Chant commission report on provincial education

Home, school church partners in child development, report

VICTORIA (CP) — The school should be regarded as a partner with home, church and the community in the development of a child and should not take over the functions of the other agencies, the Chant royal commission on education said Thursday.

The massive report prepared for the British Columbia government after two years of study under the chairmanship of Dean S. F. N. Chant of the University of British Columbia department of arts and sciences, said:

"No school system can encompass the whole of a person's education when the term is given its broadest meaning to include all the worthwhile learning that occurs during a lifetime."

It said the schools major job is intellectual development.

Among its almost 100 recommendations the commission called for no increase in the religious instruction in schools and added that it "appears strange" that churches have not made more use of the instruction now provided.

The report, that recommended deletion of such courses as cooking, was very clear in what it regarded as the responsibility of the various sections of the community.

"The home provides indispensable training in terms of general forms of conduct as they pertain to family observances and to many of the ordinary but necessary affairs of life . . . The schools should not deprive parents of the satisfaction of teaching their children many matters of commonplace knowledge, and a great deal of the responsibility for the upbringing of the children must be left to the parents. . . The school should not be called upon to carry the burden of home training."

Report makes 158 recommendations for improvement of B.C's schools

VICTORIA (CP)—A royal commission Thursday handed down 158 recommendations to improve British Columbia's public school system, including proposals for extensive re-organization of courses, teaching methods and achievement standards.

The province's elementary and secondary schools are not badly ailing, the commission said in a 845-page report, but if Canada is to be strong its education system must be second to none and "far - reaching proposals must not be rejected because they cost money or are difficult to put into effect."

Dean S. N. F. Chant of the University of B.C.'s faculty of Arts and Sciences, was the commission chairman Other members were John E. Liersch of Powell River Company and Riley P. Walrod of B.C. Tree Fruits Limited.

Some recommendations arising from the two-year study:

Greater emphasis on "hard core" subjects such as science, mathematics and English and less time spent on "frills"—art, drama and music;

Increase the school year by a minimum of 10 days and the secondary school day by one hour, more homework, and a crackdown on teachers who "waste time;"

Junior and senior vocational schools be established for students who cannot make the grade academically, a collegiate academy above high school level and an institute of advanced technology as an alternative to university academic training;

Elimination of junior high school as such with Grade 7 reverting to elementary school and high school starting at Grade 8;

Standards of acceptable dress and grooming be set — simple hair styling and make - up for girls, conventional haircuts, standard trousers and conservative shirts for boys;

The school should be regarded as a partner with the home, church and community in the development of a child and should not take over the functions of other agencies;

More Canadian and British text books — a survey revealed as many as 73 per cent of the books used in non - academic subjects are published in the United States;

Teachers' salaries be negotiated on a province - wide basis through a "master agreement" rather than through separate contracts with local school boards.

It says school boards should be given "every assistance with building programs to provide the 6,000 additional classrooms and 700 schools which will be needed in B.C. by 1975. There are currently 300,000 students attending 1,300 schools in the province.

The commission, stressing priority for the "three R's" said it is "nice to learn to dance or sing" or to saw a board or learn how to cook. But there is no time for by-paths and education today is more important than ever because of the increasing complexity of the world.

It recommended that the maximum time for art and music combined not exceed more than two hours a week and industrial arts and home economics be discontinued in Grade 7. The time saved should be allotted to English, mathematics, social studies and science.

The Chant commission warns of the dangers of over-contralization and says local autonomy must be preserved so schools may continue to be an integral part of the communities they serve.

"A bureaucratic school system could enforce uniformity but at the expense of public interest and local initiative. The department of education should employ every means to ensure that educational opportunities in all parts of the province are as nearly equivalent as they may be made."

Rival Dean critical of report

VANCOUVER (CP)—One sour note spoiled the harmony of praise that filled the air Thursday when the Chant royal commission handed down its massive report on education in British Columbia.

"A depressing, disappointing, reactionary effort in which is spelled out rather clearly how to keep schools dull, orthodox and tedious." said Dean Neville A. Scarfe, head of the College of Education at the University of B.C.

"It represents a more efficient way of making schools unhappy places for children and regimented places for teachers.

"It is clear that children need not look for any stimulating adventure or experimental excitement in school . . . Britiish Columbia's schools will certainly not be places to breed original thinkers, experimental or adventurous individuals."

Dean Scarfe's biting remarks, made in a prepared statement, were directed at the 845-page report of a royal commission comprising fellow Dean S. N. F. Chant of the faculty of arts and sciences and two businessmen, John E. Liersch of the Powell River Company and R. P. Walrod of B.C. Tree Fruits Ltd.

URGED REORGANIZATION

The report made 158 recommendations, including complete reorganization of the school system, increased emphasis on basic subjects, a longer school year, more homework and the trimming of some "frills" from the curriculum.

Dean Scarfe said the report represents a massive collection of information about the province and will be an invaluable source book for future reference. But he added that it envisages "a traditional, conforming, class-structured society . . . with the academic intellectual telling the rest what to believe and what to know."

The report does not favor the views "of even the moderately progressive educators," Dean Scarfe said.

'It tends to pre-suppose that children are basically disciplined to effort and find school work distasteful . . . The idea that education is associated mainly with creative and independent thinking, with original and novel ideas, or with radical outlooks and adventurous experimentation is obviously not accepted by the commission.

TERMED CONSERVATIVE

'The totally conservative attitude of the whole report is reflected in the fact that little criticism is made of the present examination system.

Few parents wish children to be critical

TORONTO (CP)—A group of Ontario teachers were told Thursday that few Canadian parents want their children to think critically about religion, sex or democracy.

Sybil Shack, president of the Manitoba Teachers Society, addressed the dinner of the Ontario Public School Men Teachers Federation, meeting here with other Ontario teachers' groups.

Miss Shack said teachers are constantly told that they must develop a critical attitude among pupils. They were also told to teach respect for democracy.

"How can you teach children to have respect for something and to criticize it at the same time?" she asked.

Teachers may become so wrapped up in subject matter that they lose sight of larger meanings, Miss Shack said. Children in Grade 5 learned the paths of the North American explorers on a map but few considered the normal aspect of this invasion of a continent.

Revised text books not advantageous

VICTORIA (CP) — The Chant royal commission on education in British Columbia Thursday criticized the inadequacy" of Canadian revision of United States text books and urged more use of British and Canadian books.

"It is a matter of some surprise," the report said, "that the number of text books published in Great Britain . . . was so small in comparison to the number published in the United States.

"The commissioners do not consider that text books published in Britain are inferior to those published in the U.S. or that they are less suitable for Canadian schools."

The report showed the following percentage of U.S. text books used in B.C. secondary schools: non - academic subjects, 60 per cent; modern and classical languages, 73 per cent; English, 19 per cent; mathematics, 64 per cent; science, 50 per cent and social studies, 22 per cent.

It also recommended that all elementary school pupils be given free text books on basic subjects and that intermediate students be given free dictionaries.

ANNUAL AWARD

LONDON (CP) — The Romantic Novelists' Association has given its first annual award to Joan Nicholson, a Yorkshire schoolteacher. Her book, "Seed Pearl," tells the story of Edward III's marriage to Queen Philippa.

HANDY MAN

CARDIFF (CP) — Dr. Gyn Jones of Cardigan won the handyman prize in a doctors' hobbies exhibition. He made an outboard dinghy with two legs of a kitchen chair and part of a bank counter.

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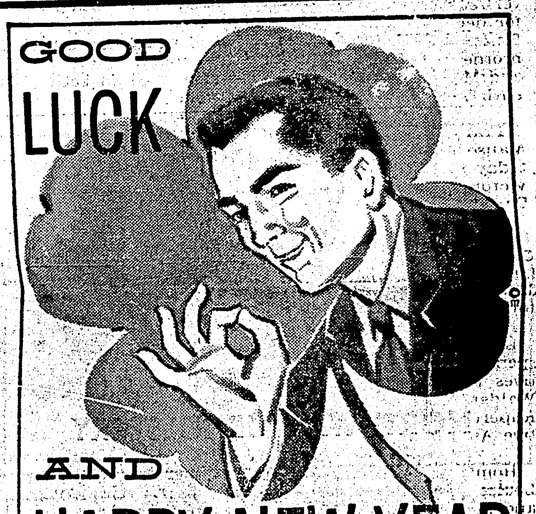
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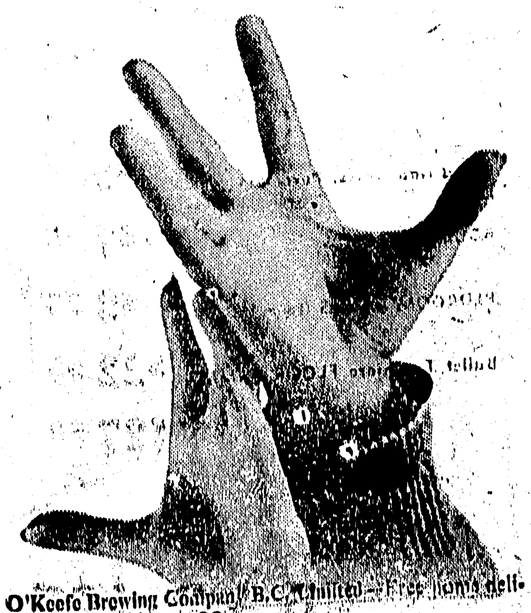
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