

Federal-Provincial Relations: Education Canada, J.W. George Ivany and Michael E. Manley-Casimir, eds., OISE Press, Toronto, 1981.

It is more than a little daunting to review a set of papers among which the editors categorize one as “brilliant”, another as “powerful”, and, a third as “magnificent”. But, as a consequence, the reviewer is left with no manifest requirement to add further adjectival superlatives, a burden happily relinquished.

It is unfortunate that the views expressed are mainly those cast up by another ploughing of fallow fields. Starting with its doomed title, expressed in “jargon Canada”, it grinds through a familiar pattern with only a few redemptive features. As it happened, the symposium dealt almost exclusively with Federal-Provincial Relations (the more general theme) and very little with education in Canada. The significant players, except for one eloquent Indian and two provincial education ministers, were elsewhere, and, one may seriously doubt whether what was said would have overwhelmed their previously prepared positions had they been listening.

Professional educators — all of the participants take pay for delivering services in the educational enterprise — are confirmed futurists. The affiliation arises, understandably, from the educator’s belief, probably mistaken, that since his efforts must, willy-nilly, affect the future, he is able to control it. It follows that to reach desired ends one must first know what those ends will or ought to be. To avoid the existential threat of megalomania, the thoughtful teacher is likely to enter modest disclaimers to the effect that he is engaged in a learning, rather than in an educational process. This pop notion, that learning has to do with something other than the passing on of accumulated knowledge, is expressed in various ways in a number of the papers. In justice, it must be noted that one author uses “knowledge acquisition”, and “consciousness raising”, where “learning” would do.

So what, in the view of most of the contributors, does the future hold? First, a continuing jurisdictional fight, with the Federal government on one side ranged against ten provinces, or nine and Quebec, with or without the Territories and the native people. From the squabbling will come some sort of coordinating organization with a degree of formal structure, variously identified by participants as a revamped version of the Council of Ministers of Education, the CMEC with Federal presence, a Federal agency in either a strong or a weak version, or, complete withdrawal of the Ottawa government from the educational scene.

The symposium was dominated by the adumbration of greater Federal control accompanying a reduction in Federal disbursements, criticism of the OECD examiners, and Canada’s continuing constitutional crisis. Thus, among the papers in this volume are quite good reviews of the history of provincial-federal negotiations, more than one interesting conjecture as to the probable effect of the Charter of Rights on educational policy, a thoughtful discussion, with an Utopian conclusion, of the consequences of official multi-culturalism, and frequent references to the necessity to do something about European criticism.

One may recommend Lavoie-Rioux's analysis of the interrelation of culture and education in Quebec, and Berard's rather angry disquisition on the effects of official Federal policy on educational practice, as two papers representing a departure from consensus. These, along with Chief Paul's statement on behalf of indigenous people, deserve more attention than they are likely to receive.

Both the preface and Shapiro's valedictory paper provide accurate summaries of the published proceedings. The book is worth reading for those who wish a review of the issues afflicting institutional education as a factor in federal-provincial relations.

Is it too much to ask that educators might learn from the dictionary the meaning of "plausible" and the distinction between "among" and "between"? On the positive side, "hopefully" in its perverted, exhausted sense, occurs once only.

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Margaret Gillett, *They Walked Very Warily, A History of Women at McGill*. Montreal: Eden Press Women's Publications, 1981, 471 pp.

From the arresting cover through the 102 beautifully ordered illustrations and the skillfully woven text, this recent publication by Professor Margaret Gillett is a worthy contribution to the history of higher education in Canada. It is also a fascinating and penetrating commentary on the status of women in our society. Following as it did Stanley Frost's splendid first volume of the new history of McGill, the book provides a dimension which could not have been explored in that more general account of the university's story. Painstakingly researched, intelligently structured, and clearly written, there is little to complain about, other than the fact that the title, while apt, is rather a tongue twister, and the index is not as instructive as it might have been.

Dr. Gillett admits that she suffered some derision and criticism for writing on what was deemed to be an inconsequential subject, more properly relegated to a paragraph or two in the Frost history. Fortunately, she received unqualified support from other quarters including Dr. Frost, Dean of Education George Flower, and incumbent Principal Robert Bell. Their confidence and encouragement were well rewarded. Even at today's inflationary prices, it is hard to imagine anyone interested in the history of women in general, or in higher education in particular, not wanting to own a copy of this book.

Initially, the author poses the age-old questions why is a woman deserving of higher education, or indeed what exactly should her role in society be? These are really two sides of the same coin and they represent the essence of "the history of women in general and thus. . . underlie the history of women in any context, including McGill"; and, presumably, that of any other university.

Dr. Gillett intended to offer more than just a description of the experiences