centres or departments of community health and the schools. A brochure entitled *Avec les jeunes*, published jointly by the Fédération des C.L.S.C. and the Bureau de consultation Jeunesse, attests that this goodwill exists. It describes various experiments in working with young people in different regions of Québec. These projects are preventive in nature and can serve as models or as inspiration for those who want to promote the prevention of delinquency among adolescents and ensure that the Youth Protection Act really becomes a law to cover exceptional cases, as is its objective.

CONCLUSIONS

The different issues which have just been mentioned augur interesting and important developments in the high schools. These are the paths to the future. They all bear a direct relation to the human dimension of education. They all fall into the domain of attitudes and behaviour. But these are not avenues that it is possible to follow in complete peace of mind without paying attention every minute. Indeed, many of these roads are still in the project phase or still have to be linked up with other roads "under construction".

Roads Under Construction

A school is like a perpetual construction site. It innovates, rediscovers values that had been placed on ice, is entrusted with new responsibilities, continually welcomes new students, and has to adapt to changing situations. It must always bring its activities up to date.

THE MEASURES ANNOUNCED IN THE PLAN OF ACTION

The policy statement and plan of action of the Ministère de l'Éducation foresee a number of changes both in the organization and in the spirit of the school. However, some of the measures announced pose difficulties of application and give rise to some unease.

Thus, the projected modifications to the pedagogical regime have been poorly received in general, especially the "incitative" plan for a timetable of three periods per week in each subject, a distribution which it will be practically necessary to adopt given the number of courses to be provided. It is felt that the Ministère let itself be influenced by pressure from certain associations that wanted all sorts of content included in high school courses, so much so that the very concept of general education has been put into question. If the time is split up too much, this risks relegating the objectives and ultimate ends of high school education, which are clearly stated in one official document, to second place.

Similarly, curriculum review is continuing despite a stabilization of course content and teaching methods. It is known, for example, that the new programs are designed on the basis of three periods of teaching per week, which means that they will represent a lighter workload than now exists. Will this result in a decline in the quality of the transmission of knowledge in the schools and in a greater dispersion of the student's preoccupations?

There is no doubt that the measures recommended will have repercussions on the teachers' workload, if only in terms

of the number of students or groups of students each will have to meet during the week. This goes contrary to the objective of establishing more sustained human relations.

Finally, nobody seems to be explaining the overall plan to the educational communities or to the public, so that a climate of uncertainty is allowed to prevail.

Despite these causes for concern, teams have set to work in several communities. The educational project, the new framework for students and the participatory structures are all certainly objects of concern, as has been said previously. These are the human dimensions which are in question, and they demand more than the information which has to be ensured at the same level to all the groups concerned. Those involved in the high schools have to learn how to dialogue and live with the different partners on the basis of their characteristics in order to be able to work together better.

PARTICIPATION

High school *students*, in general, like their school. Various polls which try to find out their degree of satisfaction with life in the school show this regularly. However, their main grievances concern the lack of human relationships, the failure to understand, and the shortage of interesting activities. When a student council exists, too often it only serves to organize activities or collect funds. The vocabulary level, the methods of discussion and the lack of continuity from year are major handicaps that students run up against when they get organized, in addition to the difficulties they encounter getting people to take them seriously.

It seems that some work is necessary to give rise to student councils that are responsible not only for certain activities but also to a large extent for the very form of education in the school, meaning whatever affects life in the school, teaching and framework for activities.

It is up to educators to concern themselves with official student participation, if only in the care taken in organizing real elections. The effective and concrete practice of democracy and representation is not only useful but valid and desirable. Student associations are undeniable educational tools, even if they cause fear in the adults responsible for the school.

In the Carignan regional school commission, for example, the students are full members of the school's management council, and through experience they develop their competence and learn a fairly significant number of skills.

How far should boldness be allowed to go? Up to what point should student initiative be supported? In this field as in others, it depends on the people involved and the particular situation.

Insofar as *parent* participation is concerned, it largely depends on the openmindedness and personal disposition of the school principal. Too often parents feel blocked by the principal's role as an authority figure or his official responses. Too often they have to be satisfied with information that is too sketchy or that has been made exaggeratedly complex. Bill 71, which reinforces the authority and leadership role of the principal, causes them to fear an even greater rigidity, while the school committee and the orientation council, as complementary structures, will split up parental participation into various forms of consultation.

Mutual understanding is necessary. On the one hand, the school principal, though under pressure from all quarters, ought to make the effort to explain all the particulars even of what he or she may sometimes regard as superficially simple. On the other hand, the parents should be able to inform themselves on the "ways and customs" of the school system with the help of the resources made available to them. Too often, students and teachers reproach parents for feeding on rumours or gossip. The adult education departments usually, though rather timidly, offer information sessions specially designed for this purpose. Moreover, parents have to be more militant and obstinate in their legitimate requests for explanations.

The problem of the representativeness of parents who agree to sit on school committees is also beginning to be raised seriously. In most cases, the parents are acting for themselves, having been elected by acclamation or by such a small number of parents that their legitimacy as representatives is placed in doubt. Even though a number of mechanisms have been established, they do not give rise to or encourage too much involvement and interest by parents. Resources assuredly have to be made available so that elected parents are really the spokesmen of their constituents.

It is also difficult to get the *teaching staff*, the *non-teaching professionals* and the other *resource people* who are directly responsible to the Ministère, like nurses and social workers, to work together. Either the school administration does not succeed in coordinating the various interventions, or the staff does not want to cooperate, or each individual acts as if he were on his own. This situation is deplorable and should be the first item on the agenda for the orientation councils to ensure that the services provided by all staff members are linked to the school's priorities. This preoccupation with orchestrating the content of the educational project with the means and resources available to the schools in order to serve the students should be of prime importance.

As for the teachers themselves, a number of observable facts lead us to think that it is pressing for their motivation and personal commitment to be boosted. Indeed, too many teachers appear to be disillusioned or find their personal gratification outside their profession.

Thus, all the possibilities offered within the hours reserved for students' structured education are far from being sufficiently exploited. General supervisory activities are still perceived too much as a series of restrictive measures to be imposed on students. Too many of them consist solely of supervising the students, whereas they should contribute to "systematizing" their participation in the educational process that affects them, with the help of a sustained and attentive presence by educators.

It is true that some teachers, because of their lack of preparation, are not capable of getting involved in activities with students outside of their subject. Others excel at this. It will probably be necessary for local collective agreements to leave room for flexibility and allow the development of original ways of organizing these general supervisory activities so as to make use of the teachers' respective talents.

Again because of lack of preparation, enormous problems are being caused by the integration of children in difficulty into regular classes. Most high school educators are unable to cope with these students, particularly with those who have not been able to learn how to read or to comprehend what they are reading.

Application of the integration policy will require adroitness on the part of those responsible: if the policy does not give rise to objections in principle, it will still require various measures to support the teachers.

A spirit of research with respect to high school pedagogical methods also seems to be lacking, though projects are being recognized and supported at other levels of instruction. Stemming from personal initiatives or from experiments arising from upgrading programs like the P.P.M.F., promising projects are often compromised by the lack of stability of teaching staffs or the lack of a pedagogical framework. This scarcely helps the development of innovations that would ensure more vitality in teaching at the high school level.

Let us finally mention that greater concern for correcting usage of their own mother tongue and that of their students should rank among teachers' professional priorities. Similarly the wish has long been expressed, that teachers in the general and vocational sectors should work together more closely, without this really happening.

Unfortunately, the collective agreements impose norms that impede the activity of true educators who do more than just teach. Greater personal and professional commitment should

be hoped for from teachers. This will come, among other things, when positive pedagogical experiences are recognized and emphasized and when the social status of teachers takes on a new sheen.

The whole question of participation by the various parties responsible for education will not move in any interesting directions as long as each individual does not see the necessity for honest and direct communication. School administrators, parents, teachers, students and other members of the staff cannot escape from this obligation if they have the human work that unites them at heart.

A CROSSROADS OF INFLUENCES

It is now commonplace to assert that a school is located at a crossroads of all kinds of influences. Some would like to see the school's own role better defined, while others prefer to exploit the school's privileged position with adolescents. To a certain extent the school has become the focus of a struggle among adults on the way its role in society should be conceived.

While the school can no longer confine itself solely to a role of instruction because of the fragmentation of what was once a homogeneous society, neither can it completely make up for everything that is lacking.

Thus the school is under pressure from all quarters to serve as the focal point for various social interventions, and as a means of cultural insertion or integration into the wider community.

To cite some recent examples, we should mention the integration of physically and mentally handicapped pupils under the age of 21, and security for adolescents placed under the Youth Protection Act.

Education in healthy food habits is another of society's demands. Except in a few rare places, this is still

embryonic and the lack of nutritional policy in school commission cafeterias often does not help. Too often, the concessionnaires are left free to do as they please, or cafeteria profits are used to finance all sorts of activities⁴.

In some low-income communities, pilot projects are under way to sensitize students to the importance of feeding themselves properly. But often these students are solely concerned about eating, and not about knowing what to eat. Some students cannot even profit from a physical education course because they are too weak from not eating enough.

Cultural expression and the development of culture can find fertile ground in the city, but in communities remote from major centres or in rural communities, the means are lacking and require reinforcement through agreements between school commissions and municipalities, for example, or through additional subsidies for transportation.

After priority was given to developing physical education in elementary schools, there was some concern about continuity, and programs are ready or in the process of being introduced in the high schools. Yet this fundamental dimension of students' training is barely discussed in *L'école québécoise* at the very time when more and more anxiety is being expressed about the physical condition of citizens.

Finally, especially in elementary school, efforts are being made to welcome immigrants through special classes, but these will have to be developed further. High schools in their turn ought to practice the necessary openness⁵.

4. See Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, "L'alimentation à l'école. Recommandation au Ministre de l'Éducation", in L'état et les besoins de l'éducation. Rapport 1977-1978. Québec 1978, pp. 119-129.

5. See Comité catholique, Dans ce pays. A l'école catholique l'accueil des enfants de traditions religieuses et culturelles diverses, C.S.E., Québec 1978, 32 pp.

All these initiatives that society wants have to be added to the educational services provided by the schools, and require periods for gradual adaptation by educators if one desires to achieve a certain degree of success and overcome resistance. The schools cannot implement all personal and social educational programs on their own. They need support and special measures, particularly for teachers who are being expected to develop the skills needed in all these areas.

TOLERANCE

A number of forms of intolerance have been noted to various degrees, and there would seem to be a risk of rifts developing between people who have every interest in working together, especially now in a time of budgetary restrictions and rationalization of resources. Thus, the denominational structure of the school system creates divisions, as in the case of Notre-Dame-des-Neiges school in Montréal, for example, or in communities where differing mentalities persist despite movements towards greater openness which have begun to manifest themselves and where it is still hard for Anglophone Protestants and Anglophone Catholics to cooperate. The language structure of the system, as in the case of Pierre-Laporte school in Town in Mount-Royal for example, also gives rise to divisions.

However, in the everyday context, it is the practice of the right to exemption from religious education that attracts most of the attention. This right is easier to demand in major centres than in small localities, but it is a preoccupation in all communities.

On the one hand, parents who believe in the specific character of religious education feel that too much place is being given in this program to psychology and ethics as such. Can it be otherwise when the catechism is entrusted to teachers without special training or convictions?

On the other hand, those who want to exercise their right to exemption from religious education do not benefit from the best conditions. Students are still subjected to undue pressure. This is the case, for example, when information turns into propaganda or when uncertainty is to persist concerning the maintenance of an ethics course because of the small number of enrollments. This is also the case when parents are only given information on moral education a little bit at a time.

We think that intolerance exists in both camps, both in the lay movement demanding deconfessionalization and in the Catholic groups who cling to the denominational status quo without introducing the flexibility and adaptation required by the pluralism of our society. Before anything else, the means have to be found to respond to the needs of parents and children, even if this question is charged with emotionalism because of its deep roots in people's lives. The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation has resolved to study the denominational schools issue next year and look for a way that is fairer to all citizens.

To fuel this reflection, let's consider one initial hypothesis here: a non-denominational structure, like the one that applies in the public colleges. This can be theoretically defensible because there is no legal impediment to a pluralist secondary school. This system would respect the freedom of each individual by providing a choice each year between an ethics course and a religion course. This would be the minimum that would have to be guaranteed to parents and students.

Another hypothesis can also be envisaged. This would first involve encouraging concrete efforts to educate people in the spirit of tolerance, real respect for the religious convictions of each person and each group, and authentic acceptance of differences. Then, on the basis of these attitudes, a more liberal or more flexible application of the principle of the separation of Church and State could take shape.

All young Québeckers would benefit from the same core program in moral sciences, and the religion course, apart from the religious instruction ensured by the parish, would be one in a range of reinforcing electives, along with a supplementary course in mathematics, the second language or artistic culture, for example.

Parents who have profound convictions about the importance of religion courses in school would see to it that their children registered for them, and those who really want to have religious instruction would then be separated from those who just give in to the inertia of the system.

All students would thus receive adequate ethical training, the essence of which would not be the transmission of a scale of values but would also include a whole range of indispensable teachings. It is also likely that the religion course chosen by the parents and students would have more chance of being authentic, and everyone would gain from this fact.

Obviously, because of the eminently complicated nature of this question, other hypotheses remain possible. These comments cannot be exhaustive; at the most they open up some possible directions.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

If there is any sector in the high schools that is now in full development, it is vocational education, which is noticeably maturing and making great strides. Indeed, the effectiveness and quality of the long vocational training program and of certain courses in short vocational training are improving in several instances.

However, the short vocational program is being seriously put into question, and with reason, in most communities. Its very heterogeneous and poorly identified clientele is its main problem. The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, following the work of its Commission de l'enseignement

secondaire, submitted a recommendation to the Minister of Education this year on this issue⁶. Its proposal centers on the needs of different students who require adapted services. The Conseil recommends that the present short vocational program be abolished and proposes two concrete measures as alternatives, for schools where a concept of general education adapted to students now steered to the short vocational program prevails, and for integration of these students into the regular vocational training process.

These orientations fit perfectly into the whole draft policy on vocational training now being submitted by the Minister of Education for consultation. This policy seeks "1. to guarantee the possibility to a greater number of Québeckers to acquire a minimum of vocational preparation (accessibility); 2. to assure future workers of the vocational preparation that will better enable them to adapt, be mobile, and retrain and upgrade themselves (quality); 3. to increase the possibility for the individual with the desire and capacity to do so pursue his or her education to upgrade his or her professional competence (continuity)"⁷.

These aims are supported by those responsible for vocational education, though they are waiting for concrete but flexible measures to be planned that will stimulate local initiatives. There is still a lot of material for reflection for some time yet, even though the situation demands quick action.

6. See appendix, "A new curriculum for students in the short vocational program", Recommendation to the Minister of Education, May 1980.

7. La formation professionnelle au Québec, Consultative Document, Ministère de l'Éducation, February 15, 1980, pp. 20-21. (Translation)

While waiting, it is appropriate to rejoice at a number of current achievements which deserve more encouragement and especially more development.

Thus, after the adoption of Bill 17 on occupational safety, the high schools ought to be redoubling their efforts to apply its provisions and provide students with better preparation for this important aspect of work. School workshops are not always models of safety, and they are now being strongly urged to implement and ensure compliance with the minimum standards concerning the cleanliness and upkeep of the premises, noise intensity, lighting and air quality conditions, the physical protection of individuals, and the handling of tools and equipment, to mention only these examples.

Organization of practical training periods is intensifying, and in many places it is the fruit of interesting and enriching cooperation between the school and the work environment. Where this cooperation is lacking, the quality of training suffers appreciably. Awareness is gradually increasing both in the school and in the working world that they have a joint role to play in upgrading the quality of vocational preparation for young people. The schools cannot respond to the industries' pace of development if they do not cooperate; industries cannot develop if the previous training of their employees is inadequate. The schools and the companies will benefit from learning how to complement each other, rather than using each other; they will also benefit from learning to understand each other so as to better link concern for profitability with the objectives of education and training.

However, the means are often lacking. Establishing a committee to link the school with the world of work would require designation of a responsible person in the schools and reliance on placement officers who coordinate relations with manpower centres, training programs, and assistance to students looking for a job at the end of their studies. The schools are often completely unequipped to handle this, even if efforts are made to include job-seeking and interview techniques in the student's training and even if one tries to develop the student's independence and resourcefulness

These needs are very realistic. College and university students are less numerous and have achieved greater maturity than high school students, but the latter group cannot resort to backup services that are as well organized.

Also this year youth employment integration (PIJE) programs were introduced, to favour job creation and the adjustment of young people to the labour market in various economic regions. The PIJE programs generated extraordinary interest, because sixty-four manpower centres in the province participated in their creation. In the Saguenay-Lac-St-Jean region, for example, 85% of the young people concerned were able to keep their jobs because they received follow-up attention from those responsible rather than being left on their own after leaving school.

Finally, appreciable breakthroughs have been made at the Office de la Construction du Québec. Until very recently, it was practically impossible for a young high school graduate to practice a trade in the construction industry. But since June 21, 1979, any student holding a high school vocational certificate can obtain a work permit from the Office or from an employer who will guarantee him fifty hours of work, and can then be registered in the job pool, which is now regional instead of provincial. This represents an important development in this field. However, it has correctly been pointed out that graduating students should obtain their certificates from the Ministère as soon as possible to avoid having to wait all summer before they can request a work permit.

CONCLUSION

Long stretches of the high school highway are still under construction or in the process of being completed. Important measures still have to be put in place and linked to the rest of the network to ensure better service to all students. On the other hand, it would seem that a number of branch roads lead to dead ends and should be explored more thoroughly beforehand.

Probable Dead Ends

In addition to having to follow a number of roads that are still under construction, the high schools are travelling along some old routes or more recent avenues that lead to dead ends. Several problems of the school system have in fact fallen behind along the way and do not seem near to being resolved. Traffic is so congested on these roads that it is hard to see any exits ahead.

DECENTRALIZATION AND LOCAL AUTONOMY

The Ministère de l'Education has long repeated its intention of decentralizing its activities and favouring school commission autonomy. The school commissions have never ceased to demand more independence and feel that the Ministère's moves only represent deconcentration. The lack of understanding is clear. Several disputes that arose this year are signs of it: the reactions to Bill 57 on municipal financing, which took away the property tax field from the school commissions, the boycott of the regional branches of the Ministère de l'Education by the school commissions, the difficulties arriving at a united position within the management bargaining team during the negotiation of the collective agreements with the teachers, the methods of financing education and the uncertainty stemming from these. The accusations rain down and considerable energy is wasted. Furthermore, the public's image of the school system is not going to be improved by all this, and neither will there be increased confidence on the part of parents and taxpayers.

It is hard to see that anyone is really concerned in these conflicts about the plight of the students. However, one cannot doubt the good faith of those who have spoken out. While the objectives are the same, the means of achieving them differ.

The school authorities want more autonomy and more powers to solve their problems locally as much as possible. But

when faced with difficulties, some of them are inclined to entrench themselves behind ministerial norms or to expect everything from the Ministère as organizer of the school system and purveyor of funds, instead of using their creativity and looking for the appropriate solutions themselves.

For its part, the Ministère, in pursuing its objectives of a fair distribution of the funds available, is tempted to standardize services. In several cases that it itself deems to be priorities, it directly finances the organization of activities that do not always fit in with local objectives. Tensions inevitably ensue. There would appear to be some hope, however, in a joint project to finance school commissions through overall transferable budget envelopes. Since present budgetary standards are no longer enough to cover the rising costs of teaching materials, supplies, raw materials for workshops in the vocational sector, and building maintenance, the school commissions are happy that the Ministère has finally acceded to their requests. But they are subject to serious constraints when they have to decide themselves on how to apportion their resources.

This is the impasse in which school organizations now find themselves. A flexible system must be found that would make it possible to support school commissions incapable of solving their problems on their own and that would favour the momentum of other school commissions that show evidence of initiative. For the time being, this would seem to be utopian.

Finding a way to ensure the maximum use for the benefit of youth of the human and financial resources allocated to education in these times of restrictions constitutes the major challenge for provincial and local school administrators, who are "condemned to live together", in the words of the Minister of Education.

THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

The process which governs the negotiation of collective agreements at the provincial level with the teachers as well as with other school personnel is still far from being satisfactory despite all the recommendations formulated since 1972, and particularly since 1976. At the local level, the negotiations let obstructions filter through that appear to be even worse. The most well-intentioned people are disconcerted at how complex these undertakings have become.

On the one hand, the contents of the agreements become more complicated each time with norms that impede attempts at making the system more flexible and hinder the ideal functioning of the schools because they give priority to the rights of the parties to the agreement rather than to the rights of the students and to pedagogical needs.

On the other hand, the way the teachers are involved during the bargaining period causes major internal friction and often leaves only one year of calm between each round.

In the meantime, the public and the students get used to these conflicts, and school disruptions no longer have any great effect on them. But this does not change the fact that the student does not count for much in this whole sequence of adult problems and that his or her expectations are not satisfied.

THE STRUGGLE FOR PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP

In spite of many individual examples of teachers who really act as educators with the children, the teaching staff as a whole has suffered a loss of esteem in public opinion. Not a day goes by without the newspaper reporting a conflict in the schools, and each time the teachers' responsibility is put into question. The teachers' unions project a bad image, which is decried and even contested by their own members at public meetings.

At the same time, society's requirements and expectations of the school are growing, as society seeks to entrust teachers with more tasks that have social implications. Parents in particular are increasingly challenging the ivory tower nature of the school system and want to assert their wishes. More than ever, they have the intention of understanding what is happening in the school and mean to demand certain interventions that correspond to their aspirations and values. The Ministère de l'Éducation is giving them the necessary support in this respect. But there are serious gaps in the pedagogical and professional framework in which teachers operate, particularly when it is a matter of ensuring coherent interventions in school.

The solution then envisaged in order to increase the correspondence between the community's expectations and the teachers' activities is to strongly recommend a system of evaluation that would include criteria for eliminating teachers judged to be incompetent and would thus obviate the arbitrariness of the seniority criterion in awarding teaching posts. The intentions are very clear. Such a system would boost teachers' worth by accentuating competence and recognizing merit.

However, teachers are a very long way from accepting such measures because the unknown factors appear to be so great. Despite their union affiliation, they continue to perceive themselves as professionals, and as such they are reticent about any subjective evaluation. They doubt the competence of their eventual evaluator and they especially doubt the validity of the instruments that would be used to judge the results of their teaching. A formative evaluation, like the PERPE program on student perceptions of the teacher-student relationship, which is optional or voluntary, would receive more backing, though teachers still see any evaluation as a problem.

There are too many factors that risk being detrimental to their interests. While the number of teaching posts

continues to diminish, teachers will react normally in wanting to protect themselves. They reject an evaluation system that would lead to judgments on which promotions or dismissals would be based.

They object to the rectification of the school system being placed on their backs without an increase in resources. Indeed, they are beginning to fear that their overall workload will be so defined that it will become possible to include all sorts of responsibilities in it. They call for more specific clarifications.

The viewpoints are so divergent that the positions are thus hard to reconcile. For one side, the available resources have to be made profitable and exploited to the maximum; for the other side, it is a matter of preventing exaggerations.

THE AGEING OF THE TEACHING STAFF

The average age and average number of years of experience of the teaching staff are rising inescapably. As a result of the continuing decline in school enrollments and in view of the norms governing job security, very few new candidates are hired and the less senior teachers are little by little being placed on supply. Teachers who are relegated to insecurity cannot play the role expected of them. They constantly sense the precariousness of their situation. Certain dramatic cases boost their anxiety. Each teacher wants to "stay alive" and keep his or her job.

The ageing phenomenon itself contributes to accentuating the cultural gap between the youth and the teachers and causes a mutual lack of understanding in certain cases. Moreover, even though not all teachers are so afflicted, routine, habits, prejudices and fatalism are not easily compatible with the expectations of young people.

As for experience, while it can be beneficial in that it provides more maturity as it grows, it also risks leading to a diffusion of resistance to any change. Several teaching staffs are already feeling this. Teaching methods in some communities are not being renewed any more due to lack of new blood and lack of motivation.

No new light has been shed on this issue and everyone is making do with noting that the phenomenon is as unprecedented as it is alarming.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Transporting students is another problem that is being regarded fatalistically. For years, the public, the school authorities, the teachers and the students have deplored the fact that the requirements of school transportation govern the very life of the school. The whole school is rendered subservient to the means it has chosen for a particular service.

Long-distance transport of students forces school activities to be concentrated into too limited a time, so that each day passes like a frantic race between two bus trips. The use of time during lunch hour should be organized, but it is very difficult for students to benefit from extracurricular activities after class.

However, statistics are lacking, for example, on transportation costs with regard to the viability of smaller schools or with regard to the cost of facilities left unused because of the fact that they are virtually inaccessible in the evening.

These problems are not without importance. They are leading the school system into dead ends or bottlenecks. They are accentuating the fatalistic attitude of those responsible for education at the provincial or local levels, who feel somewhat paralyzed by the scale of the bypasses or

interchanges that would have to be built to enable all the traffic arteries in the system to be brought into harmony.

Conclusion

In ending this scenic tour through the high school landscape of 1979-1980, the members of the Commission de l'enseignement secondaire would like to note that promising avenues still remain open and new highways are being pushed through the educational field thanks to the personal initiatives and determination of many individuals. People are the system's wealth. Regardless of what issue is being discussed, the question of personnel infallibly arises. It is therefore important to promote the creativity and commitment of those involved as much as it is to pay attention to the ways of the future: innovations, the educational project, participation and cooperation, vocational training.

However, the Commission observes that most bottlenecks form within the system itself. It is the system that is severely trying the endurance of its personnel. Serious power failures threaten to develop unless the necessary decongestion occurs, particularly in terms of the ageing of the teaching staff and the struggle for pedagogical leadership.

Beyond these comments, the Commission would recall one fundamental objective of education: improvement of the school system must continue *by considering the students themselves*. In this respect, the most difficult challenge will be for some to motivate the members of the staff and for others to commit themselves professionally and personally so that each individual involved feels her or she is participating in the creation of a truly educational environment.

5. ADULT EDUCATION

On several occasions in the past few years, the Commission de l'éducation des adultes of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation has insistently called for the intruction of an overall policy on adult education¹. The creation of a special study commission in January 1980 is an important step in this direction². The C.S.E.'s Commission has sought to put the data and experience accumulated in its word to use by extracting a number of thoughts about the issues at stake and the challenges involved in the development of an adult education polycy within an overall perspective.

By creating a study commission and through the mandate it has entrusted to it, the government has given rise to two hopes: an imminent solution to the main problems of adult education an the development of this sector of education within a new perspective.

The problems are known and have been discussed on many occasions. Several groups have already published their points of view and their demands. All Ministers of Education and all governments for at least the past ten years have been made aware of the problems and of the need for a comprehensive and coherent adult education policy. The research the study commission should be undertaking to find solutions now calls for an effort at

1. See the chapter on adult education in each of the annual reports of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation from 1975 to 1979.
2. See the Québec government's decree concerning the creation of a commission to study vocational training and social-cultural education for adults, Décret No 129-80, January 23, 1980.

collective bargaining in which the confrontation of the different groups will have to take the general interest into account. It must be hoped that the Commission will find the necessary machinery to ensure these negotiations are effective and that it will thus trigger a process which should survive it to establish itself on a permanent basis.

Furthermore, as the Cabinet's order-in-council spelled out, the study of the problems of adult vocational training and socio-cultural education will have to fit into an overall perspective of continuing education, social change and economic development. In addition to the bargaining effort, this perspective requires an open and audacious effort at collective contemplation of the issue. The definition of continuing education, like the definition of the problems of adult education, should not require much energy. Several documents exist. UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the OECD, the Carnegie, Wright and Worth Commissions and various task forces in Québec³ have widely developed the concept of continuing education and its implications. But broad reflection is still necessary to unmask the ambiguities, pitfalls and limitations of this magical concept, to spell out what ends should be pursued, to identify points of resistance and obstacles, and to define the conditions for implementing and developing continuing education. Once again it must be hoped that the Study Commission will ensure the conditions for this collective contemplation and that it will initiate a public debate in this sense that will not run out of steam before the end of its mandate.

3. We can mention the work of the Canadian Institute of Adult Education, the Fédération des Cégeps, the Fédération des commissions scolaires catholiques du Québec, the Conseil des universités, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, and the authors of Education et Travail.

A. The Quest for Solutions to the Problems Must Start with an Analysis of the Interests Involved and the Ultimate Objectives Effectively Being Pursued

The quest for and selection of solutions to the urgent problems of adult education cannot escape from analyzing the interests of the different groups involved, including those of the government apparatus, or from negotiations among these groups.

Behind these interests, the ultimate objectives of adult education must be unveiled and submitted to the whole Québec community for criticism.

The development of an adult vocational training and socio-cultural education policy requires this analysis and this public discussion of the interests and needs of all those involved in adult education.

Because of the Study Commission's status and mandate, it is better placed than any other group to conduct this operation which is crucial for the individual and collective development of the people of Québec.

Regularly during its work, the C.S.E.'s Commission has been led to consider the interplay of interests at stake and the weight of hidden objectives as a particularly revealing way to examine the deep-rooted causes of adult education problems in Québec. To illustrate this assertion, it is enough to summarize the elements of a few major problems.

1. *ADULT EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM NEGLECTS WHOLE POPULATIONS*

While acknowledging the considerable efforts and progress made in Québec to democratize adult access to educational services, the C.S.E.'s Commission has recalled on several occasions that whole categories of the population were being forgotten or neglected: people

with physical or sensory handicaps, senior citizens, certain groups of immigrants, women, populations of remote regions and underprivileged urban neighbourhoods, young workers who left school before completing their high school education, welfare recipients, and low-income workers. In general these populations have the common characteristics of low schooling, inadequate information, a certain degree of isolation, difficulties in banding together and a lack of resources in their organizing efforts.

The Commission was led very early to be concerned about populations which do not recognize themselves in the school system, even if it were adapted to adults. Adult education in underprivileged communities posed the problem of unequal opportunity and its social-economic and social-cultural roots that a mere adaptation of the school system would not be able to resolve.

The Commission thus became aware of two facts. The school system, even if adapted to adults, continues to exclude or ignore certain less privileged categories. The school system, even if adapted to adults, is limited in its capacity to satisfy the educational needs of certain communities and certain groups in the population. In addition to contributing to the reproduction of social inequality, it has proven incapable of respecting and sustaining the educational options created by different groups, particularly in underprivileged communities, to take collective control of their development.

2. *THE SCHOOL SYSTEM FAVOURS YOUNG PEOPLE AND INDIVIDUAL ADVANCEMENT*

Outside of school, it can be observed that the definition of the processes of educational intervention is closely linked to a definition of local needs, stemming from an analysis of the immediate problems of the organizations, groups and individuals involved in a common situation.

In school, the process is reversed. Everything happens from the top down. The definition of needs and objectives,

programming, resource allocation and recognition of educational attainments escapes the control of individuals and local decision-making bodies. These local authorities essentially have the function of adjusting individuals and their needs to predetermined responses. This is the case with guidance, teaching and evaluation.

The school, which our system of education defines and provides with a frame of reference, primarily addresses the individual. It isolates the individual in unstable mass environments (comprehensive high schools, CEGEPs and universities) far from the solidarity of his or her community of origin and even from the forms of solidarity that develop in the school environment. It invites the individual to participate in a formal process that should prepare him or her to confront a competitive world where professional mobility in the race for the rare higher echelon positions in a system of individual advancement.

The school makes considerable efforts to personalize its educational intervention. However, it still remains locked into a psycho-pedagogical approach to learning and training and into an approach that has the primary purpose of ensuring future integration and adaptation of young people into their society.

Adults barely recognize themselves in this school. Primarily preoccupied with their day to day problems, jealously holding to the value of acquired experience, and sensitive to the forms of solidarity developed by exercising responsibilities in the different fields of human activity, these adults have become sparing of their time and energy in the face of a future that is beginning to look like the present, and have expectations and demands that are poorly met by schools geared to young people.

When one considers that half the student population of the universities is made up of adults and that the same pattern will soon be reproduced at the high school and college levels, one is entitled to have some anxiety

about the educational system's persistent resistance to the transformations demanded by massive adult access to the services that it ensures to adults despite everything.

Since the beginnings in 1967 of the expansion of adult education in teaching institutions, administrators of adult education services, professionals and some teachers with experience in this sector of education have repeatedly called for the school to adapt and open itself up to other models of intervention, to better meet the needs of adult groups, taking their experience and their situations into account. On the whole, the school system has resisted these demands so well that adult education has for the most part developed outside the school's usual control, under virtually clandestine conditions.

3. *DIPLOMAS ARE USED LESS TO RECOGNIZE THAN TO ELIMINATE*

The proliferation and diversification of school programs both for young people and for adults have led to the proliferation of diplomas, certificates and attestations which serve as keys to higher levels of the academic ladder or for access to the labour market. In addition to this already complex system, there are the licences to practice issued by the professional associations and the competency cards granted in regulated trades.

This realm of recognition and authorization is the most tangible manifestation of the link that exists between education and the imperatives of a society, between the inner freedom of an individual who learns and the outer determinism that defines what he or she will have to learn to be recognized.

The recognition of educational attainments through standards, criteria and ways of attributing official approval defines the process of intervention by educational institutions in individual learning. It determines the

selection and admission of candidates, the choice and content of training programs, and the methods and techniques of assistance to learning and evaluation. Beyond schooling, it contributes to the social selection and regulation of the job market.

After analyzing this question, the C.S.E.'s Commission concluded:

- that the recognition of education attainments is essentially and almost exclusively based on individual advancement;
- that the school is virtually the sole agent involved in conferring this important social sanction;
- that the labour market, which has played little or no role in defining these criteria, has not spared its criticism of them but uses them to a very large extent as a means of negative selection;
- that the educational system also uses these criteria as a means of negative selection in accepting applicants and in regulating enrollments at different levels;
- that the system of recognizing educational attainments enshrines and in some cases accentuates social inequalities;
- that the two extremes of the alternative - "let's abolish diplomas" and "let's increase the number of diplomas" - lead to a dead end.

Many forms of learning are not recognized and the diploma is mainly used as an instrument of negative selection, both in the labour market and within the educational system; on the other hand, it is by no means certain that the situation would be improved if more attainments were recognized. There are people whose valid and up-to-day knowledge is not recognized, and this is an injustice of omission, but there are also people who were given recognition at some given time for

knowledge that is no longer up to date, and this is an injustice of excess.

4. *IS VOCATIONAL TRAINING A TOOL FOR WORKERS TO ADVANCE THEMSELVES?*

Vocational training should be a tool of advancement both for workers and for businesses.

Manpower training policies and adult vocational training programs have been subjected to very severe criticisms, regardless of whether they are the responsibility of companies or of governments.

The end result of internal company training programs has been to favour those with the most schooling, management personnel and workers who are already highly skilled. Other workers have generally only been entitled to training required to perform new jobs and to certain capsule programs related to accident prevention or increasing productivity.

Government policies and programs have mainly favoured large private and public enterprises to the detriment of small and medium-sized companies and cooperatives. They have paid particular attention to unspecialized workers, the unemployed and welfare recipients, victims of technological progress or economic recession. However, these populations have only been entitled to programs to prepare them for a job or for training or upgrading in a trade. Vocational training programs at the college and university levels have for the most part been inaccessible to them.

Both governments and companies have geared vocational training to the rapid and continuing adaptation of workers to the cyclical needs of the labour market.

Workers and their organizations have been kept far away from the decision-making process on policies and on the programs that define the objectives, content and means of their training.

In such a context one might wonder whether the main aim of vocational training is not to make the majority of workers, particularly unspecialized workers, internalize a mobility requirement imposed by the technical and economic imperatives of production and productivity. Vocational mobility is being presented to them as a synonym for freedom and individual independence, whereas in fact it obliges them to struggle against disqualification and loss of employment by competing with each other in mobility. Severe anxiety thus becomes the first motivation they have to learn.

5. *FEDERAL OR PROVINCIAL, CANADA MANPOWER OR THE M.E.Q....
THE INTERESTS OF ADULT EDUCATION OR POLITICAL INTERESTS?*

Organizational problems have always been the major reason for demanding a comprehensive policy on adult education. The administrative muddle observed in this sector has always appeared to the Commission to be one of the main causes of the problems of adult education in Québec, particularly for underprivileged populations.

It has always seemed aberrant that the Québec government does not exercise full jurisdiction over all questions of adult education and that it leaves the initiative and leadership to the federal government, particularly in the area of funding.

In Québec the lack of planning and the lack of coordination among the government departments, the teaching institutions at various levels and the different non-scholastic adult educational organizations have led to the development of a complicated competitive system.

While the training process should respect the unity and continuity of the individual's learning patterns, the ways in which the training is organized should avoid dissociation of these stages from a process of assistance to study.

The Commission has always opposed fragmentation of the

training process through separation of training as such from the earlier and later stages of learning activities. Programs for welcoming new students, academic and vocational information, orientation, the determination of pedagogical objectives, the development of training profiles, mid-term student reorientation, and evaluation are all stages which should be in continuity with the learning period, in a unified educational process.

The Commission has always wanted to avoid reducing vocational education to continual training in technical and mechanical behaviour patterns, prevent educational institutions from becoming vending machines for courses, correct the administrative muddle of which the present state of organization is proof, and favour thrifty use of Québec's educational resources.

6. *WHAT IF THE SYSTEM'S FIRST AIM IS TO REPRODUCE ITSELF?*

The hierarchization of the school system into levels of instruction creates a number of problems for adult education which has had no influence at all in fifteen years of existence on this hierarchic structure or on solving these problems. The liaison committee for college education and secondary education, or CLECES, as well as the liaison committee for higher education and college education, or CLESEC, which were established to bring transition from one level to another into line, have always refused to examine the aberrations that this kind of hierarchic structure gives rise to in adult education.

This situation has left the way open for institutional competition in recruiting students. At least in a good number of programs and courses, we are now seeing a levelling of conditions of acceptance, programs, methods and learning techniques. However, the hierarchy of diplomas still remains as the stumbling block to coordinating the various levels of adult education.

The compartmentalization of the different branches of the ministère de l'Éducation, at least in the area of adult

education, has only aggravated the problem. The Direction générale de l'éducation des adultes might have been able to dispel the contradictions and the tension. But this branch has the same marginal status in the Ministère as an adult education department in an educational institution.

To solve the problems of coordinating the levels of instruction in adult education, it would first be necessary to solve the problems stemming from the conflictual relationship between adult education and youth education. This situation is a good example of the impossibility of defining a coherent adult education policy without revamping the whole system of education. As long as educators limit themselves to seeking to integrate adult education with youth education, and adult education services into educational institutions, it will not be possible to solve the fundamental problems of adult education.

The whole situation was recently complicated by the sudden interest displayed by school administrators in the economic dimension represented by the rise in adult enrollments in the face of declining youth enrollments and the increasingly pressing demands of the teachers' unions on job security. The integration policy vaguely recommended by the ministère de l'Éducation and by local administrations has suddenly become an avidly pursued short-term objective.

7. *COMMUNITY SERVICE OR COOPTATION BY THE SCHOOLS?*

There is a considerable distance between the schools and the organizations that exist outside them. While some of their objectives are complementary and have translated into a number of cases of harmonious cooperation, several situations have led to tension, conflict and sometimes radical opposition.

More and more groups, including those in the economic sector, have the intention of ensuring that their educational activities are defined and implemented in close conjunction with their action program to defend their interests and as part of a push towards individual and collective advancement. The expansion of this

phenomenon demands a redefinition of the mission of school institutions and of the Ministère in adult education.

The weight of the school institutions of their resources has made more than one volunteer organization reticent about and even hostile to lending its participation to a system that maintains such an imbalance of powers and that represents a virtually irresistible force for cooptation.

Our consultations and observations have allowed us to observe that the school organizations are being reproached for using organizations outside the school to recruit their clientele. They are criticized for being too remote from local and regional concerns. They are criticized for providing human resources that are incapable of adapting when they are not simply incompetent. They are criticized for imposing their programs, their educational methods and their administrative standards without taking the particular needs of organizations outside the school into account, and without considering the value of their educational activities.

For their part, the school institutions refuse to be reduced to a mechanism for distributing resources. The imperialistic and paternalistic tendency in the first years of government funding of adult education in public institutions seems to have given way to clarification of these institutions' particular mission and roles. A concern for individual advancement is prevalent in these schools, along with a preoccupation with coordinating and developing school activities and services. Sometimes one may also find a timid form of interest in providing services to the community, stemming from a concern for collective advancement and development.

If the missions of school organizations and organizations outside the schools are different, it then becomes useless to subject the latter to the decisions of the former, and hazardous to require that they participate in concerted action that can only lead to their being coopted and to the negation of their originality under the existing conditions.

This perspective calls for a policy on education that will affect all bodies in society which have an educational mission, each in its own way. It calls for coordinated and planned intervention by all levels of government and by all government authorities, not just by a department responsible for schools and teaching.

B. A Solution to the Problems Requires an Overall Perspective for a Collective Definition of Ultimate Objectives, a Coherent Assignment of Roles, an Equitable Sharing of Resources and a Recognition of Legitimate Interests

Behind each of the main problems of adult education, there are groups which are confronting each other to defend their interests, safeguard their rights or privileges and attain their objectives.

The official speeches resemble each other and vie in their nobility and generosity. They all hark back to a concept of independent, responsible, dynamic and creative individuals and of a democratic, egalitarian and progressive society.

But the hidden agendas or those which are only partially admitted to are somewhat less splendiferous. They are peopled with ideologies and strategies that directly orient the activities of the various groups.

Some people see this generalized situation as being one of free competition. Some explain this by the recession of private and public authority which has left the established order defenceless. Many attribute it to the ambivalence of human nature and prefer to put their accent on its splendours, on the progress that has been achieved, on successful experiments, and on efforts at cooperating and working together. Generally there is a refusal to analyze the situation and the problems, which are denounced as being the result of tension and conflictual relationships between groups endowed with unequal powers.

If the major problems of adult education are reexamined in this analytical perspective, one will observe the following tensions and conflicts among the various groups involved in adult education: between the privileged and underprivileged classes of our society; between generations; between sexes; between the school and the alternative to the school; between adult education services and volunteer associations; between the administrators of educational institutions and the adult education services; between management and the unions; between the government and its institutions; among all these groups at the same time.

If one dwells on the ultimate objectives instead, one will observe the same tensions and conflicts between individual and collective advancement, between manpower training needs and the needs for skilled labour, between vocational training to serve the liberation of the workers and vocational training to serve corporate productivity, between schooling and the autonomous education of individuals and self-determined groups, between centralization and decentralization, between planning and participation.

This analytical perspective does not cover the whole reality. It does not explain everything. It even can be faulted for polarizing the debate.

Nevertheless, it has the advantage of demystifying the official speeches and unmasking the hidden agendas.

It is all the more important in that the majority of the groups have not risked doing such an analysis, for fear of losing the advantages they have gained or to avoid doing a disservice to their cause by taking a stand that is usually a shock to those holding power.

Finally, it may lead to public recognition of legitimate interests in an overall perspective where realistic ends will have been collectively determined, roles clearly assigned, and means equitably distributed.

We deeply hope that the Study Commission will analyze the distribution of resources among the different groups intervening or involved in adult education;

that the tensions and conflicts will be studied at the same time as the dynamics involved in groups exercising their power on the basis of their avowed or hidden interests and objectives;

that particular attention will be paid to analyzing the main forms of polarization generated by the present lines taken on adult education (e.g. individual and collective advancement; schooling and deschooling; the school and the alternative to the school; education as an investment and education as a consumer item).

C. Continuing Education and its Consequences for the Choice of Ultimate Objectives in Adult Vocational Training and Socio-Cultural Education

The mandate given by the government to the Study Commission specifies that research will have to be conducted in the perspective of continuing education. The order-in-council adds the perspectives of social change and economic development.

Can this threefold perspective make it possible to resolve the problems of adult education in Québec and define a policy "that can best serve the interests and the individual and collective needs of the people of Québec"?

We have already made it clear that the search for solutions to the problems of adult education demands an overall perspective in which the ultimate objectives, roles, powers and interests would be collectively defined and apportioned.

Can continuing education bring us to this overall perspective?

1. *CONTINUING EDUCATION CAN BE USED TO JUSTIFY ANYTHING*

Continuing education does not say everything and can be made to say everything. The argumentation involved is largely open and can provide the necessary elements to justify the conceptions one has, the objectives one is pursuing and the interests one wants to defend or safeguard.

It can be used to justify development of adult education within the school system, continued training of workers as demanded by rapid technological change, and State funding of all educational activities of individuals, groups and institutions.

It can be used to demonstrate the validity of deschooling, decentralization and deinstitutionalization.

In short, continuing education can be used as a justification for anything.

In this respect it represents a pitfall that must be avoided through a collective effort to define it and analyze the consequences that this definition will have on the choice of ultimate objectives for adult vocational training and socio-cultural education.

2. *CONTINUING EDUCATION DOES NOT CREATE A CONSENSUS ON THE ENDS OF EDUCATION*

Continuing education does not establish unanimity on the ends that education should serve in our society.

While it is generally recognized that the design for continuing education is a bearer of change, there is far from being an agreement on the orientation this change should take and on the ends that education should serve from now on.

Many discussions and writings have spelled out the

conditions for this concept to emerge, and have retraced the stages through which it has evolved. Different definitions have been attempted and confronted, and this has led to consensus and opposition. A few ultimate objectives have been defined and shared, but most have given rise to resistance. Some people have sought to translate the idea into a plan. Research reports have been written. Recommendations have been formulated. Some reforms have been undertaken. These reforms have aroused criticism, and people have come back to the definition of the concept, outmoding it even before its possibilities have been used up.

The Study Commission's mandate collectively leads us into the debate on continuing education, and we will be confronted with the same limits: a concept of the individual and society that has to be defined and shared; ultimate objectives that have to be established for the vocational training and socio-cultural aspects of adult education in terms of this concept; the means to be chosen, funded and distributed, with the power sharing that they imply, to meet the avowed collective ends and not the hidden interests of particular groups.

3. *CONTINUING EDUCATION' THE LIBERATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL,
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND THE FUNCTIONAL DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY:
A BROAD HIGHWAY WITH FEW EXITS*

Regardless of their point of departure, all the discourses on continuing education end up talking about the liberation of the individual, autonomous and self-determined personal development, equal opportunity for all individuals and all groups in society, the advent of a democratic and functional society, founded on effective citizen participation and on the distribution and coordination of different functions or different sectors of activity.

Before arriving at the formulation of these great ends, which are the ultimate stumbling block for the operationalization and implementation of continuing

education, these arguments develop a common set of elements and dimensions that add to the resistance aroused by the very statement of the final objectives.

In this sense one could reread UNESCO's Recommendation on the development of adult education, the OECD's recurrent education project, the elements of an adult education policy in the context of continuing education adopted by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, or even the chapter on the revival of teaching in the White Paper on the Québec cultural development policy.

Let it suffice us to reproduce a few proposals from the UNESCO Recommendation⁴ and to imagine what the consequences of these might have been in terms of changes in mentality, roles, powers and resource allocation for certain groups and institutions in our society.

"The expression 'continuing education' designates an overall project which has the aim both of *restructuring the existing educational system* and of *developing all the formative possibilities outside the educational system*".

"In general, adult education should tend to contribute

- to the development of a *critical understanding* of the major problems of the contemporary world and of social changes, and of the aptitude for *active participation* in the progress of society within a *perspective of social justice*;
- to *conscious and effective insertion* in the working world by ensuring advanced technical and vocational training and by developing the aptitude for *creating* new material goods and new spiritual or aesthetic values, *alone or in a group*".

4. UNESCO, Recommendation on the development on adult education, 19th session of the UNESCO General Conference, Nairobi, October-November 1976. (Translation)

"Adult education should be *conceived in terms of the needs of the participants, take advantage of the diversity of their experience and give the highest priority to the most underprivileged groups* by means of instruction within a *perspective of collective advancement*".

"...It should ensure the *participation of adult individuals, groups and communities in decision-making at all levels of the educational process, particularly in determining needs, developing curriculum, implementing and evaluating programs, and developing educational activities with the aim of transforming the working and living environment of adults*".

"...It should acknowledge that each adult, by virtue of his or her own experience, is the *bearer of a culture that enables him or her to simultaneously be taught and teaching in the educational process in which he or she is participating*".

"The objectives and goals of the adult education policy should find their place in *national development plans; they should be defined in liaison with those of the overall policy and of the social, cultural and economic development policies*".

"Mesures should be taken in order to encourage public authorities, institutions or organizations which are competing in education, voluntary associations, workers' and employers' organizations and, in the framework of direct participation, the users, to *work together in defining and implementing these objectives*".

"Without excluding approaches aimed at resolving particular situations in the short term, technical or vocational education activities as a general rule should *tend to favour the acquisition of broad enough qualifications to facilitate subsequent adaptation and permit a critical understanding of the problems of working life. Technical and vocational teaching should integrate general and civic training*".

"In view of the existence of a close relationship between the guarantee of the right to work and the right to education, and in view of the necessity of *favouring the participation of everyone*, wage-earners or non-wage-earners, in adult education programs, both *by reducing the constraints* that weigh on them by *giving them the opportunity to apply* the knowledge, qualifications or aptitudes in their work that adult education programs have the aim of helping them acquire, and their need to find in their work a source of personal growth and progress, as well as stimulation for the creative effort applicable in the world of work just as in society as a whole, measures should be taken

- a) to draw elements and resources from the *experience* obtained at work that will be useful for *developing the operational content* of adult education processes;
- b) to *improve the organization and particularly to reduce the laboriousness of work*, and alleviate and rearrange working hours and conditions;
- c) to *promote the granting of educational leave* during working hours, with maintenance of remuneration or payment of substitute remuneration and compensation for the cost of education received;..."

These seven proposals from a recommendation which contains a hundred is an adequate indication of the scope of the transformations that the idea of continuing education can require as an overall perspective for defining a comprehensive adult education policy.

These seven proposals alone call for the restructuring of the educational system, the development of all the educational forms outside this system, and training in critical comprehension, participation and creativity. They demand that priority be given to underprivileged groups within a perspective of collective advancement. They demand the transformation of the modes of educational intervention to ensure participation by adults in decision-making, and recognition of the experience,

situations, and cultures of these adults which endow them with the power to teach as well as to be taught. They call for a policy of broad vocational training, which integrates general and civic training and which allow for conscious and effective insertion in the working world in order to transform this world. They demand that education policy be coordinated with social, cultural and economic development policies and integrates into a national development plan.

If the solution to the problems of adult education demands an overall perspective as a basis for negotiation and as a general framework for choosing ultimate objectives and distributing roles, powers and interest, it would be illusory to hope that continuing education will supply the elements for a starting consensus without advance negotiations.

On the contrary, if continuing education calls for a new type of individual and society, if it bids all sectors of society to develop an educational dimension, if it endorses the liberation of the individual and of collectivities, social equality as a precondition for equality in education, and integration and coordination of education with other dimensions of the individual and other sectors of society, it is unerringly embarking on a road from which there are few exits. Most groups which should be operationalizing and developing this process, when face with the profound transformations that it requires, will quickly reduce it to a generous but justificatory discourse backed up by a few prestigious but inconsequential reforms.

What has become of the reports of the Ontario Commission on Post-secondary Education, the Alberta Commission on the Planning of Education, the OECD recurrent education project, UNESCO's educational society, and closer to home, the documents of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation on educational activity, the Nadeau Report, Opération-départ in Montréal, tailored training in the CEGEPs, the "policy of collective development in adult education" called for by the provincial SEAPAC committee, the proposal

for "the university in an educational society" submitted to the Conseil des universités, and the TEVEC and Multi-Media experiments?

Either the reports are piling up on the shelves of documentation centres,

or the projects have quickly been coopted by the established system (e.g. TEVEC, MULTI-MEDIA),

or, as is the case in France with the 1971 Law, it has been perceived after just a few years of application that the groups and classes that already have the advantages use their power or access to the privileges of power to twist the law in their favour.

In the face of such a state of affairs and the impasse that can be foreseen,

not only must the use of education as a justifying argument be unmasked;

not only must it be affirmed that social and economic transformations should be preconditions for or at least concomitants of the implementation of continuing education and the educational society;

but, above all, the factors blocking the design for continuing education and for the society that it presupposes must be sought out and exposed.

Once this task is accomplished, perhaps it will be possible to fruitfully tackle the search for an implementation of a few preconditions which, through adult vocational training and socio-cultural education within a perspective of continuing education, social change and economic development, will in the long run force the emergence of a truly democratic society, while in the short term correcting a few acute problems which have awaited solutions for too long.

In this sense we hope that the Study Commission will analyse

- *the deep-rooted causes that explain the needs one would wish to satisfy and the problems one would wish to solve through an adult education policy within a perspective of continuing education, social change and economic development;*
- *the main obstacles impeding the introduction of adult education that falls within the perspective of continuing education;*
- *the experiments in Québec which have tried or are still trying to operationalize and implement one of the elements of this perspective, and particularly the difficulties which have caused them to disappear or impeded their development.*

4. *AN INITIAL PROPOSAL FOR CONTEMPLATION AND FOR COLLECTIVE NEGOCIATION: RESEARCH IN THE AREA OF ADULT EDUCATION AND CONDITIONS FOR ATTUNED PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE DEVELOPMENT*

Whether one begins development of a comprehensive and coherent policy of adult education by analyzing the interests and ends of the groups providing this education, or whether one begins by studying the deep-rooted causes of the problems and obstacles impeding the introduction of continuing education, one always ends up looking for the best factors which in our particular society could "best serve the individual and collective interests and needs of the people of Québec".

In our opinion, the main elements of a social system that would favour the self-determination of the individual in his or her development, equal opportunity both in the social and educational fields, harmonious integration of the different human dimensions and activities, and coherence among the various functions and institutions are already beginning to sprout in our society.

These elements are inherent in the very contradictions of our economic and social system. To develop production, this system has to expand access to consumer goods and increase consumer purchasing power. To boost productivity through ever-greater exploitation of the labour force, it has to ensure reproduction of this force, it has to ensure reproduction of this force and protect the workers to a certain extent. To ensure free enterprise, it has to recognize individual liberties, freedom of association, and the right to participate in decision-making, the democratic ideal, in short. The contradictions arise out of the fact that the development of production and the boosting of productivity are not primarily geared to individual and collective development, which is the object of all the justificatory arguments, but rather towards the quest for profits by an entrepreneurial minority.

The elements of a system which would be directly geared to the quest for individual and collective development are also inherent in the demands of those who can no longer find advancement through the machinery of individual promotion, and especially in the initiative of those who band together "to rely only on their own means".

In adult education these elements are inherent in several experiences that can be found in educational institutions just as much as in the voluntary associations. What these experiences have in common is the recognition of the capacity and responsibility of individuals and communities to ensure their own development and the quest for conditions enabling them to become aware of and practice this capacity and responsibility.

In this sense it is urgent in Québec to bring together the elements of a personalist conception of educational activity and a social conception of education in one coherent discourse. The personalist conception, founded on the inner autonomy and vitality of the individual, has been limited in its effects by the refusal to seek out and expose the deep-rooted

causes of the alienation of individuals and collectivities. It has too often been reduced to the role of a justifying argument, because of this refusal. The social concept of education, concerned with bringing individuals together to understand and take charge of the problems and situations they have in common with the aim of collective development, has been confronted with resistance from a society which finds it hard to admit that the freedom of the individual necessarily depends on the freedom of the collectivities to which he or she belongs.

Research and reflection on adult education within a perspective on continuing education should give priority to the analysis and implementation of conditions for attuned personal and collective development. And these conditions should favour both the learning and the practice of a spirit of criticism and a sense of responsibility in order to develop individual and collective awareness and assumption of responsibility.

In this perspective we tend to believe - and we hope that the Study Commission will consider this option - that an adult vocational training and socio-cultural education policy should give priority to:

- guaranteeing voluntary access to and use of many and varied educational resources for all adults in all regions of Québec, without any other condition than the wish to educate oneself, and not necessarily to be educated;
- recognizing and supporting the educational initiatives of temporary or permanent organizations established by adults to defend their interests, in exercising their social responsibilities or working towards their collective development.

In terms of educational objectives, the adult education policy should

- give value to and favour scientific and technical training, which should not be so specialized

that it is isolated but rather integrated into the overall development of the individual and society, with priority to the development of collective responsibility and solidarity;

- favour the independence and self-determination of the individual in his or her personal development while nonetheless giving priority to the individual's spirit of criticism, aspects of his or her relationship with others, the individual's social responsibility, and the development of solidarity with his or her community and with the collectivities to which he or she belongs.

APPENDICES

1. ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN 1979-1980

1. AMENDMENTS TO THE REGULATIONS AFFECTING SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND PARENTS' COMMITTEES AND TO RULES RELATIVE TO REGIONAL AND CENTRAL COMMITTEES OF PARENTS OF ANY SCHOOL BOARD OF THE ISLAND OF MONTREAL WHICH ESTABLISHES ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS OR DISTRICTS

Notice to the Minister of Education, adopted at the 226th meeting, Septembre 13, 1979.

The participation of parents in school affairs is a subject which has long preoccupied the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. Above and beyond the numerous opinions which the Conseil has submitted on this subject, it recently commissioned a survey on this question, the results of which have been published in fourteen pamphlets now available to interested organizations¹. Moreover, in view of the expressed desire to decentralize school administrations, the responsibility for following up this particularly important question has been confided to a committee composed of members of the Conseil and its Commissions of Primary and Secondary Education.

The Conseil is therefore pleased with the adoption of a law like Bill 30 which, in conformity with their wishes, allows parents greater participation at the institutional level. Parents have clearly indicated on different occasions and particularly in the "Green Paper on Primary and Secondary Education" that they hope for well defined improvements in the functioning of both school and parents committees, as well as in their ability to influence school authorities. The government has therefore agreed to legislate on the subject of school and parents committees. The contents of the Law will perhaps not satisfy all interested parents.

1. Pierre Georgeault and Louise Sylvain, "La participation des parents dans les comités d'école". Direction de la recherche, Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Québec 1979.

It does, however, attempt to extend their influence right up to the Council of Commissioners. It also tries to improve the operations of school committees and parents committees, which would allow parents to better assume their responsibilities with regard to the education of their children in the school milieu.

The Conseil understands that the modifications proposed by the Ministry constitute mainly adjustments to regulations concerning school committees and parents committees as laid out in Bill 30, sanctioned June 22nd last. The Conseil knows, on the other hand, that, following the publication of "The Schools of Québec", the regulations concerning the school principal, the school orientation committee, the educational project, all subjects which relate to the participation of parents, must be submitted to the Conseil for consultation this autumn, as indicated on the Ministry's schedule. It would have hoped for a global view of the whole question before pronouncing itself either on the different proposals for change, or new regulations².

Nevertheless, the Conseil agrees to pronounce itself, within certain well defined parameters.

- This opinion does not call into question any of the basic regulations which Bill 30 seeks to establish.
- With a few exceptions, the Conseil limits its comments and proposals to the articles which need modification.
- Finally, where the wording of certain articles of the regulations is less clear than the text of the Law itself or can be improved, additional clarification or corrections in form are suggested.

2. The text surveyed here was submitted for consultation to the Conseil on August 7th last.

This approach, it should be remembered, is obviously inspired by the desire of the Conseil to collaborate in the improvement of the mechanisms of participation for parents in school affairs.

REGULATIONS CONCERNING SCHOOL COMMITTEES AND PARENTS ~ COMMITTEES

Article 1

1. The Article in any regulation which defines the terms or expressions used is of the utmost importance. The Conseil therefore feels that it should make two points about the proposed paragraph "a" of Article 1 before suggesting a new wording which would include elements that it considers indispensable*

Secondly, for purposes of the present regulation, the Conseil considers it essential that the nature of the term "parent" as clarified in Bill 30 itself should be added to the paragraph in question, i.e. it is the parent or person responsible for the school registered child whom we are trying to reach and whom the school principal is obliged to convene (article 8, non-amended version). Thus, paragraph "a" of article 1 should read as follows:

* The Conseil's first point deals with clarifying the ambiguity inherent in the French term "gardien", and suggests that the French expression "gardien d'un enfant" in paragraph "a" of Article 1 be replaced by "le tuteur ou le gardien de fait d'un enfant".

In English where the above-mentioned ambiguity is much less present, "guardian of a child" could be replaced by "legal guardian of a child".

"Parent: father, mother or in their stead, tutor or legal guardian (or custodian) of the child attending school".

This, then, should enable the school to contact those (parents, legal guardians, custodians, whatever the case) who are legally responsible for the child's education.

The following definitions should be added to Article 1 as paragraphs "f" and "g" in order to allow for a better understanding of some important elements of the regulation:

- f) "delegate" a member elected by the school committee, responsible for representing this committee before the parents committee.
- g) parents committee representative: a member elected by the parents committee to represent the parents before the Council of Commissioners.

Article 2

2. The Conseil notes that the Ministère has decided to integrate various considerations related to the composition of the school committee into a new wording of article 2. As a result, the article becomes more complex while the benefits of such a decision are not evident.

In the eventuality that the new regulation remains in today's proposed form, the numeral classification would of course have to be totally revised. In article 2, at the very least, the references in paragraphs one and four would have to be rectified while a new numeral classification would require the stipulation "under reserve of article 13", in the first case and "the day of the election as indicated in article 6", in the second case.

As for the third paragraph which underlines the importance of a well balanced school committee in relation to its composition, the Conseil would more readily and favourably accept it if its wording:

1. would not forget the preschool level, a separate level, practically always present in the primary school;
2. would encourage consideration of other aspects (sectors, groups of students, age-grade, etc.) of the representation necessary to the school committee;
3. would eliminate the requirement of a "ratio", certainly well meant, but in fact too constraining under the circumstances.

Since many parents, in the case of large polyvalent schools, do not readily accept the limitation of 23 parents on the school committee, the Conseil, for reasons of efficient operations which no doubt influenced the Ministère itself in drawing up the first paragraph of this article, accepts this limitation, secure in the knowledge that if necessary, it can add advisors (article 20, non-amended version) or form sub-committees (article 22, non-amended version).

Article 8

3. The modified version of article 8 reflects an important change of date, which is likely to satisfy the hopes so often expressed by those concerned. The Conseil cannot but willingly endorse it.

However, it would be a good idea if, to use the terms of Bill 30, the article clarified the definition of parents eligible to attend general meetings and meetings of the school committee, that is to say, "the parents of children attending that school and registered for the next school year". Since it deals with the formation of the next school committee, those two conditions will eliminate parents of children who, for one reason or another, leave that school the following month. And exceptional cases resulting from late registration can be covered by a second election meeting to be held in October of the same year. The first sentence of the article in question could therefore be written as follows:

Before the 20th of May of each year, the school principal will convene a general meeting of parents whose children attend that school and who are registered for the next school year in order to elect parents to the school committee.

Article 9

4. The Conseil notes that the second paragraph of article 9 is simply a repetition of the second paragraph of article 2. It therefore proposes to delete these three lines. On the other hand, the Conseil believes that it was the intention of the Ministère to give to the general meeting of parents the task of establishing the number of seats to be filled before proceeding to the nomination of candidates. The Conseil is of the opinion that this method of proceeding seems more interesting and presents a greater challenge than the procedure which consists of an automatic election to the school committee of all persons presenting their candidacy, this time, up to a maximum of 21. The second paragraph could therefore be written thus:

It is during this meeting convened for the creation of a new school committee and before the nomination of candidates that, in conformity with article 2, the general meeting of parents will determine the number of seats to be filled.

Article 12

5. The Conseil is of the opinion that the wording of article 12 (unchanged index number) would be more explicit were it compulsory for the teachers to "inform" the school principal after his nomination, of the name of their representative to the school committee. Consequently, the new text of this article would read as follows:

Each year, the school principal should invite the school teachers to designate and to let him know before the 20th of May, the name of their representative to attend the school committee meetings.

In addition, should a vacancy in the post of teacher representative to the school committee occur during the year, the Conseil judges it indispensable that a second paragraph prescribe that it must be filled within 30 days of a notice to that effect made to the teachers by the Chairman of the school committee. Consequently, a new paragraph to this effect should complete the article in question:

Any vacancy which occurs in the post during the course of the year must be filled within 30 days of a notice to that effect to the teachers from the Chairman of the school committee.

It goes without saying that article 6 (index number unchanged) must, in this case, be slightly modified in order to better demonstrate that it is a question of a vacancy in a seat of a parent member of the school committee. A review of this same article would permit the Ministry to question the propriety of a long delay of 90 days to fill such a vacant post, taking into account the short duration of a mandate of one year.

Article 13

6. Article 13 (index number unchanged) makes it compulsory for the school committee members to hold a meeting on the same day as their election in order to elect at least their chairman. The Conseil is of the opinion that this is an unjustified constraint and unduly urgent. It is an unjustified constraint because the school committee members could very well decide it would be preferable and justifiable to hold their first meeting on another day before May 20th to proceed with all necessary nominations. It is unduly urgent because it is important to give a little time to the newly elected members to become acquainted before nominating the committee officers from among themselves. If it is important, as the Conseil believes, that posts of the executive members of the school committee and the representative(s) to the parents committee be filled at the latest by the 20th of May, the first sentence of the article mentioned could read as follows:

Before the 20th of May or on that date at the latest, the school committee members will hold their first meeting to choose their Chairman (...).

Article 14

7. As a result of the remarks made about the preceding article, the Conseil also proposes a new wording for the first paragraph of article 14 (amended version):

Always before the 20th of May or on that date at the latest, following the election of the Chairman and of other officers deemed necessary, the school committee will nominate one of its members to be its delegate to the parents committee.

It would be necessary, on the other hand, to rephrase slightly the second paragraph of this article as it refers to article 3 superseded by the third paragraph of article 2, newly proposed. It could read as follows:

In the case mentioned in the third paragraph of article 2, one delegate is nominated for each of the primary and secondary levels.

Article 15

8. The Conseil wants to point out that all the terms of paragraph 66a of Bill 30 (article 1) should be found in the new article 15, as in article 8, in order that the terms of eligibility of parents convened would be once more indicated. It should therefore read:

Between the 1st and the 15th of October of each year, the Chairman of the school committee must convene a general meeting of parents of children who are attending that school in order to elect at least two other members to sit on the school committee.

In addition, the Conseil notes that the article in question does not give enough information about the real motive behind

the obligation to hold a second election of the school committee members at the beginning of the school year. The Conseil believes that a second paragraph could indicate that this new election is aimed, so to speak, at filling the gaps in the composition of the school committee which had been elected during the previous month of May.

Article 20

9. Concerning article 20 (newly proposed), the Conseil acknowledges the wisdom of the obligation of school committees to convene at least one general meeting of parents within six months following the second election mentioned in the new article 15. However, by indicating the 20th of May as the deadline for the prescribed period, confusion could arise with the general meeting of parents whose objective is to choose the school committee for the next year. Therefore, the Conseil proposes, in order to eliminate any ambiguity, that the dates indicated in this article should be months which are not utilized anywhere else in the text of the present regulation, that is to say November 1st and April 30th.

Article 21

10. Since there may be two school committee delegates to the parents committee in the case where a school offers primary and secondary level studies, the Conseil believes that the wording of the second sentence of article 21 (newly proposed) should take this into account. It should read:

as the case may be, the delegate or delegates of
the school committee (...).

Articles 32, 33 and 38

11. The Conseil acknowledges the need to clearly distinguish between the role of delegate which is exercised in the parents committee and that of representative which is exercised at the Council of Commissioners. For this reason, it suggests that both definitions be included in article 1 in order to avoid any possible confusion. Again, in order

to improve the clarity of the articles where they are mentioned, the Conseil believes that more precision should be added to the second paragraph of article 32 newly proposed:

... of one representative for each of the primary and secondary levels in order to attend the meetings of the Council of Commissioners...;

to article 33 (newly proposed):

... or the representative of the parents committee on the Council of Commissioners...;

and in article 38 (newly proposed) as much for the possibility of dual representation as for the place where it is exercised:

... as the case may be, the representative or representatives of the parents committee before the Council of Commissioners...

Article 45

12. Concerning article 45 (newly proposed), the Conseil will not comment on this amendment of simple agreement which relates to the deadline for the submission of the annual report of the parents committee. The Conseil will, however, use this opportunity to make two observations, the first concerning the date "set by the school board" and the second concerning the contents of the said report.

The Conseil would hope that the date for the meeting of the school board during which the annual report of the parents committee is to be tabled would not be fixed unilaterally by the school board, as the first words of this article indicate, but rather that it would be the object of a tacit agreement between the two groups concerned. It should read:

At a date agreeable to the two groups concerned, but before the 1st of June, (...).

Because of the complete freedom of parents committees regarding their tasks and activities (article 41 newly proposed), and in order to avoid a restrictive interpretation of the terms "administration" and "management", the Conseil suggests the replacement of these terms by a more general term such as "operations" (of the schools). Consequently, the report would simply contain reference to "recommendations aimed at improving the operations of schools".

It may be noted that these remarks apply equally to articles 13 and 40 of the second regulation submitted to the Conseil for consultation.

REGULATION CONCERNING THE REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND THE CENTRAL PARENTS COMMITTEE OF ANY SCHOOL BOARD ON THE ISLAND OF MONTREAL WHICH CREATES ADMINISTRATIVE OR REGIONAL DISTRICTS.

1. An examination of the amendments which the Minister wishes to make to the second regulation, raises few questions which have not already been made with regard to the preceding regulation or which do not flow directly from it.

Article 6

2. The Conseil notes in particular the second sentence of the second paragraph of article 6 (amended version) which requires an election of delegates to the central parents committee in direct ratio to the number of members on the regional parents committee for each level of the primary and secondary sector. It is not believed that recent experience justifies this additional constraint of a "ratio election", since the composition of the central parents committee is usually made up of a well balanced representation of both primary and secondary levels. The Conseil, on the other hand, is worried to see an increase in the number of delegates from each region, which could hamper the efficiency of the central parents committee. It is also feared that such a measure would favour an over-representation of parents/students at the primary level, due to the always larger number of schools at that level. It proposes that

each regional committee should delegate to the central committee a number of parents from each of the primary and secondary levels. Article 23 (amended version) should then be rewritten to be consistent with the second paragraph of the new article 6.

Example: "..., consistent with the second paragraph of article 6".

Articles 25, 28 and 33

3. In its remarks on the preceding regulation, the Conseil is asking that, in order to avoid any confusion, the expression be written in full when designating a delegate or a representative. Similarly, in order to improve the understanding of the text, the Conseil is suggesting that the same procedure be used for article 25 (2nd paragraph):

... or representative on the Council of Commissioners...

for article 28 (2nd paragraph):

... to the election of a representative on the Council of Commissioners for each...

for article 33:

... as the case may be, the representatives of the central parents committee on the Council of Commissioners are members ex-officio of this executive committee.

Articles 18 and 40

4. The Conseil, concerning articles 18 and 40, recalls the conclusion of the comments regarding article 45 of the preceding regulation: 1) it would be important that the deadline for submission of reports in question be convenient to all parties concerned; 2) any ambiguity in the

interpretation of the words "administration" and "management" could be avoided by simply writing that the reports in question would include recommendations most likely to improve the "operations of the schools".

At the end of this consultation, the object of which has been fragmentary and the exercise essentially technical, the Conseil expresses a wish and a worry. Although it is felt that efforts have been painstakingly made to word the regulation in clear and adequate language, the Conseil wonders not only if the readers will find their way through it, but also if they will be inspired by it. The Conseil expressed doubt. Consequently, it recommends and wishes that the Ministère will soon complete its process of renewal regarding the participation of parents in school affairs (subjects of compulsory consultation, ways and means committee, educational plan, etc.) through explanatory documents which will reach and interest all persons concerned. The need to master the very difficult art of communication with the public must be kept in mind by all public organizations, by the ministère de l'Education and by the school boards.

2. EDUCATION AND SERVICES FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Recommendation to the Minister of Education adopted at the 226th meeting, September 13, 1979.

INTRODUCTION

In this International Year of the Child, and after the publication of The Schools of Québec - Plan of Action, and of the White Paper on cultural development, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation wants to recall a few preschool educational needs and outline the main lines of a coherent and relevant policy. No such policy exists in Québec so far; several measures have been taken, but the link between them is not always obvious.

For the last 15 years or so, the Government has established a certain number of services for preschool children. Some of them, such as kindergartens for five-year-olds, have now become generalized. Others, like day nurseries or kindergartens for four-year olds are still more embryonic or used by a specific and limited part of the population only.

Several services, especially those set up by the Government, aim at preparing the child for school. Others, such as day nurseries, seem more meant to help the family, and their educational intention is not always clearly specified.

In either case, the educational aspect as such does not seem to be part of a general policy, the result being a parceling in the proposed solutions, sometimes oriented exclusively towards school purposes, and sometimes aimed at helping the collectivity.

The Conseil takes the two following positions:

- . the family remains the first center of education; all educational service policy should aim at helping the family in its role, and not at taking its place;
- . the setting up of educational services for preschool children should be undertaken from the point of view of continuing education, which aims primarily at developing individual autonomy through the use of various educational means.

The following recommendations deal with the setting up of a coherent educational policy on services for preschool children and with the necessary co-ordination of several authorities, especially the ministères de l'Education and des Affaires sociales. The Conseil also indentifies research areas in the education of very young children.

SITUATION

1. Services under the authority of the ministère de l'Education

The ministère de l'Education offers or supports a large variety of services which operate, in many cases, without any specific policy. There are part-time or full-time, public or private kindergartens for "4-year-olds" or "5-year-olds", day-care centers, home-kindergartens, and also the televised series "Passe-partout"¹.

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1. A short description of these services and of "Passe-partout" is given on pages 313-315 of the supplement. This description deliberately ignores locally operated services, cost-shared arrangements with municipalities and other services that have yet to be recorded.

Regular kindergartens

Even if nearly all 5-year-olds attend kindergarten, only 2,05% of them can do so on a full-time basis. Part-time kindergartens for 4-year-olds are theoretically intended for underprivileged children, but the figures appearing on the following table question the implementation of this principle. They show, for example, that the most disadvantaged region ranks sixth in the possession of such kindergartens, whereas the Côte-Nord region ranks first in spite of a poverty rate twice as low. Is this a good distribution of educational resources?

Table showing kindergarten attendance by 4-year-olds in relation to the proportion of the population of disadvantaged districts by school administration regions. (1)

	% of population living in disadvantaged districts	% of 4-year-olds attending kindergartens
01- Bas St-Laurent Gaspésie	80,3%	5,13% (6th rank)
03- Québec	36,0%	5,17% (5th rank)
04- Trois-Rivières	35,3%	5,73% (3th rank)
09- Côte-Nord	34,0%	12,6% (1st rank)
02- Saguenay Lac St-Jean	33,6%	10% (2nd rank)
08- Nord-Ouest	28,6%	1% (1st rank)
07- Outaouais	27,6%	5,3% (4th rank)
05- Cantons de l'Est	17,6%	2,23% (8th rank)
06- Montréal	17,2%	3,6% (7th rank)

- The figures in the first column are taken from the study Les secteurs défavorisés du Québec; those in the second column come from statistics published by the Data Processing Service of the ministère de l'Éducation, September 30, 1978.

Most full-time kindergartens for 4-year-olds are reception classes mainly located in the Montreal and Outaouais regions. They cater to about 5,28% of children of this age-group. Elsewhere such classes are extremely rare or nonexistent.

Special kindergartens

Special full-time kindergartens for 5-year-olds exist for children with difficulties in learning or adaptation. Only a very small number of children are admitted in these classes. Home-kindergartens and stimulation classes created to respond in a new way to developing needs of the very young exist only in a few areas. As far as part-time immersion kindergartens for five-year-olds are concerned, they have no effect on the attendance rate, their main purpose being to give the children a quick knowledge of the French language.

<u>Number of families reached by the activities officers of Passe-partout</u>	
01- Gaspésie	3800 families (one officer for 115 families)
02- Lac St-Jean	700 families (one officer for 144 families)
03- Québec	1000 families (one officer for 99 families)
04- Trois-Rivières	292 families (one officer for 93 families)
06- Montréal (Verdun)	54 families (one officer for 54 families)
07- Outaouais	392 families (one officer for 98 families)
08- Abitibi	130 families (one officer for 130 families)
09- Côte-Nord	392 families (one officer for 98 families)
<u>Total</u>	<u>6760 families</u>

Source: Passe-partout project: Guy Legault, ministre de l'Éducation, Service général des moyens d'enseignement, M.I. 1979-04-05.

It may be worth noting that the most economically underprivileged area is the best served by this program. However, officers' services vary greatly with regional environments, unless the number of families assigned to each officer is counterbalanced by the distance he has to cover. This program responds to real needs and its utility is thus evident. It is also highly rated by the press. Moreover, the institutional school seems inclined to take it over by placing it on its schedule.

With respect to the services as a whole chiefly meant for underprivileged environments, the geographical criterion should be questioned as many children with specific needs are thus being excluded, even if they do not live in underprivileged areas.

2. Services under the authority of the ministère des Affaires sociales

The ministère des Affaires sociales also offers a wide range of services for young children, such as "centres ou familles d'accueil, garde de jour et garde para-scolaire, min-garderies, famille de garde, garde à domicile, haltes-garderies"¹.

It is difficult to find statistics on these services as a number of them, such as the "familles de garde" and the "garde à domicile" are entirely private, and others are still in the implementation stage. However the following table shows the privileged position of Québec and Montréal as compared to other areas.²

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1. A description of these services is given on pages 317-318 of the supplement
 2. This situation will change following the new estimates announced by the ministère des Affaires sociales.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF DAY-CARE CENTERS
AND DAY-CARE CENTER PROJECTS

Areas	Number of operational day-care centers	Number of projects	Total	authorized places		
				Number of oper. d.c.c.	Projects	Total
01	2	2	4	85	69	154
02	4	1	5	235	30	265
03	41	2	43	1 653	75	1 728
04	11	2	13	555	60	615
05	12	-	12	461	-	481
06-A	154	14	168	7 125	703	7 828
06-B	7	1	8	267	35	302
06-C	35	5	40	1 474	210	1 684
07	14	2	16	511	65	576
08	6	-	6	256	-	256
09	4	1	5	130	45	175
TOTAL:	290	30	320	12 752	1 292	14 044
Source: Service des garderies, ministère des Affaires sociales, Québec November 28, 1977						

The rules of the ministère des Affaires sociales governing these services are mainly administrative: licences, legal status, financing, equipment (premises, etc.). As demonstrated in the following text, the ministère gives little information on educational action as such:

- a. All nurseries must establish a written program which may be consulted at any time by parents or representatives of the Ministère. It must be sent to the Service des garderies on request.
- b. The program of the nursery must include:
 - general and internal regulations, children's admittance tests and the conditions of parental participation;
 - the schedule of activities for the children with an indication of the human and material resources needed to accomplish them.
- c. The staff and the parents of the children attending the nursery must be involved in the formulation, implementation and revision of the program of the nursery.
- d. The program should be examined at least once a year and reconsidered if necessary.
- e. The program of activities should be educational without being academic; it must be adapted to the age of the children and their sociocultural environment. It must include daily periods for indoor and outdoor games, weather permitting, as well as periods devoted to personal care hygiene, rest, nutrition.

- f. The program and daily schedule for the children must be displayed for staff and parent information ¹.

The educational requirements are not very clear and the quality of the educational services offered may differ greatly depending on the person in charge.

Certain nursery supervisors noticed important differences in the services offered (premises, equipment, menus) depending for example on the location of the nursery in a more or less underprivileged socioeconomic environment. Is control of the application of the regulations a sufficient measure for ensuring a certain equity among the environments and preventing disparities from becoming more marked? It is asked that activity programs be evaluated, but no one seems responsible for carrying out the task. No distinction is made between the various types of nurseries, despite the fact they offer different services.

3. Other services

Families can also benefit from several other services related to early childhood, such as maternity leave, family allowances, tax abatements, babysitter services, not including the help of the social and health services. Even without a direct repercussion on the educational aspect, these services should be included in a global policy for early childhood. ²

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1. "Projet de normes pour les garderies", ministère des Affaires sociales, mai 1978, pp. 11 and 99.
 2. Interesting information and recommendations can be found in the "Rapport du Comité interministériel sur les services d'accueil à la petite enfance", (Québec, February 1978).

4. Teacher education and animator training

The training of teachers in universities or that of animators in nursery techniques is being questioned greatly. For example, is it better to recommend specialist training adapted to 0 to 5 year-old children or a more general training for the education of 0 to 11 year-old children? This is why specialist certificates in preschool teaching and specialist certificates in elementary teaching have been set up and abolished. At the collegiate level, the program in nursery techniques is still at an experimental stage.

Most practicing nursery animators have not been able to take advantage of the presently existing and really interesting training programs.¹ But it would be good to know if the local boards of directors are really serious about encouraging animators to follow these programs. On the other hand, the importance of acquired experience cannot be denied; this brings up the question of the recognition of the training or further improved training acquired by those already working in nurseries without an official diploma.

5. Conclusion

In short, the description of the present situation shows the great variety of services offered to young children, their variable degree of accessibility, and the lack of coherence between them and the educational needs of early childhood.

1. "Description de la fonction-type éducateur de garderie", interministerial group on programs and exams, ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, direction des politiques et plans, May 19th 1978.

ORIENTATIONS

1. Reminders

Let us first recall the needs and rights of early childhood. What we mean by early childhood is the period covering the first six years of a child's life. It is the period during which the child, alone or with his peers, parents or other adults or paid assistants, slowly begins to discover himself, others and his environment. It is the beginning of the continuous and complete development of a person.

The needs of early childhood

Any policy of educational services should be based on the young child's educational needs. Different theories exist concerning these needs and their satisfaction such as for human beings in general. But beyond their differences, fundamental needs are unanimously recognized: physical needs, the need of protection and security, of love and belonging, need of self-esteem and the respect of others; also need of self-assertion¹.

The expression of these needs varies according to age and social environment. Without entering into all the details, we think it necessary to recall the main stages of the development of early childhood with the knowledge presently at our disposal.

1. A Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, Harper and Row, New York, 1970.

From birth to 8 or 19 months, several writers speak of the affective stage. The baby's needs are unconditional. Love and attention are just as vital as air, food, sleep, personal care and physical protection, as demonstrated for example in Spitz's works on the impact of a lack of affection on children¹. The child's confidence in the world surrounding him depends largely on the way his environment meets his needs.

The following stage, from 8 or 10 months to 2 or 2½ years, may be considered the exploration stage. The child is more aware of his physical possibilities which enables him to enlarge his exploration field and to learn more about his environment. He must then be given space and stimulation, and also the possibility to explore his environment safely.

The period from 2 or 2½ to 3 or 3½ years is characteristic of the "No". It is the separation stage. The child becomes more and more negative and often adopts a position opposite to that of a parent. It is the child's way of showing his intention to think, act and feel by himself. He discovers his entity. The child needs to assert himself, to gain autonomy and to feel accepted. This separation is difficult for both the adult and child alike. It is an emotionally rich period. The child must learn that the emotions of the people around him may differ from his and it is at their contact that he learns to control his own.

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1. R. Spitz, Hospitalism, Genesis of Psychiatric Conditions in Early Childhood, 1945.

From 2½ or 3½ to 5 or 6 years, the child goes through the socialization stage. He then needs sexual and social identification and to be able to accept himself. The child thinks loudly, asks questions, imitates the adult, establishes links, and experiences new relationships with his peers. He learns about family values and the rules to be observed at home or in the nursery. He learns how to become interested in others. The values he is taught at this stage may greatly influence his future.

The rights of early childhood

Recognition of the child's needs has led to rights recorded in charters or preamble to educational or social legislation. A declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations in the autumn of 1959. We do not feel it necessary to recall here all the rights of the child recognized by our own legislation. Let us simply mention the rights asserted by the United Nations mainly concerned with education:

- . the right to love, comprehension and protection
- . the right to free education, recreational activities and leisure
- . the right to be given means for a healthy and normal physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual and social development
- . the right to protection against discrimination and the right to education in a spirit of peace, fraternity and friendship among nations.

The primary responsibility of the family

In order to respond as adequately as possible to the educational needs of young children in accordance with their recognized rights, any possible ambiguity concerning the respective roles of parents and the State must be abolished.

In our society, early childhood education starts within the family, whether it be a monoparental family or one resulting from a new union for one of the parents. Indeed, according to legislation, parents are primarily responsible for their child's care and education, and it would be unthinkable to recommend an ascendancy by the State over the child and his education. On the contrary, the fundamental responsibility of the family should be asserted, with the assistance of the State to help parents to carry out their role. State intervention should occur only when needed by the family.

The Declaration of the United Nations on the Rights of the Child states clearly that:

"The higher interest of the child should be the guideline of those responsible for his education and orientation; this responsibility is first incumbent on his parents" ¹.

State Assistance

The task of bringing up a child is a long process that requires a high level of competence in today's society.

1. Extract of Principle No 7.

Thus, in order to help the family in its role, the State should:

- provide parents with educational services: lectures, training courses, professional assistance, recourse to the mass-media, etc.;
- define norms of excellency for institutions assisting parents in their task: nurseries, schools, recreational services;
- develop a system of care-taking and educational services available to those who need them, as well as a policy of assistance to parents who keep their young children at home.

The following recommendations are meant to be concrete and feasible orientations inspired by the goals of continuous education and which count on all possible educational resources to assist the family.

2. Recommendations

Coherent Policy

1. THAT THE MINISTERE DE L'EDUCATION, TOGETHER WITH OTHER MINISTRIES - AFFAIRES SOCIALES, ENVIRONNEMENT, COMMUNICATIONS, AFFAIRES CULTURELLES,... - ESTABLISH AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL POLICY THAT IS CLEARLY SITUATED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF CONTINUOUS EDUCATION.

Some twenty years ago, the setting up of kindergartens led to the creation of new pedagogical trends which had a most positive influence on traditional elementary pedagogy. With the development of an educational services policy for children it should be possible:

- . to re-assert the fundamental aim of education - to learn how to learn - and to keep it in mind in all educational activity,
- . to set up an inventory of all educational resources meant to support the child's education in the family environment.

Communications media, plays and films for children, open-air activities, environmental discovery studies are some of the many educational means not yet sufficiently used in the educational field, mainly due to the fact education remains too exclusively based on academic and traditional dimensions. Just think about the amount of time people, even young children, spend weekly watching television and just how beneficial this actually can be¹.

The fundamental orientation of early childhood education within the context of continuous education should be to encourage the child's natural curiosity, offer him experiences and activities that will enable him to discover his geographical environment with its many educational resources, help to live happily in his surroundings and become gradually autonomous.

1. R. Grégoire, "Television and Values in the Educational Project", Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Québec 1978.

Integration and consolidation of legal provisions

2. THAT GOVERNMENT, THROUGH THE MINISTRIES CONCERNED, SEE THAT THE ELEMENTS OF SEVERAL PRESENTLY EXISTING LAWS ARE GATHERED INTO ONE FAMILY ACT THAT SPECIFIES:
 - . THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE FAMILY TOWARDS YOUNG CHILDREN
 - . THE ASSISTANCE THE STATE MAY OR MUST GIVE TO THE FAMILY IN ITS TASK.

Presently, there is such an intricacy of laws or acts that only a real expert can find his way through: the Family Allowance Act, the Fiscal Acts, the School Act, Act for the Protection of Youth, Social Welfare Act, Divorce Act, Education Act, the Civil Code and many others often beating around the question without ever really grasping it. Starting from the needs and rights of the child, it should be possible to create a coherent law that would protect children's rights, including their right to education.

If such a law were applied, it would be easier to define coherent policies on services for young children, provided several ministries work together, especially the ministères de l'Education and des Affaires sociales.

Family assistance

3. THAT GOVERNMENT DEFINE A POLICY OF ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN ORDER TO PROVIDE THOSE KEEPING THEIR CHILDREN AT HOME WITH FINANCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND OTHERS WITH DAY-CARE SERVICES.

In Québec, nearly 40% of mothers of young children will soon work outside the home¹. If this reality justifies the setting up of nurseries why should mothers staying home with young children be neglected? Different means are possible, one of them consisting of financial aid to socioeconomically underprivileged families. But others should consist of information on young children's educational needs, courses for parents, educational programs for children, educational games given to families, and so on. A family policy cannot avoid these means especially designed for the education of young children within the home first, with the setting up of nurseries, if needed, at certain periods in the day.

The resources of the State are not unlimited and families will have to contribute to the cost of such measures, according to their income, but the population as a whole should also be expected to contribute.

Nurseries for children from 0 to 5 years are widespread in highly industrialized countries like France, Israel, Sweden, Germany, the United States. They are controlled by the State but parents still have to pay a certain amount, unless they are supported by other social measures, such as assistance to needy mothers. Nurseries located on working premises are less popular than nurseries situated close to home. In several places the educational and health programs are highly developed.

1. "Rapport du Comité interministériel sur les services d'accueil à la petite enfance", Québec, February 1978, p. 11.

Nurseries are by no means to be considered mere "parking lots" for children. This shows the need for measures to establish the educational value of the activity programs and the qualifications of the staff working in public or private nurseries. Parents taking advantage of day-nurseries should be closely implicated in their administration and operation.

Here also is concerted action on the part of the ministère de l'Éducation and that of the Affaires sociales necessary.

Kindergarten classes

3. THAT THE MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION STUDY:
 - a. THE ADVISABILITY, FROM THE EDUCATIONAL POINT OF VIEW OF SETTING UP KINDERGARTEN CLASSES FOR 3 AND 4 YEAR-OLD CHILDREN.

In the above-mentioned countries the preschool level generally starts earlier than in Québec. France has kindergartens for 3 year-olds, and the majority of the other countries have them for 4 year-olds.

- b. THE REACTION OF 3, 4 OR 5 YEAR-OLD CHILDREN TO A MORE OR LESS LONG SCHEDULE IN KINDERGARTEN.

Why are preschool activities generally limited to half a day only, while nurseries accept children the whole day without seemingly causing serious traumatism? The same thing applies to certain classes for 4 or 5 year-olds operating on a whole day basis without affecting children's health.

- c. THE POSSIBILITY OF ADOPTING A MORE FLEXIBLE MEASURE THAN THE PRESENT ONE WHICH FIXES ENTRANCE TO KINDERGARTEN AT 5 YEARS OF AGE BEFORE OCTOBER 1ST.

Where the entrance age is concerned, is the administrative measure stating that a child must be 5 years old before October 1st realistic, even if its utility on the academic level is understandable? The arbitrary nature of this measure is being more and more questioned.

Have such different possibilities as a double entrance, in September or January, parents' free choice between the 1st of October and the end of December, or kindergartens "4 to 5 years" in multi-age groups been seriously examined?

Educational programs

4. THAT THE MINISTERE DE L'EDUCATION, TOGETHER WITH THE MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES, SET UP AND IMPLEMENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR NURSERIES AND KINDERGARTENS AND REVISE THE ALREADY EXISTING PROGRAMS.

Whether within the family, nursery or at the preschool level, the quality of the educational programs must prevail over all other organisational aspects. On the other hand, psychologists are unanimous in recognizing the importance of play as the means "par excellence" for helping children to learn.

Through play and different educational activities especially adapted to early childhood psychology, nurseries and kindergartens develop all aspects of the personality. They are not limited to psycho-motor development: running, jumping, painting or cutouts... With the help of structured experiences they attempt to develop speech as well as logical and emotive reasoning. The activities are also aimed at the

socialization of the child. But programs must obviously identify concrete learning situations rather than offer theoretical notions.

Human and material resources

5. THAT THE MINISTERES DE L'EDUCATION AND DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE JURISDICTIONS AND WITH DUE RESPECT FOR THE COMPETENCE OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS, WORK TOGETHER IN ORDER TO PROVIDE KINDERGARTENS AND NURSERIES WITH:
 - a. Competent staffs dedicated to early childhood education

Working in the field of early childhood education cannot be a "job" one chooses according to employment market needs. It is a privileged function reserved for persons with superior human qualities and a special interest in working with young children. What is the existing situation as far as staff selection criteria are concerned? A candidate's background, interests and experience should be taken into account prior to academic qualifications. Great care should also be taken in the selection of the managerial staff.

How many school principals admit relying entirely on their kindergarten teachers because they do not know how to cope with their school's young children? And these same schools are now attempting to set up "halte-garderies" ¹.

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1. Expérimentation des services de garde pour les enfants d'âge scolaire dans les écoles, circular of the Direction générale des réseaux du ministère de l'Éducation, December 19th, 1978.

Will there be just another "spare room" of children left to the more or less creative initiative of a voluntary agent or underpaid employee without professional assistance or supervision?

To establish an efficient system, it will be necessary to study the whole question of staff requirements, professional qualifications, training programs, staff supervision, and possibilities for professional improvement.

b. Favorable material conditions

Children need wide, airy, bright and pleasant areas but they do not always get them. What is the noise tolerance level of a 3 or 5 year-old child confined within a small space? Most provided areas do not take a child's need to move about, jump or run sufficiently into account.

The didactic material does not call enough on the child's creativity and spontaneity. Publishers flood the market with "miracle" didactic material which makes it difficult for teachers to tell the good from the bad.

This question of conditions favorable to the educational activities of young children is a hardly explored field requiring more research. The results of studies could be helpful even for any action undertaken at other levels.

CONCLUSION

The resources of the State are not unlimited. Were all the various educational measures mentioned in the present text to be applied, it would probably cost considerable amounts of money as indicated by the Conseil. The State is thus unable to assume such costs alone, at least not during the first phase.

And finally only a strict evaluation of costs will enable us to establish priorities in the setting up of an educational policy for early childhood.

However, these considerations represent no reason for the Government to postpone taking action. The consolidation of several laws, a definition or revision of educational programs in early childhood services, a supply of proper information to families, an inventory of available educational resources, the application of revised criteria for the engaging of teachers or animators and research on means to improve services to early childhood are all fields for immediate action.

The International Year of the Child should give rise to a greater interest in the educational needs of early childhood. It is to be hoped that it will mark the start of a more coherent Québec policy to meet these needs. Several ministries will have to work together and in close cooperation with the different "milieux".

SUPPLEMENTARY I

SERVICES UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION

A. Part-time public or private kindergartens for 5 year-olds

This is the most universal situation and includes almost all of the existing clientèle. This service is not compulsory either for parents, ¹ or school boards ².

B. Full-time kindergartens for 4 year-olds

These are "reception classes" for children of immigrants located mainly in the Hull and Montreal areas.

C. Part-time kindergarten for 5 year-olds

These are directed to children of disadvantaged districts.

D. Full-time kindergartens for 5 year-olds

They are of two 2 kinds:

1. Those for children of disadvantaged districts;
2. "Reception classes" which are also open to anglo-phones.

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1. Loi sur l'Instruction publique, article 272.
 2. Loi sur l'Instruction publique, article 203, 3rd para.
Recueil des règles de gestion des commissions scolaires,
Ministère de l'Éducation directive 08-00-02.

E. Full-time special kindergartens

Directed to children with special needs.

F. Part-time home-kindergartens for 4 and 5 year olds

They are the result of a joint project of the ministère de l'Éducation and Centraide-Québec. According to the 1975-1976 annual report ¹, 232 children from the Québec area make use of this service for 4 year-olds.

This service exists for 5 year-olds in remote and sparsely populated areas. There are no statistics on the number of children affected by this service which consists in gathering 5 or 6 children in a private home under the supervision of a kindergarten teacher several half-days a week.

G. Animation kindergartens

Similar to the home-kindergartens, the only difference being that here the kindergarten teacher gives advice to parents on how they may participate in the education of their children ².

H. Immersion kindergartens

Entended for anglophones seeking instruction in the French language.

1. Maternelle-maison, Centraid-Québec, 1975-1976, p. 4

2. Une maternelle dans sa maison, Centraide-Québec, 1978, p. 24.

I. Passe-Partout series for 4 year-old children

A televised program supplemented by printed literature and animators' visits to private homes. The television program is broadcast across the Province, but only certain areas benefit from the help of animators². This is a deschooling experiment that should be evaluated after a reasonable period of time.

1. L'éducation 1978-1979: Au rythme du Québec, Jacques-Yvan Morin, June 1978, p. 31.

SUPPLEMENTARY 2

TABLE

**TABLE 1 OF CHILDREN BENEFITTING OF PRESCHOOL SERVICES
IN RELATION TO THE TOTAL POPULATION OF FOUR-AND-FIVE YEAR OLD CHILDREN
IN QUEBEC (1)**

		Kindergarten 4 year-olds	Reception 4 year-olds	Kindergarten 5 year-olds reception	Kindergarten 5 year-olds half-day	Kindergarten 5 year-olds whole day	Kindergarten 5 year-olds special needs
01	F	05.13	-	-	95.50	-	00.38
	A	-	-	-	03.50	00.62	-
02	F	10.00	-	-	97.50	01.07	00.26
	A	-	-	-	01.09	-	-
03	F	05.17	-	-	97.80	00.82	00.35
	A	-	00.33	00.17	01.00	-	-
04	F	05.73	-	-	98.70	-	00.38
	A	-	-	00.38	00.92	-	-
05	F	02.28	-	-	91.70	-	00.55
	A	-	00.75	00.64	06.09	01.60	-
06A	F	03.03	-	-	92.20	-	00.34
	A	-	02.01	00.97	06.94	00.51	-
06B	F	01.80	-	-	88.50	01.05	00.46
	A	-	01.95	01.08	10.00	-	00.02
06C	F	05.90	-	-	56.70	07.20	00.98
	A	01.80	-	-	34.40	00.30	00.35
06	F	03.60	-	-	78.00	03.00	00.61
TOTAL	A	00.65	05.03	03.69	18.00	00.24	00.13
07	F	05.30	-	-	89.10	-	00.05
	A	-	05.28	04.84	10.10	00.79	-
08	F	01.00	-	-	92.90	01.39	00.50
	A	00.88	00.54	00.54	05.20	-	-
09	F	12.60	-	-	92.00	01.40	00.24
	A	02.62	-	-	06.20	-	00.05
10	F	13.30	-	-	56.00	02.80	-
	A	25.20	-	-	41.30	-	-
Québec							
Total	F	04.60	-	-	86.50	01.80	00.48
	A	00.54	02.80	02.12	10.80	02.60	00.07

(1) Source: Ministère de l'Éducation, Data-Processing Service, 30 septembre 1978.

SUPPLEMENTARY 3

SERVICES UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MINISTERE DES AFFAIRES SOCIALES

1. Centres d'accueil

Facilities organized to accomodate, support, keep under observation, treat or rehabilitate children with health problems or physical, emotional, psychosocial or family deficiencies, who must be taken care of or kept in protected residences and, if need be, under supervised treatment. L.R.Q., c.S-5 .

2. Famille d'accueil

Family taking care of one or several adults or children, up to a maximum of nine, who have been confided to its care by a social service center.

3. Care-taking services

- Garde parascolaire

Any service taking care of primary school children during their parents' absence for short periods of the day outside school hours morning and/or noon and/or end of afternoon

- Day-care center

Any institution accomodating, on a regular basis and for an over four-hour period daily, ten or more children to whom it offers care and activity programs that help to develop them physically, intellectually and socially.

- Mini-nursery

Any institution accommodating on a regular basis and for an over four-hour period daily, less than ten children to whom it offers care and activity programs that help to develop them physically, intellectually and socially.

- Care-taking family

A family which receives regularly and for over four hours a day, four or less non-related children giving them care and required attention.

- Home care service

Care given regularly at the child's home by a "baby-sitter" for over four hours a day.

- Halte-garderie

A "garderie" receiving children for short and irregular periods only. No permits or grants are awarded by the Ministry.

3. THE FUTURE OF THE CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION

Advice to the Minister of Education, adopted at the 227th meeting, October 11, 1979

PRESENTATION

At its 227th meeting held on October 11 and 12, 1979, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation took stock of its reflection about the presence and the function of advisory councils in education. The text of the advice adopted on this occasion as a temporary report is meant to be a contribution to a work that must be pursued. The Conseil now renews its request of February 9, 1979, to the Minister of Education, to be actively associated with a working party that would take an in-depth look at such issues as the future of the Conseil supérieur and the articulation of the links that must exist between this council and other sectorial councils in education.

The Conseil will possibly revise its advice in the light of the results of this study and of its own work. For the moment, it intends to fully play the part it has been allocated under the present Act.

BACKGROUND

Announcement of the creation of a Conseil des collèges

1. At its plenary assembly of June 1978, the Conseil received the Minister of Education, who expressed the wish to obtain the Conseil's opinion on the creation of a Conseil des collèges, as proposed in the Government's Project on the CEGEPs. A few months later, that is, in November, in a speech delivered at the Fédération des CEGEP's convention, the Minister put forward the hypothesis of the transformation of the Conseil supérieur into a Conseil des écoles, were a Conseil des

collèges to be formed. The Conseil reacted immediately with a note to the Minister dated November 11. It clearly indicated its opposition to a reduction of its mandate, without, however, excluding the hypothesis of the forming of a Conseil des écoles, similar to a Conseil des universités and Conseil des collèges. The Conseil asked for a meeting with the Minister to discuss the orientations being perceived by the ministère de l'Éducation, which differed a lot from those drawn from its own reflection.

Foundation of a Conseil de l'Éducation

2. In its note of November, the Conseil had stated the need for a "special body, irrespective of its name or structures, to act as a consultant to the government on its overall policies in education, both within and outside the established school system"¹. The Conseil's explanation was that education extends far beyond school. The angle from which the White Paper viewed the development of Québec society shed a new light on the broader part a Conseil de l'Éducation would eventually have to play. The Conseil had previously recalled that it must be "a counterweight to the heavy technocratic machinery of an education department and its policies conceived primarily in terms of separate levels of instruction"².

Specific feature of a Conseil de l'Éducation

3. That note was followed by an advice addressed to the Minister of Education last February 21. In it, the Conseil clarified the mandate of a Conseil de l'Éducation, after distinguishing between the two kinds of issues

1. CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION, (Note to the Minister of Education), Québec, November 1978, p. 2.

2. CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION, (Note to the Minister of Education), Québec, November 1978, p. 1.

that would motivate separate plans of consultation and, consequently, the existence of distinct councils. On one hand, "consultation on questions concerning specific sectors or levels of education, often technical or administrative in nature and demanding immediate solutions"¹, would be part of the mandate of sectorial councils such as the Conseil des universités, and possibly, a Conseil des collèges. On the other hand, "consultation on general education questions transcending particular sectors or levels or even the school system as a whole, situated more within an overall context of cultural development and long-term educational planning"², should constitute the specific feature of the mandate held by a Conseil de l'éducation.

Necessity of situating the various Conseils

4. In the advice, the Conseil did not claim to settle the question. So, its recommendation to the Minister of Education was that a working party be set up to plan the administrative structure and legislative measures that would best provide the necessary links between several advisory councils in education, including those already established: the Conseil des universités and the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation.

Reexamination of the issue by the Conseil

5. At the end of March, in the face of the announced tabling of a bill to create a Conseil des collèges before the initiation of a study on a global plan to situate the

1. CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, (Advice to the Minister of Education), February 1979, p. 2.

2. Ibid, p. 1.

various councils involved, the Conseil supérieur established a committee granted with the mandate that was formerly supposed to have been that of a joint working party, formed, among others, of members representing the Minister of Education and the two existing Conseils. More precisely, this mandate was to define in a bill what consultation would be in education.

6. At its plenary assembly of last June, work documents were submitted to the members of the Conseil, to the Comités catholique and protestant, and to its five Commissions. Meanwhile, in a meeting with the Minister of Education, the Conseil's ad hoc Committee, in charge of the dossier, informed the Minister of the project intended for the Conseil. The Minister showed much interest in the text and wished to be further advised about it as soon as possible.

Appearance before the Commission parlementaire sur l'éducation

7. At a special meeting during this plenary assembly, the Conseil requested to appear before the Commission parlementaire de l'éducation to explain its position as defined in its advice of November. The Conseil wished to dissipate any possible ambiguity that could be inferred from certain speeches made at the Assemblée nationale on the issue and reinforced by the content of section 16 of bill 24 on the establishment of a Conseil des collèges. This section puts the sectorial councils and the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation on the same footing, reviving the apprehension of this Conseil being perhaps converted into a Conseil des écoles. On June 18, 1979, before the Commission parlementaire, the Conseil's representatives asked for a modification of section 16 in order to make a clear distinction between a Conseil supérieur and

conseils pertaining to levels¹. These representatives had met previously with the Minister of Education to clarify the position that was taken by the Conseil at its special meeting of June 14.

A distinct and independent Conseil de l'éducation

8. These various actions show that a certain debate has taken place on the future of the Conseil, based in great part on the hypothesis that was put forward by the Minister of Education in November 1978 to transform the Conseil supérieur into a Conseil des écoles. Since then, various comments from authorized sources have substantiated this orientation. On the other hand, at the conclusion of the Conseil's appearance before the Commission parlementaire on June 18, the Minister of Education clearly stated: "There must be an advisory body whose functions extend beyond the various levels of education in Québec. This is a principle about which I have never had any doubt. Of course, we must still find out how the advisory system for this purpose is to be elaborated.

It is equally important that the members of this body not be professional educators. Of this, I am well convinced as proven by experience. There must, of course, be members from the field of education for they are needed when time comes to discuss concrete subjects. However, there must also be members from outside because of the continuously broadening concept on education which is more than a

1. Proposed section: The Conseil des collèges can, with the Conseil des universités, prepare and submit to the Minister of Education joint reports on common interest issues, and with the Conseil supérieur, joint reports on any question on the subject of coordination, on one hand, between teaching levels and, on the other hand, between the school system and non academic education.

matter of levels and has to relate more and more to what is beyond the scope of education in the strictest sense of the word.

9. The Conseil can only agree with this statement of principles. At the ministère de l'Education, however, there are plans in circulation for reducing the advisory function in education which would result in also reducing the mandate, status and the structure of the Conseil de l'éducation. According to these proposed plans, the Conseil could end up being only a coordinating mechanism for the sectorial councils. On the contrary, a fully independent Conseil de l'éducation, distinct from single level councils, is considered a necessity by the Conseil supérieur. The mandate of the Conseil de l'éducation, as already defined in the Conseil's note of November 78, and specified in its advice of February 79 cannot be influenced by the priorities of the sectorial councils.

REASSERTION OF THE CONSEIL'S POSITION

1. Up to now, the Conseil's study of a new definition of the global advisory function in education has brought up several questions that need answers. For instance, which Conseil would be in charge of adult education? Where do the confessional committees fit in? How to provide the links between the various councils without impairing their autonomy? How to assign a place to the Conseil de l'éducation in relation to single level councils? The Conseil supérieur does not wish to work alone on questions that also concern other councils and the ministère de l'Education. Hence its request for a joint study.

The mandate of the Conseil supérieur

2. The Conseil never thought that the establishment of single level councils would challenge the existence of an advisory body distinct from the new councils. The creation in 1968 of the Conseil des universités had been influenced by a recommendation of the Conseil supérieur to form an

"office de l'enseignement universitaire". Its report on the state and needs of college education entitled The College published in July 1975 recommended the establishment of a Conseil des collèges. It would be appropriate to describe once again the Conseil's mandate in the light of today's context: still a continuation of the original mandate, it has however been broadened. The Conseil must advise the Government, and particularly the Minister of Education¹ on:

- a) the basic questions raised by education inside and outside the school system that must be considered on a long term basis;
ex.: the desirable amount of intervention from the government and the level of local responsibility; the place of private schools; the kind of schools to establish; equal opportunities: the confessional nature of the public school; the school's specific role and social function; teacher training;
- b) Québec's priorities in education
ex.: the quality of education, the place of education in the national budget;
- c) the measures to facilitate the evolution of education towards a global policy of continuing education;
ex.: inventory of the resources of a learning society; definition of an adult continuing improvement policy, revision of the goals of education to ensure the citizens' autonomy;

1. The Conseil's immediate interlocutor is the Minister of Education, but the Superior Council Act also provides for submission of an annual report to the Assemblée nationale. Moreover, today's broadened field of education requires the Conseil to study questions that concern several ministries.

- d) the means to ensure coordination between education levels on one hand, and between schools and other places of education on the other hand;
ex.: acknowledgment of experience; training stages in work environments;
 - e) the links between specifically educational activities and those aimed at community cultural development
ex.: sharing material resources (facilities, equipment); promotion of arts and crafts activities as means of education; use of media for education; museum development policy.
3. It is very difficult to admit that such a mandate can be properly fulfilled by a kind of ad hoc committee formed with representatives of single level councils. It is also doubtful that even a permanent committee under the leadership of the level councils could fulfill a mandate concerned with priorities and perspectives entirely different from those of these councils. The nature and the extent of this mandate demand a powerful, well structured, self-governing body, independent of both the government and other councils which act in more specific fields and are closer to the government.

Description of the Conseil supérieur

4. The mandate held by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation is adapted to the present context and does not invalidate the provisions of the Act by which it was created in 1964. It seems appropriate here to briefly recall what the Conseil thinks it must be to properly fulfill this mandate.
- a) The Conseil is an advisory body in all matters of education since section 10-b stipulates that the Conseil may "make recommendations to the Minister on any matter relating to education"¹.

1. Loi sur le Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, L.R.Q., chap.60 (Superior Council of Education Act, R.S.Q. 1964, c-60)

- b) It must be an organization devoted to middle and long-term study and research. Section 10-c says it may "cause to be carried out such studies and research as it deems useful or necessary for the pursuit of its objects;"
- c) It may intervene occasionally on limited issues, even if its primary responsibility is to "transmit to the minister, who shall communicate it to the Legislature, an annual report on its activities and the state and needs of education". This involves all the provisions of sections 9 and 10.
- d) The Conseil must act as a link between the public and the government. In its report, the Commission royale d'enquête sur l'enseignement viewed the Conseil as a permanent inquiry commission. Besides, in section 10-a, the Act says that the Conseil may "invite opinions, receive and hear the petitions and suggestions of the public in matters of education".
- e) It must be representative of all circles. In this respect, the Superior Council Act is explicit on the necessity of basing the appointment of the Conseil's members on "consultation with the religious authorities and of the associations and bodies most representative of the parents, teachers, school board members and socio-economic groups"(section 4). The same applies to the composition of the Comités catholique and protestant (sections 16 and 17) and the Commissions (section 25).
- f) In certain ways, the Conseil is a pressure group which permits it to act as a counterweight to the technocratic and political power. The publication of most of its prompt interventions and annual reports constitutes, to some extent, a means of pressure, but mostly allows the Conseil to render an account to the public on how it is carrying out its mandate. However, one must not confuse the Conseil and organizations with specific interests to defend. On the contrary, the Conseil

must be attentive to the expectations of the general public in matters of education which have an influential effect on much of its advice.

5. The mandate defined in the Superior Council Act is vast and cannot be limited to that of single level councils. These councils would find it difficult to be consulted on matters that extend beyond their competence. The very terms of this Act that extend the Conseil's competence to "any matter relating to education" permit its mandate to be situated within the context of a society armed with many educational resources outside the regular school system. The Conseil must place itself within the perspective of continuing education. The scope of this mandate inevitably induces the Conseil to deal with issues that concern ministries other than that of Education alone. In this respect, it may indirectly advise the Government or their ministries even though its primary interlocutor is the Minister of Education.

A WORK TO PURSUE AND INTENSIFY

1. The revision in recent months of the Conseil's present structures and Act brought it to conclude that the scope of the mandate given to the Conseil under the present Act is large enough to permit it to pursue and intensify its work.

Since the creation of the Conseil des collèges, it is no longer up to the Conseil to give advice on specific questions in college education. But the Conseil must still take interest in college education as part of a greater whole. The creation in 1968 of a Conseil des universités did not entail the abolition of the Commission de l'enseignement supérieur which, during the last years, has carried out much appreciated studies in various circles. To mention the most recent: Deux aspects de la fonction sociale de l'université (June 1979), Commentaires sur le Livre vert "Pour une politique québécoise de la recherche scientifique" (June 1979). The considerations of these reports are

noticeably different from those of the Conseil des Universités.

Policy for the near future

2. The Conseil does not reject a priori a thorough reform of its present Act and the prospect of creating other sectorial councils. But before such important legislative changes take place, should they be found necessary, the Conseil intends to pursue and intensify its activities. The reflection that it had to do on the global question of consultation in education only helped it to evaluate its own operations, which is still going on. The Conseil has already decided on some measures for adapting its action to the needs created by the rapid development of education since the reform of the 60's and the development of the advisory function itself.

Commissions' specific role

3. The Conseil's Commissions have been very active, carrying out many studies on questions specific to their sectors. During the last years, the exceptional quality of many reports to the Minister of Education, largely distributed within the school system and the adult education world, testify to the beneficial role the Commissions can play. The Conseil intends to let the Commissions take the initiative in order to have a more effective influence on the evolution of their respective sectors. This policy was initiated three years ago by the publication of many reports produced and signed by the Commissions themselves and it will be intensified. Three out of four actual Commissions occupy sectors that are not covered by sectorial councils, that is, primary education, high school education, and adult education. These groups will be able to properly fulfill tasks which, in other sectors, were assigned to sectorial councils. Besides, according to the present Act, the Conseil will continue to coordinate its Commissions' activities. Its present structure also provides for shared services - secretarial work, communications, research - to save on resources, which proves

more difficult to achieve with councils that operate completely independent of one another.

The Conseils' specific role

4. As far as the Conseil will let its Commissions take the initiative, will it be able to devote more energy to more general basic and prospective questions. It also intends to improve its operations, and greater autonomy to the Commissions seems to be an appropriate policy for easing strain and improving its efficiency.

A future to define

5. The ministère de l'Éducation is presently studying the means for locating all the advisory councils in education under the same roof to facilitate the sharing of secretarial services. The proposed hypothesis of the Minister of Education to create a Conseil des écoles may result in new legislative and administrative measures. In its advice of February 1979, the Conseil recommended to the Minister the forming of a work party whose mandate would be to formalize in administrative structures and legislative measures the ties that should exist between different advisory bodies. It asked that this group be composed of representatives from involved groups such as the Conseil supérieur.
6. At the Commission parlementaire de l'éducation, the Minister himself stated that the present advisory structures should be evaluated before proceeding with any major changes such as the creation of a Conseil des écoles and the modification of the Conseil supérieur. He also agreed with the suggestion to create a work group for this purpose which would be set up on receipt of provisory advice from the Conseil. The Conseil therefore reiterates its request because of the obviously urgent need for an evaluation of the global issue of the advisory function in education as a prerequisite to any major change in the present Superior Council of Education Act. The reflection already effected at the Conseil

may be helpful to such a group. The Conseil will pursue the evaluation of its own structures. The present advice is provisory and will possibly be followed by further recommendations.

4. THE FUTURE OF THE INSTITUT NATIONAL DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE

Note to the Minister of Education, adopted at the 228th meeting, November 8, 1979.

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation is amazed at seeing that the Green Paper "Towards a Scientific Research Policy for Québec" raises the issue of the status of the Institut national de la recherche scientifique and recommends, among other things, that it be dissolved without first questioning the value of this Institute and the merits of the activities it pursues.

A reading of the briefs submitted by the various universities to the Minister for Cultural Development in reaction to the Green Paper allows us to see:

- 1) that only one brief deals with the issue of the status of the Institut national de la recherche scientifique to suggest that the Institut's future be the subject of a thorough study, as was proposed by the Conseil in its report on the Green Paper;
- 2) that several briefs mention the inter-university and inter-sector cooperation that resulted from the research activities of the Institut national de la recherche scientifique. The Conseil also notices that other briefs, from non-universitarian sources, also give examples of similar cooperation and recommend that the INRS preserve its present status and connection with the Université du Québec.

These statements cause the Conseil to wonder about the basis of a recommendation leading to a change in the status of this body, especially since it is rather delicate to want to requestion a body whose creation is still recent.

In other respects, in a previous report, the Conseil emphasized that a specialized university primarily committed

to oriented basic research and to applied research does not imply that other universities are excluded from these fields.

The Conseil recognizes that the field structure typical of this body and the existence of centers favour decompartmentalization, interdisciplinarity and joint action with other universities, governments, and industry.

The three-year plan for its development and the last annual reports issued by the Institut national de la recherche scientifique demonstrate a high-quality programme, many publications and a contribution to the training of researchers in fields of immediate relevance to Québec.

In all, the Conseil considers that a scientific research policy for Québec would stimulate the development of the INRS. It is of the opinion that the experience acquired by the Institut, just as its method of organization, notably its field structure and the existence of centres, must be taken into consideration in establishing this policy.

5. PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Note to the Minister of Education, adopted at the 230th meeting, on January 10, 1980

The Conseil superieur de l'éducation and its Commission de l'éducation des adultes were informed of the five-year plan for the development of public libraries proposed by the Minister of Cultural Affairs to the municipalities of Québec. The plan aims at making available by 1984, the services of public libraries to every citizen of Québec, without exception.

- In view of the importance of libraries in continuing education which concerns young people as much as adults, and
- in view of how much Québec has fallen behind compared to other provinces and several countries (in 1977, the number of loans per person was 2,1 in Québec, whereas it was 6,3 in Ontario and 13,2 in Denmark);

The Conseil repeats that

- . reading is still one of the best means of personal improvement and individual education,
- . the book represents an easily decentralized learning tool, within the reach of the whole population and that
- . the public library is an essential complement to the school system at all levels, and a necessary tool for informing and training groups who are involved in a collective development process.

And consequently, the Conseil wishes to inform

the Minister of Education, Mr. Jacques-Yvan Morin,
the Minister of Cultural Affairs, Mr. Denis Vaugoies,
the Minister of State for Cultural Development,
Mr. Camille Laurin:

- . that it supports the content and the immediate implementation of the five-year plan for the expansion of public libraries;
- . that it considers the issue of public reading in Quebec parallel to that of public education in the 60s; what is at issue here would require an operation among the municipalities as wide-ranging as Operation 55, which could be called: A Public Library for Every Municipality in Québec.
- . that its Commission de l'éducation des adultes intends to show, to the best of its ability and at all levels of intervention where it is involved, the necessary link between READING and LIBRARIES on one hand, and CONTINUING EDUCATION on the other hand.

Furthermore, the Conseil wishes to mention the importance of ensuring the best cooperation possible between municipalities and schools. It also hopes that the present plan will be carefully implemented in accordance with the special needs of different regions.

Dissidence

A member, Mr. Linus Cassidy requested that his dissidence be duly recorded. He agrees entirely with the proposed plan but would have liked the Conseil to take the following points into consideration:

- . school must be a place culture;
- . better consultation is needed between the various elements of a milieu (municipalities, school boards, social agencies, etc);
- . school libraries are deficient;
- . the maximum use of schools favours the maintenance of the last school in a community;
- . school must be more open to the milieu which must be more attentive to the school.

In his opinion, no municipality should receive public funds for a public library before having made a real effort to discuss with the school boards in its territory how resources may be put to the best possible use.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFICULTIES IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR ADULTES

Letter to the Minister of Education, March 28, 1980

Mr. Minister,

In a report dated December 1978 entitled: "The Administrative Jungle of the Professional Training Program for Adults", the Conseil pointed out the problems created by the multiplicity of authorities responsible for the professional training program for adults.

The Conseil, at that time, recommended:

1. that pre-training activities (reception, evaluation of applications, analysis of needs, academic and vocational information, career planning be exclusively within the competence of teaching bodies;
2. that the activities for which the teaching bodies are responsible within the framework of this program be subjected to an evaluation;
3. that the Professional Training Commissions be invested with powers to research and analyse needs in the adult professional training field, and powers to evaluate the activities in this field in terms of manpower needs.

At the request of the Commission de l'éducation des adultes, I would like to point out to you that relations between the Professional Training Commissions and the teaching bodies are still a problem.

Since the adoption of the Manpower Vocational Training and Qualification Act (L.R.Q., section F-5) assented to June 13, 1969, and of the agreement on the operational mechanisms concluded between the ministère du Travail et de la Main-d'oeuvre and the ministère de l'Education in June 1972, there have been many contracts between the Commission de formation professionnelle and the training centers. In actual practice however, the training given under such conditions has always created difficulties for students who have to deal with many different authorities. The Commission de l'éducation des adultes notes that difficulties have increased during the past year. In fact, several Commissions de formation professionnelle did not renew their agreements with the training centers, as they chose to carry out the pre-training activities themselves.

The Commission de l'éducation des adultes and the Conseil itself would appreciate being informed of any measures adopted or considered to solve the difficulties in question.

Yours sincerely,

Jean-M. Beauchemin
Président

7. EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

*Statement of Principles, adopted at the 233rd meeting,
April 24, 1980*

PRESENTATION

Last year, more precisely in September 1979, the Conseil published a research report under its author's signature entitled "L'égalité des chances en éducation. Considérations théoriques et approches empiriques"¹. The Conseil sought to pursue this reflection and to make known its position on a matter it considers of prime importance. Hence this text, which is, first of all, a statement of principles that must serve to inspire a policy with respect to equality of educational opportunity. The statement is divided into two parts: the first part deals with the Conseil's interpretation of the concept of equality of educational opportunity; the second part discusses the main implications of true equality of educational opportunity.

The Conseil is fully aware of the complexity and scope of the issues dealt with here. For instance, the Conseil adopts the hypothesis that school can have a positive influence on greater equalization of opportunity in society, even though many groups may be opposed to this view. The Conseil insists on making it immediately clear that the search for equal educational opportunity cannot be the concern of school only and that reference must be made to the broad educational action carried on in society and to several economic, social and cultural factors which are of prime importance. However, because the Conseil does not

1. Mireille Levesque, L'égalité des chances en éducation. Considérations théoriques et approches empiriques, Direction de la recherche, Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Québec 1979.

wish to exceed the limits of its jurisdiction, it can deal only with the educational dimension of equal opportunity in our society, though it is the global aspect of all these factors that is truly deciding.

It is not the Conseil's intention to examine here the various theories and conceptions relating to equal opportunity as they have been analyzed in its research report. It is however advisable to recall that there are three stages involved in the pursuit of equality of educational opportunity: 1) to ensure equal access, 2) to provide individuals and groups with educational services that will allow them to put their talents and their individual and collective resources to the best possible use, which calls for a diversity of educational measures adapted to a diversity of aspirations and needs, 3) to have recourse to various corrective measures in face of social inequality so that belonging to a group per se be not a cause for educational inequality; it is a search for equality of results, meaning that to belong to a social group as a failure factor is reduced to its lowest extent. We moreover believe that there are three main factors of inequality in educational opportunity: individual, econo-socio-cultural, and academic.

INTRODUCTION

Equality of educational opportunity fits into the search for greater social justice, and consequently, appeals to the educational system's social and cultural roles. If education is considered a fundamental human right, then equality of educational opportunity is a basic and indispensable condition to the exercise of this right.

Yet, it is not enough to acknowledge the right to education; there must also be agreement on the definition of this right and on the ways and means of exercising it. The right to education is not confined to the possibility of attending school only; rather it is defined as the right of each individual to receive a minimum of quality training to ensure

self-fulfillment and active participation in the society to which one belongs. Ideally, the full exercise of this right would require the elimination of all existing political, economic, social, and above all, academic obstacles.

In recent decades, most industrialized societies in varying degrees have been concerned about the establishment of greater equality of educational opportunity. A political will has asserted itself in the re-organization of school structures, redesigning of school programs and in new patterns of administration and management.

The effort to democratize the Québec school system over the past fifteen years reflects this concern. Nobody can deny that progress has been made in three important areas of our school system.

1. First, school system structures have undergone radical changes: the isolated curricula of the past are now standardized but remain versatile. A complete network of public schools from pre-school to university now exists.
2. Secondly, school attendance has increased considerably. In 1961, 74,6% of 15-year-olds attended school; in 1966, 86% and in 1972, school attendance reached 95,9%. More young people attend school for a longer period of time.
3. Finally, the school system is seeking a balance between general training and specialized training. It is also trying to be a factor of social change and adaptation. The development of education has become essential to the general development of Québec society.

Though the above may be considered as assets, they must not hide the serious problems still waiting to be resolved. It is a fact that almost all young people between 5 and 15 years of age are now attending school, yet one must also consider failure, drop-out and maladjustment situations,

which seem to show that school reform has not yet fulfilled all of its promises and that it is urgent to reduce the great extent of inequality still existing in education.

Solving the problem of educational inequalities is a challenge for the whole of society and only through concerted efforts can a better equalization of educational opportunity be achieved. The complexity of the problem and the difficulties inherent in necessary changes particularly within the school system and its educational activity as a whole deserve serious consideration.

It is within the above perspective that the Conseil situates the two main features of its present advice:

First, a clarification of terms: the many misunderstandings on the subject often lead to the conclusion it is only a benevolent dream;

Second, the implications of a will to equalize educational opportunity: from the moment we decide to accept this principle, we must face the important changes required to achieve its full purpose.

EQUALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The term equal opportunity has been much in the foreground in recent decades, which has caused it to suffer from overexposure. Many clichés refer to a great number of different concepts. One may say that all of the great political currents of our time claim to offer programs aimed at greater equalization of opportunity.

The concept of equal educational opportunity attracts much attention and represents a real challenge. Once the right to education has been acknowledged and accepted by all, we then want to ensure to every citizen full exercise of this right. In principle, equal opportunity for all is a

goal that attracts much sympathy, debate and discussion. It is a necessary dream that must serve as a guideline for collective action. In reality however, the objective of equalization of opportunity often gives rise to reservations. Some fear standardization, the negation of individual differences; others fear mediocrity, the lack of competence, even anarchy. Such ambiguities raise ideological debates essential to the necessary criticism of our educational system. However, they may discourage, even ruin the efforts made to alleviate educational inequalities. Hence the appropriateness of clarifying the ambiguities that compromise these debates.

The scope of equality of opportunity

1. The concept of equal educational opportunity reveals a concern for social justice, a will to train individuals for their social role, the necessity of ensuring the overall development of people and a concern to develop society as a whole.

A multi-resource educational society

2. Equalization of educational opportunity refers to the educational function as a whole and not only to school. School becomes a service, an educational means among many others and must not take upon itself the education of a whole community. All the community's resources must assume an educational function. Access to school, to museums, libraries, training programs must be made easier. However, access to resources is not enough, increased assistance to social groups is needed to avoid making collective resources available to only the most favoured. The idea is not to impose recourse to these resources. But sometimes, more incitation or extra assistance only would be enough to really democratize access to educational services.

Therefore, we must not conclude that educational resources must come in the form of vending machines, that is to say institutionalized services. Besides structured services, there is room also for educational services devised and

created by those who will use them. The entire society must become educational in order to enable all its members to make use of the opportunities that are offered by it.

Individual development

3. The individual's complete development, which must be made possible for all individuals without exception, irrespective of race, sex, social class, religion, language or region. To pursue the objective of the equalization of educational opportunity is to offer everyone the possibility of developing all aspects of one's personality according to one's aptitudes, capacities and interests, to reach self-fulfilment and efficient social inter-action. It supposes that all have the essential elements, that is, the knowledge to allow them to take part in social cultural political and economic life, and the tools to analyze and evaluate any kind of information and social action.

Respect for individual differences

4. Equal educational opportunity must imply acknowledgement of individual differences. The differences are important; they are the result of innate as well as acquired characteristics. Each person is unique and has specific talents, abilities and characteristics as well as limitations on the physical, intellectual and psychological levels. To seek for equal opportunity is to acknowledge the richness and the diversity of existing aptitudes, to consider also the value of different competences. Consequently, to acknowledge individual differences does not mean to accept personal successes or failures, but rather to desire the actualization of different but complementary aptitudes.

Collective promotion

5. Equalization of educational opportunity must not contribute simply to the individual promotion of each citizen but also to the collective promotion of all social groups. This means on one hand, that the group's specific characteristics are acknowledged and respected, and on the other hand, that

different social groups are able to provide themselves with educational services that fit their needs and aspirations.

Diversity and competence

6. In a society characterized by competition and stratification, equalization of educational opportunity raises much apprehension. According to some, such a policy could lead to standardization, cultural levelling, mediocrity and intellectual impoverishment. The search for equal opportunity does not fall within the framework of impoverishing normalization, nor that of rejection of excellent and competence. It is rather the present situation which, by neglecting many aptitudes, creates inequality and causes standardization and intellectual impoverishment. A society concerned with equalization and social justice will not necessarily turn into a monolithic and static society. On the contrary, our goal is that the relations between the various elements of the social body be dynamic and well organized, with equal consideration for the diversity of individual experience and for the complexity of the tasks needed for the adequate operation of a society.

Equal access

7. Equal educational opportunity first demands equal access. Once this accessibility is ensured, equalization of chances, even strictly academic, is not attained for all that, a fact illustrated by the Québec school system itself. After fifteen years of efforts, access to compulsory schooling is now guaranteed to every Québec youngster, but a true equalization of academic chances is not guaranteed in that a large proportion of students do not obtain a high school certificate, which is the minimal criterion in our society.

A diversified treatment

8. Equalization of opportunity implies a diversified treatment, adapted to the educational needs of the people and of the groups involved, and not standardization. School cannot be the same for everyone. If individual differences are

acknowledged, the same school cannot be imposed upon everyone with hope for the same achievement. A standard school would be deeply unjust and could not fulfill all the various needs of students. So different services must be offered to allow each individual to develop with equal educational opportunity.

Equal results

9. The ideal of equality of opportunity must be other than mere statistical equality of results, that is, a pseudo-equality in which every social group would be proportionally represented at all levels including university. This would not prevent the continuing existence of social inequalities. For instance, it has been proved that diplomas being equal, income varies according to social origin. Therefore, school must guarantee a basic training to everyone so that instead of setting limitations on individuals, it will present them with the widest possible range of training options.

In the final analysis, the concept of equalization of educational opportunity refers to individual, collective and cultural promotion alike.

Individual promotion:

- . the individual's liberation
- . possibility to develop all one's aptitudes to their maximum
- . acknowledgement and valorization of different abilities
- . achievement of the best performances by the greatest number
- . dynamic interaction between the individual and his environment
- . the necessity of acknowledging diversified experiences in relation to the complexity of social functions.

Collective promotion:

- . collective enrichment due to the differences that can be expressed
- . appropriation of the necessary tools for collective development by various groups
- . adequate answers to the most urgent social needs
- . particular promotion of socially and economically underprivileged groups

Cultural promotion

For groups as much as for individuals, cultural promotion demands

- . diversification of educational services according to group needs
- . access to all these services
- . extra services for the most underprivileged.

MAJOR IMPLICATIONS OF EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

These various elements of equality of educational opportunity reveal all the complexity of the reality covered by this concept. In order to understand better this reality, it seems necessary to determine the major implications and requirements of an equal opportunity policy.

Equality of educational opportunity is an ideal of most contemporary societies that entails consequences on the educational, economic, social as well as political planes.

These same societies, however, experience much difficulty in reconciling equal educational opportunity with the principle of freedom, reconciling individual promotion with that of the less favoured classes while having at the same time to take into consideration the requirements of school organization, budget cuts, the requirements of a well organized society (competence, specialization).

Educational and social opportunities

1. What we must see in an equal opportunity objective is hope for social change. This struggle for equalization must be directed towards all social structures. It is imperative to ponder over social stratification and the justification given to it, to ensure the evolution of social functions, to facilitate a better balance between social relations, and to ensure the social integration of all individuals.

Pursuing the objective of equal educational opportunity means working at social change, although one must not see society's educational function as the only remedy to social disparities. The Conseil considers that greater equality in matters of education is highly desirable, from an individual as well as collective point of view. Education, in the broadest sense of the term, which extends beyond school, may be a major factor of change, provided that educational policies are accompanied by health, income, taxation, housing, labour policies, etc. The development of the education sector will surely have consequences on the development of other sectors which, in turn, will have a strong influence on education. It is this creative dynamics which characterizes the relation between education and society. Equalization of opportunity calls for a society that is administered at all levels by the greatest possible number of enlightened and responsible citizens, without going against the variety of competences and aspirations.

The principle of equal opportunity refers to the social responsibility of all citizens.

Explaining school inequalities

2. Our discussion of equality of educational opportunity reveals the close link between school and society. For a long time school success or failure had been explained only in terms of individual aptitudes. But a child's academic difficulties can also be attributed to the family or social environment and may be caused by socio-economic or

socio-cultural factors such as social class, scale of values, cultural heritage, family environment and economic conditions. And eventually, even school structures can create inequality. Contrary to the still strong tendency of placing the blame for school inequalities and individual differences alone, the Conseil is of the opinion that the explanation is not so simple. For example, school failure or dropping out is more prevalent among disadvantaged children. The intellectual aptitudes of each child are therefore not the only cause.

Achieving equality of school opportunity and, with more reason, equality of educational opportunity requires the right combination of many favourable physical, psychological, economic, academic, cultural and social conditions.

The role of the school in reducing inequality of social opportunity

3. Even if we acknowledge that school alone cannot reduce social inequalities, it is nevertheless a fact that the school has human and material resources of considerable influence in the matter. Educational organization, staff qualifications, educational material, training programs, school structures are all deciding factors in the schooling process that can contribute to build a more just society. Greater financial accessibility must be ensured from the beginning to socially less favoured students.

School must devote its human and financial resources to an equal social opportunity policy

Diversification of educational services

4. One can no longer pretend that school is satisfactory to everyone, that true education is obtainable only through preestablished formal stages, and that school is the only course to follow for training. On the contrary, school is not the only accepted center of training. For some forms of training, other training centers can suit certain individuals more advantageously. It is society as a whole

that must be educational. School provides useful types of training but other social institutions also play an educational role. School must not monopolize training; it must be in harmony with the other educational resources of the environment. Diversity of training centers is one essential condition for equalizing educational opportunity and fulfilling expressed needs. Within this perspective, the whole issue of equality of educational opportunity is entirely in keeping with the general aims of a continuing or lifelong education program¹.

Society's educational function must be discharged through a wide range of services or means to meet the diversified needs of individuals or groups.

The principle of
positive discrimination

5. Equality of educational opportunity as previously stated means more than simply uniform treatment. A wider range of services must be offered to individuals or groups who need them most. This is the principle of positive discrimination. At this moment the opposite situation prevails. The schools of deprived districts are generally the most disadvantaged where recreational facilities and educational material are concerned. And yet, the more such districts are deprived of these resources and facilities, the greater, for all practical purposes become their needs.

To help those who experience the greatest needs, society must increase the quantity and quality of their educational resources and give them the tools needed to create their own services.

1. CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, "Elements d'une politique de l'éducation des adultes dans le contexte de l'éducation permanente", L'état et les besoins de l'éducation. Rapport 1978-1979, Québec 1979, pp. 215-247.

The target populations

6. A policy of equal educational opportunity must be primarily aimed at society's less favoured individuals or groups. Many of the past recommendations of the Conseil demonstrate its constant concern for this segment of society: deprived adults (the unemployed, low-income workers, welfare recipients), the children of disadvantaged districts, certain ethnic minorities, the handicapped, children with learning disabilities, the parents of disadvantaged districts.

The work toward equality of educational opportunity is first and foremost to help those least able to make use of our existing educational resources because of the cultural, economic and social gap between their norms and values and those of our educational services.

The need for decentralization

7. The educational model required by a policy of equal opportunity is difficult, if not impossible to achieve without a general decentralization of all educational services. There must be sufficient local and regional autonomy to permit every individual to actualize his or her potential and the group to express its own culture. And decentralization fosters such development by services better adapted to specific needs.

Local and regional management of educational resources is one of the conditions of a policy of equality of educational opportunity.

One real purpose of school

8. With a view to greater equality of educational opportunity, we must work toward a real transformation of what is considered in contemporary society as still the best vehicle of education - the school. This transformation must deal with both the social and cultural roles of the school, its teaching objectives, methods and programs, its evaluation process, and with the articulation between education levels. The

school must return to the basics and avoid trying to fulfill all sorts of roles at once, something that no social institution can do. The school must requestion the values it transmits and aptitudes it wants to develop. As one educative means among others, the school provides for individual development but school programs do not take all individual aptitudes into account. No one can deny that schools give the precedence to certain mental aptitudes, in particular verbal skills and abstract reasoning, thereby contributing to the preservation of an hierarchical division between intellectual and manual workers.

The specific role of the school must be precisely defined while bearing in mind the role belonging to other mediums of education.

The educative function in terms of individual development

9. Any society concerned with equality of opportunity will see to it that all human skills and talents are considered valuable as well as the work functions to which they lead. This supposes that the educative function does not give greater priority to academic skills to the detriment of manual or other skills. The school may be more conducive to the development of certain skills and other educational institutions, to other skills. This will prevent a large percentage of persons from abandoning their education because of the fact they happen to be less suited for regular school.

In the area of education as a whole, it is obvious that all individuals do not develop all their talents, aptitudes and skills to an equal degree. But each should have the possibility to develop to the maximum all of his potential, with greater emphasis on certain special personal skills, while obtaining at the same time a minimum amount of common education through compulsory schooling. And the latter must foster several forms of communicating, not simply emphasizing verbal communication.

We must work toward deschooling the educational process, or as otherwise stated, toward recognition of different kinds of learning acquired as much outside as within school itself, while continuing to aim for unity, coherence and complementarity in the educative function.

The educative function in terms of collective development

10. Society's educative function not only consists of individual development but collective advancement as well. We can no longer ignore the need of placing at the disposal of various social groups the educational resources needed to provide for greater equity among them. All sub-groups of a given society should have the means to develop, assert their own identity and take charge of their future.

To ensure the advancement of different social groups, education must go beyond a single concept of culture as stated in the recent Québec policy on cultural development. The reality of cultural diversity can in no way escape from our education system. While preserving the primary conditions, "reinforcing basic learning, drawing sustenance from the heritage of great human values, being deeply rooted in a country"¹-, the school should recognize other expressions of human intelligence. It should therefore offer a basic cultural model that results from a social consensus which at the same time fosters diversity.

A policy of equality of educational opportunity must recognize and promote cultural diversity and its inherent value. It is a basic condition for the collective advancement of all social groups.

1. GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC, A Cultural Development Policy for Québec. Volume 2, 1978, p. 414.

A diversified process
of education

11. Each person learns at his or her own pace and the educational process of the school must respect such differences. So-called "new" teaching methods are aimed at individualized instruction. Because of the special needs of students we have established various educational services to provide support to teachers.

The same thing applies to study programs which must above all foster the maximum development of each individual's talents and aptitudes. This does not prevent coherence in the establishment of the programs and a pedagogical regime providing for a minimum of common education at a given level. Yet the pursued objective is not to lead all students to the same level of performance for the same exams, not even to an equal assimilation of standardized course content. Diversity in individual progress and programs will reflect the diversity of individual talent that is not subjected to negative comparisons emphasizing success or failure more than the personal development of each individual.

A policy of equality of educational opportunity therefore requires a flexible school organization and teaching process centred on students instead of programs.

The selective function
of the school

12. To the extent schools direct prematurely or without adequate reason students into different streams of which many are marginal or not even desired, they are playing a harmful selective role toward students who are thereby labelled. Such selection often results from an education process based on competition and a utilitarian concept of education concerned, for example, at the secondary level with training solely for the labour market. The effect of such selection is to reproduce social, economic and cultural inequalities. Some students experience greater learning and behavioral problems thus require special help. But

their chances to succeed are better when they are not prematurely oriented or placed in a marginal situation that often leads to regression. In this respect it would be well to recall our past practice of multiplying so-called "maladjusted" classes as opposed to today's efforts at integration.

Selection can be positive if it results in a rational orientation of students permitting them to discover their assets and limitations and to choose the proper courses leading to specific careers. The purpose of such selection is not to highlight success or failure but to concentrate on individual talents and needs, to encourage students to actualize their potential. Selection should never occur until all students have acquired what is considered by society as a minimum of basic education. Students then select the stream that corresponds best to their aptitudes and interests. But no choice should be irreversible for students must have the right to change their orientation in the face of new needs and interests.

Schools must foster the personal development of each student and avoid negative selection that emphasizes the failure of some students as compared to others. This is opposed to positive orientation in terms of student aid which is to be regarded as very educational.

Normalization and
education opportunity

13. We must avoid the temptation of increased normalization as the best means for correcting situations condemned in recent surveys of the compulsory school for this is contrary to a true policy of equality of educational opportunity. Respect for different kinds of learning and learning speeds is incompatible with the establishment of excessive standards that generally result in widening the gaps between children and blocking the progress of many.

There has been a call in recent years for more detailed programs to permit young Quebecers access to equal quality education. On the other hand, the standardization of education and how it is done risks accentuating inequalities. At the level of compulsory schooling the present school system is still primarily directed at preparing students for further education. But schools should not impose on everyone requirements that apply to only a small percentage of the student body, i.e. students destined for higher education. We believe that flexible limits should be advocated yet we still do require a minimal amount of norms. Regard for local autonomy and openness to the milieu does not exclude the setting up of a minimum of educational standards applicable to the province as a whole.

A school system concerned about equality of educational opportunity must seek a balance between excessive normalization that prevents the expression of diversity on one hand, and the total absence of norms on the other hand, which are necessary to define society's major goals of education.

The evaluative function
in education

14. Within the perspective of equal educational opportunity the evaluation function demands to be revised. As expressed by a group of Swiss researchers, the question is whether school evaluation is indicative of inequality of ability, or conducive to inequality of success. Evaluation to a large extent strengthens the image a young person has of his capacities but also of his deficiencies. The shortcomings identified through evaluation are often interpreted as a lack of aptitude so evaluation then leads to a premature labelling of students.

Research studies have emphasized the inequality of children before tests or exams such as they are generally designed. This, then, makes it difficult to speak of equality among social groups where school evaluation is concerned. It is very difficult for evaluation to be objective in education.

Too many factors are involved in the appreciation of skills. That is why the evaluation process cannot be considered an absolute or exclusive criterion for deciding a person's academic career and what is more his social position.

To provide for greater equality of opportunity we must distinguish clearly between the three following functions of evaluation: the formative function, to guide and instruct students on their academic progress; the predictive function, to help out in course counselling and selection; the summational function, for stocktaking and establishing an inventory of learning achievements. In not seeing clearly between these different functions the school changes the true nature and scope of evaluation. The school system must identify precisely each function of evaluation. Moreover, to promote equality of opportunity it must give precedence to the formative function in compulsory schooling, specially at the primary level. The summational function of evaluation serves as a valuable reference tool to both students and teachers alike. The predictive function should be utilized at the proper time with prudence and discretion. Predictive evaluation must guard against premature student selections and orientations as is sometimes the case at primary school and the start of secondary school. Predictive evaluation must at all times supply only indicators never to be considered exclusive or final. On these conditions this form of evaluation can be valuable to the individual called on to make determining course selections with a view to a future career. This form of evaluation also gives society a means for guaranteeing a minimum amount of competence from its members in their respective areas of activity.

Evaluation at all education levels can prove most valuable to teaching, whatever its function for both the students and teachers, provided it is accomplished by different means to allow it to be more efficient.

The school sector must make an enlightened use of evaluation taking its different functions clearly into account. Evaluation can then be most instructive and a valuable means of orientation to the extent it is carried out with caution

and discretion. Evaluation also furnishes society with a means for ensuring a minimum of protection by sanctioning the skills needed for the orderly operation of society.

CONCLUSION

- A- A policy of equality of educational opportunity
- 1) therefore includes more than equal access to education and equal chances to succeed at school;
 - 2) is based on the two inseparables of collective and personal development which are both fostered by measures for cultural development;
 - 3) should moreover recognize that the factors of inequality in education are of several kinds: individual, socio-cultural and academic.
- B- As a result, a policy of equal opportunity implies:
- 1) a process of education centred on the student and his learning pace;
 - 2) a common basic education for all at school to permit those who so desire to continue their studies in the future;
 - 3) the reconciliation at school of various forms of intellectual ability, mainly verbal ability and manual ability, thereby the upgrading of technical and manual skills;
 - 4) greater emphasis on the formative and summational functions of evaluation without neglecting its predictive function;
 - 5) not relying on the school as the only remedy to educational and social inequalities which, to be reduced, require policies in many other areas - health, incomes, taxation, manpower and so on;

- 6) fostering the development of a learning society where there are increased and more diversified educational resources also more easily accessible to all;
- 7) the cultural promotion of deprived groups and individuals through more diversified and accessible services;
- 8) recognition and actualization of the principle of positive discrimination with respect to disadvantaged groups;
- 9) the decentralization of educational services toward the community and local and regional group participation in the direction and management of these services;
- 10) recognition of out-of-school learning.

8. A NEW CURRICULUM FOR "SHORT VOCATIONAL" STUDENTS

*A RECOMMENDATION TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, ADOPTED
MAY 8, 1980, BY THE CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION*

INTRODUCTION

In the present context of making improvements to education at the secondary level, one uneasy sector is consistently left aside for later consideration, as if the very topic were only mentioned reluctantly. The Short Vocational Course, in secondary education, is in fact one of the failures of our educational system. It reveals how inadequately polyvalent secondary schools meet the needs of many children. Despite numerous instances of success, and increased resources at the schools' disposal, students who "end up" in Short Vocational do not get adequate educational services and are definitely in need of better treatment.

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation will examine here the present status of these students in relation to their rights and what would be fair treatment to them. Focusing attention on this clearly disadvantaged group of secondary school students, the Conseil hopes, will lead to increased awareness of the needs of these children among the various participants in the educational process.

The recommendation submitted here was prepared by the Commission de l'enseignement secondaire, whose members were particularly interested in the subject when visiting the various educational milieux during the past two years; ¹ they met vocational education coordinators, pedagogical advisors, school principals, guidance counsellors, teachers, students, parents and people from business and industry; ² they also went through numerous studies and research projects.

The Commission's approach consisted essentially in studying the needs of the youngsters themselves. It is now translated in the suggestion of establishing a new stream, which the Conseil considers realistic, and in recommendations intentionally concrete in character. The document is in three sections: present situation, suggestions, and recommendations.

It is not attempted to cover all questions raised at present by the subject of vocational training, considered under the aspect of the student's preparation for a work function and, on the other hand, under the aspect of the student's general and fundamental education. The very place of vocational training and its valorization in present-day society also raise questions which will be left unanswered here. The present study is concerned exclusively with concrete and prompt improvement of the condition of various students who, at present, are victims of our school system. The Conseil will have an opportunity later to submit more general and prospective thinking, as the Ministère has announced that a policy will soon be formulated on vocational training for the young, and in view also of the work accomplished by the recently appointed study commission on adult vocational and socio-cultural training.

1. PRESENT SITUATION OF THE SHORT VOCATIONAL COURSE

In this first section, the Conseil will describe the present situation in Short Vocational Training, so as to show clearly the different facets of what is reality to students in this component of the educational system.

LONG VOCATIONAL TRAINING

A distinction must be made here between the Short Vocational and the Long Vocational courses in secondary education. Long Vocational is the path followed by regular students who take Technical Exploration as an option in Secondary III, make an initial choice in Secondary IV toward a common core in a family of occupations, and finally receive specialized training in Secondary V. It should also be mentioned that general education students in Secondary V, the leaving year, can take one supplementary year, in specialized vocational studies, a year called Intensive Vocational³.

SHORT VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The Short Vocational sector begins in Secondary II, with a few so-called Technical Exploration courses. While the student becomes acquainted with some of the more simple work functions in different fields, he or she receives general education apart from other students, and is thus in isolation from the regular system from then on. Later, in Secondary III and IV, the student receives basic training in a given specialization or occupation.

The objectives pursued at this time consist in preparing the student, in a practical and direct way, for entering the labour market, while assisting him or her in the acquisition of basic general education, the key to self-reliance, independence and adaptability to varying work situations.

ORIGINAL OBJECTIVES OF THE SHORT VOCATIONAL COURSE

The Short Vocational Course was originally intended for a given category of students, often older than the others, who were led through more "concrete" activities better responding to the needs of a "practical" form of intelligence. Those activities were oriented toward immediate performance of occupational work in order that the student be able to enter the labour market at an early stage, as was his or her expressed wish.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

So much for general concept and purpose, but what about actual reality? With an ever greater number of students, among new arrivals, who displayed multiple problems of personal adaptation and learning capabilities and were unable to follow the regular streams, while resources for aiding them adequately were not available, the secondary school system saw a light of hope in resorting to the short vocational sector, which provided an opportunity, or a set-up, for helping prepare those students for early access to an occupation.

Whether this was done intentionally or not is immaterial. The fact is, however, that Short Vocational has become the one place for all students with training deficiencies or unresolved problems who are no longer fit to receive what education the school can offer. In this way, Short Vocational has unfortunately become, according to the vast majority of persons consulted on the subject, a sort of dumping ground for slower, academically weaker students whose behavior is a disturbing factor in the normal life of the school or who have neither the ability to do abstract work nor any interest in it.

Students in Short Vocational make up some 4% of total enrolment in Québec secondary schools. ⁴ This proportion, however, is variable from one polyvalent school to another. In the schools of the Commission Scolaire des Laurentides, for example, it varied from 2% to 25%. This is explained largely by the manner in which the criteria applied for selection are interpreted as well as by the provision, or lack, of proper mechanisms for taking care of those students who are unable to follow the general education curriculum ⁵.

This, therefore, largely explains why the different school boards have greatly varying criteria for admission to the Short Vocational Course and why, under the same school board different orientations may be offered from one school to another. In one school, a Short Vocational Course will be set up to help students who have learning problems, while in another school the objective will be to train students for a definite occupation, and in yet another one the intention will merely be to keep a group of students busy so they do not hang about the streets.

Some school boards also offer, for similar groups, courses such as "Initiation to Work", "Training of Assistants", "Auxiliary Vocational Training" or "Practical Stream" sectors, more closely related to the sector of adaptation to school for children with light or medium mental deficiencies.

From this cursory survey, it appears that the basic problem in setting up a Short Vocational Course in a secondary school is one of defining and classifying the students, who otherwise will all find themselves relegated to one and the same course for lack of appropriate reception or selection procedures.

DEFICIENT CLASSIFICATION OF STUDENTS

Because it is frequently performed in a manner unrelated to the very objectives of the course, classification of students is clearly inadequate, resulting in a most heterogeneous bundling together of all problem students in the school. The only homogeneous factor among Short Vocational students is the meandering and perturbed path each one of them has followed, often because he or she could not fit in what was considered a normal stream.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENTS

Frequently, therefore, those students are placed in Short Vocational on the basis of wholly negative criteria or for being compared with the students in the so-called "regular" sector. This is clearly demonstrated by the characteristic adjectives used to describe them. They are intellectually slow students, unable to function normally, inferior to those in the "light" stream, weak, less gifted; they show delays in various respects and have learning problems; their form of intelligence is more concretely oriented; they have neither the aptitudes for, nor an interest in, school activities 6.

Not uncommonly, socioemotional or family problems as well as minor physical or other handicaps further complicate things for some of these children.

On the other hand, teachers say that these youngsters have an acute sense of what is fair, are remarkably straightforward, show great spontaneity, are most engaging and become attached to those who take care of them. It is also observed that their memory is a short-term one and that they enjoy repetitive exercises. 7

Whatever the human qualities of these students, they are perceived in a most negative way. In course of time, they come to adopt this perception themselves and accentuate the behaviour attributed to them.

Most of them show great interest in workshop activities, which afford opportunities for putting their creativeness and imagination to good use, while they reject academic subjects, which remind them of repeated previous failures. They are worried about entering the labour market, as they will be leaving school before the age of eighteen and will therefore not find employment easily, particularly in their own field of training. And then they know that whatever jobs will be open to them will be jobs as helpers or auxiliaries, because ever more competence is expected of workers 8.

Yet one may wonder if there are any students who actually elect to study in Short Vocational Training. Very few, apparently, make up the "true" clientele for which the Short Vocational stream was first provided, that is, students who wish to learn a trade quickly for reasons of interest and talent. Educators in charge, however, consider it difficult to evaluate the situation accurately, as the students now in Short Vocational, in view of their poor academic performance, cannot choose another sector until they are 16 years of age; otherwise, they would find no major difficulty in electing to study in Long Vocational.

DIFFICULTIES AND FAILURES

Since Short Vocational serves as the one solution to a variety of problems, it is no wonder that many difficulties arise and there are numerous failures.

- . The sector has a definitely poor reputation in the school and the community. Students often attend Short Vocational because they have neither the choice nor any possibility to do otherwise; this is their last chance. Few teachers are motivated to work there personally and professionally, not being prepared to face students with so varied and pressing problems. Parents accept this stream for their child through frustration, ignorance or to obey the law. Employers are reluctant to hire Short Vocational graduates because their academic education does not prepare them adequately for adult life and their vocational training is not well adapted to real work functions or does not correspond to employment available.
- . Short Vocational graduates have no access to studies leading to the Secondary V certificate, as they have not acquired the requisite knowledge in the mother tongue and mathematics and therefore can only move on to Long Vocational with great difficulty. In short, they are in a dead end at school.
- . Only 15 to 20% of Short Vocational graduates succeed in obtaining employment in an occupation for which they received training. Their unemployment rate is 32.2%⁹, the highest in all groups, even higher than the percentage for non-graduates from the other sectors. A dead end also, therefore, on the labour market.
- . Of some twenty-four "vocational options", apart from commercial techniques and secretariat, barely three or four offer any openings for girls, all of them in the most traditional and stereotyped fields: hairdressing, beauty-care, food trades, household service.
- . Most serious of all, in only offering preparation for a work function to such a widely heterogeneous clientèle, the school brings no remedy to the personal problems of the students, which led them to enroll in Short Vocational in the first place. For lack of adequate resources, no attention is given to delay in learning, emotional

and behavioural learning problems, minor physical handicaps, and this results in the highest dropout rate in the entire school system. Socially, these children will live on as maladjusted persons.

A NEW AWARENESS OF THESE FAILURES

Those responsible for secondary education or participating in it are increasingly aware of so many dramatic situations and compounded organizational and human difficulties. Because the Short Vocational Course has become a dumping ground for all students in need of help who are being neglected by the school, the continued existence of this course is now challenged. Suggestions range from outright abolition of the sector to transfer of the students to a team of "missionary" educators for social and emotional care. There is no overabundance of alternative and miracle solutions, however, in spite of all studies and experiments presently being conducted 10.

Numerous initiatives are to be seen, all of them encouraging under some aspect. While they stem from efforts of daring or more sensitive educators, needless to say, from the feeling among some that more ought to be done beyond set standards, the fact is that there is no generalization of such worthwhile initiatives and that, in the vast majority of Short Vocational sectors, physical conditions of organisation are restrictive and there is a growing need for more human resources.

A QUICKER WAY OUT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL

It is clear, therefore, that the Short Vocation Course as it now exists does not attain its objectives: not only does it fail in offering students a sound basic education adapted to their needs, but it has led to a lowering of requirements in the Long Vocational Course itself.

Those of the students who for several years have been going from failure to repeated failures are not offered any effective support by the secondary school but merely a quicker way out of the school system. It is thus their privilege" to have a shortened secondary course, either because the school does not succeed in bringing them the support they need, or because the problems facing the school with its limited traditional resources are too much of a challenge.

For the above reasons and, most of all, considering the plight of these young people, who will have throughout their life to suffer from the effects of inadequate education, one must conclude that the Short Vocational Course is a failure. Its poor results in both the academic and vocational fields point to a need for important change.

2. SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE

Diagnosing problems unanimously is easier than pointing the way to solutions. In this second section, the Conseil outlines several changes it advocates.

FROM THE GREEN PAPER TO "THE SCHOOLS OF QUEBEC"

Between publication of the Green Paper and The Schools of Québec, the problem of the Short Vocational Course has changed. At first, it was suggested that admission to vocational training properly so called be delayed. In The Schools of Québec, however, the government indicates its determination to "ensure the acquisition of a general education through concrete learning, and an immediate preparation for the world of work" for those students "whose aptitudes lie in the direction of concrete learning and who wish to find work after their fourth year".

In addition, The Schools of Québec announces the formulation of a policy on vocational training for the young. The following objectives, among others, will be pursued: to facilitate the integration into the labour market of students who leave the school system without sufficient vocational preparation; and to examine the relevance of defining vocational training through means other than reference to years of schooling. 12

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, supported by its Commission de l'enseignement secondaire, cannot but subscribe to such orientations, which proceed from accurate observation of a situation which is real life for many students. The Conseil also adheres to this statement, made in The Schools of Québec: "The objective of the Short Vocational Course is not the correction of learning or of behaviour problems."

SOME QUESTIONS

This, however, raises some questions. As Short Vocational Training has two basic problems a marginal and most heterogeneous clientele, and seriously deficient training for work functions - two questions must be answered.

First, if the Short Vocational Course is expected to prepare students for the labour market, will any specific clientele remain when it no longer accepts students with learning or behaviour problems?

NEED FOR CHANGE

As indicated in The Schools of Québec, there will still be room in secondary schools for a specific sector of students who are prevented by a variety of reasons from following the customary stream of academic education or Long Vocational Training. Thus, there could be set up a sector less considerable than the present Short Vocational Course, since fewer students would eventually enroll in it when progressive and appropriate measures have been taken. These students, however, should be offered a system adapted to their needs, so as not to be relegated to a ghetto because they do not conform with the present concept of general education.

EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS AND PEDAGOGY

On the one hand, those students must be taken as they are, and they must be offered the educational services required by their condition. Thus, while the objectives of basic education must be pursued, a determined effort should be made to adapt the entire educational process to the possibilities of students with a concrete and only slightly verbo-motor intelligence, and to the needs of those who display various forms of maladjustment, educational, personal or

social. That is the challenge for secondary schools.

The first steps to be taken, therefore, will consist in identifying the various categories of students interested in such a special stream of studies, and providing for personalized measures which would be of various forms according to need: orthopedagogic and therapeutic services in some cases, programmes for personal and social development, opportunities for making up learning deficiencies by new methodologies, appropriate information and adequate preparation for life at the economic, social, trade union and family levels, participation in activities conducive to the development of a sense of initiative and personal responsibility in order to revalorize the student's image of himself or herself, thereby increasing motivation...

All these aspects of a school system that must be renewed would respond to confirmed needs - a great deal better anyhow, than many badly integrated academic programmes.

These various measures, called for by a new and better knowledge of the special needs of the students, require individualized education and pedagogic interventions. In the circumstances, further research in the determination of different learning patterns, as undertaken by Joseph E. Hill in the United States ¹³ are under consideration at the Commission Scolaire Régionale de Chambly ¹⁴, might provide answers to several enigmas regarding individual learning patterns. It would also help prevent failures and maladjustments leading to educational dead ends like the present Short Vocational Course.

A distinction should be maintained, however, between individualized education itself and the means employed. The pupils should not be submitted to all sorts of pedagogical gadgetry on the ground that individual processes or continuous progress are to be respected. Real individualized edu-

cation is primarily a spirit, a preoccupation of the educator, who on the basis of an understanding of the child's personal need, endeavours to meet it adequately by the best possible method. Often, an observing teacher will be the best resource for leading the child to personal progress. The teacher can set up varying situations or use varying methods of learning, and see that there is the required interaction between student and adult, student and student, and student and group.

It is essential, therefore, that the greatest stability possible be achieved, so that the students can at last acquire emotional and social balance despite their chaotic past history at school. To this end, several things are absolutely necessary: premises of their own, an adapted timetable, well-prepared voluntary teachers, only a small number of whom will take care of any one group of students, no group exceeding fifteen students, and supervisory elements characterized by permanence continuity and greater personalization of human relations.

As mentioned above, responsible and well-prepared educators will be the mainstay of such an organization. They will see to the development in the group of a sense of belonging, instill a taste for work well done, give the students a new personal pride or build up a new motivation in them by a pedagogy of progressive effort and success, and cultivate in them a sense of their own identity and personality by developing their individual self-reliance. This, therefore, is a specific educational concept for a specific clientele. The project would be entrusted primarily to a team of teachers who would be given the required latitude and means of action through reallocation of the school's resources.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

At the same time, realistic openings must be assured to the students. While various measures of reeducation and support are being applied for their benefit, they must be led through a process of gradual vocational training. This training need not be different from that offered in the Long Vocational Course. However, they would have access to it earlier in terms of years of schooling, the age criterion being retained as the most important one, and they would be allowed more time in order that they can move ahead at their own slower pace. This appears essential in order for each student to be afforded an opportunity for revalorizing his or her own image by achieving success in concrete activities and making progress in "serious" and definite programmes.

Arrangements like these conform well with certain orientation of the proposed policy on vocational training for the young, which contemplate programmes translated into cumulative units with continuing admission of participants for varying durations according to each one's own rhythm and the more or less complex character of the work function aimed at ¹⁵.

Precise performance standards must be included in the programmes, however, in order that they do not become diluted and that quality be promoted. Should any students need making up or remedial teaching, some flexibility of organization would be required. In this way, the student could make progress and receive attestations of acquired skill each time he or she has covered the number of modules in the vocational stream that are required for a given work function.

Preparatory courses for vocational training, followed by activities in common cores of families of occupations, and afterwards progressive training for a more precise work function are processes that should be encouraged in order that the youngster acquires sufficient motivation to continue at school and complete his or her preparation for the future

within the framework of a regular and normal vocational programme. A system of this kind would offer several advantages for the student.

- . First, it would do away with the untoward and definitely devalorizing difference between the Long Vocational and Short Vocational programmes; the very name of the Short Vocational Course would be abolished.
- . It would make it possible for those who must leave school for some time to take up their studies again at the point they left off, or to complete their interrupted training in the adult education sector.
- . It would establish the required distinction between certification of their studies, which goes with general education, and professional qualification, relative to knowledge and skills required for a given occupation. Thus, a student making good headway in vocational training would not be penalized for his entire lifetime because he did not obtain a diploma of completed secondary school studies.
- . It would provide for enrollment of the students considered here in the regular vocational sector with its resources, development plans, pedagogic innovations and employment services for on-the-job training or actual employment.¹⁶

All of this is feasible and clearly respects the individuality of each student. As a matter of fact, it conforms with the orientations of The Schools of Québec, which call upon the secondary school to "maintain its fundamental objectives of general education, adapting to their special need the curriculum, the content of the courses, and the teaching methods."¹⁷ It is also in conformity with the proposed policy on vocational training, which aims at ensuring a greater number of Québécois will have an opportunity to receive a minimum vocational training accessibility, ensuring

for the future worker vocational training better enabling him or her to adapt readily, be mobile, retrain, and upgrade his or her competence (quality), and increasing the possibilities for an individual who so wishes and has the required aptitudes to pursue his or her training and increase his or her professional competence (continuity)¹⁸.

THE NEED FOR A VARIETY OF FORMULAS

With such orientations, on the other hand, it would be difficult to think of a single solution, universally applicable to all secondary schools. Each school will have to imagine the most flexible formula possible, considering the groups of students concerned and the objectives it will wish to set for itself. A multiplication of experiments and pedagogic formulas should therefore be encouraged.

A type of organization which would make it possible to counterbalance the negative influence of the students' schooling history and overcome the major obstacles to a revalorization of vocational training¹⁹ would be of a nature to do the best service to those students now in Short Vocational.

Substantially increased resources, finally, should be made available for those students whose training needs have never been adequately met and the duration of whose schooling will be comparatively shorter than it will be for students who move up to college or university. This is relevant to social justice and equal opportunity.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

After expressing these considerations, the Conseil will submit recommendations, some short-term and the rest medium-term. Their purpose is to promote, by adequate action, the broadest possible general education of a group of students who are neglected within the present type of organization of secondary schools, and to afford each of these students an opportunity for preparing for a citizen's life by leading him or her through a process of coherent and continuous vocational training.

Thus, preoccupied with the needs of a clientele made up of dissimilar students,

The Conseil recommends:

- . That the present Short Vocational Course be abolished;
- . That there be established a special sector for human revalorization of the students concerned through an adapted concept of general education;
- . That those students be integrated normally into the regular process of vocational training, henceforth to be the only one in secondary schools.

The Conseil, furthermore, hereby suggests accompanying measures of a nature to promote such an approach.

AT THE LEVEL OF SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

1. In order to abolish the Short Vocational sector in its present form as a sort of dumping ground;

In order to make possible an accurate and fair identi-

fication of problem students upon their admission to secondary school;

In order to make it possible, at the best time and so as to ensure equal opportunity for all, to offer appropriate educational services to students whose needs are different.

The Conseil recommends:

- . That evaluation and detection activities in primary and secondary school to identify the nature of the students' problems be carried out in a more serious manner;
- . That formal identification of a problem result in specific measures to remedy such problem or to allow for a personalized educational path;
- . That such varying measures result in a distinct grouping together of the students concerned, by way of special educational supervision as early as Secondary II, in view of their age;
- . That the sector in question be called the Applied Secondary Course;
- . That the general education received by those students respond to a concept differing from that which prevails in the regular sector.

2. AT THE PEDAGOGICAL LEVEL

In order to allow for the development of forms of interest which general education, as conceived at present, does not succeed in creating in certain students;

In order to valorize the personality of these students and encourage them to make progress;

The Conseil recommends:

That encouragement be given to all original and innovative pedagogical formulas, centered on the students, that are developed in the educational milieu or inaugurated by teams of teachers;

That encouragement be given to student participation in valorizing activities through a pedagogy based on success;

That general education programmes be reconsidered and based on the observation of more concrete and "gestural" learning patterns;

That programmes of personal development be included in the students' basic education;

That access to Initiation to Technology and Technical Exploration courses be based on age rather than performance at school.

3. AT THE LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

In order that appropriate educational services can be made available to the students after they are classified in a manner respectful of them;

In order that remedial courses can be offered as required to students with socio-emotional problems, and adequate interventions made;

For true pedagogic concern;

In order to revitalize in these children their image of themselves a sense of personal usefulness and a feeling of belonging to a group or society;

In order to help them assess their place in a society that is changing and perceived as menacing;

The Conseil recommends:

- . That school authorities commit themselves to a greater degree as regards to the needs of this category of students;
- . That provision be made for a reallocation of human and financial resources of schools so that these children can be assured increased individualized services;
- . That appropriate teaching aids be explored, developed if necessary, and made available to teachers in charge of these students;
- . That educational supervision of these students be characterized by permanence and stability in the teams of teachers, reinforced by the physical stability of premises and timetables;
- . That care be taken to assign to this sector teachers whose psychological, technical and pedagogical preparation is adequate;
- . That fifteen be the maximum number of students in any one group;
- . That parent participation be sought in educating these students, whose problems are often of a personal nature.

4. AT THE LEVEL OF TEACHING PERSONNEL

In order to give encouragement to voluntary teachers who wish to engage in a helping relationship with these students;

In order to foster the development of an appropriate and significant pedagogy;

In order to ensure stability and continuity within the teams of educators;

In order to allow for a full, effective and high-quality pedagogic activity;

The Conseil recommends:

That teachers assigned to the sector obtain adequate job security provisions in local employment agreements, including the setting up a distinct field of teaching if necessary;

That there be set up an association of educators with this same preoccupation in order that circulation of relevant documentary material, exchanges of stimulating information, and dissemination of the results of experiments be encouraged;

That upgrading programmes directly centered on the needs of the milieu be offered to the local teams of teachers;

That encouragement be given to participation by teachers in symposia or conventions held on pedagogic days reserved to that effect.

5. AT THE LEVEL OF QUALITY OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In order to make it easier for the students to become well prepared personally for social and family life;

In order to prepare them adequately for exercising a work function in which they are interested, upon leaving school, and to make it possible for them to enrich this activity later;

In order to dissociate professional qualification from certification of secondary studies;

In order to motivate students in pursuing their studies further;

In order to valorize vocational training in the minds of the students;

In order to enable every student to leave school with a diploma of completed secondary studies of fifth year level;

The Conseil recommends:

That students in the Applied Secondary Course be admitted to the regular process of continuous vocational training after following courses of preparatory training for employment, as suggested in the proposed policy on vocational training for the young;

That the training content in cumulative vocational training units be of variable duration in view of the requirement of the different work functions as well as the complexity of the tasks, and that the students be given the required time to master such training content at their individual pace;

That access to more numerous profiles, or profiles rendered non discriminatory, be made easier;

That cumulative units acquired in vocational training be considered for purposes of qualification in professional training independently from academic subjects in general education.

That units or credits acquired in general education respond to precise standards and be considered only for purposes of certification of secondary studies;

That the Applied Secondary Course provide for studies up to and including the level of Secondary V, so that the students are allowed enough time to complete their training and make sufficient progress in their vocational training;

That the new form of certification of secondary studies contemplated by the Ministère provide for adaptable criteria taking into account the different types of courses followed, among others, by students in Applied Secondary, and that the certificate, in order to be valid and significant, must mention all successfully completed learning activities.

6. AT THE LEVEL OF VALORIZATION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

In order to improve the quality of vocational training and promote it better;

In order to encourage a greater commitment of responsible persons in the world of work, as well as more adequate knowledge of the world of work on the part of the school;

In order to assist the student better in gradually making more precise and concrete the path he or she follows throughout his or her vocational training;

In order to make it possible for students leaving school to find better openings;

The Conseil recommends:

That official mechanisms for cooperation with industry, commerce or the business world be set up, such as school-industry liaison committees, and that specific resources be made available to the school for that purpose;

That information on education, occupations, the economy and trade unionism be widespread;

That greater attention be given to organization of on-the-job training in the world of work;

That appropriate personnel be made available in the schools to assist students in their search for employment;

That encouragement be given to local initiatives such as public exhibitions of student projects, visits of school workshops by employers, industrial visits by the students, home-created diplomas for students who distinguish themselves under some personal or professional aspect.

To sum up, it must first be restated that these students are different from one another, that together they are different from the school's regular sector and that there would be no hope in trying to pursue with them a constant objective of pedagogic catching up according to the regular model. These students, consequently, need another type of organization and a different system, in order to develop to the limit with a maximum chance of achieving success in some way.

The vocational training system offers a degree of promise in this regard. Without establishing any difference as to learning possibilities, vocational training may succeed in saving these students by more humane supervision and adequate pedagogic support, and especially by encouraging among its teaching personnel more specifically educational attitudes in the transmission of knowledge.

Notes

1. In 1978-1979, the Commission visited the following regional school boards: Du Bas-Saint-Laurent, De la Mauricie and Du Lac-Saint-Jean; in 1979-1980, it visited De l'Outaouais, Chaudière and Carignan regional school boards.
2. See Michèle VANIER-ALFRED's synthesizing document, L'enseignement secondaire professionnel court, Direction de la recherche, Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, December 1979, 42 pp. and annexes.
3. For a detailed description, see MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION, Annuaire de l'enseignement secondaire, 1977-1979, Québec City, 1977, 299 pp. See also CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION, COMMISSION DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SECONDAIRE, The proposed Institution of a Secondary VI, Québec City, 1979, 31 pp. In this document, the Commission suggests a substantial reorganization of secondary schools aiming at decompartmentalization of vocational training.
4. Clientèle scolaire des organismes d'enseignement. Statistiques de l'enseignement 1976-1977, M.E.Q., 1979, pp. 86 and 98.
5. See VANIER-ALFRED, op. cit., p. 25
6. See VANIER-ALFRED, op. cit., pp. 19-21
7. Ibid., p. 20. See also in Annex I below an empirical description of positive and negative characteristics of Short Vocational students in the C.E.C.M.

8. See VANIER-ALFRED, op. cit., pp. 19-21.
9. Marc AUDET, Relance 1978, Ministère de l'Education, January 1979, p. 147.

Unemployment rate among Long Vocational graduates, 15.9%;
among College Vocational graduates, 9.6%.
10. See, in Annex II, a brief description of these studies and experiments.
11. See Annex III,
12. This policy is presently being formulated: see La Formation professionnelle au Québec, Document de consultation, M.E.Q., February 15, 1980, 104 pp.
13. Profil d'apprentissage et enseignement personnalisé d'après Joseph E. Hill, by Scholer, Hill, Nunney, Lamy, Lamontagne, Document de travail, M.E.Q., August, 1974, 139 pp.
14. C.S.R. de Chambly, Cadre général de l'individualisation de l'enseignement professionnel. Problématique du diagnostic des élèves, by Lucie Trépanier, Info-recherche, No. 37, November 1979, 30 pp.
15. La formation professionnelle au Québec, Document de consultation, M.E.Q., February 15, 1980, 104 pp. The suggestions made here are aimed at improving the situation in the short term, without prejudice to a more comprehensive discussion of vocational training. It is possible to draw from this proposed policy certain elements which appear more immediately significant for the young people considered here.

16. See, in Annex IV, a graphic representation of a proposed type of organization in this regard.
17. The Schools of Québec. Policy Statement and Plan of Action, M.E.Q., 1979, p. 144, section 13.8.4.
18. La formation professionnelle au Québec. Document de consultation, M.E.Q., February 15, 1980, pp. 20-21.
19. What is referred to here is compartmentalization of studies, too early orientation of students and inadequate pedagogical preparation of teachers.

ANNEX I

AN EMPIRICAL DESCRIPTION OF SHORT VOCATIONAL STUDENTS

Marie-Thérèse Miller, in a study prepared for the C.E.C.M., describes as follows the characteristics of students in the Short Vocational Course:

"Positive Characteristics"

Informers say that these children have a practical, intuitive, concrete intelligence; they are not mentally deficient or feeble minded. They are capable of making analogies and transfers. They show surprising manual skills. When their aggressiveness can be defused, so to say, and they come to trust a person, they are engaging, warm, likeable, honest with themselves and with others; they communicate their feelings readily; they are devoted and available. They also display a great deal of personal initiative and resourcefulness when interested in any subject. On the other hand, they demand much attention and affection. They have a great need for security, for being supervised, for identifying themselves with someone stable and to be valorized".

Negative Characteristics

Their main problem is one of motivation and interest in school. These Children are not easily reached, because of emotional and social blocks. They are maladjusted, unstable, unbalanced, academically weak. Many are aggressive, impolite, abrupt, noisy, of changeable mood; they have difficulty in concentrating on one subject for more than 10 or 12 minutes. A number of them have problems with drugs, alcohol, the police, robbery, prostitution, delinquency. More than half of them have family problems; as a rule, they are in poor form physically and do not lead a well-balanced life. Finally, absenteeism among them can be said to be chronic" 1 .

1. Marie-Thérèse MILLER, ETUDE SUR LE PROFESSIONNEL COURT,
Phase I, C.E.C.M., Service des projets éducatifs, mars 1979,
pp. 43 et 44.

ANNEX II

STUDIES AND EXPERIMENTS ON THE SHORT VOCATIONAL COURSE

Among the most significant studies, mention should be made of the work done by the Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal the Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal ², the Commission scolaire régionale de Chambly ³, the Commission scolaire Blainville-Deux-Montagnes ⁴, the Commission scolaire de l'Outaouais ⁵, and the Commission scolaire des Laurentides ⁶...

For its part, the Commission scolaire régionale du Lac Saint Jean ⁷, in May 1979, was host to a provincial symposium on the Short Vocational Course, organized by a team of Alma teachers.

The coordinators of vocational training of the school boards of Administrative Region No. 3 have made a sample survey in preparation for a brief to be submitted to the Commission de l'enseignement secondaire of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation ⁸...

For its part, the Ministère de l'Éducation has commissioned I.N.R.S. - Education to conduct wide-ranging research on the schooling history of Short Vocational students ⁹. Valuable information should be obtained from this source, for a survey of the schooling history of all students will make it possible to identify the phenomena, situations and factors which handicapped a student or helped him or her along. Indeed it would seem that quite a number of Short Vocational students would not find themselves in that sector if there had been adequate detection of their problems and remedial action had been taken opportunely.

The Commission de l'enseignement secondaire du Conseil supérieur de l'éducation has been highly sensitized to the matter in the past three years. It began developing certain orientations, mentioned above in the second section, 10 when examining the assumptions in the Green Paper on Primary and Secondary Education.

VARIOUS EXPERIMENTS, often resulting from previous consideration of the matter, are being made in different milieux. At both the Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal and the C.E.C.M., it has been suggested simply to abolish the Short Vocational Course and replace it by a variety of measures.

In Alma, a team of highly devoted educators has taken full charge of the education of these students under every human aspect - social, academic and technical - so as to offer them an educational whole and render them as autonomous as possible.

At the C.E.C.Q., all Short Vocational students have been grouped together in two of the city's schools and an attempt is made at revalorizing them by developing in them a sense of belonging and pride in achievement.

In Jonquière, two teachers are assigned full-time to a remedial effort in the mother tongue and mathematics in order to help weaker students succeed in those compulsory subjects.

In Victoriaville, an experiment is being made with modular, micro-graduated teaching, the student following every progress made on a development chart in the form of a ladder he or she is climbing.

In other places, leaving-year students spend half of their time at school and the other half in on-the-job training

with an industry or small business, with the assistance, often voluntary, of employers willing to do such a service to society.

In yet other places, coherently linked on-the-job training periods in industry or business afford concrete opportunities for using skills and developing attitudes in relation to life in the world of work.

In many places, considering the students' youthful age on leaving Secondary IV, or in view of their need for further education, they are allowed to join Long Vocational students for the equivalent of one more year in the workshop without having to take the compulsory academic subjects. Such a derogation to the regulations undoubtedly means salvation for many of these youngsters.

1. Conseil scolaire de l'île de Montréal, Rapport du Comité de coordination de l'enseignement professionnel sur l'éducation technologique. Montréal, 1978, 35 pp.
2. Marie-Thérèse MILLER, Etude sur le professionnel court, Phase I, C.E.C.M., Service des projets éducatifs, March 1979, 78 pp. and annexes.
3. C.S.R. de Chambly, Cadre général de l'individualisation de l'enseignement professionnel, problématique du diagnostic des élèves, Info-re-cherche No. 37, November 1979, 30 pp.
4. C.S.R. Blainville-Deux-Montagnes, Dossier secondaire court, June 1978, 95 pp.
5. C.S.R. de l'Outaouais, Secondaire court, enseignement professionnel, Direction des services à l'enseignement, Hull, 1976, 25 pp.
6. C.S. des Laurentides, Document de travail sur l'enseignement professionnel court, 1977, 80 pp.
7. Centre de vie communautaire du Lac-Saint-Jean, Pavillon Wilbrod-Dufour, Secondaire professionnel court, Alma, 1979, 13 pp. and C.S.R. du Lac Saint-Jean, Rapport du colloque provincial sur l'enseignement professionnel court, Alma, 1979, 38 pp.
8. Comité régional de l'organisation de l'enseignement secondaire professionnel, Situation du professionnel court, région 03, December 1979.

9. Marcelle HARDY-ROCH, Caractéristiques des étudiants du professionnel court à partir de l'analyse de leur cheminement scolaire. Research project, I.N.R.S. - Education, September 1979.

10. COMMISSION DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SECONDAIRE, L'éducation à l'école secondaire, a report submitted to the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation for the 1977-1978 report on the state and needs of education, June 1978, pp. 15 to 18.

ANNEX III

Short Vocational: from the Green Paper to the The Schools of Québec

In the Green Paper on Primary and Secondary Education in Québec, orientations were already suggested to respond in a better way to the characteristics and needs of adolescents. Three major orientations, in particular, were put forward regarding the subject considered here.

The secondary school must: G.P. 3.46

- *pursue the individual development of its pupils at the intellectual, emotional, physical, social, moral and religious levels, and allow them to take the first steps toward the orientation of their life;
- *pursue, as a priority, general training objectives;
- *supply the adolescent with the support and educational supervision he or she needs¹.

Concretely, in terms of school organization, these orientations were translated thus for short vocational training:
G.P. 3.54

- *entry into the short vocational, which takes place at the moment at Secondary III, would be delayed one year, and would allow all pupils to complete their general studies through the three years of the first level; G.P. 3.54

*the so-called "exploration" year, which at the present time is Secondary II, would be postponed till Secondary III;

*the short vocational programmes would be of variable duration, depending on the complexity of the work function for which they prepare the pupil;

*the pupil who leaves school at the end of Secondary IV will have acquired sufficient basic knowledge to ensure an adequate overall initiation into a given work sector ².

Such apparently minor changes, however, drew many protests. Delaying the first vocational options, especially raised fears that more students would drop out of school, as nothing would remain to motivate them in staying. On that occasion, in its Avis du Conseil supérieur de l'éducation au ministre de l'Education sur le livre vert de l'enseignement primaire et secondaire, C.S.E., June 1978, the Conseil also reacted to the suggested reorganization of short vocational training, in the following terms:

THE "SHORT VOCATIONAL COURSE"

- 12.5 To delay the short vocational one year, as the Green Paper suggests, is insufficient for meeting the needs of some 10% to 15% of poorly motivated students due to an accumulation of failures since primary school. It is the orientation of the course itself that must be changed. It seems a pity to teach these students elementary skills that can easily be acquired on the labour market when other more pressing needs exist. They should be allowed to complete basic studies not yet mastered, to receive information on subjects that will be of use to them once they enter the work world, i.e. economics, labour relations,

protection of the environment, industrial security, etc.

- 12.6 While it would be difficult to eliminate this sector immediately, the program should at least be revised promptly and directed towards the objectives of basic education, with greater emphasis placed on more concrete and practical subjects. Furthermore, the student body should be rationally identified and reduced to a minimum, and special efforts directed to the educational supervision of the students. We must not hesitate to requestion the whole pedagogical process, even to shatter traditional structures. Grants could be paid to industries willing to accept trainees with the understanding that these students would be permitted to return to school one or two days a week. Part-time school and part-time training in industry is a formula worthy of experimentation for students who have lost all interest in academic subjects. For these students and for a larger number of others no longer interested in anything even the least abstract, we must meet the challenge of a bold, persistent and creative teaching process. Students qualified to do so would be allowed to return to regular classes 3.

In view of these various reactions, the Schools of Québec. Policy Statement and Plan of Action put forward what seems a more realistic and open suggestion: 4. S.Q. 13.8.4

A "short" vocational course, adapted to students whose aptitudes lie in the direction of concrete learning and who wish to find work after their fourth year, will be set up. For these students, the secondary school must maintain its fundamental objectives of general education, adapting to their special needs the curriculum, the contents of the courses, and the teaching methods.

The "short" vocational course would be of four years duration, with the possibility of an extension, offered through the secondary school or through the adult education service. The organization of this course should allow the student, if he so desires and has the necessary aptitudes, to pursue his general and vocational education.

The objective of this vocational education is not the correction of learning or of behaviour problems. Rather, it is to ensure the acquisition of a general education through concrete learning, and an immediate preparation for the world of work. S.Q. 13.8.1

"The changes suggested in this PLAN OF ACTION will be carefully reviewed when the policy on vocational training is drawn up. The following possibilities will be considered, among others:

- facilitating the integration into the labour market of students who leave the school system without sufficient vocational preparation;

- considering the relevance of defining vocational training through means other than reference to the level of schooling: vocational programmes of variable duration, distinction between certification of studies and professional qualification;
- evaluating the means to be perfected or to be introduced in order to improve the professional competence of Québécois and to promote their integration into the labour market: better adapted academic and professional information and vocational guidance, more adequate courses of study, better pedagogy, better prepared teachers, etc.;
- considering the possibility of recognizing vocation specialization as a means of access to higher levels of education."

The Applied Secondary Course

Degree

I		
II	Adapted general education	7/10
	Initiation and Technical exploration	3/10
III	Adapted general education	5/10
	Vocational training	5/10
IV	Adapted general education	3/10
	Vocational training	7/10
V	General education, adapted if necessary	
	Vocational training	10/10

Remarks:

1. The fraction refers to a context of 10 blocks of 3 courses per week for the timetable of the Secondary Course, 30 periods per week, and suggests possible proportions;
2. The Applied Secondary Course is intended for students who have already spent two years in secondary school unsuccessfully, after preparatory classes for secondary education, supplementary courses or reception courses, and Secondary I, or who are already 14 or 15 years of age in Secondary II;
3. The vocational training courses are the same as those followed by other students, although individual progress in the different modules will be made at the student's own pace;
4. A distinction is necessary between certification of studies and professional qualification if these students are to have access to a higher level of vocational training.

1. Green Paper on Primary and Secondary Education in Québec, M.E.F., 1977, p. 63.
2. Ibidem, pp. 65-66.
3. Avis du Conseil supérieur de l'éducation au ministre de l'éducation sur le Livre vert de l'enseignement primaire et secondaire, C.S.E., June 1978, pp. 20-22.
4. The Schools of Québec, Policy Statement and Plan of Action, M.E.Q., 1979, p. 149.

9. REMINDER OF THE CONSEIL'S POSITION ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF QUEBEC IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Telegram to the Ottawa Minister of State for Science and Technology, Mr. John Roberts, June 11, 1980.

The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation was somewhat astonished at the interview of Mr. John Roberts, the Minister of State for Science and Technology, in *Le Devoir*, Saturday May 31. In his comments to journalist Gilles Provost on the White Paper on scientific policy published by Mr. Camille Laurin, the Minister of State for Cultural Development, Mr. Roberts challenges all claims from Québec to any sort of exclusive jurisdiction over university research or scientific research devoted to matters under provincial jurisdiction. Moreover, Mr. Roberts maintains that Ottawa has no intention at all of transferring increased subsidies to the Québec government for its scientific policy. Finally, the Minister concludes that if Québec wants more money for science, "it ought to collect the funds itself"...

For the benefit of Mr. Roberts, as well as for that of the population of Québec and Canada, The CSE, a non-political consultative organization in the field of education, wishes to recall that its reaction and comments of last year in regard to the Green Paper on scientific policy had been entirely different. In fact, the CSE clearly expressed its endorsement of Québec's cultural sovereignty as far as science was concerned in its annual report "The State and Needs of Education 1978-1979".

In this document, the Conseil reiterates its agreement "With the will of the Québec government to take back the powers and resources pertaining to research carried on in educational establishments", considering that "a problem of double jurisdiction actually exists, and that the many criticisms levelled at Ottawa are justified to a great

extent". The Conseil added that "the present situation is abnormal: even though education and the general financing of universities are Québec's areas of concern, it is Ottawa that finances most of Québec's university research and influences its priorities, leaving the indirect costs to Québec" p. 300.

If these "priorities" in the field of scientific research as usually dictated by Ottawa must be understood in the restricted sense given them by Mr. Roberts in his interview with *Le Devoir* of May 31, the CSE has no other choice but to contest them. Readily reiterating his "pragmatic" personal point of view, Mr. Roberts states: "The Canadian government prefers to consider research within the context of the nation's economic development. Above all, it aims at improving industry's efficiency on national and international markets".

In its previously quoted commentary on the Green Paper, the CSE seriously questioned a certain concept which it considers to be out of date, of economic development conceived from the sole viewpoint of industrial growth as seen during the 19th century. It deeply regrets that "nowadays, economic concern, in its most limited sense, too often prevails when defining the fields of research" p. 296. Anxious to reaffirm simultaneously the increased importance of the social, ecological and ethical dimensions of scientific research, the CSE linked it to cultural development and education, which are traditionally under provincial jurisdiction by Constitutional law.

The Conseil concluded that "scientific research is always a fact of civilization. It is undertaken to respond to certain obvious needs in the socio-culture to which the researcher belongs". And as far as we generally acknowledge the existence of a distinct society and a distinct culture in Québec today permitting assertion of the widely accepted idea of "cultural-sovereignty", then the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation can only give its complete support to the

present demands of the Québec government where scientific policy is concerned and considers Minister John Roberts' statement particularly deplorable in the light of the present context.

10. INTOLERABLE CONFLICT OF JURISDICTION IN ADULT PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Note to the Minister of Education, adopted at the 236th meeting, July 10, 1980.

1. The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation regrets the jurisdiction conflict that prevails in adult professional training between the ministère de l'Éducation and the ministère du Travail et de la Main-d'oeuvre. The Conseil asks the Government to clarify the situation and put an end to the confusion that has paralyzed this training sector for ten years. This conflict, which looks more like parochial rivalry, is detrimental to adult students. It is in the name of this clientele and of the public in general that the Conseil is asking for the government's immediate intervention. We must not tolerate the status quo any longer, even if a commission or some committees are presently working on the matter. As useful as they can be, these work groups may only serve to postpone the deadline to an urgent political decision.

2. The Conseil considers urgent and imperative to designate a real leader in the field of professional training, even if it acknowledges the need for close collaboration between several authorities, particularly in this sector. There must be a strong leadership since a costly duplication of services highly complicates the candidates' steps when it does not drive them away from training for good. In December 1978, the Conseil pointed out to the Minister of Education the confusion that characterized pre-training activities such as the reception of candidates, analysis of their experience and needs, professional information and guidance.

"Moreover, these various steps do not follow one another, the candidates are driven from pillar to post which can be a most unpleasant experience".

At that moment, the Conseil asked that teaching institutions be in charge of these activities in order to clarify the situation.

3. In appointing a leader and distributing responsibilities, the government should take the following points into account:
 1. Even if the establishment of a manpower policy is a prerequisite to the elaboration of a possible professional training policy, the problem of appointing a leader remains a priority.
 2. For the last ten years, teaching institutions have acquired valuable experience in professional training for young and adults, even though a relationship problem existed between the ministere de l'Education and the ministere du Travail et de la Main d'oeuvre. These institutions structured their services, learned to analyse needs and established consistent communication with the labour market. They own various material resources: classrooms and workshops, equipment, teaching material. Use must be made of these acquired assets irrespective of the leader.
 3. The organization of local adult professional training must be based upon the various groups involved, gathered together for local and regional consultation and agreement.
 4. Only one authority must take the leadership of the pre-training and training activities. Participation of the labour market is essential to identify the adult professional training needs and evaluate the training means established to answer these needs.

The jurisdiction conflict between the two levels of government, federal and provincial, cannot be the only explanation to the present state of confusion. The recent creation of a commission d'étude sur la formation des adultes under the authority of a Minister other than that of Education or Travail et de la Main d'oeuvre is a perfect example of such a scattering of responsibility.

The Conseil thinks it must expose the harm done to the adult students by a jurisdiction conflict between Ministers and ministries. It strongly invites the Government to designate a leader in professional training, clearly and without any further delay. Such a decision could even involve a new authority other than those already concerned, and could only be made by the highest Government authority.

2. LIST OF PUBLICATIONS IN 1979-1980

1. REPORTS

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, Rapport d'activité
1978-1979, Québec 1979, 105 pages

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, L'état et les besoins
de l'éducation. Rapport 1978-1979, Québec 1979, 207 pages,
Appendices 119 pages

Offprints

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, L'école catholique.
Extrait du rapport 1978-1979 sur l'état et les besoins
de l'éducation, Québec 1979, 15 pages

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, L'école primaire.
Extrait du rapport 1978-1979 sur l'état et les besoins
de l'éducation, Québec 1979, 18 pages

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, L'école secondaire.
Extrait du rapport 1978-1979 sur l'état et les besoins
de l'éducation, Québec 1979, 38 pages

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, L'éducation des adultes.
Extrait du rapport 1978-1979 sur l'état et les besoins
de l'éducation, Québec 1979, 28 pages

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, The State and Needs of
Education 1978-1979, Québec 1981, 401 pages

Offprints

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, The Quality of
Education. Excerpt of report 1978-1979 The State
and Needs of Education, Québec 1980, 20 pages

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, The Catholic School.
Excerpt of report 1978-1979 The State and Needs of
Education, Québec 1980, 26 pages

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, Primary School Education, Excerpt of report 1978-1979 The State and Needs of Education, Québec 1980, 36 pages

Reports of Committees and Commissions

COMITE CATHOLIQUE, L'éducation catholique dans les milieux scolaires du Québec, Report tabled for the 1978-1979 report of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Québec 1979, 20 pages

COMITE PROTESTANT, L'éducation protestante dans les milieux scolaires du Québec, Report tabled for the 1978-1979 report of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Québec 1979, 5 pages

COMMISSION DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT PRIMAIRE, L'éducation au pré-scolaire et au primaire, Report tabled for the 1978-1979 report of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Québec 1979, 37 pages

COMMISSION DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SECONDAIRE, L'école secondaire entre l'incertitude et l'espoir, Report tabled for the 1978-1979 report of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Québec 1979, 64 pages

COMMISSION DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR, Pour un renouveau de la fonction sociale de l'université, Report tabled for the 1978-1979 report of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Québec 1979, 68 pages

COMMISSION DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR, L'étudiant au premier cycle universitaire et la formation fondamentale, Report tabled for the 1978-1979 report of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Québec 1979, 68 pages

COMMISSION DE L'EDUCATION DES ADULTES, Pour le vrai monde et pour tout le monde. Contribution à une politique québécoise de l'éducation des adultes, Report tabled for the 1978-1979 report of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Québec 1979, 44 pages

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, Rencontre generale de consultation 1980, 1. L'état et les besoins de l'éducation. 2. Le financement de l'éducation. 3. La décentralisation gouvernementale de l'éducation, 4. La formation et le perfectionnement des enseignants, Report of the meeting held in Montréal, April 10 and 11, 1980, Québec 1980, 113 pages

2. ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, Modifications à la réglementation concernant les comités d'école et les comités de parents et au règlement relatif aux comités régionaux et au comité central de parents de toute commission scolaire de l'Ile de Montréal qui établit des régions administratives ou des districts, Advice to the Minister of Education, Septembre 1979, 17 pages

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, L'éducation et les services à la petite enfance, Recommendation to the Minister of Education, Septembre 1979, 24 pages

CONSEIL SUPERIEUR DE L'EDUCATION, L'avenir du Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, Advice to the Minister of Education, Octobre 1979, 9 pages

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