

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

THE CONTRIBUTION OF  
TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS TO THE STATUS OF  
THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN CANADA

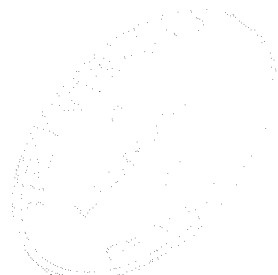
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BY

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## FOREWORD

It may be said with reason that upon the status of the teaching profession depends the standard of education. During the past ten years Canada has been increasingly confronted with the problem of maintaining an adequate supply of teachers. Both problem and solution are linked inseparably with the status which society is prepared to grant its teachers or which the Canadian teachers' associations can win for their members.

There must be some weakness within our social structure when such a vital service as education is able to obtain a sufficient number of recruits of high calibre only when conditions become unfavourable in other occupations. Today other occupations are preferred and professional organizations of teachers are working to correct the situation and to improve the status of their members. The matter is also the concern of many persons who are not engaged directly in the work, but who appreciate the significance of education in modern times.

The present study arose out of a long-standing interest in teachers' organizations and the part they were attempting to play in improving the status of the profession. The difficulties of such a study are known and limitations of the results are admitted. There seems to be no end to the matter, and related problems have a tendency to intrude. The study of active teachers' associations may be prolonged indefinitely, for the

number of their contributions increases with the years. They have played an important part in the advancement of public education and the improvement of teaching personnel, but their efforts to improve the status of their members have not prevented them from championing many causes purely in the interests of child welfare.

The historical chapters of this study are of considerable length--more particularly the one dealing with the development of teachers' organizations. Their story seems fundamental to the whole study and is in itself some indication of the contribution these organizations have made to the status of the teaching profession, and so to education itself. The concluding chapter is an attempt to assess general educational conditions and make some suggestions with special reference to teachers' associations upon whose membership rests the task of making an educational philosophy effective.

In the preparation of this work the guiding hand has been that of David Scott Woods, M.A., Ph.D., Dean of the Faculty of Education of the University of Manitoba, who acted as Chairman of the Committee supervising this study. Appreciation and thanks are alike expressed to Dr. Woods and to the members of the Committee for their helpful criticism and suggestions.

Thanks are extended also to the secretaries of the various Canadian Teachers' Associations and to Mr. E. K. Marshall, Honorary Secretary of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, who found time to answer questions and to supply material upon request.

Geoffrey John Buck,  
Regina, Saskatchewan.  
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## CHAPTER I

### DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM AND SOURCES OF DATA

The citizens of Canada have not yet fully grasped the possibilities latent in professional teachers' organizations as factors in modern life. The general public is more familiar with the work of the classroom where our nation of the future is being moulded by the members of these associations. Teachers have been charged by society with the duty of influencing the minds of boys and girls according to pre-formulated educational policies, and these policies will fail to achieve their purpose unless the teachers are competent, well-trained and satisfied with their professional status.

Education is Canada's largest public "business" whether considered in relation to the tangible economic cost or the less tangible return to society for the money expended. The realist in our midst can and does weigh the effects and sacrifices of the first with scant attention to deferred returns which he may find difficult to measure. The idealist thinks in terms of the second and has some difficulty in appreciating any policy which would starve potential intellectual power so necessary for the development of a stable social structure. The problem of education for the ordinary Canadian citizen may be circumscribed in this way, and he may have some understanding of the extent to

which his choice and action control the social pattern and later the sort of country in which he and his children are to live.

The choice being thus made at any one time, it then becomes the work of the educationist to carry out the mandate within the limits of the prescribed pattern. The story of his efforts is one of constant struggle to achieve his ideals in the face of a materialistic philosophy which demands that tangible returns be shown for money expended. Through the years the task of the sincere educationist has been heavy and he has often been discouraged by defeats and misunderstandings, but his perseverance has contributed to placing society in a position today from which it would not willingly retreat when it recalls the life of the common man of only one hundred years ago.

Educationists are of many types, but the largest group is that made up of ordinary school teachers. To the thousands<sup>1</sup> of common school teachers in our country fall the burden and the delight of educating its future citizens. They work as individuals, in small groups and as members of large professional associations. It is in these professional organizations that we are more particularly interested. An answer is sought to the question--What have teachers' professional associations contributed to the present status of the teaching profession in Canada, and correlatively to the well-being of their country's citizens and their country? That there has been and continues to be a

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<sup>1</sup>The teaching staffs of day schools under provincial control in Canada constituted in 1945, 74,957 teachers (15,155 males and 59,802 females). The Canada Yearbook, 1947, p. 284.

positive contribution to the status of the profession is accepted, as will be shown in this study, but the extent and form of that contribution provides the specific aspect of the problem to be explored.

Contributions towards this status or relative position or rank in the field of human relations may be classified in various ways, but for present purposes they are to be thought of as related to legal, economic, professional, social and political status; all of which are to be placed against a briefly sketched background of Canadian educational history. General educational history tends to take the work of the teacher somewhat for granted and lets the reader forget that the burden of implementing an educational programme is in a real sense carried by those who instruct children in classrooms. The broad treatment of educational history tends to forget also that educators have developed their professional organizations, and that these have a developmental story of their own which is closely related to general educational history and to the end product which emerges from the classrooms after six to twelve years, to make its contribution to society.

A phase of the problem which merits some consideration is that of "professional idealism." This is particularly difficult to deal with in connection with a study which must be treated as objectively as possible. Professional idealism is one of the forces which stimulated idealistically minded teachers to put forth the effort required to organize professional teachers' societies. Teachers imbued with this idealism gave leadership

and pointed the way to better things. They provided the spiritual incentive for action. On the other hand the realists have tended to stress the economic and legal aspects of the profession, and with the aid of those idealists who recognized the necessity for basic action of a concrete nature, have made definite contributions to education and the teaching profession. Codes of ethics and principles of conduct have been enunciated<sup>1</sup> and improved standards for education have been fostered. Both the idealistic and realistic approaches to the professional problems of teachers have been harmonized to a large extent and neither has excluded the other, although each has received varying emphasis throughout the years.

The nature of the problem outlined is such that no single research technique is practicable. A study of the problem is further complicated because there is still considerable disagreement as to whether educational research should be viewed as a science, a technology, or an art. There is also the question whether all careful study of a subject should be treated as research, or whether to be known as research it must conform to the traditional laws of scientific procedure. Some merit may be found in thinking of educational research as that which educational researchers do; for their work is a practical reality and a dynamic movement in contemporary education, easily described in terms of the interests and ideas of its participants.

When the educational research movement began fifty years

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<sup>1</sup>Appendix L. Extracts from Constitutions and Codes of Ethics of Teachers' Organizations.

ago it was utilitarian and pragmatic in character, and led to extensive use of the techniques of science and survey methods, with statistical method as a necessary tool. Such methods were productive of thousands of piece-meal quantitative reports, often difficult, if not impossible to fit into the educational picture. This approach has never been accepted fully by educational philosophers who protested that the quantitative-efficiency trend made it impossible for educators to view their problems without distortion and caused them to overlook the unifying purpose of education. Today there is a recognition of the part played by evaluation and synthetic thinking in educational research, and the acceptance of the view that research method is not a fixed procedure, but rather a refined process of problem solving. One method flows into another. In this view all suitably chosen techniques are acceptable and applicable to the many-sided problems of education in seeking to integrate and reduce any particular endeavour to orderliness.

Of the four major types of research method--the descriptive, causal, evaluative and constructive--use will be made of the descriptive and evaluative. In so far as possible the ascertained facts concerning teachers' associations will be arranged in significant patterns, and the status of the Canadian teaching profession evaluated from these facts.

The method of evaluation is necessarily subjective and in the hands of a careful research worker should exemplify the controlled utilization of subjective judgment. The factors undergoing evaluation are to be described in the historical

setting in which they have operated. The criteria for evaluation are those factors which impinge on the welfare of the teacher as a professional individual, as a member of his association, and as a contributor to his profession and the welfare of education. Broadly speaking a contributory factor will be judged accordingly as it answers the question--Does the factor make a contribution to the status of the teaching profession? In so far as possible the factors will be analysed functionally. It is hoped that the procedure will be held together by the logic of any solution to the problem under investigation, and that the thinking will be as systematic, unbiased and factual as circumstances permit.

The importance of objectivity will be kept in mind constantly, but as this approach is often highly restrictive it will be occasionally necessary to exercise some freedom in the use of relatively subjective data, when such data will yield equally valuable information. In common with historical and semi-historical studies the chronological arrangement will be used where most suitable. No special attention will be given to the study of causation, for in most cases of this nature the results are rather self-evidently related to causative factors. For example, economic factors, no matter how brought about, will naturally affect teachers' salaries, change the number and quality of teachers serving in the profession at any one time, and influence persons who may desire to enter the profession.

The general history of Canadian education has been brought together and condensed from several sources, one being

that of "Canada and Its Provinces" edited by Shortt and Doughty. As the present study is not one of the general history of Canadian education, secondary sources have been considered sufficiently valid for this section. Information concerning the Canadian Teachers' Federation and its affiliated organizations has been gathered from primary sources over a period of years. These sources have been personal contact with the membership of the different associations, office records, minutes of executive and convention meetings, the yearbooks of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the various official magazines published by the different associations, correspondence with the general secretaries of the provincial associations, constitutions, legal enactments, copies of contract forms and annual reports of departments of education. Slight use was made of the questionnaire, but this was not very satisfactory, and from the responses made it was possible to form the opinion that in some cases the secretaries were not very familiar with the background of their respective organizations. Furthermore, material gathered in this way is considered as a secondary source of information. It is acknowledged that information supplied by the general secretaries of the associations in the four western provinces was much more comprehensive than that given by the organizations in the other five provinces.

A review of the literature in the field revealed that few studies have been made which relate directly to the problem as it pertains to Canadian teachers and their organizations. The Research Division of the National Education Association

sponsored studies of "The Rural Teachers' Economic Status" in 1939, and "Teachers' Salaries and the Public Welfare" in 1943. In the American field there are also the studies made by Ira M. Allen (1928) and Earl W. Anderson (1927) dealing with the contractual and legal phases of the status of teachers in the United States. In Canada, A. C. Lewis made a study of "Contracts and Tenure of Canadian Teachers," and J. M. Thomas investigated "Teachers' Retirement Schemes in Canada." Historical studies in the field of Canadian education have been made in specific areas by Hardy, Percival, MacNaughton, McLaurin and others, but there is no single complete and up-to-date compilation of the story of Canadian education.

The last "Annual Survey of Education in Canada" lists forty-five educational organizations: four general educational associations, twenty-three school teachers' and principals' associations, nine home and school associations and nine school trustees' associations. There are in addition ten departments of education. In this list there is one main group, the "School Teachers' and Principals'" associations, the members of which guide the activities of our classrooms and are clearly bound by common aims and problems.<sup>1</sup> To this group belong the fourteen provincial associations of teachers, consolidated by a Dominion-wide organization--The Canadian Teachers' Federation. The present study purposes to deal in detail with this section of the group, namely, the Canadian Teachers' Federation and its

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<sup>1</sup>Elementary and Secondary Education in Canada, 1940-42.  
The Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1944. Ottawa, Ontario.



affiliated professional associations. In order to complete the picture brief consideration will be given to the main teachers' organizations in Great Britain and the United States, because through example these organizations have exercised some influence on Canadian associations.

The story of Canadian teachers' associations and of the status of the teacher parallels our educational advancements of the past thirty years. Teacher status, educational advancement and the welfare of our country are inseparably joined. The guiding wisdom of Aristotle is more valuable today than it was when he said, "All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth." This single statement should make all serious minded people giving thought to educational matters and the close relationship between the teacher and the pupil, consider also the importance of teacher status in its bearing on the lives of the youth of Canada, and the attitudes that will be established in our citizens.