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Progressive Education and High School Social

Studies in Alberta in the 1940s.

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the implementation of progressive education in Alberta high schools in the 1940s. The formation of the new Social Studies program of studies in 1937 focussed on the present and not the past. Students were to become more effective citizens and to learn how democracy operated in order to take on a more active role. The instruction became more child-centered. Learning was to be more active and the classroom was to be a lab. Students would do committee work, with more discussion in class. Recent technology such as motion projectors, and radio, would be implemented. Teachers would move from one textbook to a variety of references. While some historians have felt that progressive education was unsuccessful because of the poor quality of teachers and lack of money and resources, there is evidence that progressive education for high school Social Studies did succeed at least in part.

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On a personal note I thank my brother Dean and his wife Andrea for their support and discussion, and I thank my parents for their continued encouragement. Without my parents' help I could never have completed this journey. I dedicate this thesis to them.

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INTRODUCTION

1

Background

Alberta encountered tremendous changes in the 1930s and 1940s. Politically, the province elected a new Social Credit government in 1935. The party was led by “Bible Bill” Aberhart, a former school teacher and principal of Crescent Heights School. Acting as both Premier and Minister of Education, he would champion many educational changes. He implemented large units of school administration, an idea taken from Perrin Baker of the United Farmers of Alberta. During his tenure schools adopted the new progressive education, and the Alberta Teachers’ Association was greatly strengthened by an act making it compulsory for teachers to belong.

The 1930s saw Alberta in a terrible Depression, and teachers fared poorly. In 1932, there was a surplus of a thousand teachers. For those who did work, some had to barter for food, others were not paid, and many were handled badly by penurious trustees who had problems of their own. Some quit because of the poor working conditions in the one room schools. Many of the school buildings were neglected during the Depression. To keep the operation of existing and the building of new schools was a major concern claimed John Chalmers.¹ Because of the lack of jobs and the new stress on schooling as a way out of poverty the number of high school students mushroomed.

¹John Chalmers. Schools of the Foothills Province (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1967), p. 83.

Progressive education appeared in Alberta in the first half of the 1930s. Many Canadians attended United States teaching colleges such as Columbia, New York or the University of Chicago. Key educational leaders went south, including H.C. Newland, M.E. Lazerte, Donald Dickie and Fred McNally. Some teachers joined organizations such as the Calgary Progress Club or the Education Society of Edmonton. Both organizations acted as a think-tank for the Department of Education, said Amy von Heyking.² Special meetings were devoted to overviews and criticisms of the new courses of study. As well, they prepared textbooks for the new courses and gave considerable attention to the revision of the high school program.

Robert Patterson explained that the time was right to implement progressive education: "Discontent was apparent in Alberta in the 1920s, but it was heightened by the impact of the Depression and the political campaigns of the mid- 1930s. People were ready for change. They were at a low ebb and willing to try something new."³ The new philosophy revamped the curriculum and changed its methodology. Classes were to become active labs, and the program was to be more student-oriented. New technology was to be worked into the class and a greater variety of texts and references was to be used. Students would no longer rely on the one textbook format.

²Amy von Heyking, "Shaping an Education for the Modern World," Doctoral Thesis, University of Calgary, 1996, p. 188.

³ Robert Patterson, "The Establishment of Progressive Education in Alberta," Doctoral Thesis, Michigan State University, 1968, p. 172.

The new Social Studies high school curriculum came into existence in 1937, starting with grade 10. Social Studies was to stress democracy and citizenship concepts and to foster a community and identity through the curriculum. As well, pupils no longer focussed their studies on the past, but now examined more current events. These changes were to play a larger role than expected with the emergence of the Second World War.

Despite the lack of money for educational resources such as texts or newer technology, World War II provided a boost for the high school Social Studies program. The emphasis on citizenship and democracy worked well because Canada was fighting a war against dictators. Students joined cadets, Red Cross, led in victory bond drives, helped farmers with the harvest or sent care packages to soldiers overseas. The entire country rallied to the cause and at no other time in history would it be more exciting to learn current events. Families huddled around the radio to listen to the news broadcasts of events in Europe and the Pacific. Newspapers were filled with stories of battles, and photos and maps of Allied and Axis thrusts.

Statement of the Problem

Progressive education brought about a change from History, Civics, and Economics to Social Studies in Alberta high schools starting in 1937. Immediately there were changes in educational content and methodology. But how far did progressive education enter Social Studies in the high schools of the 1940s? The central issues of this thesis will focus on the following questions:

- (i) What role did the progressive education concepts of citizenship and democracy play in the Social Studies curriculum during the Second World War and how did teachers and students respond to it?
- (ii) To what extent was progressive education a success in Alberta high school Social Studies classes? Did the classroom become a lab with a more child-centered philosophy?
- (iii) To what extent did Social Studies emphasize current events, implement more technology and move from one textbook to a variety of references?
- (iv) To what extent did the grade 12 Social Studies departmental exams focus on citizenship, democracy, and current events? How did teachers prepare students for it?

Limitations of the Study

The writer recognizes this study may be limited because of the following circumstances.

The annual reports and inspectors reports came from all sizes of schools from all parts of the province of Alberta. The inspectors reports were chosen randomly from numerous school district records boxes located in the Provincial Archives. Other reports were used from Pincher Creek and Crowsnest School Division found at Glenbow Archives. They are meant to give a provincial impression, not a specific sub-regional one.

Twenty one people were interviewed. Two were Social Studies teachers and nineteen were high school students in Alberta in the 1940s. Some interviewees names were provided by the Western Canada Alumni

Association. Others were located through the Alberta Teachers' Retirement luncheon. A few names were given by other interviewees who had gone to school with these people and were once classmates. All but one of the interviews took place in Calgary; the other occurred in Edmonton. Most of the interviewees attended Calgary high schools (Western Canada, Crescent Heights, and Central), but a few attended town schools at Cluny, Brooks or Westlock. Concerning oral history, there are always several factors which affect the way people respond- age, health, interest, memory, and the way a question is asked.⁴

Review of Related Literature

Background information regarding the political and economic times of the 1930s and 1940s was gained from various sources- David Elliot, L.P. Johnson, Bob Hesketh and Ola MacNutt, and David Laycock.⁵ George Tomkins, Alf Chaiton and Alison Prentice wrote an overview of Canadian education.⁶ John Chalmers wrote much on the educational events of the

⁴ Valerie Raleigh Yow, Recording Oral History (California: Sage Publications, 1994), p. 19.

⁵ David Elliot, Aberhart: Outpourings and Replies (Calgary: Historical Society of Alberta, 1991); David Elliot and Iris Miller, Bible Bill (Edmonton: Reidmore Books, 1987); Ola MacNutt and L.P. Johnson, Aberhart of Alberta (Edmonton: Institute of Applied Art, Ltd., 1970); Bob Hesketh, Major Douglas and Alberta Social Credit (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); David Laycock, Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies, 1910-1945 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990)

⁶ George Tomkins, A Common Countenance (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1970); Alf Chaiton and Neil McDonald, eds., Canadian Schools and Canadian Identity (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Limited, 1977); Alison Prentice, The School Promoters (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977)

time.⁷ Robert Patterson published numerous articles and wrote his doctoral thesis on progressive education in Alberta. He believed the implementation of progressive education was ineffective for various reasons.⁸ Nancy Sheehan and Nick Kach also questioned its effectiveness or success.⁹ Jones, Stamp, Wilson, Sutherland, McDonald, and Charyk described the life of a teacher and the nature of schools.¹⁰

A Doctoral thesis by Amy von Heyking, and two Masters theses by David Embree and Isidore Goresky explained the formation of education in Alberta.¹¹ Kathleen MacNab researched the history of the Alberta

⁷ John Chalmers, Gladly Would He Teach (Edmonton: The A.T.A. Educational Trust, 1978); John Chalmers, Schools of the Foothills Province (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967); John Chalmers, Teachers of the Foothills Province (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968)

⁸ Robert Patterson, John Chalmers, and John Friesen, eds., Profiles of Canadian Educators (Toronto: D.C. Health Canada Ltd., 1974)

⁹ Nancy Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson, and David C. Jones, eds., Schools in the West (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1986); Nick Kach, Exploring our Educational Past (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1992)

¹⁰ David C. Jones, Nancy Sheehan, and Robert Stamp, eds., Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1979); Robert Stamp, School Days: A Century of Memories (Calgary: Calgary Board of Education, 1975); J. Donald Wilson, Robert Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet, eds., Canadian Education: A History (Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall of Canada Ltd., 1970); J. Donald Wilson, and David C. Jones, eds., Schooling and Society in Twentieth Century British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1980); John Charyk, The Little White School House (Saskatoon: Western Producer Book Service, 1973); John Charyk, Gopher Tails and Syrup Pails (Saskatoon: Western Produce Book Service, 1983)

¹¹ Amy von Heyking, "Shaping an Education for the Modern World," Doctoral Thesis, University of Calgary, 1996; David Embree, "The Beginning and Growth of Instruction in the Social Studies Provided by the Schools of Albert," Master of Education

Teachers' Association,¹² Barry Oviatt, Aberhart's role as Minister of Education and Patricia Oviatt, H.C. Newland's contributions.¹³

Source Material

The major primary sources of information for this thesis were government documents. Much was obtained from the Department of Education's annual reports, inspectors' reports, curriculum guides, handbooks, bulletins, and grade 12 departmental exams. Supplementary data was collected from newspapers, interviews and magazines. In addition, the location of some of these sources is provided in the footnotes because of the difficulty in finding them.

Content Organization

Chapter One deals with the change to progressive education (History, Civics, and Economics to Social Studies) and its emphasis on the concepts of citizenship and democracy. Chapter Two concerns the extent to which progressive education actually penetrated the classrooms. Chapter Three discusses the role of current events in the new Social Studies program and

Thesis. University of Calgary, 1952; Isidore Goresky, "The Beginning and Growth of the Alberta School System." Master of Education Thesis, University of Alberta, 1944.

¹² Kathleen MacNab, "A History of the Alberta Teachers' Association," Master of Arts Thesis. University of Alberta, 1949.

¹³ Barry Oviatt, "The Papers of William Aberhart as Minister of Education," Master of Education Thesis, University of Alberta, 1971; Patricia Oviatt. "The Educational Contributions of H.C. Newland," Master of Education Thesis, University of Alberta, 1970.

how teachers taught it. Chapter Four examines the content of the new grade 12 Social Studies departmental exams.

CHAPTER ONE

Citizenship and Democracy

Alberta education underwent some major changes in the late 1930s. One of the changes in the program of studies was the transformation of History, Civics, and Economics into Social Studies. By 1940, the new curriculum was intended to produce better citizens who would thrive in a democratic society. Pupils would be better prepared for active citizenship, for more freedom, for more cooperation, and for a better understanding of the current world. The emphasis on citizenship and democracy in the Social Studies program was demonstrated by two factors. The first was the progressive education movement led by H.C. Newland who was appointed Supervisor of Schools in 1935. He directed the major curriculum revision for Alberta schools. By understanding Newland, one can see how he stressed the importance of an educated society in a democracy. The second factor was the Second World War itself. The emergence of dictatorships in Germany, Italy, and Russia threatened democratic nations including Canada. By observing the Social Studies curriculum and bulletins, one sees that many of the changes focused more on citizenship and a strong Canadian component emerged as the war progressed. Annual reports commented on the importance of teaching citizenship in the high school classroom. The Calgary Herald and the Alberta Teachers' Association Magazine (A.T.A.) contained numerous articles stressing the importance of democracy during the darker days of the Second World War.

Before the formation of Social Studies in Alberta classrooms in 1937, History, Civics, and Economics comprised the program of studies. The

1930 Handbook for Secondary Schools explained the two aims of these courses. First, the student was to possess a body of knowledge of both practical and cultural value. Secondly, he was “to develop his intellect, expand his imagination, and engender worthy personal and social ideals.”¹ The handbook explained that the pupil should be “taught to develop innate memory capabilities.... and to lead him to organize and group his memory facts in such a way that recall is ready, accurate, and complete.... He should search for data, group them and build generalizations thereon.”²

History 1 was for grade nine students who studied Ancient and Medieval History. The objective was to look at man as a whole and not just in a framework of political organization and historical events. Students were to learn about man in all areas- society, industry, commerce, religion, art, and literature.³ History 2 dealt with British History from 1485 to the present day. The aim was to set the stage to understand and study Canadian Civics and history. History 3 focused on Canadian history such as the War of 1812 and the fall of New France. For Canadian Civics, pupils studied in detail the legislative, executive, and judicial powers of all levels of government- imperial, dominion, provincial, and municipal. History 4 looked at the general history of the Modern Age and English Constitutional history.

¹ Department of Education, Handbook For Secondary Schools, Alberta (Edmonton: 1930), p. 69.

²Ibid. p. 69.

³Ibid. p. 71.

By 1939, the new high school Social Studies program was to be fully implemented. The curriculum guide listed the five outcomes a student was to achieve:

1. To interest himself in the story of civilization and to discover how different peoples tried to solve problems such as we have to meet. He should compare textbooks and should be encouraged to read fiction and current literature bearing on a period that interests him.
2. To relate his findings to present- day problems with a view to discovering how we may cope with these problems.
3. To appreciate the fact that many widely different economic and political methods have been and are being tried in different parts of the world, and to make honest appraisal of each of these systems.
4. To estimate the price in human intelligence and human leadership necessary to make desired changes in a democratic way, and to realise that he must prepare to undertake his share of the responsibility.
5. To get some experience in democratic leadership and cooperation so that he may adequately discharge his social responsibilities in later life.⁴

In 1937, the grade 10 History, Civics, and Economics course became Social Studies 1. This course dealt with the story of man from early times to 1500. The objective was to learn the lessons of history and not merely the facts, and apply it to understanding the present. The guide stated, “Many institutions of today cannot be understood without a knowledge of

⁴Department of Education, Programme of Studies for the High School, Bulletin III (Edmonton: 1939), p. 3. Doucette Library, University of Calgary, A 375 A 1SS0.

early, and especially medieval, history.”⁵ Teachers were to relate the past to the present wherever possible. The guide advised not to set aside periods for current events, but rather to train the pupils to bring up the topics themselves.

Social Studies 2 was implemented in 1938, covered the time from 1500 to 1914 and dealt with various themes. Topics included Nation States of the Modern World, the Expansion of Europe, Trade, Industry, and Standards of Living, Growth of Knowledge, Expression and Aesthetics and Society and its Problems, and Religion. Again, where possible, teachers were to connect the past lessons to the present day.

Social Studies 3 focused on the most important contemporary problems since 1914 to the present day. The goal was for students upon graduation to keep up with future developments regarding national, imperial and international problems. The guide stated: “This interest should result in creating a due appreciation of the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic state.”⁶ The outline suggested that current events be given attention throughout the year and approximately two to three periods per month be allotted to this subject. To achieve this, students were to read the newspapers and other sources of information as well as discuss outstanding events daily. The first topic included International Relationships dealing with the First World War. The second dealt with outstanding developments in the totalitarian states of Russia, Italy, and Germany. As well, students

⁵Ibid. p. 4.

⁶Ibid. p. 33.

studied the democratic states of Great Britain, France, Sweden, Denmark and the United States. The third topic looked at Commonwealth problems such as constitutional adjustments, inter- Empire trade, the problems of defence and immigration, and the future of the Empire. The fourth explored both internal and external Canadian problems.

The change in curriculum from History to Social Studies was due in part to H.C. Newland and the progressive education movement. Robert Patterson felt Newland “exerted considerable influence on the direction followed in education in Alberta. He was in fact the most important person in Alberta’s move toward progressive education.”⁷ Researcher Patricia Oviatt examined Newland’s beliefs and his involvement in the progressive education philosophy and the implementation of the new Social Studies program. Newland was influenced by and aligned himself with United States educators and their progressive education ideas. He especially agreed with George Counts who felt teachers needed to play a larger role in directing schools towards creating a new order. Counts stated, “In the struggle for political and economic democracy, the schools can no longer remain neutral; their influence must be positive and in a direction of total democracy.”⁸

⁷Robert Patterson. “Hubert C. Newland: Theorist of Progressive Education,” in Profiles of Canadian Educators, edited by Robert Patterson, John Chalmers and John Friesen (Toronto: D.C. Heath Canada Ltd., 1974), p. 300.

⁸Patricia Oviatt. “The Educational Contributions of H.C. Newland.” Master of Education Thesis. University of Calgary 1970, p. 127.

Oviatt noted that Newland believed in the pure forms of democracy whereby people could solve common problems intellectually.⁹ According to her, Newland felt, “Schools could strengthen the democratic ideal and point the way toward social progress by developing in citizens characteristics of intelligence and cooperation.”¹⁰ As well, Newland believed that political democracy was meaningless without economic democracy. He felt society must provide food, clothing, shelter, education, health and other services for one hundred percent of the population.¹¹ Oviatt felt Newland’s view of democracy rang heavy of socialism because he embraced social insurance, welfare and medicare.¹² Overall, Newland believed democracy must be constantly strengthened in schools and a study of democratic society must include democracy in its social and economic as well as political institutions.

Historian Amy von Heyking, who studied the evolution of the Social Studies curriculum from 1905- 1965, revealed how classrooms were infused with progressive educationalist views of the nature of society and the place of schools in a democracy.

Harold Rugg explained that schools faced a delicate task in balancing the individual needs of students while preparing them for life within a democratic society. While he admitted that child centered schools faced

⁹Ibid. p. 129.

¹⁰Ibid. p. 129.

¹¹Ibid. p. 128.

¹²Ibid. p. 131.

important challenges in many aspects of their pedagogy, he insisted that no other approach to schooling was as effective in its preparation of future citizens. He maintained that only students who had experience in governing themselves, rather than having discipline imposed upon them from outside authorities, such as teachers, were adequately prepared for participation in a democracy.¹³

As a result, von Heyking explained that progressive educationalists insisted on democratic classes, which meant student freedom. The students could sit in a variety of configurations and were free to speak to each other and move freely. Jennie Elliott, a Calgary teacher, believed students should be trained to behave as adults and to cooperate so they could deal with the democratic world as free and responsible citizens.¹⁴

Researcher David Embree explained how Social Studies was to create good citizens who would be well equipped mentally and capable of thinking intelligently.¹⁵ He said teachers were to lead children en route to citizen development and not just teach a program of studies. He was afraid pupils would not develop inquisitive and analytical minds which was a concern at that time. Embree felt the age was fraught with propaganda with pitfalls for the unwary, the ignorant, the unthinking and mentally unawakened.¹⁶

¹³Amy von Heyking, "Shaping an Education for the Modern World," Doctoral Thesis. University of Calgary, 1996, p. 238.

¹⁴Ibid, p. 240.

¹⁵David Embree. "The Beginning and Growth of Instruction in the Social Studies Provided by the Schools of Alberta," Master of Education Thesis, University of Calgary, 1952, p. 233.

Historian Robert Patterson believed the Second World War heightened citizenship education. He said:

Numerous activities were encouraged to promote appreciation of national responsibility. Some of the more usual types of activities and services sponsored in various schools included purchase and sale of war savings stamps, contributions to and collections for service organizations and patriotic funds, collection for salvage, making and collecting clothing to send overseas, farm service, sending gift boxes and letters to men overseas, participation in Junior Red Cross, and studying First Aid courses. Apart from the value in the war effort these activities were noted for their contribution to development of wholesome community attitudes and improved citizenship.¹⁷

During the Second World War, the high school Social Studies curriculum changed and new topics were implemented which stressed the teaching of citizenship and democracy. Robert Patterson wrote, "The rise in popularity of these totalitarian ideas and their ascendancy to power in Italy, Germany and Russia caused many in the Western world to fear their spread and to resist their growth. One outcome of this was to recognize the importance of education as a means of affirming the democratic way of life."¹⁸ There was a real fear that fascist ideologies might enter the schools.

¹⁶Ibid. p. 233.

¹⁷ Robert Patterson. "Society and Education During the Wars and Their Interlude: 1914- 1945." in Canadian Education: A History, edited by J. Wilson, R. Stamp, and L. Audet. (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 380.

¹⁸ Robert Patterson. "The Canadian Experience with Progressive Education." in Canadian Education, edited by Brian Titley, (Calgary: Detselig, 1990), p. 105.

In 1940, Macleans published an article which addressed the concern that teachers were indoctrinating Canadian children in Nazi and Fascist schools from Vancouver to Halifax and their fifth column activities. It was suggested that teachers used propaganda and indoctrinated the pupils with anti- democratic thoughts. One textbook that students read claimed, “All Italian children love Mussolini. Mussolini loves them because they are the beautiful essence of Italy, because they will grow up to be strong and as a result Italy will be powerful and happy.”¹⁹ Due to this fear of propaganda entering schools, the Social Studies curriculum implemented more democracy and citizenship content as seen through the Social Studies Bulletins. These bulletins were published for three reasons. First, they were to provide the names and prices of a large number of reference materials so that students were encouraged to order and read a wide variety of pamphlets and books. Second, they were to give helpful hints on the teaching of Social Studies. Third, they were to enrich the content of the course with interesting and timely material.²⁰

Each high school Social Studies course was changed to add more citizenship material. The December 1943 Social Studies Bulletin remarked how Social Studies 1 had been altered to emphasize more Canadian affairs both locally and nationally. Teachers who had been teaching Ancient History needed guidance on how the new topics were to be presented.

¹⁹ Roy Davis, “Primers of Treachery,” Macleans, 53, 17 (September 1, 1940), p. 10.

²⁰Department of Education, Classroom Bulletin on Social Studies, (Edmonton: December, 1943), p. 36. Coumts Library, University of Alberta. h69 a33 1943.

Changes to the curriculum stressed more democracy and citizenship content and less ancient history. The new grade ten units discussed in this issue were: Canadian Democracy in Action, Education, Community Health, How We Govern Ourselves- provincial and community problems, Leisure and Poverty.²¹ Superintendent of Calgary Schools, F. G. Buchanan recognized this change and said, "Democracy demands active intelligent citizens and the home as well as the school try to impress upon the children that it is a great thing to be a Canadian and to live in Canada. They also stress the part Canada is playing in the war."²²

The 1945 program of studies laid out the objectives of the second section for Social Studies 1. Students were to learn themes on government and become more familiar with their problems and appreciate the factors which were to affect their everyday living. Two units stressed democracy and citizenship. The first, Canadian Democracy in Action, looked at the following issues: how the citizens are represented at Ottawa; how laws are made; how the nation's business is conducted by the executive; how the laws are interpreted. How law breakers are punished. How public services are financed; how public opinion is expressed. The second unit, Provincial and Community Problems, outlined how we governed ourselves in the province and municipality and discussed education, community health, juvenile delinquency, leisure, and poverty.

²¹Ibid, p. 36.

²² "Value of Education Said Greater Than Ever Today," Calgary Herald, 27 April 1943.

Other units prepared students to become more educated citizens in a democratic state. Pupils looked at the economic geography of Canada, employment, social security, changes in agriculture and Canada's relations with other nations. The 1946 annual report explained that Social Studies I was altered and "the content of eight of the eleven units illustrates an emphasis on Canadian citizenship and values."²³ Another unit focussed on community projects. The guide stated:

In some classrooms there is a dissatisfaction with merely studying a community problem. There is a feeling that these problems are challenges to be met and overcome by students and teachers. In the province of Alberta, for example, a number of schools have undertaken community projects such as local beautification programmes or measures for public safety with very satisfactory results. These projects are excellent examples of "democracy in action."²⁴

The guide provided measures teachers and students could adopt in their own community. These included public safety, beautifying the community, community health, or patriotic programmes such as the collection of salvage or Red Cross activities. In addition, students could work at agricultural improvement, cultural activities, or local surveys such as the collection of historical records or writing local history.

²³ Government of Alberta, Annual Report of the Department of Education. 1946. p.53. Hereafter referred to as AR.

²⁴Department of Education, Programme of Studies for the High School, (Edmonton: 1945), p. 62. Edmonton Public School Archives and Museum. Accession 92.45.69.

Betty Wolfe, a 1944 Crescent Heights graduate, recalled learning citizenship in Social Studies. She said the war broadened their lives, and aspects of citizenship like responsibility and leadership were inculcated in what they did. She remembered being taught “a lot of civics and civic government. We were very civic minded and most of us still are.... Everyone had it drummed into their heads that they were responsible because they were needed.”²⁵ Civics impregnated Social Studies during the war, she said, and every man and woman had a duty to perform, such as collecting ditty bags, working for the Red Cross, or sending letters or yearbooks to men overseas. Wolfe believed that back then children were aware of their country, who they were, and why they were doing their civic duty. Today she feels these values are lost.²⁶

Dixie McCall, a 1946 Western graduate, recalled how some students learned citizenship through an Alberta organization called Tuxis. Here boys learned about democracy by setting up a parliament. McCall said the students learned about politics and “would debate current problems about education.”²⁷

The 1944 Program of Studies for the High School Bulletin showed the new changes to Social Studies 2. Students still studied European history from 1500- 1914, however, a stronger emphasis was placed on creating a better citizen. Students learned a new unit called Responsible Government which helped in understanding the responsibilities citizens had in a

²⁵ Interview with Betty Wolfe, April 29, 1998.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Interview with Dixie McCall, April 1, 1998.

democracy. The October 1944 Classroom Bulletin explained the history of democracy in Great Britain and Canada and its effectiveness. The issue talked highly of Canada's democratic government and described it as "one of the rare arts of the world, achieved over any great length of time in very few countries. It demands tolerance of high order; it depends upon a background of steady political growth."²⁸ The article discussed the history of democracy and why it failed in nations such as Germany and Italy. The bulletin answered this question by claiming:

The masses of Germany and Italy preferred food to the vote. When the dictators promised them security in lieu of their political freedom, they were pleased to make the exchange. After all, the heroic struggle by which democratic peoples had won the franchise might be significant to a man like Wilson; to the average German or Italian, worrying about his next meal, it was of little consequence.²⁹

Another unit explored provincial and community problems such as education, recreation, social progress, community health, government and the economic order. Three other new units focussed on a National Physical Fitness Programme, Immigration, and Consumer Education.³⁰

²⁸Department of Education, Classroom Bulletin on Social Studies, (Edmonton: October, 1944), p. 6. Edmonton Public School and Museum, Accession 92.69.79.

²⁹Ibid. p. 19.

³⁰Department of Education, Programme of Studies for the High School, Bulletin A (Edmonton: 1944), p. 13- 14. Alberta Education Library, Edmonton, Accession 373.19 1944.

The October 1944 Social Studies Bulletin contained an article by Van Loan and Williams which stressed the importance of citizenship. They claimed reading skills should have been more developed and more guidance was needed in selecting reading material. As well, students needed to be educated in listening activities because of the radio age. Van Loan and Williams pointed out how much information was presented through graphic form such as charts, graphs, tables, and maps. They believed skills in interpreting this data were essential for effective citizenship. In addition, both believed, "An effective citizen needs to express his ideas clearly in both written and oral form.... Skills in reading, listening and interpreting data by themselves do not necessarily make for intelligent, effective citizenship. Critical thinking and the drawing of sound generalizations from valid data are also essential."³¹

Van Loan and Williams concluded that the never- wavering belief in democracy was essential for the preservation and development of democratic life. They felt attitudes had to be developed such as cooperativeness, tolerance, respect for civil liberties and respect for authority in order to ensure democratic living. Both felt education must "meet the needs of boys and girls as they grow into effective citizens in our democracy."³²

³¹Department of Education, Classroom Bulletin on Social Studies (Edmonton: October 1944), p. 3- 4. Edmonton Public School and Museum, Accession 92.69.79.

³²Ibid. p. 5.

The Social Studies 3 curriculum focussed on the most important contemporary issues to keep in touch with such problems nationally, imperially, and internationally upon graduation. By generating interest it should have “resulted in creating a due appreciation of the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic state.”³³ For grade twelve students to appreciate democracy, the 1939 curriculum explored totalitarian states such as Communist Russia, Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Imperialist Japan. As well, students learned how other democratic nations operated in Great Britain, France, United States, Sweden, and Denmark. Pupils learned the merits and defects of the democratic state and also “the need for enlightened, alert, and aggressive citizenship under democracy.”³⁴ Another unit titled Canadian Problems introduced both external and internal problems such as diplomacy, economics, and our proximity to the United States and internal problems such as constitutional adjustments, economics and issues of defence.

The Classroom Bulletins on Social Studies discussed citizenship and democracy in Social Studies 3. The fear of dictatorships due to the war was still quite high. The February 1944 issue discussed global reconstruction following the completion of the war. One concern was the necessity to “remove control of press and radio and speech, to liberate human thought, to reeducate the youth of Germany, Italy, and Japan, to assist countries like Poland in which educators and libraries and schools have been deliberately

³³Department of Education, Programme of Studies for the High Schools, Bulletin III (Edmonton: 1939), p. 33.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 35.

destroyed.”³⁵ Later, the bulletin mentioned the importance of social rights for these nations. They should have the freedom from fear of war, invasion, and to be protected from the rise of dictators again.³⁶

Following World War II, the September 1945 bulletin discussed reconstruction again and the importance of democracy. The findings of the Alberta Post- War Reconstruction Committee were printed. The article pointed out the need for democracy because it provided freedom and security. It defined government functions as responding to the expressed desires of the people, and the government could not step outside its proper field of activity. The article stated, “Democracy means government on the spot. Totalitarianism means government by control.”³⁷

Right from the inauguration of the full high school Social Studies program, annual reports discussed the importance of preparing students for active citizenship. As well, the Calgary Herald and the A.T.A. Magazine contained numerous articles which stressed democracy during the first half of the war. The A.T.A. Magazine helped teachers with the new Social Studies curriculum by aiding those who had trouble evaluating citizenship or democracy. Stanley Clarke’s article, “The Evaluation in Social Studies I and II” was intended to help teachers understand the objectives of the new programme. He addressed the evaluation problem by including a test in his

³⁵Department of Education, Classroom Bulletin on Social Studies (Edmonton: February, 1944), p. 4. Coutts Library, University of Alberta, h69 a333 Shb.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 6.

³⁷Department of Education, Classroom Bulletin on Social Studies (Edmonton: September 1945), p. 17- 18. Coutts Library, University of Alberta, h69 a33.

article. It tested students' attitudes on the matter of citizenship in order to save democracy. Students read an excerpt and then decided which of the statements offered the best possible solution. The first blank was for the best answer and the third blank for the worst. One question asked:

There is little doubt that the unemployed are susceptible to radical propaganda and some argue that they thus constitute a disruptive element in the state. One person suggests that as soon as a man becomes unemployed he should be forced to go to a government labor camp and there kept at such work as forestry, under a strict surveillance. What are the relative merits of these principles which bear on the above case?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

(A) The welfare of the state is more important than that of the individual.

(B) We wouldn't want to copy anything that Germany does.

(C) Individual liberty is the most valued thing in Democratic nations.³⁸

A second question asked,

One of the boys in Sociology class is a Red- a definite Communist. Many students are not yet well informed and are easily influenced.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

(A) The teacher should cut him short every time he starts to say anything in discussions.

(B) The teacher should argue with him and show him where he is wrong.

(C) The teacher should keep in the background as far as possible and let him and the other members of the class discuss all matters freely.³⁹

³⁸ Stanley Clarke, "Evaluation in Social Studies I and II," A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 1 (September 1939), p. 16-17.

Douglas Arbuckle explained that driving thousands of useless facts into students' heads was not the objective of progressive education. He felt school was to assist in developing good citizens and not just turning out mechanical robots.⁴⁰ Arbuckle felt a student had to:

Learn to use his eyes and his ears; he will learn to reason; he will learn not to accept things blindly, but will analyse them carefully: and so he will not immediately believe everything he hears or reads; he will learn not to be a gullible prey for suave smooth talking gentlemen; he will learn how to question; he will learn that although all that glitters may not be gold, there are many men who think only of that gold, and he will be on the watch for those men; he will learn that he lives in a democracy, and that he must think in terms of the people not of himself; he will learn how to use carefully that symbol of democracy for which our ancestors fought- the right to vote; and he will learn how to guard that right jealously; he will learn that just because he lives in a democracy, he cannot sit back, happy, content and say, "Everything is just wonderful."⁴¹

Arbuckle finished by asking teachers if they were moulding the youth so they would have been real democratic citizens who would build Canada or were they turning out smug, self- satisfied creatures who had eyes and ears, but could not see or hear what went on around them.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 17.

⁴⁰ Douglas Arbuckle. "The Challenge," A.T.A. Magazine, XX. 2 (October 1939). p. 21.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 21.

Two more articles appeared in November 1939 which promoted democracy in the classroom. The first dealt with Remembrance Day and explained that Canada was fighting a war to make the world safe for democracy. Mr. McKee explained the battle was to determine which two types of government was to prevail- dictatorship or self- government. He included a list of characteristics of both a despotic and free state. He suggested,

Should the Nazi ideology prevail, it is hard to visualize what the world would be like. The British Empire in all likelihood would be dissolved. England and France might become second class powers. All the peoples of Europe would pass under the hegemony of Nazi Germany.... Canada's destiny could be either of three things- a German possession, an independent state, a part of the United States of America. Should the allies be defeated, the prospects for the world are lamentably dark.⁴²

The second article was called "What is Democracy?" Professor Hunt reported on "Education For Citizenship" and listed the weaknesses or blocks to current efforts at education for citizenship. The first was the lack of reality in the subject matter and experiences provided in many of the schools. Second, was the lack of positive, colorful and active elements in education for citizenship. Third, was the failure in many instances to train pupils to think, to use facts and to cope with propaganda. Fourth, was the failure of schools in general to provide adequate and continued experience

⁴² G.A. McKee, "Remembrance Day," A.T.A. Magazine, XX. 3 (November 1939), p. 6.

in the practice of democracy in the classroom, the school and the community. Fifth, was the lack of a program for developing leaders. Sixth, was the difficulty of finding teachers with the personal and professional qualities needed for a program in which the teacher is often the determining factor in ultimate success or failure.⁴³

The 1940 annual report discussed meeting the objectives of democracy. One inspector stated, "Educators and citizens now accept the fact of change in the school programs and recognize vital importance of ensuring that democracy's schools serve democracy."⁴⁴ A second inspector said, "Progressive teachers are approximating in the classrooms, the community life the students will later experience and the latter are getting actual practice in citizenship and the democratic way of life."⁴⁵ Dr. Ryan, of Northwestern University, commented on democratic classrooms and believed, "the schoolroom should be a friendly place, that the teacher should try to create a democratic atmosphere as this was most conducive to producing pupils who were resourceful and yet who felt secure and so did better work."⁴⁶

A January 1940 A.T.A. Magazine article stated, "Here in Alberta we were just nicely launched on a new system of studies, one that would make for better citizens, contributing we hope, something of value to a better

⁴³Christine Manser, "Summary of Columbia Programs to Improve Education in the United States." A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 3 (November 1939), p. 5.

⁴⁴AR, 1940, p. 39.

⁴⁵AR, 1940, p. 69.

⁴⁶ "A.T.A. Honors Veteran Teachers," Calgary Herald, 23 March 1940.

world.”⁴⁷ Mr. King explained schools were to play a significant part in the struggle for “peace on earth and goodwill towards men.”⁴⁸ That same month, Mr. Thomas discussed education and democracy. He claimed, “If democracy was to be saved and developed it will be by and through the schools and teachers of Canada presenting a programme of education for living in a democracy. The schools of the world are the battlefields where democracy is to be won or lost for the world of tomorrow.”⁴⁹ Thomas said political safety lay in education and if we wanted a democratic state in Canada, citizenship would have provided the background for progressive democratic thought.⁵⁰

In May, Stanley Clarke helped teachers evaluate the Social Studies II course. He explained that the ultimate goal of Social Studies was to develop students for intelligent citizenship. They should experience democratic leadership, learn current events and lessons of history and gain skills in collecting and evaluating evidence.⁵¹ Clarke provided numerous examples of questions he used. One asked to compare and contrast governments in France, England, and Germany with a list of statements

⁴⁷Walter King, “Education By Concussion,” A.T.A. Magazine, XX. 5 (January 1940), p. 15.

⁴⁸Ibid, p. 15.

⁴⁹J.M. Thomas, “Education and Democracy,” A.T.A. Magazine, XX. 5 (January 1940), p. 7.

⁵⁰Ibid. p. 7.

⁵¹Stanley Clarke. “Evaluation in Social Studies II,” A.T.A. Magazine, XX. 9 (May 1940), p. 15.

provided. One of the statements to be discussed said, “Democratic governments are more imperialistic than autocratic governments.”⁵² A second question asked,

Mussolini recognized Japan’s puppet government in China before it was created; he is fostering a Balkan pact, friendly towards Franco and suspicious of Britain and France. Give a careful estimate of Mussolini’s policy, considering as a background the facts you know about Italy.⁵³

The A.T.A. Magazine reported what took place at the Canadian Teachers’ Federation Conference (C.T.F.) in Hamilton in 1940. That Education Week in November they titled, “Education for Democracy in War and Peace.”⁵⁴ The objective of the programme was to be more spirited with Canadian unity and partnership in the present struggle for human liberties.⁵⁵ Next month, the editorial rallied teachers around democracy. It stated, “Teachers, your nation needs you now to do a good job in the schools, to teach good citizenship in a more vivid manner than ever before, to develop unity of aim in your own little community, striving at all times to curb any tendency towards detachment and laissez- faire. Neutrality doesn’t pay anyway.”⁵⁶ Mr. Barnett claimed it was not enough for teachers to

⁵² Ibid, p. 17.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 17.

⁵⁴ “C.T.F. Conference at Hamilton, August 13- 16, 1940”, A.T.A. Magazine, XXI, 1 (September 1940), p. 5.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 5.

⁵⁶ John Barnett. “Carry- On.” A.T.A. Magazine, XXI, 2 (October 1940), p. 1.

simply give lip- service to the great ideal [*democracy*] or to discuss it abstrusely in a Social Studies class.⁵⁷

The A.T.A. Magazine that winter assisted teachers with the objectives of citizenship. Dr. Samuel Everett wrote, “What does citizenship mean in a democracy? Are the public schools teaching citizenship? How may democratic citizenship be better taught in our schools?”⁵⁸ The article helped teachers to understand the concepts of democracy. In December, Ida Vyse wrote, “The objective of Social Studies, Sociology, citizenship and enterprise courses is not ‘credits’ but understanding and citizenship and life. It is suggested that the new Canadian field offers possibilities for experiments in practical citizenship.”⁵⁹

The annual report discussed the issues surrounding democracy in the new programme of studies. Prime Minister Mackenzie King said in the 1941 report:

If we want a new social order after the war, we must begin to build it now; and if it is true that we cannot build a thoroughly democratic society with the traditional type of education, then it follows that we must begin now to plan our school programmes for democratic uses, and to plan them in a democratic manner.⁶⁰

⁵⁷Ibid. p. 2.

⁵⁸Dr. Samuel Everett, “Schools Are Teaching Citizenship,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXI, 3 (November 1940), p. 5.

⁵⁹Ida Vyse. “We Teach New Canadians,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXI, 4 (December 1940), p. 14.

⁶⁰AR, 1941. p. 20.

As early as 1941, many suggestions were made to implement more democracy and citizenship content into the Social Studies curriculum. Study groups were to be formed and to make a rough draft of a modern high school programme. Some of the suggested areas to investigate included,

1(A) To what extent does the subsistence of a democratic social order depend on its system and programme of education?

(B) Is it possible to build a democratic society with the traditional system and programme of education?

(C) On what concepts of democracy should a high- school curriculum be built?

(D) It has been held that the high school programme should be designed to foster (i) scholarship, (ii) discipline, (iii) personality and character, and (iv) social responsibility. Are these aims valid? Are they compatible? What is their order of precedence?

2. In what ways should the high school be ready to help with the work of post- war reconstruction?⁶¹

In March 1941, a proposal was made by the unofficial Committee of Ontario Teachers to the Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship. They suggested a series of pamphlets entitled “What We Are Fighting For- The Democratic Way” which taught the theory and history of democracy for grades 7- 10. It explained high school grades could also use these with or without the teacher’s assistance. Each pamphlet was a chapter and there were thirteen in all. Such titles included: The Democratic Way, Canada as a

⁶¹ AR, 1941, p. 21- 22.

Democracy, Freedom of Press and Speech, Dictatorship- the Great Illusion, What Democracy Means To You, Responsibility of the Citizen in a Democracy, and How Can We Make Democracy Work?⁶²

In April 1941, two Calgary Herald articles addressed citizenship and democracy. On April 19, the paper printed the two winning essays from the provincial Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire (I.O.D.E.) contest. Students wrote on the subject, "What Democracy means to me."⁶³ On April 25, an article discussed how schools were actively involved in the sale of war savings stamps and Red Cross work had greatly expanded. In addition, the "Number of sewing and knitting groups has increased and a plan for the regular collection of magazines for soldiers' camps and hospitals has been augurated."⁶⁴

John Barnett, editor of the A.T.A. Magazine, urged teachers to do more when it came to preserving democracy. He said, "Teachers must become more than paying spectators on the side- lines, that we must become active participants on the side of democracy and that we must guard it zealously from attack from every and any quarter, while at the same time seeking to refine it and extend its privileges. How can this best be done?"⁶⁵

⁶²A proposal put forward by an unofficial committee of Ontario Teachers to the Canadian Council of Education For Citizenship, "Teaching Citizenship in Schools," A.T.A. Magazine, XXI, 7 (March 1941), p. 11.

⁶³ "Youth Looks at Democracy," Calgary Herald, 19 April 1941.

⁶⁴ "Effect of War on School System Shown in Report," Calgary Herald, 25 April 1941.

⁶⁵ John Barnett. "Presidents News Letter," A.T.A. Magazine, XXI, 7 (March 1941), p. 3.

The article went on to define democracy and how teachers should continue in the fight to maintain and promote it.

Two months later, Dr. Harold Rugg's radio address in Edmonton was published in the A.T.A. Magazine. He stated,

To guarantee minimum understanding the very foundation of education must be the study of the actual problems and controversial issues of our people. There is no way by which the democratic principle of consent can be carried on other than that of the parliamentary discussion of issues. But consent based upon knowledge of only one aspect or side of a problem, upon the avoidance of controversy, is a travesty of both knowledge and democracy. To keep issues out of the school, therefore is to keep thought out of it; is to keep life out of it. Moreover, democracy cannot be understood except as it is lived. Our young people and their elders must practice it in the family, in school, in community, organizations everywhere. To study government effectively they must take part in governing. Obviously they can do this most realistically in the government of their own group life.⁶⁶

That fall, four other citizenship articles appeared in the A.T.A. Magazine. One September article suggested schools send out a questionnaire which mentioned "How generations of young citizens [*were*] eager to cooperate and to serve, eager to apply the art of serious learning in their daily life and work, and devoted to the master art of self- instruction and self- perfection."⁶⁷ The article listed twelve essential characteristics of

⁶⁶Dr. Harold Rugg, "Education and the North American Democratic Way of Life," A.T.A. Magazine, XXI, 9 (May 1941), p. 11.

⁶⁷A document prepared by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, based on the proposals of the New Education Fellowship Meeting held Ann Arbor, Michigan, July 6-

a democratic state. One stated, "To respect man's dignity while recognizing his duty to society is to advance towards that democracy of citizens and of states; to perfect, maintain, and defend this is the end of education."⁶⁸

V. Gable could not emphasize the testing of citizenship enough. He stressed, "We must not stop education in citizenship at public school just when the young citizen is beginning to think."⁶⁹ He explained how a student should never leave school institutions without practical instruction in how he may actively participate in public affairs in order to control the government and make democracy work. Gable suggested new courses should be created to include these principles and that one quarter of a student's school time should be devoted to it.⁷⁰

An A.T.A. Committee on Democracy was formed and submitted progress reports to the A.T.A. Magazine. In their first report they suggested that wall cards on the theme of democracy be displayed in the classes.⁷¹ The convenor, A.J.H. Powell, explained how a symbol for democracy should also be created. It was suggested that the Swastika represents something, therefore democracy needs a symbol representing free people

13. 1941. "Proposal To Men of Goodwill For Educational Reconstruction." A.T.A. Magazine, XXII, 1(September 1941), p. 9.

⁶⁸Ibid, p. 9.

⁶⁹V. Gable. "So You Want Democracy," A.T.A. Magazine, XXII, 1(September 1941), p. 45.

⁷⁰Ibid, p. 45.

⁷¹A.J.H. Powell, "Progress Report of A.T.A. Committee on Democracy," A.T.A. Magazine, XXII, 2 (October 1941), p. 7.

freely working out their destiny.⁷²

The 1942 annual report commented on students and their citizenship roles. It stated a large number had joined cadets and others helped the war effort by packing goods, knitting or sewing.⁷³ The report stated inspectors, “generally agreed that training for citizenship in a democracy, or in other words, training for social responsibility, is one of the three most important objectives, if not the most important objective, of the high school programme.”⁷⁴ It was also noted that “the scope of Social Studies now definitely includes appreciation of the privileges and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship of British and democratic aims and ideals, and of Canada’s part in the war effort of the United Nations.”⁷⁵

The Calgary Herald wrote about student citizenship in March. An article discussed how students were given a longer summer holiday to help farmers with the harvest. One Western Canada High School girl mentioned how she and her sorority helped at two farms last summer cooking for the harvest gangs. This summer she planned, “to organize a trip to British Columbia in the hope that they could get work on fruit farms.”⁷⁶ In October 1942, the paper announced how the Victory Loan Drive had made record gains and the loan headquarters said, “Young Canadians have shown a keen

⁷²Ibid, p. 7.

⁷³AR, 1942, p. 66.

⁷⁴Ibid, p. 14.

⁷⁵Ibid, p. 69.

⁷⁶ “Long Holiday,” Calgary Herald, 24 March 1943.

sense of citizenship.”⁷⁷

The January 1942 A.T.A. Magazine talked of a New Order. L.W. Kunelius suggested a better democracy would arise out of the war and lay the foundations for reconstruction. Before this could occur, he felt it was the responsibility of teachers to work on these foundations via the education of the young. He said it was the schools’ and teachers’ responsibility “to assist pupils in learning the way of democracy.”⁷⁸ To teach this New Order, Kunelius, in his own class, asked his students in grade 11 and 12 “to state what democracy means to them. They were given ten minutes to write their answer and were cautioned against giving quotations.”⁷⁹ He claimed all thirty students revealed some understanding of its real meaning but few understood its all encompassing definition. Most tended to think in terms of rights alone. He also asked the pupils to list the privileges and responsibilities of students as citizens in a democratic school. By collecting all the responses, the class covered all aspects of democracy.⁸⁰ A follow up article was given the next month, and Kunelius continued to ask what we were doing about “Education for Democracy.” He proposed numerous aspects that should be explored when teaching democracy. Some proposals included teaching the meaning of democracy, the appreciation of civil liberties, problems in social welfare, and a study of our own political

⁷⁷ “Victory Loan Drive Holds Record Gains,” Calgary Herald, 27 October 1942.

⁷⁸ L.W. Kunelius, “Teaching For the New Order,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXII, 5 (January 1942), p. 11.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

institutions and processes.⁸¹

Dr. Carr, in the April 1942 A.T.A. Magazine explained the difficulty of the change in education and how these children would have to grow up and live their lives before it could be known whether this new education was a success or failure. To tackle this new programme, he felt, “Fellowship, cooperation, democracy, a number of very difficult terms need to be carefully defined. The aim of the proposed revision is to form good citizens for a democracy. This, to say the least, is very vague.”⁸²

There was much debate as to how citizenship and democracy were to be taught and whether the attempt was successful. In June 1942, Jennie Elliott wrote in response to Bruce Hutchison’s column in the Calgary Herald. He charged that Canada’s schools were not producing the citizenship which Canada needed. Elliott, a thirty year veteran of education, defended Alberta schools and felt, “there are very many of our students not only well- informed, but willing and even eager to face up boldly to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.”⁸³ She stated that those who did not accept these duties could fault society and factors surrounding economic opportunities but not the education system.

In 1943, the Calgary Herald published more articles regarding

⁸¹L. W. Kunelius. “Teaching For the New Order.” A.T.A. Magazine, XXII, 6 (February 1942), p. 25- 26.

⁸²Dr. H. Carr. “The High School Programme.” A.T.A. Magazine, XXII, 8 (April 1942). p. 13.

⁸³Jennie Elliott. “Our Schools and Our Democracy,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXII, 10 (June 1942), p. 11.

citizenship and democracy. One emphasized the importance of citizenship and said, "If we want good citizens, we must start developing them in the home and in the school....[schools] must promote the formation of study groups studying the meaning of democracy."⁸⁴ An editorial stressed special emphasis be placed on citizenship to impress upon the youth the demands to be met in order to be classified as a good citizen. The writer felt that failure to educate our youth was the fault of both parents and schools.⁸⁵ Finally, a third article mentioned how the Second World War contributed to students' becoming better citizens. The writer explained how times had changed in high school circles. In the past a student with 25 cents in his pocket was rich. Now, the writer said, "Take the lads in the senior grades at Crescent Heights High School for instance. They measure wealth in terms of victory bonds."⁸⁶

The mention of citizenship and democracy in the annual report and the A.T.A. Magazine declined after 1942 and did not resurface until the end of the Second World War. In April, 1945, the issue of whether the principles of democracy were imparted to students was raised again. Dr. Floyd Willoughby said:

In these recent war years is a pronounced and widespread feeling that somehow the schools have not quite measured up to their opportunities in imparting to

⁸⁴ "H.S.A. Delegates Divided On Longer School Holiday." Calgary Herald, 28 April 1943.

⁸⁵ "Observations." Calgary Herald, 23 October 1943.

⁸⁶ "School Boys Subscribe \$2500 to War Loan." Calgary Herald, 22 October 1943.

the youth of the country the ideals and principles of democracy. On all sides we have been hearing something like this: "Look at the important part played by education in welding Soviet Russia into a United Nation. See how the Nazis used education to transform the thinking of the people in a few short years." Why can't education save Democracy in a similar manner.⁸⁷

There was a shortage of teachers during the 1940s because many were involved in the armed services, the war industry, or simply chose not to enter education because of the poor salary. The Edmonton Journal stated, "now in the midst of this dreadful war, we note that many of our promising educators are leaving the profession for more lucrative positions in a wartime economy."⁸⁸ Some believed the poor quality of teachers and the apathy towards the new progressive education resulted in its ineffective implementation. Willoughby said the teaching ranks had been so depleted since 1940 that now "thousands of immature, totally or partially untrained teachers staff many of our schools. Young people who, however willing they may be, haven't the slightest conception of their real responsibilities."⁸⁹ Willoughby explained three things that were necessary to evaluate our citizens for a truly democratic society. Firstly, conditions were to be met to attract the best men and women into the teaching

⁸⁷Dr. Floyd Willoughby, "Education for National Unity and the World of Tomorrow," A.T.A. Magazine, XXIV, 6 (April 1945), p. 31.

⁸⁸ "Conditions Offer Challenge Educators at Banquet Told." Edmonton Journal, 27 April 1943.

⁸⁹Dr. Floyd Willoughby, "Education for National Unity and the World of Tomorrow," A.T.A. Magazine, XXIV, 6 (April 1945), p. 32.

profession. Secondly, the teacher- training institutions should be of the highest calibre and provide a longer and more comprehensive training schedule. Thirdly, a better organization of our school system into larger units and better equipment was necessary.⁹⁰

Near the end of the war, a column was created which published letters to the editor entitled "The Letter Box." Jennie Elliott defended the teaching of democracy in school. She explained students were given access to facts on all sides and were encouraged to examine them fiercely and to make their own decisions. She said Social Studies in high school,

is becoming famous across Canada because it does not attempt to build citizenship of a high order. Our students do present different opinions, examine and discuss them without prejudice, and presently emerge as young voters capable of judging social and economic issues.⁹¹

⁹⁰Ibid. p. 33.

⁹¹Jennie Elliott. "The Letter Box," A.T.A. Magazine, XXIV, 6 (April 1945), p. 44.

CHAPTER TWO

School a Lab

With the creation of the new Social Studies program at the high school level, the Social Studies classroom was to be a lab. Researcher Patricia Oviatt explained that “Social Studies was a vehicle by which insight into the vital areas of social living would be offered. It was to provide free access to all available relevant facts and information and encourage students to look critically at a question before forming a judgement.”¹ Therefore students were encouraged to willingly explore and investigate current issues and not to simply sit in a desk and be told what to know. Newland hoped that students would be able “to develop the ability to see both sides of a question and to think independently on the basis of facts and to educe an attitude of fair mindedness.”² Researcher David Embree explained the principles of activity education. He said that the teacher lectured and explained, but students should be given the opportunity to discover for themselves. The emphasis was on practice in interpreting and understanding facts, not collecting and memorizing.³ Harold Rugg, an American progressive educator, believed that schools should “visualize the curriculum as a continuing stream of child- centered activities, unbroken by

¹Patricia Oviatt, “The Educational Contributions of H.C. Newland,” Master of Education Thesis, University of Calgary 1970, p. 125.

²Ibid, p. 125.

³David Embree, “The Beginning and Growth of Instruction in the Social Studies Provided by the Schools of Alberta,” Master of Education Thesis, University of Calgary, 1952, p. 245.

systematic subjects, and springing from the interests and personally felt needs of the child. Theoretically then, child-centered schools abandoned traditional subject disciplines in favor of activities chosen by students in order to answer questions they raised or in order to explore issues of importance to them.”⁴ Due to conditions in the 1940s many historians have questioned how effective this new progressive education was and whether it really penetrated the classrooms. Most felt that high school Social Studies classes were not active labs because of the teacher shortage and lack of qualified teachers. Historian Robert Patterson felt, “The extent of the change appears to have been superficial at best and more characteristic of the rhetoric of the period than of the actual classroom behaviour of most of Canada’s teachers and students.”⁵

The 1938 annual report explained that high school “Social Studies was the most challenging in its teaching, study procedure and class activity.”⁶ The following year it was reported that “Because of the sweep of subject matter and the range of problems which are treated, it is probable that the new courses in Social Studies are among the most interesting, even if the most difficult of the whole high school programme.”⁷ George Desson, a high school Social Studies teacher at Westlock, commented about

⁴Amy von Heyking, “Shaping an Education for the Modern World,” Doctoral Thesis, University of Calgary, 1996, p. 234.

⁵Ibid, p. 251.

⁶AR, 1938, p. 63.

⁷AR, 1939, p. 71-72.

the new Social Studies curriculum. He said the new program tried to cover too much world history in the three high school years. Desson compared Social Studies to brill cream. He explained how a little dab of brill cream will do you, just like a little smattering of history will do you. As a result, he had no recollections of anything specific or worthwhile coming from his high school Social Studies program.⁸ High school Social Studies teachers not only had to deal with a new curriculum with few resources but had to change the style of teaching from teacher centred and content oriented to student oriented and to allow more freedom of thought. By observing annual reports, inspector reports, and interviews there were a few cases where teachers did attempt to set up their classrooms as a lab and to allow students to explore and investigate.

High school Social Studies teacher J.F. Watkin wrote a three part article regarding classroom procedures, describing in detail what the ideal Social Studies lab should look like. There were to be blackboards, and bulletin boards covered with maps, clippings and time charts. As well, there was to be a reading desk in order to look at papers, reference books, atlases, or dictionaries. Desks were to be replaced by tables to allow for group discussions or projects. There was to be a filing cabinet with index cards to store current materials for easy access. Finally every class was to be equipped with a projector, slides, and pull down maps.⁹ Watkin suggested

⁸Interview with George Desson, March 17, 1998.

⁹J.F. Walkin, "Classroom Procedure in High School Social Studies," A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 5 (January 1940), p. 13.

in the final article that his Social Studies room would stimulate research. He felt, "The general atmosphere of the room is so suggestive of Social Studies, that if a student went there and sat down for half an hour, he would absorb some of it in spite of himself."¹⁰

Dr. Harold Rugg described in an A.T.A. article a typical social science room he saw. He noticed grade twelve students "having a vigorous meeting on the significance to North America and to Russia of Japan's conquest of China. Maps and charts hang on the wall. The tables are piled high with reference books and magazines and bulletins and pamphlets. Folders full of statistical facts supply definite data for critical discussion. Here is the group consideration of a vast amount of individual student research. The teacher, though not presiding, is an alert, subtle questioner and assistant guide to the discussion."¹¹

A number of annual reports discussed how Social Studies classes were set up as labs and allowed more exploration. In 1939 an inspector wrote:

A gratifying number of teachers have grasped the spirit of the course, and have given it a very definite research flavour. Bulletin boards, maps, charts, index files create an atmosphere quite different from that which used to pervade the history classroom. Pupils are learning to discuss the topics of the course and to deal with the ideas in a critical way. In a few instances, unfortunately

¹⁰J.F. Walkin, "Classroom Procedure in High School Social Studies," A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 7 (March 1940), p. 19.

¹¹Dr. Harold Rugg, "Education and the North American Democratic Way of Life," A.T.A. Magazine, XXI, 9 (May 1941), p. 12.

because the teacher has not had enough training in the subject and has no special interest in it, the improvement is less obvious.¹²

In the 1938 annual report, one inspector pointed out how the teaching of Social Studies is, “more vital and inspiring than ever before.... Courses in grade 9 and 10 are taught more intelligently.”¹³ Two years later, another inspector described how high school Social Studies is “most interesting and perhaps most useful of all subjects offered. They lend themselves to the activity teaching techniques and as a result, teachers tend in ever increasing numbers to discontinue the old formalized methods and to attack the subject with a research approach. The courses are providing a means of developing the students socially and morally as well as intellectually.”¹⁴ In 1941, another inspector wrote:

Teachers who have caught the full impact of these courses and who are successful in interpreting their possibilities, manage somehow to keep their pupils purposefully active and give them adequate opportunities for the development of initiative and judgement. While the foregoing objectives are not fully realized in all schools, some of these possibilities are apparent in every classroom under our jurisdiction.¹⁵

As late as 1947, the annual report stated, “In general, explanatory lesson

¹²AR, 1939, p. 71- 72.

¹³AR, 1938, p. 46.

¹⁴AR, 1940, p. 69.

¹⁵AR, 1941, p. 76.

work is well supplemented by investigative reading, and assignment work guided by the teacher and preparatory to students' participation in programme- periods or class discussional.”¹⁶

Throughout the 1940s individual inspector reports revealed that high school Social Studies teachers were trying to create a laboratory out of their classes, and to have students explore and investigate. Inspector H.T. Sparby discussed in his 1942 report of high school Social Studies teacher Derald MacPherson how “In the Social Studies class, the students worked basically on a research project previously outlined by the teacher.”¹⁷ A second inspector's report of Mr. MacPherson two years later revealed: “In grade 11 Social Studies, the pupils spent the period looking through reference books for data on men of importance in the history of the growth of knowledge. My questioning of this group elicited a very good response from two or three pupils.”¹⁸ At Blairmore High School, Inspector Sweet evaluated Miss Selon in 1944. “There is a good balance between teacher- activity and pupil- activity,” he said. “Social Studies classes, to an appropriate extent, are conducted as a work- shop period in which pupils carry on research, become acquainted with a variety of source materials, and discover acceptable solutions to definitive problems.”¹⁹

¹⁶AR, 1947, p. 44.

¹⁷Crowsnest School Division #63, M2004, Box 106, File Folder 877, Glenbow Archives. Hereafter referred to as GA.

¹⁸Crowsnest School Division #63, M2004, Box 106, File Folder 877, GA.

¹⁹Crowsnest School Division #63, M2004, Box 106, File Folder 877, GA.

In 1946, Mr. Cyril Richards, the Social Studies teacher at Pincher Creek, was evaluated by two different inspectors. Inspector A.B. Evenson reported:

In his teaching, he gets the attention of all members of the class by challenging their thinking. Through his appreciation of the objectives towards which the efforts of the students are to be directed, he is able to make all classwork purposeful and worthwhile....In Social Studies 1, the students took the initiative in handling the topic, 'Educational Needs of the Province' and all showed sound thinking on the topic.... In Social Studies 3, suitable problems were assigned on the subject, 'Canada's War Effort' and students proceeded with research activities.²⁰

Inspector C. B. Johnson pointed out in December 1946, how in Richards' Social Studies I and III class "The students are encouraged to participate freely and think clearly. Very good use is made of all faculties such as blackboard, newspapers, library, etc. Makes a strong effort to teach from the practical point of view."²¹ In October 1948, Mr. Johnson reported, "There is a satisfactory balance between student activity and instruction. Good judgement is used in selecting material on new work so that continuity and interest are maintained."²² A few high school students from the 1940s recalled their classes as being like a lab.

Derald Willows, a 1945 graduate from Brooks, could remember how

²⁰Pincher Creek School Division #29, M2017, Box 36, File Folder 322, GA.

²¹Pincher Creek School Division #29, M2017, Box 81, File Folder 827, GA.

²²Pincher Creek School Division #29, M2017, Box 85, File Folder 930, GA.

his high school Social Studies teacher would have the class go and investigate an issue. He explained how the teacher didn't make them take notes and they didn't copy down what he said. The teacher gave assignments and students would go to the books. Mr. Willows described his Social Studies teacher as "Exceedingly knowledgeable and he wasn't the memorizing guy you know, you memorize this, but he set up situations that you had to consider and you'd write about them- the resolution maybe and so on. And [*in*] lots of the myths of history and politics and he made one think. He didn't just get up there and say, you know, learn the flippin' dates. He [*was*] a thoughtful teacher."²³

Mr. Willows explained that the teacher gave a topic and they would have to go and research and find an argument. Willows said, "For example, the Battle of Trafalgar- read this and ask yourself and write a small paragraph- was Nelson a good admiral?.... And he'd say when you put down a statement, 'You get to work and prove that - I think you could be mistaken.' He did not teach the trivia of history and geography and Social Studies and stuff like that."²⁴ Mr. Willows followed in the footsteps of his high school Social Studies teacher when he began teaching Social Studies at a junior/ senior high school in 1949. He also had his students go and explore topics and asked them to write their opinion on certain situations in 150 words or less. Willows didn't call it an essay because that word

²³Interview with Derald Willows, April 14, 1998.

²⁴Ibid.

frightened the pupils.²⁵

Two Western Canada High School graduates also remembered their Social Studies classroom being set up like a lab. Dave Thomson, a 1946 graduate, could recall current events pictures, maps, pictures of leaders and a time line on the wall heavy with dates.²⁶ Dixie McCall, another 1946 graduate, recalled maps and a bulletin board with some current cuttings or clippings from the newspaper. There were also pamphlets on the bulletin board available for the students.²⁷

By 1949, the annual report suggested,

The Social Studies courses present a reasonably well-balanced representation of the social environment of the students, together with a broad summary of historical antecedents and geographical backgrounds. In this field, perhaps more than in most fields of study there is evidence of departure from stereotyped lesson patterns. The teachers generally have caught the spirit of these courses as outlined for the high school and have surrounded their classes with an improved classroom environment and substantial resource- materials.²⁸

To assist teachers in creating their class like a lab, they could have consulted the A.T.A. Magazine. A few articles helped high school Social Studies teachers create a more progressive classroom. Mr. Hahn explained

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Interview with Dave Thomson, March 16, 1998.

²⁷Interview with Dixie McCall, April 1, 1998.

²⁸AR, 1949, p. 32.

the difficulty he had finishing the Social Studies X course, so in his class they created a time chart.

Each member of the class was given his choice of topics. One member took a combination of the first three (period, date, origin); a second had government and third, contributions and culture. The fourth member of the class had to prepare a piece of building paper with the name of the historical period printed along the top of it. Also we had to get pictures and draw some of the tools....²⁹

A column entitled, "Aged in Wood," written by R.A. Wood, helped Social Studies teachers with tips. He wrote, "The other day a teacher of Social Studies 2 requested me to outline for him a suggested procedure in handling Unit I of the new course.... ex. The Reign (Or Downpour) of Henry VIII."³⁰ This article provided tips on how to teach the program of studies and even showed how to relate the past to today and draw historical parallels.

Teachers were able to get much of the needed materials through the A.T.A. Magazine. The Official Bulletin in the magazine offered booklets like 'Canadian Schools at War,' as seen in a 1943 issue.³¹ Teachers could access many posters. Students could see an army, navy, or air force poster with cut- out sheets featuring the cost of missing items of equipment.

²⁹F.G.J. Hahn, "Social Studies --- Grade X," A.T.A. Magazine, XXI, 2 (October 1940), p. 13.

³⁰R.A. Wood, "Aged in Wood," A.T.A. Magazine, XXV, 3 (January 1945), p. 27.

³¹Official Bulletin, Department of Education, A.T.A. Magazine, XXIV, 1 (October- November 1943), p. 47.

Posters of the Axis leaders or German u- boats could be placed in class. The Canadian government would ship out pictures and posters. These pictures dealt with subjects of general interest in the British Commonwealth that correlated with the Alberta course of study and were placed in school libraries.

However, there are some examples of where classrooms were definitely not set up as an exciting Social Studies lab. In both Namao and Gleichen High Schools, the inspectors reported there was no flag or even a picture of the reigning sovereign in the class.³² At the three room Leduc High School the only items on the walls were a flag and a picture of the royal family.³³ The same was at Chipman High School where there was only a framed picture of the King and Churchill in the one room school.³⁴ Some schools didn't even have the basic resource of maps. In Banff, Inspector Kunelius said, "Certain basic maps should be placed in the classrooms where they are likely to be needed most. The present arrangement appears to discourage adequate use of maps which in turn contributes to the alleged lack of understanding of geography on the part of many students."³⁵

Most of the interviewees could not recall their Social Studies class as

³²School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 18, File Folder 54c and Box 12, File Folder 26c, Provincial Archives of Alberta, hereafter referred to as PAA.

³³School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 22, File Folder 106b, PAA.

³⁴School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 40, File Folder 635a, PAA.

³⁵School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 18, File Folder 53j, PAA.

being like a lab and covered with pictures, photos, news clippings, pamphlets, or bulletin boards. Margaret Robson, a Crescent Heights graduate said that they didn't put any pictures up in the room and that it was pretty bare bones.³⁶ Jackie Durkie, another Crescent Heights graduate, felt they "had some maps, but otherwise there was nothing that I can recall. They were not exciting places the way, you know, like the modern day school [*rooms*]."³⁷ George Desson, when he taught at Westlock, only had maps on the walls. He said he would use the maps from the World Affairs magazine and put them up in class because they were especially useful when teaching about World War II.³⁸

At the inauguration of progressive education at the high school level in 1937, not many teachers were willing supporters. The annual report that year discussed some of the pitfalls. One inspector commented that a "large number of teachers, and even of our supervising officials, were trained in the older tradition and for that reason the new programmes are likely to encounter a considerable amount of inertia and even of active opposition."³⁹

A second inspector observed that teachers used traditional methods because of the visible results and also because of the difficulty obtaining references, outlines, and other materials.⁴⁰ By the mid- 1940s, the fact that teachers did

³⁶Interview with Margaret Robson, March 24, 1998.

³⁷Interview with Jackie Durkie, April 2, 1998.

³⁸Interview with George Desson, March 17, 1998.

³⁹AR, 1938, p. 30.

⁴⁰AR, 1938, p. 61.

not create a more student- oriented classroom could still be seen. A number of reasons and examples can be offered.

In December 1945, the A.T.A. Magazine discussed some of the conflicts going on with the curriculum. D.S. Arbuckle said: “Teachers regard themselves as subject matter specialists. We remain chained by educational tradition, be it good or evil. All too many teachers still have a ground-covering complex. I must get to page 169 by May 10.”⁴¹ The annual reports revealed that the existing circumstances hampered teachers from a more progressive education for high school Social Studies classes. Inspector H.C. Sweet noted:

There are classrooms in which the quality of instruction leaves much to be desired. This is particularly true in some cases where a teacher with an elementary and intermediate school certificate had been secured to fill a gap in the high school staff. In the Southern Alberta high school inspectorate, there are 31 centres in which a teacher is giving instruction in one or more subject units beyond the scope of his or her original certification....⁴²

Out in the rural high school, it was even more difficult for teachers to create a more exploratory classroom. At Cessford High School in the Berry Creek School Division, Inspector Sparby observed, “The programme of subjects being offered this year is heavy for one teacher. It is unusual to find three

⁴¹D.S. Arbuckle, “Curriculum Conflict,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXVI, 3 (December 1945), p. 12.

⁴²AR, 1946, p. 34.

units of English and three units of Social Studies all being taught the same year in a one room high school.”⁴³ The 1947 annual report commented, “It is agreed that effectiveness of instruction in the small high school is below standard. The two-teacher high school does fairly good work but instruction time is limited to eighty- five percent of standard requirements and there are limitations to curricula.”⁴⁴

Most of the people interviewed could not recall ever being asked to investigate or to write argumentative essays. Donna Oughton, who graduated from Western Canada High School in 1946, explained that she didn’t remember doing essays in Social Studies. She said that you never really expressed your opinion. You might have gone and done some research, but it wasn’t very often for Social Studies. Mostly you would just do homework.⁴⁵ Betty Wolfe, who graduated from Crescent Heights in 1944, explained how they wrote reports but you never argued a position. She recalled that the students would research the origins of the C.C. F. Party or the Social Credit Party, but would never write an assignment like the one her daughter just wrote. Her daughter wrote a scathing report about Premier Ralph Klein, and Betty said they never had an assignment like that.⁴⁶ George Desson, a high school Social Studies teacher at Westlock in 1946 explained how he never assigned any argumentative essays. He recalled

⁴³School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 209, File Folder 3867, PAA.

⁴⁴AR, 1947, p. 33.

⁴⁵Interview with Donna Oughton, April 21, 1998.

⁴⁶Interview with Betty Wolfe, April 29, 1998.

that essays implied opinion and he felt that he didn't know enough to encourage a position paper.⁴⁷

Mr. Desson's frustration as a high school Social Studies teacher with the curriculum can be seen through a couple of articles in the A.T.A. Magazine. In December 1940, an article entitled, "The Fall of France," helped teachers who had trouble explaining why France was defeated. Arthur Allen commented that "Since last June, students of the international scene had been asking what happened in France that caused the collapse of the once first democracy in Europe."⁴⁸ He provided a description of three recently published books which attempted to explain why and how France fell.

It was hard for teachers to ask students for argumentative essays when they didn't know all the facts surrounding these events. By 1944, this problem was still seen. In the April issue of the A.T.A. Magazine, M.D. McEachern explained, "The only criticism of the new grade XII course yet perceived is that much of the matters of units 3 and 4 is in the realm of conflicting opinion about an uncertain future that it is difficult to sift material from the wide range of periodical opinions and counter- opinions and that it is therefore difficult to teach the course with assurance. The Social Studies Bulletin might well assist in overcoming this difficulty."⁴⁹

⁴⁷Interview with George Desson, March 17, 1998.

⁴⁸Arthur Allen, "The Fall of France," A.T.A. Magazine, XXI, 4 (December 1940), p. 22.

⁴⁹M.D. McEachern, "High School Curriculum Revision," A.T.A. Magazine, XXIV, 6 (April 1944), p. 27.

Some teachers simply lacked the experience to create a more thought provoking Social Studies class. Inspector Sparby observed Miss Mary Moore, a first year teacher at Pincher Creek and had this comment. He noticed, "The class discussions in English 3 and in Social Studies 3 (on U.S.- South American relationships) were not directed with sufficient confidence to make them as significant and thought- provoking as they could have been."⁵⁰ Mr. Murray Smith was another first year high school Social Studies teacher at Blairmore in 1948. His inspector's report explained that "Mr. Smith in anxiety to make progress in a course.... sometimes overlooks resources of his classes- it is good pedagogy to create situations which will force the students to use their knowledge in a logical manner or in other words challenge their thinking so that answers to questions will be supported by reasons."⁵¹

Part of the whole new progressive education philosophy dealt with social change. Newland, who coordinated the Social Studies curriculum committee, believed, "Society is not carried on by isolated individuals, but by cooperative interactions of both individuals and groups. The life of a single person cannot be separated from the social milieu in which he operates. The school must therefore provide a social environment in which the learner may develop his capabilities not only as an individual, but also

⁵⁰Pincher Creek School Division #29, M2017, Box 36, File Folder 325, GA.

⁵¹Crowsnest School Divison #63, M2004, Box 106, File Folder 877, GA.

as a member of society.”⁵² Therefore Newland suggested cooperative group action and participation by students in the initiation, planning, and carrying out of activities in the classroom. This classroom experience would help pupils prepare for participation in the world outside the school and for real life situations.⁵³ Newland truly felt that at the middle and high school level that “Social Studies class was to be the real laboratory where cooperation, initiative, and responsibility are developed. The school would not hope to educate a child to live in society without providing him a realistic environment.”⁵⁴

Newland’s philosophy of schools being valid agents of social change and the creation of a more cooperative society can be seen in the Department of Education Annual Reports. As early as 1939, the reports observed, “Instructional procedures of a less formal type, including group discussions, committee reports, open forums, and class projects; and more guidance and personal direction for the students.”⁵⁵ The 1940 annual report stated that even teachers would no longer be graded “in keeping with the policy of eliminating competitive spirit in our schools....It is now possible to make frank and fully written comments to the teacher on personal and technical points, which formerly invited trouble if included in the report to

⁵²Patricia Oviatt, “The Educational Contributions of H.C. Newland,” Masters of Education Thesis, University of Calgary, 1970, p. 122.

⁵³Ibid, p. 122.

⁵⁴Ibid, p. 123.

⁵⁵AR, 1939, p. 17.

trustees.”⁵⁶

For the next few years annual reports continued to mention how there were cooperative activities in the high school Social Studies classroom. In the 1941 report, one inspector observed that progress in Social Studies was apparent in individual and group reporting.⁵⁷ The following year another inspector commented:

In Social Studies genuine progress has continued in the development of cooperative procedures which implement the objectives of the course. Learning has become a more active process through application of the principle of division of responsibility within the class group in research, in preparation and presentation of reports and findings and in evaluation, guided by the teachers, of the contributions of the group members. It is becoming the rule to plan and equip the library room for group study.⁵⁸

By 1944, it was explained that “Group work is suggested with division of responsibility among committees and individual students. Guided activities are recommended to be carried through such steps as co-operative planning, research study, analysis of findings, and clear statement of meanings and conclusions. The number of classrooms in which such activities are being carried on successfully are gratifying.”⁵⁹

The A.T.A. Magazine also discussed the philosophy and importance

⁵⁶ AR, 1940, p. 63.

⁵⁷ AR, 1941, p. 76.

⁵⁸ AR, 1942, p. 69.

⁵⁹ AR, 1944, p. 56.

of cooperation in classroom activities. An article in February 1940, explained how to teach theme I in Social Studies I. It discussed how to explore the country of Egypt by collecting pictures and slides, talking of the influence of geography, all of which will lead to group projects and presentations.⁶⁰ Another article in 1944 assisted teachers in discussing the course of studies. G.C. French wrote that Social Studies “Stresses development of each child’s ability for use in a democratic society; that it embraces the tasks of teaching the child to use his talents in his contributions to the group with whom he is working, of training him to work individually, as well as cooperatively so that he may attain satisfaction from his own efforts and of giving him the knowledge and skills which will make his contributions effective.”⁶¹ A few inspectors’ reports identified with the need to have a cooperative classroom.

Not all schools had the resources to set up a classroom for group work. Inspector Sparby observed the accommodations at Blairmore School. This four room school had only 61 high school students in 1944. He reported, “It would be desirable to equip one of the classrooms, partially at least, with large tables and chairs for the use of committees of pupils carrying on study activities appropriate in Social Studies and kindred subjects.”⁶² Yet over in Pincher Creek, cooperative activity was taking

⁶⁰J.F. Watkin, “Classroom Procedure in High School Social Studies,” A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 6 (February 1940), p. 9.

⁶¹G.C. French, “Selecting Objectives for Units of Work,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXIV, 4 (February 1944), p. 15.

⁶²Crowsnest School Divison #63, M2004, Box 106, File Folder 877, GA.

place in the Social Studies classes. The inspector's report on Mr. Leonard Harper pointed out, "The group study method is followed in presenting the comprehensive Social Studies 2 course. The teacher threw the responsibility quite freely on the class and the leaders selected for the day carried out their duties quite acceptably, considering the time of year. The lesson was in the appropriate procedure and if preserved in this method should, by the end, be productive of fine results."⁶³ As well, Miss Edna Colclough implemented group work into her Social Studies classes. The inspector wrote that "Students participated in a round table discussion in grade 10 Social Studies. The group method of study, research and report is used to good purpose."⁶⁴

Many classrooms were set up to allow cooperative or committee work to take place. Inspector Sweet reported in 1943 on the excellent layout of the Social Studies classrooms at the Lethbridge High School. "The Social Studies room [*was*] fitted out with tables and chairs instead of the outmoded rigid desks and seats. It is the most modern room in the building," remarked Sweet.⁶⁵ "The Social Studies room is as good as can be found in any city high school in the province."⁶⁶ The six room high school at Wetaskiwin had a very good Social Studies room equipped "with study

⁶³Pincher Creek School Divison #29, M2017, Box 36, File Folder 322, GA.

⁶⁴Pincher Creek School Divison #29, M2017, Box 36, File Folder 322, GA.

⁶⁵School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box13, File Folder 36h, PAA.

⁶⁶Ibid.

tables and chairs in place of the outmoded immovable desks and seats.”⁶⁷

Inspector Warren observed the Innisfail High School in 1948. He stated, “One of the regular classrooms has been appropriately fitted for use for the socialized routines of Social Studies, the tables and chairs permitting committee organization as needed.”⁶⁸

Some of the smaller high schools created committee tables to allow for more group activity. The one room Mountain View High School was said to have “A large table which the pupils use for games during recesses and for discussion groups during school time.”⁶⁹ At the two room school in Namao the inspector stated one large table was available for group activities.⁷⁰ At the three room Canmore school only 62 students attended in 1945. The report that year stated how occasional use was made of group or committee work in the home economics room.⁷¹

A large number of interviewees could not recall doing any group activity or committee work, but a few did remember such programs. Joyce Spence, graduated from Crescent Heights High School in 1940 and could recall doing committee work. She explained how students would be placed in groups and were sent off to do research and discussion. After they

⁶⁷School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 21, File Folder 92h, PAA.

⁶⁸School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 20, File Folder 73a, PAA.

⁶⁹School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 22, File Folder 99b, PAA.

⁷⁰School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 12, File Folder 26c, PAA.

⁷¹School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 20, File Folder 65b, PAA.

cooperated on a project, they had to present it to their Social Studies teacher, Mr. Ferguson. She recalled how this was one of the major thrusts of Social Studies at that time. In order to prepare pupils for university, students had to be able to work by themselves and in groups, and to not have the teacher always standing over you.⁷² Betty Wolfe, a 1944 Crescent Heights graduate, could recall doing committee work. She explained that she worked in “Small groups- one or two- that was neat. I just loved it.”⁷³

George Desson, a 1942 graduate, remembered his cooperative activities in Social Studies. He remembered his Social Studies teacher assigned committee work. Desson didn't like committee work and saw it as a punishment. He explained that three or four students would go sit in the teacher's office for three or four days and put a report together. He felt this report was not terribly intellectually gripping and he didn't feel it was worth missing three days of notes.⁷⁴ George Desson would later teach Social Studies at Westlock in 1946. He would “lecture and encourage students to read and [*offer a*] tokenism on committee work.”⁷⁵ He assigned students a topic and they would go off and research causes of the war and report on it in groups of three. Desson expressed that he “didn't really know how much value there was in it. I suppose they did some research that went far deeper

⁷²Interview with Joyce Spence, March 18, 1998.

⁷³Interview with Betty Wolfe, April 29, 1998.

⁷⁴Interview with George Desson, March 17, 1998.

⁷⁵Ibid.

than any lecturing I could have done.”⁷⁶

Two students who attended Western Canada High School in the 1940s remember doing group or committee work. Dixie McCall, a 1946 graduate recalled getting into groups of three or four and doing research, but couldn't remember on what.⁷⁷ Stu Miller, also a 1946 graduate, could remember doing a group project in high school. He said, “We did quite a project on Australia.... I recall drawing a lot of different maps and this sort of thing, what the area was, you know, what the different zones were in Australia.”⁷⁸

A vital part of the new Social Studies program was to generate interest or discussion on the behalf of the students. Amy von Heyking explained how students were to research or investigate problems facing society, and class forums or discussions provided pupils with the chance to present research and debate the solutions.⁷⁹ A radio address by Dr. Harold Rugg explained what he saw transpiring in the United States. He commented how he would go to the school after dinner where several hundred grown ups and high school students held a forum. They would all

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Interview with Dixie McCall, April 1, 1998.

⁷⁸Interview with Stu Miller, March 31, 1998.

⁷⁹Amy von Heyking, “Shaping an Education for the Modern World,” Doctoral Thesis, University of Calgary, 1996, p. 252.

debate topics, such as, if world war comes, could America keep out.⁸⁰ For progressive education to work, teachers would have to move away from simply lecturing and giving notes. Student participation had to be included in this new program of studies. This task appeared to have encountered obstacles. In 1947, an inspector said, “One of the real problems in Social Studies is that of assisting teachers to develop criteria for the continuous evaluation of pupils’ achievement and understanding. The participatory process is not in itself a thing of excellence; it is a means of developing qualities, attitudes and habits of critical thinking.”⁸¹ There appears to be a mix as to whether teachers initiated discussions in class or simply dictated the information needed to be learned.

There are several examples where we see evidence of classroom discussions or presentations in Social Studies. The 1940 annual report pointed out that in Social Studies “Results are achieved by means of investigative reading, tabulations, and summaries, activities of project or semi-enterprise types, with round table discussions or formal lessons concluding problem studies.”⁸² Stanley Clarke explained in an A.T.A. Magazine article that when he taught he finished his units with oral reports and presentations.⁸³ A number of inspectors’ reports claimed classroom

⁸⁰Dr. Harold Rugg, “Education and the North American Democratic Way of Life,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXI, 9 (May 1941), p. 11.

⁸¹AR, 1947, p. 44.

⁸²AR, 1940, p. 65.

⁸³Stanley Clarke, “Evaluation in Social Studies,” A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 9 (May 1940), p. 15.

discussions or forums took place in high school Social Studies.

Inspector Sparby wrote two evaluations of Miss Claire Nagler's Social Studies classroom pointing out her active teaching techniques. The first report in 1942 observed Miss Nagler, a first year teacher, and said, "Grade X Social Studies discussion was fairly effective, though rather rambling."⁸⁴ The following year, Sparby wrote, "In the classroom, she maintains firm control over the pupils, employing a suitable variety of teaching methods to hold their interest. Discussions, during which there is an open- minded attitude toward all honest opinions, are encouraged."⁸⁵ Two years later at the same school, Inspector Sparby observed Miss Mary Moore who taught Social Studies II and III. Sparby reported, "In Social Studies II and in Biology II, several pupils took active parts in discussions which, though interesting, were not always pertinent to the topics under consideration. The grade 12 Social Studies lesson on the Scandinavian countries was well organized and more to the point."⁸⁶

Mr. Cyril Richards taught Social Studies X, XI, and XII in 1948. Inspector Johnson reported, "Situations are created to stimulate organized thinking and to develop sound understandings. The students have made definite progress in learning to express themselves on general questions which are partly aside from the material being studied. The goal of each lesson is kept before the class thus valuable time is used to the best

⁸⁴Pincher Creek School Divison #29, M2017, Box 36, File Folder 325, GA.

⁸⁵Pincher Creek School Divison #29, M2017, Box 36, File Folder 325, GA.

⁸⁶Pincher Creek School Divison #29, M2017, Box 36, File Folder 322, GA.

advantage.”⁸⁷ At Blairmore, Miss Isabelle Sellon, who had 25 years experience, taught Social Studies 1 and 3. In 1942, Inspector Sparby observed, “In the lessons which I saw, clearly defined aims made the work purposeful. Although lack of sufficient order in discussions resulted at times in a bit of confusion, there were evidences of genuine student interest.”⁸⁸ Two years later Inspector H.C. Sweet wrote, “The lesson and discussion in Social Studies 3 with a class of 13, followed headings on Problems Arising from Canada’s Proximity to the United States, which had been placed on the blackboard. Pupil- contributions were well evaluated by the teacher in Social Studies 1.”⁸⁹ The principal, Donald MacPherson, who also had 25 years experience, taught Social Studies 2. The report stated: “Students react quite intelligently to Mr. MacPherson’s thought stimulating questions. He does not overlook the value of individual guidance and help. He has learned from experience and observation as to what difficulties an average student may have.”⁹⁰

Many other teachers attempted to instigate discussion. Herbert T. Coutts was inspected in 1939 when he taught at Claresholm. Inspector Sullivan wrote:

Mr. Coutts makes some concessions to the new procedures in Social Studies, and secures a large measure of class activity in this subject, but is inclined to over-

⁸⁷Pincher Creek School Division #29, M2017, Box 85, File Folder 930, GA.

⁸⁸Crowsnest School Divison #63, M2004, Box 106, File Folder 877, GA.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

teach and would be well advised to stimulate more leadership on the part of students in assembling material and presenting the material to the class. The lesson in Social Studies 1 featured some class discussion and pupils answered questions and read from their scribblers some of their prepared material. Mr. Coutts used no notes or references himself and displayed good command of subject matter, but as before he dominated the class and did not stimulate enough student activity to satisfy the objectives of the new course.⁹¹

A report eight months later by inspector Sullivan stated that Mr. Coutts was well known for his fine style and was, “markedly successful in stimulating discussion.”⁹²

Two inspectors reports revealed Mr. Rassaie Racette’s interaction in Social Studies class at Blairmore High School in 1939 and 1940. The first report said:

He has admirably caught the spirit of Social Studies courses and his methods feature plenty of research and study on the part of the pupils, combined with intelligent direction and well- informed exposition on the part of the teacher. The subject of Current Events is closely linked up with the Social Studies in both grades, thus giving life and point to the later.... Students are spontaneous and cheerful in their response to his methods, and they put forth a high degree of personal effort.⁹³

The second report stated, “The newer techniques in Social Studies are

⁹¹School District Records, Accession 79.334, Box 454, File Folder 23, PAA.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³School District Records, 79.334, Box 599, File Folder 27, PAA.

exemplified to a pleasing degree in Mr. Racette's lessons.... The lesson featured carefully- prepared and well constructed student reports, followed by an enlightened and thought- provoking discussion. Interest in the subject is high; student participation is whole- hearted and at times spirited."⁹⁴

Two other Social Studies teachers were found to implement student involvement in the class at Red Deer High School in 1949. Wellington Dawe was a twelve year veteran when his report said,

Well informed, studious and energetic. He prepares his work carefully and enlists the students' active participation.... In Social Studies 2, the students' contributions of Canada's and Newfoundland's gains and losses through confederation were listed and evaluated. This procedure aroused considerable sustained interest. Mr. Dawe is giving splendid service and his students respond accordingly.⁹⁵

The other teacher, Arthur Allen had 19 years experience and received an equally impressive report. The inspector wrote:

He realizes the value of having his students take part and utilizes their contributions advantageously, thus interest was kept on a high level at all times.... Excellent use was made of the "Magictape Machine." After listening to a radio commentator's summary of the recent provincial legislative session, the students took part in discussing the important items and gave reasons for any opinions expressed. This was an eminently satisfactory lesson.... Through skillful leadership which Mr. Allen is giving, his

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 18, File Folder 55e, PAA.

students are learning to approach problems from more than one point of view.⁹⁶

This appears to contradict Dr. Robert Patterson's belief. He claimed:

While the ideas and terminology [*of progressive education*] gained popularity, they did not gain a stronghold in the schools. The new education demanded more rather than less of teachers. Schools and teachers were ill- equipped for these demands. Many of the teachers brought into the schools during World War II were not familiar with the new education method and theory.⁹⁷

There are other witnesses who can recall presentations or discussion in their high school Social Studies classes. Derald Willows graduated from Brooks in 1945 and could remember doing presentations in front of the Social Studies class. He said that maybe two or three people were involved in it and maybe a little project as well.⁹⁸ Mr. Willows was also a junior/senior high Social Studies teacher in 1949, and he explained in an interview how he never ever gave notes. He would have the students make notes, and he would spark debates. He said he would initiate debates by saying war was the greatest sin of mankind and let the kids take him on.⁹⁹ Willows believed that "Teaching is to set the mind on fire. Spark debates- I'm not an

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Robert Patterson, "Society and Education During the Wars and Their Interlude," in *Canadian Education: A History*, edited by J. Wilson, R. Stamp, and L. Audet, (Scarborough: Prentice- Hall, 1970), p. 378.

⁹⁸Interview with Derald Willows, April 14, 1998.

⁹⁹Ibid.

end all. They don't have to have the same ideas as me. Better to have their own ideas. That is Social Studies teaching."¹⁰⁰ Betty Wolfe, a 1944 graduate from Crescent Heights, explained how they had all kinds of discussions and presentations. In every class the pupils were required to do oral reading as well.¹⁰¹

Jackie Durkie, a 1948 Crescent Heights graduate, could remember how her Social Studies teacher, Norman Kennedy would lecture and then ask questions. She could recall this because whenever Mr. Kennedy asked 'Jack' to answer, she and another boy named Jack didn't know who should answer.¹⁰² She also recalled how Doug Harkness, one of the Social Studies teachers, was better at getting a discussion going. She remembered how he was more political and that the boys loved to give him a hard time because they were used to more conservative teachers. Doug Harkness went onto fight in the Second World War and eventually became the Minister of Defence for Canada in John Diefenbaker's government.

However, not all Social Studies teachers created an atmosphere of debate or discussion. Ken Shedden, a 1940 Crescent Heights graduate explained how Miss Wylie or Miss McKellar simply wrote notes on the board. He said that they would, "Go to sides and to front.... do this two or three times."¹⁰³ When the high school Social Studies program first came

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Interview with Betty Wolfe, April 29, 1998.

¹⁰²Interview with Jackie Durkie, April 2, 1998.

¹⁰³Interview with Ken Shedden, March 20, 1998.

out, the 1938 annual report said grade 11 teachers found the course long and many teachers simply reorganized the former history. The inspector explained that some teachers “insist on making these courses more re-organized versions of the former history. They adhere too closely to the outline, and in some instances will follow ritual of dictating notes.”¹⁰⁴

Many high school students recalled their classes as primarily lecture or note taking. Margaret Robson, a 1941 Crescent Heights graduate, said how Mr. Liesemer simply lectured. She explained how the teachers had nothing to work with, not even handouts, so they simply wrote miles on the blackboard. The teacher wrote headings and subheadings on the board and we scribbled down whatever they said under each respective heading. She recalled they could ask questions as long as they didn’t interrupt at the wrong time.¹⁰⁵

Cynthia Downe, another Crescent Heights graduate, had Elmer Liesemer for Social Studies. She described how Mr. Liesemer would start at the front board and fill it up. He then went and covered up the side boards, and we simply copied everything down.¹⁰⁶ George Desson graduated in 1942 and also had Elmer Liesemer as a teacher. Desson remembered students presenting in front of the class, but recalled they appeared as amateurs up there and it was not very interesting.¹⁰⁷ However

¹⁰⁴ AR, 1938, p. 46.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Margaret Robson, March 24, 1998.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Cynthia Downe, March 19, 1998.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with George Desson, March 17, 1998.

for the most part Desson said there was never any discussion at all, because that interfered with the note taking. He explained how Liesemer dictated two hard notebooks a year. In Social Studies everyday, Desson remembered how Liesemer would say, “The students will write,” and they would write feverishly. Desson recalled one of Liesemer’s class lectures and how he explained that Edward, Prince of Wales “took for his wife a woman.” One of Desson’s classmates then retorted, “And what else did you think he would take.” Mr. Liesemer laughed and then told the class to continue to write.¹⁰⁸

Desson felt the Social Studies curriculum contained too much content which made it hard for Liesemer to do much with it. Desson, who later became a high school Social Studies teacher at Westlock in 1946 felt, “Social Studies was the fusty dry old program that really didn’t do anything for anybody, unless you could inject something into it yourself.”¹⁰⁹ He recalled how he lectured primarily and encouraged students to read beyond the textbooks and offered a tokenism on committee work. He would have students in groups of three get up in front of the class and present. He explained how he “would make outlines on the board and prepare notes for them rather than have them scribbling. I can remember absolute distaste in grade 12 year- the class will write.... I didn’t want my kids to have that again.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Interview with George Desson, March 17, 1998.

Gwen and John Hanthol both attended Central High School in Calgary and both graduated in 1945. Neither one of them ever remembered any discussions in their Social Studies classes. John explained how the teacher “mostly lectured. She’d use the blackboard. Often they had things written on the board before we came in; it gave us no time.”¹¹¹ Gwen remembered the teachers read out of the books and you simply made notes and there was no discussion. It was lecture style and the pupils sat and listened. The lectures were good though because the students got all the information needed for the test.¹¹² This appeared to be the case at Western Canada High School as well.

A number of Western Canada graduates recall how their Social Studies teachers presented the course. Only Stu Miller could remember doing a presentation on Australia in front of the class. The rest of those interviewed do not recall any real discussions or presentations. Dave Thomson, a 1946 graduate, said “Miss McInnen wrote reams of notes on the boards from one end to another and around the bend. I could never keep up. The faster I wrote the worse it got.... She wrote notes on the board day in and day out, and that’s the exam.”¹¹³ Donna Oughton, also a 1946 graduate, remembered Mr. Norton’s Social Studies classes. She said, “Most of the time it was note- taking off the board and he was lecturing.... I can’t

¹¹¹Interview with Gwen and John Hanthol, April 28, 1998.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Interview with Dave Thomson, March 16, 1998.

remember many discussions. It was more stuff on the board.”¹¹⁴ Dixie McCall, also a 1946 graduate, remembered that the teacher lectured a lot, and could not remember ever getting in front of the class and doing a presentation. She pointed out that there was “No spark in presentation like there is today. It was straight slogging through the book, you know, reading what you covered in class and then rereading it and what have you. It is too bad because we have a remarkable history I think.”¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴Interview with Donna Oughton, April 21, 1998.

¹¹⁵Interview with Dixie McCall, April 1, 1998.

CHAPTER THREE

Social Studies Creates Interest in Current Events

One of the thrusts of progressive education in Social Studies was to implement current events. Newland, who led the change from History, Civics and Economics to the new Social Studies curriculum, felt it provided a “view to giving the normal adolescent a realistic view of contemporary life.”¹ Amy von Heyking pointed out that Social Studies was supposed to create an interest in current events, which was seen as extremely important during the war years.² Social Studies was also to change the way information was presented. Von Heyking explained that teachers were encouraged to implement new technology, like slides and movies, to generate student interest in the new curriculum.³ However, because of the Depression of the 1930s and the emergence of the Second World War, money was scarce. There was not enough to fund items like movie projectors or radios for inside the classroom.

Most historians have argued progressive education failed due to this lack of funding for the new methods of teaching. John Chalmers believed the “deemphasis on the textbook required a wealth of resource material or source units. These simply were not available to the depression- stricken

¹Patricia Oviatt, “The Educational Contributions of H. C. Newland,” Master of Education Thesis, University of Calgary, 1970, p. 87.

²Amy von Heyking, “Shaping an Education For the Modern World,” Doctoral Thesis, University of Calgary, 1996, p. 252.

³Ibid. p. 252.

school systems, and although the Department of Education had subsequently produced a few of these units, the number had remained woefully inadequate.”⁴ Nancy Sheehan felt most schools had scarce resources and the school plants were small and inadequate.⁵ Robert Patterson said, “the school facilities and resources were extremely limited in this period, [*and*] provided ample reason to doubt the new ideas and practices were properly represented in the schools.”⁶ Amy von Heyking cited Inspector W.H. Swift’s concern which regarded the lack of resources. As Swift said, “We have neither the school plants, equipment nor competent teachers necessary for their successful application.”⁷

In addition, Social Studies was to move away from using only one textbook. The 1940 annual report stated, “One text per course- Passe! Books as tools and means, not ends.”⁸ Through annual reports, inspector’s reports, interviews, and the A.T.A. Magazine, one can learn how teachers taught current events. From these sources the technology actually entering

⁴ John Chalmers. Schools of the Foothills Province, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1967), p. 93.

⁵ Nancy Sheehan, “Education, the Society and the Curriculum in Alberta, 1905-1980: An Overview,” in Schools in the West, eds. Nancy Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson, and David C. Jones. (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.), p. 45.

⁶ Robert Patterson, “Progressive Education: Impetus to Educational Change in Alberta and Saskatchewan,” in The New Provinces: Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1905- 80, edited by Howard Palmer and Donald Smith (Calgary: Tantalus Research Ltd.), p. 193.

⁷ Amy von Heyking, “Shaping an Education for the Modern World.” Doctoral Thesis, University of Calgary, 1996, p. 264.

⁸ AR, 1940, p. 79.

the Social Studies classroom and the vast array of texts and references used can be ascertained.

With the creation of the new grade ten Social Studies program in 1937, the 1938 annual report read, “Pupils enjoy current events and find applications to present day problems in the history of European nations.”⁹ Another inspector commented on current events in the 1940 annual report and felt in Social Studies, “The use of comparative data, correlations in several fields of knowledge, interpretations of history and geographical facts in light of present day conditions are now common school room practice.”¹⁰ A second in 1941 commented:

Current events are closely followed and studied with illustrative material and maps from periodicals. Current history, the inculcation of democracy and British ideals, Canadian citizenship, appreciation of the extent and nature of Canada’s war effort and war economy, all have come to form integral parts of Social Studies in the high school.¹¹

In 1943 a third inspector said, “The tendency in recent years to develop interest in and understanding of current history in the Social Studies classes had created a readiness on the part of teachers and pupils to do the type of problem work which is involved in the newer themes of the course outline.”¹² Even as late as 1946, another inspector wrote, “The

⁹AR, 1938, p. 67.

¹⁰AR, 1940, p. 65.

¹¹AR, 1941, p. 76.

¹²AR, 1943, p. 72.

tendency of teachers of Social Studies to develop interest in and understanding of current history is very favourably evident, on the whole.”¹³

Mr. Geo Miller, the principal of Pincher Creek with nine years experience, was evaluated in 1940. The inspector observed his Social Studies II class and suggested, “A better focus would be obtained in the current events section of Social Studies if these were definitely linked up with movements under discussion, and a small group should be responsible for gathering all data from day to day that have a definite bearing on specified themes.”¹⁴ At Cowley in 1948, Mrs. Iwasiuk was evaluated by Inspector James McKay. Of her grade 6- 10 Social Studies, he said: “The pupils show some knowledge of facts in current events, but no disposition to relate the facts to each other or to larger current problems.”¹⁵ Some teachers struggled to incorporate current events in the Social Studies curriculum. Many made the connections to the program of studies while others did not. In interviews both students and teachers discussed how current events were worked into their high school Social Studies classes.

A few students who attended Crescent Heights High School in the 1940s were asked about current events in their Social Studies classes. Betty Wolfe, a 1944 graduate, said, “A great deal of time was devoted to war and current events.... It was a really interesting time to be involved in current

¹³ AR, 1946, p. 37.

¹⁴ Pincher Creek School Division #29, M2017, Box 36, File Folder 322, GA.

¹⁵ Pincher Creek School Division #29, M2017, Box 85, File Folder 930, GA.

events- map[s] changing and they were, everyday, everyday.”¹⁶ Joyce Spence, a 1940 graduate, could recall how they discussed the Munich Agreement in 1938 and whether Chamberlain had done right or not by signing.¹⁷ She could also recall talking about why France was defeated so quickly in June 1940 and the ineffectiveness of the Maginot Line.¹⁸ Andy Robson, a classmate, also recalled learning about the Maginot Line and felt the British army would have had no trouble fighting anybody. He remembered being surprised when Germany “just waltzed right on through and around that [*Maginot Line*] and in no time they were at the coast. It really shook everyone.”¹⁹ Ken Shedden, also a 1940 graduate, remembered talking a lot about Fascism and the Phony War and recalled how kids would bring in the newspaper. He felt, “Social Studies was mostly current events.”²⁰ On the other hand, Jackie Durkie, a 1948 graduate and George Desson, a 1942 graduate, could not recall discussing current events much.²¹

At Western Canada High School, three graduates of 1946 were interviewed about current events. Dixie McCall recalled lots of current

¹⁶Interview with Betty Wolfe, April 29, 1998.

¹⁷Interview with Joyce Spence, March 18, 1998.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Interview with Andy Robson, March 24, 1998.

²⁰Interview with Ken Shedden, March 20, 1998.

²¹Interviews with Jackie Durkie, April 2, 1998, and George Desson, March 17, 1998.

events because of the war.²² She could remember the announcing of the United Nations formation and reading the journal, World Affairs, which she felt was very interesting. She recalled Friday was the day they worked with World Affairs, but it depended on when the publication arrived.²³ Dave Thomson felt current events was the bulk of the course, and it was worked into class everyday. He recalled talking about the fall of France, the Allied invasion of North Africa, and even the Marshall Plan in class and remembered discussing the Nuremburg Trials which was a hot topic then and whether they should have been held or not.²⁴ Stu Miller recalled getting current events out of the newspaper; he guessed that it was just to make sure you were checking up on the paper daily.²⁵

Derald Willows, who attended Brooks High School in 1945, recalled how students had to listen to the radio every night. Willows remembered his Social Studies teacher had a replica microphone and sometimes students had to go up and talk about current events or “give the morning news.”²⁶ When Willows began to teach Social Studies in 1949 he explained, “You can’t compartmentalise things because current events would lapse with history, geography lapse with history.”²⁷ Therefore, just as his Social

²²Interview with Dixie McCall, April 1, 1998.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Interview with Dave Thomson, March 16, 1998.

²⁵Interview with Stu Miller, March 31, 1998.

²⁶Interview with Derald Willows, April 14, 1998.

²⁷Ibid.

Studies teacher worked in current events, so, too, did he. They both used the World Affairs booklet in their classes.²⁸ Other interviewees used it, too.

Gwen Hanthol graduated from Central High School in Calgary in 1945. She could remember that her Social Studies teachers, Miss Hobbes and Miss Suter would use World Affairs. She explained how they would, “have students subscribe to it. It wasn’t too short and there’d be articles in it. You know, who [*was*] the President? Who [*was*] Prime Minister?....I don’t think we were asked for our opinions.” Hanthol recalled the students mostly worked through the book, World Affairs.²⁹ George Desson, who taught high school Social Studies, used the magazine to teach about war. “Students could subscribe to it,” he said. “It cost so many cents a year to get this World Affairs. It was a good magazine; we used it quite extensively....Kids read about campaigns in North Africa where [*the*] United States landed, the back and forward movement of Rommel and the British retreat into Egypt- advances and retreats.”³⁰

Jim Mackie, a 1946 West Glen graduate from Edmonton, remembered how current events played a big role in his Social Studies class. He said, “They called it current events, and it was almost a course in itself really. I mean, they really wanted you to know about things, and, of course, people [*were*] patriotic in those days during the war. It certainly caught

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Interview with Gwen Hanthol. April 28, 1998.

³⁰Interview with George Desson. March 17, 1998.

your interest.”³¹ He recalled question and answer periods. The teacher would ask and test to see if you had read the newspapers and that took an entire class.³² Gale Wheeler’s Social Studies teacher at Cluny used a similar method. Most of his classes started with a question: “What did you hear in last night’s news?”³³ John Hanthol, a 1945 Central High School graduate, recalled mainly that the teacher talked, and we listened. They would read the papers but he said it was “Not really discussed.... like what did you think of this article?”³⁴ Audrey Cuthbertson attended West Glen in Edmonton in 1944. She remembered how they always had to keep up with what was going on in the war. She said, “There were a lot of theatres [*of war*] going on, you know, that you’d be expected to be up on.... One name stands out- Djibouti, that started with a ‘D’ and that was one of the places we had to know because it was in the [*East Africa*] war theatre at that time and I remember sweating over Djibouti.”³⁵ Part of teaching the current events included learning about current maps and geography. To some this was current events.

George Desson couldn’t even recall using a map in grade twelve, but there were four students at Crescent Heights who traced maps of Europe

³¹Interview with Jim Mackie, March 20, 1998.

³²Ibid.

³³Interview with Gale Wheeler, May 7, 1998.

³⁴Interview with John Hanthol, April 28, 1998.

³⁵Interview with Robert and Audrey Cuthbertson, March 25, 1998.

when learning about current events and the Second World War. Jackie Durkie remembered, “learning the maps, also, with the current events. That in a way was good because it made it pertinent... I do recall getting a map, and then you had to put the places on it.”³⁶ Betty Wolfe discussed how the war and changing boundaries impacted on her Social Studies class. She remembered doing a lot of maps, but that they were already printed. You just had to adjust and look after them. She said they would,

get maps from the newspaper. I think about thirty percent of our time was used in redrawing maps, and they were changing the whole time and some fighting forces would take over a country.... We just redrew them. We had a map in September, but it wouldn't be the same in February because Hitler and Mussolini would be grabbing up countries and moving their forces or these arrows towards the Middle East or Poland.³⁷

Students at Western had similar recollections. Donna Oughton, a 1946 graduate, recalled gathering information from the papers because they had maps of where the various battles occurred. She said students would take pieces out of the newspaper and bring it to school, or the teacher would have maps there for them to study from. Oughton recalled tracing maps and drawing free hand in order to fill in the countries and capitals. She remembered her arms getting tired from tracing up against a window.³⁸ They also had atlases available but the newspapers were better because they

³⁶Interview with Jackie Durkie, March 17, 1998.

³⁷Interview with Betty Wolfe, April 29, 1998.

³⁸Interview with Donna Oughton, April 21, 1998.

could zero in on where the action was.

The two high school Social Studies teachers interviewed concurred with this teaching style. George Desson assigned map exercises because he felt geography wasn't a function of history, but that history was a function of geography. He felt a lot of historical developments came out of geographical facts.³⁹ Many of the World War II maps he used were from the World Affairs booklet. Derald Willows explained that if he was studying a segment of World War I or II, he would first establish where it occurred and then what happened. Then, he would put up a map.⁴⁰

Current events played a large role in making students think more about the present than the past. The Second World War helped to solidify this. Calgary Superintendent of Schools, F. G. Buchanan said, "This is a great day to teach geography. The children hear the many news broadcasts, and the names of countries and cities become familiar, so that when the lessons are given they are eager to learn. The schools try to give the children an insight into the barrage of information and news which they hear."⁴¹

There are various examples of how the A.T.A. Magazine was helpful to Social Studies teachers when it came to teaching current events. An address by Mr. Watson Thomson discussed why war occurred and

³⁹Interview with George Desson, March 17, 1998.

⁴⁰Interview with Derald Willows, April 14, 1998.

⁴¹"Value of Education Said Greater Than Ever Today." Calgary Herald, 27 April 1943.

examined various theories, such as the trade rivalry between Great Britain and Germany, the upset in balance of power, the incompatibility between two nations, and imperialism.⁴² This article was useful to a Social Studies teacher when discussing the Second World War. Another article in April 1941 addressed the causes of war again. Samuel Everett looked at what caused war and who made war, which seemed, to many Americans, a highly academic question.⁴³ Sometimes the magazine had little side notes entitled, "Items of Current Events." These few paragraphs written by Arthur Allen would disclose information such as New Defence Agreements or the trade of Naval Bases for destroyers between the United States and Great Britain.⁴⁴ These would also assist Social Studies teachers when teaching current events.

Sometimes articles explained classroom procedures for high school Social Studies teachers when presenting current events. A March 1940 article suggested a way to teach a part of the Social Studies II outline. J.F. Watkin addressed the Lethbridge and Calgary High School Convention and proposed that teachers "start with [*the*] partition of Poland in 1939, then go to [*the*] 1772- 1795 partition, Thus, the problem of creating interest is already solved; current events and past events become one, and we are

⁴²Watson Thomson, "International Affairs," A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 9 (May, 1940), p. 11.

⁴³Samuel Everett, "War, What and Who Make It?" A.T.A. Magazine, XXI, 8 (April 1941), p. 7.

⁴⁴Arthur Allen, "Items of Current Affairs." A.T.A. Magazine, XXI, 2 (October 1940), p. 26.

teaching Social Studies instead of History and current events.”⁴⁵ In the same article he helped to identify what exactly are current events and what are not important happenings. He explained important events should:

show relation to present problems- but real problems, like war, unemployment, crime, overpopulation, trade and the like.... When we discuss war as all must do, let us try to see it in its proper perspective and not in terms of headlines and news broadcasts. Let’s make distinction between news and current events news- British planes drop pamphlets in Austria.... Now historical significance- expansion of Russian influence in Baltic, the Anglo-Turkish Agreement, American neutrality.⁴⁶

There were articles which provided current events for high school Social Studies teachers and potential resources. In March 1943, a detailed review of the Beveridge Report was presented.⁴⁷ The issue of social security in the report was to be addressed in the Social Studies 3 curriculum and would have been quite useful to teachers. In addition, the Correspondence School Book Branch advertised resources it had to offer. In January 1944, the book branch explained how they had,

produced some interesting sketches of the life work and importance in world affairs of a number of outstanding persons whose names are frequently seen in the news headlines. These sketches are of value for the study of

⁴⁵J.F. Watkin, “Classroom Procedure in High School Social Studies,” A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 7 (March 1940) p. 19.

⁴⁶ J.F. Watkin, “Classroom Procedure in High School Social Studies,” A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 7 (March 1940), p. 18.

⁴⁷ “Social Security— A Summary of the Beveridge Report.” A.T.A. Magazine, XXIII, 7 (March 1943), p. 12.

current events in the Social Studies classes of intermediate and high school grades, and will be found useful in the classroom library for Social Studies. Sets of about thirty of these sketches, bearing the title, "These Make History," may be had from the Correspondence - School Branch at 40 cents per set.⁴⁸

The A.T.A. Magazine proposed a deeper look at current events and post-war reconstruction. At the conclusion of the Canadian Association for Adult Education convention, they suggested a program for reconstruction aimed primarily at the preservation of our democratic way of life and stressed social security.⁴⁹ To achieve this a series of national broadcasts regarding reconstruction were to be initiated over the CBC. Another article written by the National Institute on Education and the War Committee sent a statement to the War Commission which suggested ways education could help fight against dictatorships. A few of the proposals dealt with Social Studies and current events. One suggested a revised Social Studies course to "Give a knowledge of war aims and issues as well as actual experience in community undertakings."⁵⁰ A second dealt with understanding the armed forces, and a third was for instruction that would appreciate the implications of the global concept of the current war and post-war living.⁵¹

⁴⁸ "These Make History," A.T.A. Magazine, XXIV. 3 (January 1944), p. 30.

⁴⁹Beryl Traux and J.H. Mitchell, "Education for Reconstruction Report," A.T.A. Magazine, XXIV. 2 (December 1943), p. 15.

⁵⁰National Institute on Education and the War Committee. "A Statement to the War Commission: Concerning the Work of Schools in Relation to the War." A.T.A. Magazine, XXIII. 2 (October 1942), p. 8.

⁵¹Ibid, p. 8.

In 1944, an article by Mr. McEachern suggested, “Special emphasis should be given to the problems of post- war reconstruction, both national and international, to give what help the school can give toward establishing the bases of a sound and enduring peace. Reconstruction possibilities and plans surround us; the school may contribute something worthwhile to the direction and form of coming change.”⁵² As well, he proposed a Social Studies bulletin be provided frequently, containing summaries of pertinent legislation, and government reports necessary for an adequate understanding of rapidly changing current events.⁵³ As a result, he felt Social Studies was now a study of existing social conditions and problems and it should incorporate more fully than before, pertinent studies of a social nature.

The change in program of studies from History, Geography, and Civics to Social Studies also included a change in how the information was to be presented. Progressive education pressed for more technology to be used in Social Studies such as the slide projector, radio and motion projector. The annual reports, the A.T.A. Magazine, and interviewees suggest there were numerous radio programs and movies available, but it appeared, for the most part that schools didn’t have these technological resources to teach the current events in Social Studies. One of the options

⁵²M.D. McEachern, “High School Curriculum Revision,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXIV, 6 (April 1944), p. 27.

⁵³Ibid, p. 27.

available to students back then was to go to the movie theatres and learn current events from the news reels.

The radio was a very effective way of learning current events throughout the 1940s. One of the first school broadcasts for Social Studies was performed by Mr. Watson Thomson every Monday from 2:15- 2:30. His program was carried by CKUA, University of Alberta, Edmonton, and the CFCN station in Calgary.⁵⁴ Mr. Thomson also had weekly Social Studies news broadcasts on CBC radio through the Alberta Education Network.⁵⁵ By 1942, a radio questionnaire had gone out which found that the third most popular broadcast was the series on Social Studies by Watson Thomson and Stanley Rands.⁵⁶ Von Heyking explained, “The Department of Education developed innovative teaching resources for classroom use in these years: radio programmes introduced intermediate and senior high school students to the current events of the day. The series, ‘These Make History’ introduced pupils to high profile political and military men; ‘These United Nations’ described each of the Allied nations.”⁵⁷ The annual report stated that the radio could guide, stimulate, intensify, and supplement the classroom effort.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ “School Broadcasts.” *A.T.A. Magazine*, XX. 3 (November 1939), p. 20.

⁵⁵ *AR*, 1938, p. 35.

⁵⁶ *AR*, 1942, p. 33.

⁵⁷ Amy von Heyking, “Shaping an Education For the Modern World.” Doctoral Thesis. University of Calgary, 1996, p. 252.

⁵⁸ *AR*, 1940, p. 42.

There were numerous suggestions on how radio should be used. The 1943 annual report recommended that CBC look at topics like social welfare, problems of social security, racial discrimination and full employment after the war.⁵⁹ H.C. Newland suggested school broadcasts should air local history and local folklore. However, the Alberta committee at the Western Regional Conference on Educational Broadcasting revealed that Social Studies would be hard to broadcast because the four Western provinces did not have a common curriculum.⁶⁰ The following year it was suggested a national series be put on the radio to strengthen the sense of Canadian Citizenship amongst the boys and girls.⁶¹ By 1946, the director of curriculum attended a meeting of the National Advisory Council, Programme Committee. He recommended, "The main aim of the broadcasts should continue to be a strengthening of the sense of Canadian Citizenship."⁶² There were numerous radio programs created to teach Social Studies.

During the Second World War, many students did not have access to school for two reasons said John Chalmers. First, the demands of the armed services and war industry took many teachers. As a result, over two

⁵⁹ AR, 1943, p. 30.

⁶⁰ AR, 1944, p. 25- 26.

⁶¹ AR, 1945, p. 40.

⁶² AR, 1946, p. 68.

hundred classrooms, mostly one room schools did not open in 1943.⁶³ Second, because of rural mechanization, school populations shifted to more centralized institutions, and from 1940- 45, over one thousand schools, almost all one room closed their doors for good.⁶⁴ Therefore, in 1943, two hundred Correspondence centers were set up and numerous radio broadcasts were created. Two programs created to help distant education students with Social Studies were, “These Make History” and “Choose Your World.”⁶⁵ To assist teachers in the presentation of current events, a short news review was given which was intended to, “Prove useful to classes studying current history.”⁶⁶ In 1943, the Department of Education sponsored other school broadcasts such as, “Heroes of Canada” and “Canadian Horizons” as well as Social Studies dramatizations.⁶⁷ The A.T.A. Magazine published the list of other Social Studies programs which were available. Examples of these school broadcasts were, “Arabs and Asia,” and, “India and the Don Cossacks.”⁶⁸ By 1947, the CBC created two more programs. The first was, “Canadians at Work,” and the second was entitled, “A Visit to Parliament Hill.” The latter series was to inform the students of the democratic process

⁶³ John Chalmers, Schools of the Foothills Province, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1967), p. 239.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 123.

⁶⁵ AR, 1942. p. 53.

⁶⁶ “School Broadcasts,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXIII. 2 (October 1942), p. 42.

⁶⁷ AR, 1943, p. 28.

⁶⁸ “School Broadcasts,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXIII. 6 (February 1943), p. 21.

in Canada from the past to the present.⁶⁹ Not only were radio programs offered to assist Social Studies teachers, but films appeared as well.

There was a wide variety of films created to help present current events in Social Studies. The A.T.A. Magazine listed the available audio-visual aids that had been produced. By March 1940, the Department of Extension at the University of Alberta had new sound films available. These included, "The German Invasion of Austria, News Parade of 1939, and The End of the Graf Spee."⁷⁰ The October 1941 issue explained how the National Film Board issued a new catalogue which offered,

Canadian War Films- [*that would*] obviously provide vivid visual aid for current events classes. While students may have seen some of this material in news reels, they will not before have had it organized as it is in, "Fight For Liberty" into a digest of the major developments in the march of world happenings today, nor will they ever before have had the news shots presented in an arrangement especially calculated to show them what part Canadians- their fathers, brothers, uncles, cousins- are playing, overseas and at home, in this war.⁷¹

The following year the National Film Board listed their newer films. The article explained:

‘Canada Carries On’ appearing monthly in all neighbourhood theatres.... They deal with varied aspects

⁶⁹ AR, 1947, p. 62.

⁷⁰ "Department of Extension." A.T.A. Magazine, XX. 7 (March 1940), p. 19.

⁷¹ "New Catalogue Features Educational Films," A.T.A. Magazine, XXII. 2 (October 1941), p. 34.

of the War effort, not only in the Dominion, but on every front which finds the United Nations in arms against the Axis. Many topics of concern to Canadian communities are presented here, showing the steadily increasing production of our assembly lines, the work of the women on the homefront, our forces in training, and in action, on land, sea, and in the air....Others [*included*]- “This is Blitz,” “Forward Commandos,” “Food- Weapon of Conquest,” “Peoples of Canada.”⁷²

The list of films grew. The annual report explained how the films were screened for school use and by 1944, 2,000 titles had been reviewed.⁷³

The A.T.A. Magazine had an official bulletin by the Department of Education which listed the new available films such as: “The Battle of Russia,” “Japan Surrenders,” or “On Tour in South Africa.”⁷⁴ Even pictures could be loaned out to teachers. They could request selected photos of Britain’s government or of the newly established United Nations organization to post on the classroom walls.⁷⁵ By 1947, four catalogues had been made which contained all of the 16mm motion pictures and film strips.⁷⁶ There was no lack of audio- visual materials being offered. The question was whether they actually entered the classroom.

⁷² “National Film Board,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXIII. 2 (October 1942), p. 38.

⁷³ AR, 1944 p. 30.

⁷⁴ “Official Bulletin, Department of Education,” A.T.A Magazine, XXV. 1 (October- November 1944), p. 32.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 55.

⁷⁶ AR, 1947. p. 59.

Did schools purchase film projectors, slide projectors, and radios? Were these audio- visual aids used for the teaching of Social Studies? Much conflicting information has been gathered. A few sources stated that audio- visual aids in the classroom were effective. As early as 1940, the A.T.A. Magazine claimed the use of a radio as a means of classroom stimulation was the newest trend. It stated, "In many cases, these objectives have been reached."⁷⁷ However, the annual reports had mixed views on how effective the use of audio- visual aids were. A 1941 report stated: "A number of larger schools have projectors for still and animated pictures....Gramophones and radio are now almost standard equipment in high school."⁷⁸ Yet the 1943 annual report stated, "At the time there was great difficulty in securing the adequate accommodation for school broadcasts on the telephone lines of the province, owing to war priorities. Under these circumstances, it was difficult to formulate any definite plans for school broadcasts during the year 1943- 44."⁷⁹

Following the war, another inspector reported, "Medicine Hat, Olds, and Rocky Mountain Division had purchased sound projectors while Red Deer reported a contract with the NFB for regular showings in some of its schools. This arrangement seems to have had a few drawbacks, but in

⁷⁷Kathleen Collins. "School and Radio." A.T.A. Magazine, XXI. 2 (October 1940), p. 14.

⁷⁸AR, 1941. p. 75.

⁷⁹AR, 1943. p. 28- 29.

general is proving valuable.”⁸⁰ That same year, Inspector Sweet commented,

The number of schools which are now equipped with sound- film projectors is steadily increasing. 65 or more of the high schools now have such equipment, while more than thirty five have silent motion- picture projectors. The radio programmes sponsored by the Department of Education [*were*] most desirable. Many schools are, commendably, planning upon appropriate uses of the sound- film projectors to such an extent as to overlook the value of the less expensive film strip projector, which is found to be a very effective teaching aid. Several of the school divisions operate their projectors on a circuit basis, one machine serving several schools in turn.⁸¹

In 1947, an inspector said, “The number of high schools which have film- slide or sound motion- picture projectors shows a substantial increase. The usefulness, educationally, of such equipment is definitely increasing, through the availability of films adopted to interpretation and enrichment of the courses in Music, Drama, Science, Social Studies and other subjects from the audio- visual branch of the Department of Education.”⁸² At the end of the decade it was reported “Radios and record players are now used daily in many schools and are regarded as valuable teaching aids.”⁸³ A few students interviewed could recall audio- visual aids being present in the

⁸⁰ AR, 1946, p. 32.

⁸¹ AR, 1946, p. 35.

⁸² AR, 1947, p. 39.

⁸³ AR, 1949, p. 21.

school but not always for Social Studies.

Derald Willows attended Brooks High School and graduated in 1945. He recalled his Social Studies teacher had a slide projector for the geography aspect of the course. He would show black and white slides of different areas for identification such as the tropical rain forests or the savanna.⁸⁴ When he began teaching in 1949, Willows recalled having a radio in his classroom.⁸⁵ However, other students recall a motion picture projector, but not for Social Studies. Andy and Margaret Robson both attended Crescent Heights and recalled a projector but not in the classroom. Margaret remembered a wiggly movie in the auditorium while Andy remembered a venereal disease movie at an assembly. Neither could recall movies being used in Social Studies for current events.⁸⁶ Dixie McCall recalled motion pictures at Western, but didn't think they were used for Social Studies.⁸⁷ Audrey Cuthbertson attended West Glen and remembered a slide projector in biology class, but not in Social Studies. So while it appeared that many schools could have had slide and movie projectors and radios it did not necessarily mean that they were used to teach current events in Social Studies class.

The creation of Social Studies resulted in a change of texts and

⁸⁴Interview with Derald Willows, April 14, 1998.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Interview with Andy and Margaret Robson, March 24, 1998.

⁸⁷Interview with Dixie McCall, April 1, 1998.

references. No longer was Social Studies based on one textbook but on a variety. Some teachers had difficulty changing to the new textbooks. The 1938 annual report said, “the only course in grade XI presenting undue difficulty is Social Studies. The course is long, and the authorized reference books contain the material in very diffuse form, so that the teachers find it difficult to organize.”⁸⁸ How were school divisions able to afford to get the additional texts and did schools have enough texts to teach Social Studies according to the progressive theory? This section looks at how school divisions went about getting additional texts and if those texts were sufficient to teach Social Studies according to the progressive education philosophy. As well, a brief description is given of a useful current events reference, World Affairs.

The program of studies was geared towards preparing students for a constantly changing society and not for the philosophy that the past was worthy of study. This change in thinking resulted in more and newer textbooks being required. Von Heyking pointed out that it was hard for progressive education methods to work if the school boards refused to purchase the needed materials.⁸⁹ Some school boards made the students purchase their own books. The 1939 annual report gave an example of one of the ways boards dealt with the money shortage. It stated, “Texts and reference books are purchased by pupils, as a rule, through the division

⁸⁸AR, 1938, p. 67.

⁸⁹Amy von Heyking, “Shaping an Education For the Modern World,” Doctoral Thesis, University of Calgary, 1996, p. 263.

office, thereby effecting a saving of 15 percent.”⁹⁰ Following the Second World War, new textbooks were introduced for high school Social Studies. The 1946 annual report said organizations outside of the school provided books in a few cases. Sometimes the board provided all the necessary books, but most often students paid an annual fee which may have been matched by the board. The report said:

the total fund is then used for book purchases for school or classroom libraries (this plan is in frequent use for both free reading and Social Studies reference book purchases). In other cases, students buy different books and exchange among themselves.⁹¹

The 1947 annual report said very few divisions were interested in textbook distribution. Two divisions supplied free texts and four others bought and sold all texts to students at cost. Three divisions rented and in four other divisions teachers ordered class sets of texts via division office saving 15 percent of cost. Another division offered texts at cost. The report summarized, “the majority of the division textbooks are purchased at retail by the individual students.”⁹²

A 1947 superintendent’s report from Pincher Creek concurred with the annual report. It noted, “The division is now providing a large number of items free of charge to all students; the only items not provided free are

⁹⁰ AR, 1939, p. 59.

⁹¹ AR, 1946, p. 37.

⁹² AR, 1947, p. 29.

textbooks--these, however, are made available at cost.”⁹³ Some divisions shared the reading materials amongst each other. The 1944 annual report stated that libraries were circulating book sets from school to school to deal with the shortage.⁹⁴

Students who attended city high schools were interviewed and many recalled having to purchase their own books. Audrey Cuthbertson graduated from West Glen in 1944 and recalled, “The teachers didn’t have much money, and they couldn’t just tell you to buy five textbooks. There was nothing from the government then. If you needed textbooks, you bought the books you needed. You were responsible for your own stuff, so they [*the teachers*] didn’t lay it on you to buy a lot of stuff.”⁹⁵ Two students who attended Crescent Heights High School in Calgary recalled buying their own texts as well. Ken Shedden, a 1940 graduate, and Cynthia Downe, a 1942 graduate, remembered going to a second hand bookstore called Jaffe’s to buy their texts. Cynthia explained that everyone was short money, so they went there or bought books from students in the grade ahead. She remembered her texts being very shabby.⁹⁶ Ken Shedden liked Jaffe’s because they could get the texts they needed at a low cost. He said they would get a list of texts required by the teachers and would head to Jaffe’s where texts cost around ninety cents to a dollar twenty- five. He felt

⁹³Pincher Creek School Division #29, M2017, Box 81, File Folder 842, GA.

⁹⁴AR, 1944, p. 52.

⁹⁵Interview with Audrey Cuthbertson, March 25, 1998.

⁹⁶Interview with Cynthia Downe, March 19, 1998.

that was reasonable, but some texts were pretty beaten up.⁹⁷

Three students, who also attended Western Canada Composite High School, recalled buying texts from Jaffe's. Doug Robb, a 1944 graduate, remembered that if the school didn't supply it, he headed to Jaffe's and would get a hand-me-down text for as little as ten cents.⁹⁸ Donna Oughton, a 1946 graduate, said going to Jaffe's was the logical thing to do, because their parents had gone through the Depression, and they were thrifty. She said they could also buy books from the school if need be.⁹⁹ Dixie McCall, a 1946 graduate, recalled the book exchange. She explained you returned your texts and got discount prices on new purchases, but you had to be "Johnny-on-the-spot" to get them or else you ended up having to buy new ones.¹⁰⁰

Progressive education hoped to move away from the one textbook course to the use of many references. Many various sized schools, both urban and rural, did attempt to use a variety of references, and only a few of the smaller rural schools had trouble collecting the needed resources. Teachers were able to access the list of references needed through either the curriculum guides, the classroom bulletins, or the A.T.A. Magazine.

There was evidence of a satisfactory supply of texts and references for Social Studies. The Calgary Herald reported how High River High

⁹⁷Interview with Ken Shedden, March 20, 1998.

⁹⁸Interview with Doug Robb, March 31, 1998.

⁹⁹Interview with Donna Oughton, April 21, 1998.

¹⁰⁰Interview with Dixie McCall, April 1, 1998.

School had more supplementary material because of the changing curriculum with its greater emphasis on the contemporary work and Social Studies. The article claimed:

The school library is of greatest value to young people whose homes are limited in reading material. And there are a few homes which encompass the variety that the school library is acquiring. There seems to be no question but high school students read more widely and more spontaneously than they did in any previous period within memory. They are becoming explorers in their own right.¹⁰¹

Numerous inspectors reported on the satisfactory supply of text and references for Social Studies. The 1941 annual report claimed, "The need for extensive reference reading has been quite adequately met, frequently by the school boards, often by the pupils themselves, through group purchase plans."¹⁰² The 1945 annual report stated,

Social Studies reference libraries are now as a rule, quite extensive in the larger schools and in most of the smaller school; frequent additions to the stock of recommended books and periodicals have been made to the libraries generally. Cooperative plans for class purchase of reference books and of books for Free Reading very frequently meet the needs of Social Studies classes.¹⁰³

Two comments were made by Inspector Sweet the following year. First, he felt the students had access to a satisfactory library of Social Studies

¹⁰¹ "School Library Proves Successful," Calgary Herald, 28 September 1940.

¹⁰² AR, 1941, p. 76.

¹⁰³ AR, 1945, p. 30.

reference books.¹⁰⁴ Second, he reported it was the established custom for the library provision of Social Studies reference reading to be quite extensive in every school. As well, the newly authorized book for Social Studies was extensively purchased.¹⁰⁵ By 1947, the annual report stated, "It is now the established custom for library provision of reference reading (books and periodicals), for Social Studies and kindred subjects at least, to be quite extensive in each school."¹⁰⁶

Many inspector's reports claimed satisfactory references were allocated to high schools in accordance with the progressive education philosophy. The high schools with adequate reading materials ranged in size from the rural one room school to the urban centers with as many as thirty classrooms. The one room high school of Namao in the Sturgeon School Division was a case in point. The 1941 inspectors report said there was a fairly satisfactory range and a number of references when supplemented with student contributions.¹⁰⁷

At the one room Cessford High School in the Berry Creek School Division, Inspector Sweet reported in 1941 the supply of Social Studies 1 and 2 references were adequate but not especially extensive.¹⁰⁸ The

¹⁰⁴ AR, 1946, p. 34.

¹⁰⁵ AR, 1946, p. 30.

¹⁰⁶ AR, 1947, p. 39.

¹⁰⁷ School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 12, File Folder 26c, PAA.

¹⁰⁸ School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 209, File Folder 3867, PAA.

following year, Inspector Sparby reported again on this school of eight students. He stated, "Reference books for Social Studies have been adequate for the small number of pupils this year. Several good periodicals are coming to the school."¹⁰⁹

Three other one room high schools appeared to have ample references for Social Studies. The 1943 inspector at Chipman High School claimed the reference reading for Social Studies was extensive.¹¹⁰ In 1946, DeWinton High School in the Calgary School Division reported, "The primary reference list in Social Studies is practically complete. A few books of the secondary reference list are also stocked. A satisfactory choice has been made of current references."¹¹¹ That same year, it was observed the Social Studies reference reading had some new and very good usable books at Abee High School in the Thorhild School Division.¹¹²

A few two room high schools were also found to have ample references for the Social Studies program. A 1940 report for Okotoks High School claimed the school was well supplied with reference books.¹¹³ Three inspectors reports claimed Gleichen High School had satisfactory references for Social Studies. The first inspector reported that in 1940.¹¹⁴ Two reports

¹⁰⁹School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 209, File Folder 3867, PAA.

¹¹⁰School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 40, File Folder 635a, PAA.

¹¹¹School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 17, File Folder 48a, PAA.

¹¹²School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 213, File Folder 3940, PAA.

¹¹³School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 20, File Folder 68b, PAA.

¹¹⁴School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 18, File Folder 54c, PAA.

in 1942 and 1943 by Inspector Sparby said Social Studies references were ample.¹¹⁵ Inspector Sparby reported on Mountain View High School in St. Mary's River School Division in 1943 and felt the reference books for grades 10 and 11 Social Studies was fairly complete but not for the grade twelves.¹¹⁶

A few three room high schools had adequate Social Studies texts and references. Inspector Sparby in 1942 and Inspector Evenson in 1946 both said Pincher Creek was moderately well equipped with books and a number of Social Studies references were on hand.¹¹⁷ Reference books were satisfactory in all subjects except Social Studies 3 at the three- room high school in Leduc in 1943.¹¹⁸ Six years later it was reported the references were now quite substantial.¹¹⁹

Three high schools ranging from four to six classrooms were inspected and found to have good reference material. In 1948, the four room Innisfail High School had "Excellent general references....[and] generous supplies of Social Studies reference material."¹²⁰ By 1940, the four room high school in Banff had a provision of Social Studies reference

¹¹⁵School District Records. Accession 84.37. Box 18. File Folder 54c, PAA.

¹¹⁶School District Records. Accession 84.37. Box 22. File Folder 99b, PAA.

¹¹⁷Pincher Creek School Division #29, M2017. Box 36, File Folder 322, GA.

¹¹⁸School District Records. Accession 84.37. Box 22. File Folder 106b, PAA.

¹¹⁹School District Records. Accession 84.37. Box 22. File Folder 106b, PAA.

¹²⁰School District Records. Accession 84.37, Box 20. File Folder 73a, PAA.

books that was generous.¹²¹ A 1942 report of the four room Vermilion Center High School read, “The reference books are ample in number and range except in grade XII Social Studies.”¹²² In 1942, the inspector of the six room Wetaskiwin High School explained, “This room [*Social Studies*] has reference books in quantity and almost every reference book listed may be found here. In this room are also current magazines useful for Social Studies research.”¹²³ In 1943, the Lethbridge inspector observed the twenty one room high school and claimed provisions for Social Studies had been comparatively generous. He said, “Since the new courses all required extensive reading, and since no subject any longer can be learned from a single text, it is essential that this library policy be continued and reference books kept in good repair and up- to- date.”¹²⁴

Not all schools could afford to keep up with the necessary reading materials required with the new progressive education. Some of the smaller rural high schools had trouble collecting a vast array of reading materials. Two comments were made in the 1944 annual report regarding the text and reference shortages. One inspector stated, “The demand for texts and reference books [*was*] not met.”¹²⁵ A second claimed it was difficult to get

¹²¹School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 18, File Folder 53j, PAA.

¹²²School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 39, File Folder 609a, PAA.

¹²³School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 21, File Folder 92c, PAA.

¹²⁴School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 13, File Folder 36h, PAA.

¹²⁵AR, 1944, p. 43.

both text and reference books.¹²⁶

A few inspector's reports commented on the book shortages encountered by schools in their respective divisions. In 1940, at the one room school of Midnapore in the Calgary School Division, the inspector said, "Two of the primary references in Social Studies, namely DeWitt and Pahlow should be on the shelves."¹²⁷ The 1941 inspector for the one room high school at Chipman claimed the Social Studies references were inadequate for grade 12.¹²⁸ In 1943, at the two room Fort Saskatchewan High School, the inspector stated, "Reference books for Social Studies are too few in number and too restricted in range."¹²⁹ The inspector of the Gleichen two room high school commented in 1946 that there was not sufficient books to "give a more logical systematic and sequential treatment of the subject matter of the Social Studies courses."¹³⁰

Two inspectors discussed the lack of references at the three room Blairmore High School. Inspector H. T. Sparby in 1942 claimed the reference books for Social Studies were limited and observed that no new books were purchased that year. Sparby commented, "In a high school of this size it is essential for progressive work that the library be kept up to

¹²⁶AR, 1944, p. 53.

¹²⁷School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 17, File Folder 49, PAA.

¹²⁸School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 40, File Folder 635a, PAA.

¹²⁹School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 17, File Folder 50b, PAA.

¹³⁰School District Records, Accession 84.37, Box 18, File Folder 54b, PAA.

date and the board should be prepared to make some purchases each year.”¹³¹ In 1948, Inspector C.B. Johnson reported the textbooks and supplementary reading were too limited “to encourage research or to develop wide reading interest which form an important part of objectives of secondary education.”¹³²

One of the most popular high school Social Studies references throughout the 1940s was a monthly magazine called World Affairs. The A.T.A. Magazine published an advertisement in 1939 promoting this reference. The advertisement explained that the booklet was devoted entirely to current events and was officially recognized by five departments of Education.¹³³ In December 1942 a summary of World Affairs said:

Many teachers of high school Social Studies are using for the study of “current events” an excellent monthly magazine for high school students entitled, World Affairs.... A periodical of this type is almost indispensable in Social Studies classes that do not have access to daily newspapers in the classroom library. The material of World Affairs is well selected for high school students, and includes not only news items, but summaries and comment on war events.¹³⁴

The booklet World Affairs was well known. The 1944 Official

¹³¹Crowsnest School Division #63, M2004. Box 106, File Folder 877, GA.

¹³²Crowsnest School Division #63, M2004. Box 106, File Folder 877, GA.

¹³³ “World Affairs.” A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 3 (November 1939), p. 6.

¹³⁴ “Official Bulletin, Department of Education,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXIII, 4 (December 1942), p. 26.

Bulletin in the A.T.A. Magazine said the School Book Branch had carried it for the past year.¹³⁵ In 1947, one inspector claimed that World Affairs was one of the most popular current events magazines.¹³⁶ Inspector Sparby suggested to the Mountain View High School in his 1943 report that “A current events magazine like World Affairs would also be useful.”¹³⁷

Four interviewees recalled using the World Affairs manual. George Desson used it when he taught Social Studies in Westlock in 1946.¹³⁸ Derald Willows used it when he taught junior/ senior Social Studies and recalled his teacher used it when he attended Brooks High School from 1942-1945.¹³⁹ John Hanthol and Betty Wolfe, both Crescent Heights graduates, remembered the booklet. Betty Wolfe felt they had to pay for it and seemed to remember being tested on current events just like the tests in the World Affairs booklet.¹⁴⁰

The new high school Social Studies curriculum was to focus more on the present than the past and an emphasis was placed on current events. The Second World War helped to achieve this objective. From several sources—annual reports, inspectors reports, interviews, the A.T.A. Magazine, and the

¹³⁵ “Official Bulletin. Department of Education.” A.T.A. Magazine, XXV. 1 (October- November 1944), p. 29.

¹³⁶ AR, 1947, p. 23.

¹³⁷ School District Records. Accession 84.37, Box 22, File Folder 92b, PAA.

¹³⁸ Interview with George Desson, March 17, 1998.

¹³⁹ Interview with Derald Willows, April 14, 1998.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Betty Wolfe, April 29, 1998.

Calgary Herald, it is clear that many teachers taught current events. In addition, some teachers were able to implement new technology such as movie projectors, slides, or radios into the class. The move from the single textbook to multiple resources, thus, achieved at least, a moderate success.

CHAPTER FOUR

Exams and Evaluations

With the formation of Social Studies came a change in the evaluation format. The emphasis, as explained earlier, was on current events, and citizenship and democracy. Amy von Heyking said that the stress on current events was reflected in the examinations set by the Department of Education. The government departmentals were now given in grades nine and twelve and no longer in grades ten and eleven.¹ The students now faced a new type of exam with questions much different from the types used to evaluate the old History program. To what extent did the content of the Social Studies 3 Departmental Exam focus on citizenship, democracy, and current events? The exams indicated a strong emphasis on these elements. Interviews with students and teachers showed how they prepared for the grade twelve exams, and the A.T.A. Magazine and annual reports contained various information regarding the evaluation process.

The 1939 annual report stated, “the 1939 grade twelve exam was the last under the unrevised programme. That for 1940 will necessarily be of an entirely different character and for the most part of the objective type, designed to test the student’s power of comprehension and his ability to apply the knowledge gained to problems of daily life.”² The following year, the Department of Education said exams were “....not [*to*] test student’s

¹Amy von Heyking, “Shaping an Education for the Modern World,” Doctoral Thesis, University of Calgary, 1996, p. 253.

²AR, 1939, p. 44-45.

ability to reproduce memorized or specifically prepared material but to apply principles in new situations and to think independently- in other words- democratically.”³ The report advised that the Social Studies 3 exam should now have a large percentage of objective and short answer questions.⁴ As well, they pointed out that 15 percent of the real score was based on language. The report stated, “This evaluation required almost as much time and attention as the evaluation of answers on subject content.”⁵ The format of this exam contained quite an assortment of question types. These would include mapping questions, multiple choice, short answer, fill-in the blank, matching, and essay questions. The A.T.A. Magazine published a statement regarding the grade twelve department exams:

Teachers should take notice.... Grade 12 subjects for June and August 1940 will employ to a larger extent than heretofore approved modern techniques of testing. Accordingly, candidates may expect the following changes in exam papers:

1. Instead of a comparatively small number of ‘long’ questions, there is to be expected in most of the examinations a comparatively large number of ‘short’ questions.
2. The number of questions on the paper is larger than any candidate will be able to complete within the time allowed. All candidates will therefore be expected to do as much as they can during time, but they should not be alarmed or disappointed if they find that they cannot answer all of the questions.

³AR, 1940, p. 18.

⁴AR, 1940, p. 43.

⁵AR, 1940, p. 44.

3. The total number of marks will not be indicated on exam papers; in fact, the totals will vary for different papers. The 'Pass Mark' will not be pre- assigned or pre-determined.
4. A considerable number of 'objective' type questions mainly short answer and multiple choice.⁶

With the new departmental exams coming in 1940, the A.T.A. Magazine published articles dealing with the evaluation process. One article in December 1939 discussed evaluations and what we should examine. Harry Clark cited Dr. Taba and Dr. Tyler's evaluation suggestions. Dr. Taba felt the grade twelve exam should have made more use of short answer questions because it would have applied a principle or generalization to a new situation.⁷ In March 1940, J.F. Watkin said the test in Social Studies was to arouse interest and not kill it. He suggested teachers put questions on the test that students could answer. This would have created more interest and encouraged the poorer students to do better. Watkin also claimed that if the results were terrible, the failure should be marked up against the teacher and not the students.⁸

In 1941, two articles were published concerning the grade 12 departmental exams. The first discussed how a large number of students

⁶ "Official Bulletin, Department of Education," A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 7 (March 1940), p. 29.

⁷ Harry Clark, "Some Thoughts on Evaluation," A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 4 (December 1939), p. 9.

⁸ J. F. Watkin, "Classroom Procedure in High School Social Studies," A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 7 (March 1940), p. 17.

scored less than fifty percent in the various subjects. This appeared more than usual and a review of the testing was felt to be in order. Mr. Clark addressed the discrepancy between rural and urban results on the exams. One of the reasons Clark suggested for the poor results was "Subjects at the grade twelve level [*were*] harder than [*the students had*] come into contact before. The conditions of the exam different.... gone are good old days of memorization- the parrot- like repetition of Avogadro's Hypothesis, or Boyle's Law. Exam questions are now functional in character."⁹ The article continued:

Teachers have been known to remark: "It took the youngsters so long to read the paper, there wasn't time enough for them to workout the questions".... In some papers it is not expected that any students will answer all the questions. The Department has a special technique to handle papers of this kind. Similar methods have been evolved which do not allow candidates to be heavily penalized in any particular year because of the unusual stiffness of an exam.¹⁰

Another article discussed the results of a grade 10 survey test between rural and urban areas. For Social Studies 1, the city pupils scored higher than the rural pupils by about five percent. Mr. Sansom suggested rural kids were not as brainy as city children and poor rural school conditions were a factor,

⁹Harry Clark, "High School Examination Results," A.T.A. Magazine, XXII, 2 (October 1941), p. 31.

¹⁰*Ibid*, p. 32.

too.¹¹ A follow up article claimed towns that are good in math stand a pretty good chance of being good in Social Studies and English.¹² By 1943, the Department of Education began to adjust the length of the exams. The A.T.A. Magazine noted: “to some extent in Social Studies, the three hour period does not include time for reading the questions. The number and content of the questions have been reduced accordingly.”¹³

The second issue, in December, pointed out that 40 percent of the students who wrote the grade twelve exams in June 1941 received a standing lower than fifty percent. C. B. Willis said that prior to 1941 the percentage of students who scored below a fifty percent was 25 percent. Why the larger failure rate? He felt the larger portion of students entering grade twelve was the cause, and it would be offset by better teaching.¹⁴

The annual reports recorded the number of students who wrote the grade 12 Social Studies 3 department exams each year. In 1939, over 2,600 students wrote and this number jumped to over 4,300 in 1940. The report said because the Social Studies 3 exam was now obligatory, there was a drastic increase. Throughout World War II, there was a decrease in the number of students who wrote their departmental exams because many left

¹¹C. Sansom, “President’s Column,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXV, 3 (January 1945), p. 6.

¹²C. Sansom, “The Grade X Survey Tests,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXVI, 2 (November 1945), p. 13.

¹³ “Department Examinations,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXIII, 8 (April 1943), p. 35.

¹⁴ C. B. Willis, “Grade XII Examinations,” A.T.A. Magazine, XXII, 4 (December 1941), p. 27.

for the armed services. The Calgary Herald reported, “Large numbers of senior boys enlisted, changing what had been for several years an increasing high school enrollment into a declining one.”¹⁵ As well, R.V. Bellamy, the Registrar claimed the decrease was due to war conditions. He said, “Although recruiting officers who visited the schools urged students to remain at school until their courses were completed, many enlisted before writing examinations, while in a few cases arrangements were made for students to write at the Manning Depots.”¹⁶ In 1941, over 4,200 wrote and by 1945, 800 fewer took the exam. The end of the war resulted in an increase again. Over 4,000 students wrote each year for the remainder of the decade. Following the war, the annual reports began to post the results on grade twelve exams. In 1947, over 4,000 students wrote Social Studies 3 and of those over 1,600 scored below 50 percent. In 1949, of the 4,300 students who wrote, over 1,700 scored below 50 percent on their final.

Until the new change from History to Social Studies, every high school grade had to write departmental examinations. The History exams consisted of short and long answer questions. A 1930 History 2 exam to be completed in three hours had ten questions and seven were to be answered for one hundred marks. The questions were worth from three to fifteen marks and all were short answer. These questions were mostly fact based. One question was, “Describe the chief features of the Reformation

¹⁵ “Effect of War On School System,” Calgary Herald, 23 April 1941.

¹⁶ AR, 1942, p. 46.

Movement in Henry VIII's reign."¹⁷ A second required students to "Write a brief account of the chief events in the history of South Africa from 1870, the date of Cecil Rhodes first visit there, to the union of all the colonies in 1909."¹⁸

The History 4 exams were of the same format. The 1934 exam had nine questions and students were to complete five for one hundred marks in two and one half hours. Again these questions were all knowledge based. One twenty mark question asked, "Indicate the part played by each of the following in the history of Russia: Peter the Great, Nicholas I, Alexander II, and Lenin."¹⁹ A second asked, "Trace the development of the House of Lords from its earliest beginnings to the Reformation."²⁰ There was a similar format of questioning as late as 1938. The History 4 supplemental that year required students to answer five of the eleven short and long answer questions. One twenty mark question asked, "Why is the French Revolution considered such an important event in the history of Europe?"²¹ Another requested students to "Sketch the history of Parliament since the

¹⁷ "Departmental Examinations, 1930: History 2," Examinations File, Edmonton Public School Board Association. Hereafter referred to as EPSBA.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ "Departmental Examinations, Supplemental, 1934: History 4," Examinations File, EPSBA.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ "Departmental Examinations, Supplemental, 1938: History 4," Examinations File, EPSBA.

revolution of 1688.”²² With the change in program of studies came a drastic change in the format of department exams.

There was quite a dramatic change in the structure of the new Social Studies exams. These tests were extended to three hours and were quite lengthy. The 1941 exam noted, “It is not expected that any candidate will complete this paper. Questions may be answered in any order; but Questions 1, 3, and 19 must be attempted.”²³ The new Social Studies exams had more questions and a variety of testing formats. Students who wrote the Social Studies 3 departmental exam had to answer mapping questions, short answer questions, fill in the blank questions, multiple choice, matching, true/ false, essay questions, interpret small reading articles, know facts about important people, and interpret graphs. Throughout the 1940s, a large percentage of the Social Studies 3 exam focussed on current events, citizenship and democracy.

One of the ways to test current events was to have students identify countries and capitals in the news on maps during the Second World War. The 1940 Social Studies 3 exam asked students to draw on the accompanying map of Europe, the boundaries of Greater Germany in December, 1939.²⁴ By this time in history, Hitler had already taken the

²²Ibid.

²³ “Departmental Examinations, 1941: Social Studies 3,” Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

²⁴ “Departmental Examinations, 1940: Social Studies 3,” Accession 94. 148, Box 41, PAA.

Rhineland, Austria, Czechoslovakia and had invaded and conquered Poland. Students had to predict the approximate positions of such places as the Sudetenland, Danzig, Scapa Flow, and Munich. The 1941 exam provided a world map and students were to identify the list of places labelled on the map on their answer paper. They were to locate the following places in the news: Singapore, Eritrea, Kiel, Dunkirk, Vladivostok, Dakar, Bangkok, and Manila.²⁵

The 1942 Social Studies 3 exam contained two maps which dealt with places in the news. The first map showed the Pacific Theatre of War and students were to name the place which was marked on the map.²⁶ When looking at the Outline of Answers and Directions to Sub- Examiners- the places dealt with the emerging war in the Pacific. Students needed to located such places as Hong Kong, Pearl Harbor, Tokyo, the Burma Road, Port Moseby, and the Philippine Islands.²⁷ Finally, they were to mark with arrows the directions of the Japanese attack in Malaya and in Burma. The second map tested places in the news back home as well. The map outlined the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes and students had to locate the

²⁵ "Departmental Examinations, 1941: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

²⁶ "Departmental Examinations, 1942: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

²⁷ "Outline of Answers and Directions to Sub- Examiners, Examinations, 1942: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

most important canal built by Canada, a canal built by the United States and the two islands recently seized by Free French forces.²⁸

Current events was the focus of the two maps in the 1943 exam. The first map asked the students to indicate the approximate areas controlled by Italy and Germany, and to label two routes by which 1942 goods were conveyed from New York to Russia. In addition, pupils were to draw the routes by which airplanes from Canada or the United States were ferried to Soviet Russia, the British Third Army and to China. The route General LeClair's Free French army took to join General Giraud's forces in Africa was to be labelled.²⁹ The second map was of Alaska, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories, British Columbia, and Alberta. Drawn on the map was the route of the Alaska Highway then under construction. Students had to label locations such as- Great Bear Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, and the Athabasca River.³⁰

The 1943 Supplemental Exam contained two maps which focused on battlesites of World War II. The first was Western Europe and North Africa and students were to identify such places as Tobruk, Stalingrad, Cairo and Tunis. A follow up question asked the locations of the battlefronts at the

²⁸ "Departmental Examinations, 1942: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

²⁹ "Departmental Examinations, 1943: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

³⁰ Ibid.

present time.³¹ The second map outlined the world and asked the locations of Darwin, Midway, and the Solomon Islands. As well, students had to draw ten world shipping routes vital to the United Nations and the three major oil producing areas of the world.

During World War II, Canadian troops fought on the Italian peninsula in 1943- 44 and were in the news often. The 1944 exam had a map outline of Italy with numerous blank boxes and asked pupils to fill in the box with the corresponding place name as well as to draw the present battle front.³² In addition, students had to name three more places recently prominent in news of the Canadian Forces in Italy. The second map was of the Pacific Theatre of War and pupils were to draw a line enclosing the territories presently held by Japan. Students were told, “each of the numbers show(n) and circled on the map, marks place(s) mentioned in the news of warfare between the United Nations and Japan. What place is represented by each number?”³³ Answers included Guam, Wake Island, and the Aleutian Islands. Students also had to indicate, by means of arrows the locations of current attacks by the United Nations upon Japanese held territory.

With the war nearing an end, the two maps in the 1945 exam looked at both theatres of war. The first outlined the Pacific Theatre of War and

³¹ “Departmental Examinations, Supplemental 1943: Social Studies 3,” Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

³² “Departmental Examinations, 1944: Social Studies 3,” Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

³³ *Ibid.*

answers included Bataan, Iwo Jima, Nagasaki, and Borneo. One question asked, “By using arrows, indicate the location of two important assaults by United Nations forces on Japanese held territory by sea and air during the past four months.”³⁴ Students also had to mark with crosses locations of two naval battles and print their names. A final question asked to mark the farthest advances of the forces of the United Nations. The second map was a close up look at Western Europe and answers included Caen, Antwerp, Arnhem, and Dresden. Another question asked to show the territory now occupied or held by Russia and by armies of Britain, United States, and Canada.³⁵

Following the war, mapping questions were still included in the grade twelve exams, however, they appeared to have not taken on the importance of current events as such. Now most of the places asked were major cities like Ottawa, Moscow, Cairo, and Washington. Students were to mark, using dotted lines, the shortest routes from Montreal to Moscow, or from Edmonton to Chungking.³⁶

The 1947 exam had mapping but dealt mostly with World War II events again. One question stated, “After each of the following names of places where Canadian Forces took part in the War, 1939- 45, write the

³⁴ “Departmental Examinations, 1945: Social Studies 3,” Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ “Departmental Examinations, 1946: Social Studies 3,” Central High School Papers, Box 2: Examinations, Social Studies Department Examinations, 1946- 1959, GA.

number which shows its position on the map.”³⁷ Students also had to mark with arrows the direction of the German retreat in Africa, the advance of Allied forces, including Canadians in Italy, the attack of British, Canadian, and United States forces on German-held Europe, 1944, and the attacks from two directions on Germany in 1945. Another question asked students to mark the route by which Lend-Lease supplies were sent to Russia (1942-45).

The Social Studies 3 exam tested students on their knowledge of places in the news through mapping questions. The new examination format tested current events through multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, and essay questions. In the 1940 exam many questions asked to match leading personalities found in current newspapers. Examples included the commander-in-chief of Allied Land Forces, Sir Samuel Hoare and the present British Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax.³⁸ As well, students were to write about five hundred words on any one of the four topics provided. They included- the Cooperative Movement in the Scandinavian Countries, the role of Canada in Anglo-American Relations, Factors which foster or obstruct Canadian National Unity, or the Provision and Support of Social Services in Alberta.³⁹

³⁷ “Departmental Examinations, 1947: Social Studies 3,” Central High School Papers, Box 2: Examinations, Social Studies Department Examinations, 1946- 59, GA.

³⁸ “Departmental Examinations, 1940: Social Studies 3,” Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

³⁹ “Departmental Examinations, 1940: Social Studies 3,” Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

The 1941 exam continued to test current events heavily. Fill in the blank questions were used. One question asked, "Fifth column leader who assisted Hitler's conquests in Europe are?"⁴⁰ Another enquired as to what the present political status was in Canada, Newfoundland and Hong Kong. Students had to discuss the Rowell-Sirois Commission report which had just recently come out. The 1941 essay asked, "Write an essay of not more than one and one-half pages in length, (approximately 200 words), taking as your title: Canada's War Effort. Use as your opening sentence: During the Battle of Britain this country was thoroughly aroused, ready for any sacrifice, prepared for any effort."⁴¹ A second essay topic was the Defence of the Americas and students could mention any of the following points- American solidarity, the two-ocean navy, the American defence bases, and/or the Lease- Lend Bill.

In the Outline of Answers and Basis of Marking for the 1941 Social Studies 3 exam, the answer key explained how the markers were to evaluate the above essay questions:

The basis of evaluation of the essays will be decided by the sub-examiners as a body, after a group reading and discussion of sample answers from students' papers. The general nature of the topics will permit a wide variation in the method of attack. It should be observed that an essay must be written with some facility of expression at the grade XII level, and that it should be in good

⁴⁰ "Departmental Examinations, 1941: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁴¹ "Departmental Examinations, 1941: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

connected prose. One would expect something more than a series of disjointed facts. It is suggested that three sample essays be selected for each essay with group evaluations of 15, 10, and 5 respectively. These answers might be typed and kept in the room for reference purposes. The chairman may then make comparisons with these 'model answers' in an attempt to maintain uniformity of marking.⁴²

The supplemental that year had more fill in the blank questions regarding current events. Students were asked who the present Foreign Secretary of Britain was, and who the Greek leader was who organized his country's defence against Italian attack.⁴³ Two essay topics were given and one was to be completed. One topic was, "The Military Collapse of France," and suggestions on what to include were given. Students could discuss the French Empire when the war started, the coordination of British and French Plans, Britain's added burden since the collapse of France and the French situation today.

Many of the Social Studies 3 exams expected students to identify certain individuals and state their importance in current history. The 1942 exam asked to identify such key figures as Douglas Badar, Erwin Rommel, and A.G.L. McNaughton.⁴⁴ Multiple choice answers began to appear in the

⁴² "Outline of Answers and Directions to Sub- Examiners, Examinations, 1941: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁴³ "Departmental Examinations, Supplemental, 1941: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁴⁴ "Departmental Examinations, 1942: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

1942 exam. There were three questions which gave a statement and students had to choose which of the following four answers provided was correct. One asked who “the most influential agencies for forming opinions about political issues are,” and students had to choose the correct answer below:

(1) Impartial agencies which gather and distribute authentic facts.

(2) Non-partisan magazines which print articles on both sides of an issue.

(3) Educational Institutions

(4) Pressure Groups⁴⁵

There were two writing portions in the 1942 exam. The first essay asked to write on one of the four topics given. They were, The Four Freedoms, a Great Leader, Canada’s Armed Forces and the Alaska Highway. The second writing exercise had students choose from, “Three different opinions of Canada’s place in the world of nations. Choose the one which you, as a Canadian, would support and present as clearly as you can in a paragraph what you believe Canada should contribute to world progress.”⁴⁶

The 1943 exam asked students to identify and state the importance of the likes of Bernard Montgomery, Dwight Eisenhower, and Maxim

⁴⁵ “Departmental Examinations, 1942: Social Studies 3,” Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁴⁶ “Departmental Examinations, 1942: Social Studies 3,” Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

Litvinoff.⁴⁷ On this exam students only had to write an explanatory paragraph on one of these topics. The first dealt with the political situation in North Africa since 1942. The second focused on the 1938 agreement between Great Britain and Eire, and the third looked at Australia's part in the war.

In the supplemental exam that year, seven multiple choice questions dealt with a number of situations that President Roosevelt had faced. Students had to choose which answer concurred with what Roosevelt had done. As well, students had two writing assignments; the first had students choose one of the three quotations provided and write about it. One quotation dealt with Japan's war with China. The second quotation was from the booklet, Foreign Affairs and dealt with China's internal and external problems. The third looked at Great Britain's relationship with India. The instructions stated students should refer to events occurring within the past five years.⁴⁸

The 1944 exam asked to identify and state the importance of current figures such as General Broz Tito, Marshall Kesselring and Mohammed Ali Jinnah.⁴⁹ The exam also included five multiple choice questions and dealt with the current situation with Nazi Germany. One question asked, "A

⁴⁷ "Departmental Examinations, 1943: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁴⁸ "Departmental Examinations, Supplemental, 1943: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁴⁹ "Departmental Examinations, 1944: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

crucial question which will arise immediately after the collapse of German opposition concerns the areas to be occupied by the conquering armies.

Show the procedure which you consider the most reasonable of those listed:

(a) Each force will drive forward on the collapse of the German armies until they meet. The boundary line between the forces will determine the territory over which they will have control.

(B) A joint commission should plan in advance a line of demarcation, defining the areas to be occupied.

(C) Germany proper should not be occupied by either army.⁵⁰

The 1944 exam contained a larger selection of current events essay topics. Students wrote an essay of about one hundred and fifty words on any one of the following. Topics included the Women's Branches of Armed Services, Canadian Immigration, Civil Aviation in Canada (Pre-war, present, Post-War), the Social Security Plan, or the Significance of the Atlantic Charter.

The 1945 exam contained ten multiple choice questions which dealt with current events. One question asked, "The American General whose prophecy, 'I will return', made in 1942 and fulfilled in 1945, was:

(1) Omar Bradley

(3) George Patton

(2) Mark Clark

(4) Douglas MacArthur⁵¹

⁵⁰ "Departmental Examinations, 1944: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁵¹ "Departmental Examinations, 1945: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

A second question asked, “The German military leader who surprised the Allies by a smashing drive into Belgium during the last part of 1944 was:

- | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|
| (1) Von Leeb | (3) Von Rundstedt |
| (2) Von Bock | (4) Von Brauehitsch. ⁵² |

For the 1945 exam essay, students choose from three topics. They could pick to write on Canada’s National Unity, Post- War Treatment of Fascist Nations, or the British North America Act. After the Second World War, questions still focussed on current events. The 1946 exam provide twelve multiple choice questions relating to current leaders around the globe. One question asked who the president of the General Assembly of the United Nations was.⁵³ A second question asked who the new president of Brazil was.⁵⁴ As well, students wrote 150 to 200 words on one of the following topics: Canada’s Part in the War, 1939- 45, the Possibilities of Full Employment in the Present Period, or General MacArthur’s Programme for Japan.

The 1947 exam contained seventeen current events multiple choice. One asked what the present British government was. A second question asked what was the major reason for the present occupation of Germany.⁵⁵

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³ “Departmental Examinations, 1946: Social Studies 3,” Central High School Papers, Box 2: Examinations, Social Studies Department Examinations, 1946- 59, GA.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵ “Departmental Examinations, 1947: Social Studies 3,” Central High School Papers, Box 2: Examinations, Social Studies Department Examinations, 1946- 59, GA.

In 1947, the matching questions went back to a similar format as in 1940. Students had to match important people in the world today. Examples included the United States Secretary of State, George C. Marshall, and the Canadian Minister of Reconstruction, C.D. Howe.⁵⁶ For essay topics, students could choose either, The Later Phases of the War with Italy and Germany, the Peace Treaties between the United Nations and Finland, Hungary, and Italy, or the relations between the United Nations and Russia in the Post- War period.

Current events played a large part throughout the 1940s on the Social Studies 3 exams, yet many questions stressed the importance of democracy and citizenship through a vast array of questioning techniques. In the 1940 exam there were two short answer questions which asked students to discuss weaknesses and merits of a democratic government.⁵⁷ The exam also contained a reading passage and questions which followed. The question was followed with four extracts and students were to state in their own words, the ideas of these extracts. One of the quotations dealt with democracy. It stated,

There is ample room in this Commonwealth for many varieties of democracy. We do not know what the future will bring. All we can safely say is that neither we nor our children are likely to accept, just as our fathers refused to accept, any system of government

⁵⁶ "Departmental Examinations, 1947: Social Studies 3," Central High School Papers, Box 2: Examinations, Social Studies Department Examinations, 1946- 59, GA.

⁵⁷ "Departmental Examinations, 1940: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

which subordinates the individual to the state. Adapted from page 238, The British Commonwealth and the Future (edited by Hodson).⁵⁸

The 1941 exam had an excerpt from France's, The Declaration of the Rights of Man written by the National Assembly in 1791. Students then read a speech by Roosevelt before Congress in 1941 which said, "There is nothing mysterious about the foundations of a healthy and strong democracy. The basic things expected by our people of their political and economic systems are simple."⁵⁹ Students read these two statements and were to conclude about the changing duties of these governments.

The 1941 supplementary exam contained an essay topic which provided a portion of a speech by James S. Duncan, former Deputy Minister for Air. The students were then asked to title the essay, "Our Way of Life," and explain what they considered essential features of the democratic way of living.

The 1942 exam and others to follow moved away from matching important people and their description to general Social Studies concepts or terms to be learned. One question expected pupils to match terms like appeasement, democracy, social security, and nationalism with their respective definitions.⁶⁰ In the 1942 exam, students were to comment on

⁵⁸ "Departmental Examinations, 1940: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁵⁹ "Departmental Examinations, 1941: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁶⁰ "Departmental Examinations, 1942: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

political developments in Great Britain. One of the questions asked to show the strength of British democracy and the weakness of the French nation in the early stages of the present World War.⁶¹ The following question asked, “What qualities of citizenship are necessary in democratic states if realization of the above merits is to continue and expand?”⁶² Short answer questions were given dealing with democracy and citizenship. One asked, “Give one reason for the fact that a large percentage of Canadian citizens neglect to vote at elections.”⁶³ Another asked to, “Explain clearly the danger which threatens any community in which the people neglect the duty of voting.”⁶⁴ A third asked, “How would you suggest that our people could be induced to assume their full responsibility in this matter?”⁶⁵

This exam included another writing assignment which looked at the development of democracy in Canada. This question required in paragraph form, and to include the period during which Canada was a Crown colony, partly self-governing, or had representative government. Another reference to be included dealt with the introduction of the federal plan uniting several colonies to form the dominion.⁶⁶ The second writing assignment asked

⁶¹ “Departmental Examinations, 1942: Social Studies 3,” Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁶²Ibid, 1942.

⁶³Ibid, 1942.

⁶⁴Ibid, 1942.

⁶⁵Ibid, 1942.

⁶⁶ “Departmental Examinations, 1943: Social Studies 3,” Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

students to write on any one of these topics. They included-- Why Canada Went to War; Russia's Achievement; An Important Community, School, or Patriotic Project; Northern Canada or the Quest for Social Security.

The year 1943 was the turning point in the war and still there was a fear of totalitarianism. The 1943 exam asked students to match terms like: propaganda, sabotage, fifth column, scorched earth and laissez-faire. Another question gave a statement such as "Complete freedom of speech is permitted to all citizens at all times." Students were to compare such a statement with Stalin's Soviet Constitution, which was proclaimed the most democratic in the world, with Canada's and the United States' and decide if it was true in all three countries.⁶⁷

In 1944, the matching continued with such concepts as free enterprise, imperialism, inflation and passive resistance.⁶⁸ A similar question was asked in the 1945 exam. Students were to compare Democratic and Totalitarian Governments. A statement was given and students had to identify if it was a feature of a democratic government or a totalitarian one.⁶⁹ With World War II nearing its end, the Soviets were in the news quite often and the 1945 exam contained a matching exercise filled with Soviet terms. Examples included the-- Kremlin, Duma, OGPU, and

⁶⁷ "Departmental Examinations, 1943: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁶⁸ "Departmental Examinations, 1944: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁶⁹ "Departmental Examinations, 1945: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

Pravda.⁷⁰ Again in 1946, there was another matching section of Soviet terms which dealt with current Soviet leaders such as-- Zhukov, Molotov, and Stalin.⁷¹ As well, students had to read a lengthy document entitled "The Future of Canadian Democracy" and answer six multiple choice questions.⁷²

There were numerous ways the teachers prepared students to write the Social Studies 3 exam. George Desson, a Social Studies teacher at Westlock in 1946, gave tests and the odd quiz. The questions he asked were the same sort of questions asked on department exams which he had access to. They were to be sent back to Edmonton, but the principal always kept one or two. He said that the exams they gave at Christmas and Easter were a dress rehearsal for the finals. Desson pointed out that the exams were a regurgitation of facts and that he didn't like the matching questions. He never assigned argumentative essays in order to prepare for the departmental. Desson felt there was no room for criticism of statesmen because it was a criticism of government policy. As well, he said, "I'm not even sure that I knew enough to encourage criticism based on my university reading."⁷³

⁷⁰ "Departmental Examinations, 1945: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁷¹ "Departmental Examinations, 1946: Social Studies 3," Central High School Papers, Box 2: Examinations, Social Studies Department Examinations, 1946- 59, GA.

⁷² "Departmental Examinations, 1946: Social Studies 3," Accession 94.148, Box 41, PAA.

⁷³ Interview with George Desson, March 17, 1998.

Gale Wheeler, a 1944 graduate from Cluny, concurred with Desson. He knew what the department exams were like because the teachers had old examination papers in all the subjects so they knew what to expect. The teachers would show them old ones and they would practice them. He recalled that there were no essays on the test. They had a current events quiz once a week and were tested on geography. They gave maps that covered the world and students had to pick out certain countries. Wheeler said it was just like the tests they had in Readers Digest back then and that the geography was always related to the history of that country. The test format was mostly short answer and was a straight recall of history as taught. He recalled they even marked the exams in class. He would pass it back and they would tell you the answers, and other students decided if you were close enough to get it right.⁷⁴ The A.T.A Magazine explained how they had recently had pupils setting and making their own tests and which were used as a basis of promotion.⁷⁵

Many teachers had current events quizzes quite often. Stanley Clarke pointed out how every month he gave a short answer test on the most important happenings. It was like the current events quiz in the February 26 Time Magazine.⁷⁶ Derald Willows remembered he had to listen to the radio

⁷⁴Interview with Gale Wheeler, May 7, 1998.

⁷⁵Walter King, "Self Tests," A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 4, (December 1939), p. 11.

⁷⁶Stanley Clarke, "Evaluation in Social Studies II," A.T.A. Magazine, XX, 9 (May 1940), p. 16.

and the teacher would give a current events quiz from it once a week.⁷⁷

Audrey Cuthbertson graduated from West Glen in 1943 and recalled having current events quiz once a week.⁷⁸ Stu Miller and Dave Thomson, both graduates from Western Canada High School in 1946, remembered having a current events quiz once a week.⁷⁹

A number of students from Western Canada could recall how their teachers tested them. Dixie McCall, a 1946 graduate, remembered doing matching questions on a pop quiz on current affairs. She said, “You would get a list of people and you would have to identify who they [*were*] by the question down below. That was a common system of examination in those days.”⁸⁰ McCall explained how they wrote paragraphs in one hundred words or less on a selected topic. Donna Oughton, also a 1946 graduate, remembered her tests having some true and false, and short answer questions, but there wasn’t very much writing. She said you didn’t write essays or long answer questions. For the tests, she simply studied the information the teachers had given them and they were to give it back.⁸¹ Dave Thomson remembered doing matching questions; they had terms at the top of the page with blanks down below.⁸²

⁷⁷Interview with Derald Willows, April 14, 1998.

⁷⁸Interview with Audrey Cuthbertson, March 25, 1998.

⁷⁹Interview with Stu Miller, March 31, 1998 and Dave Thomson, March 16, 1998.

⁸⁰Interview with Dixie McCall, April 1, 1998.

⁸¹Interview with Donna Oughton, April 21, 1998.

⁸²Interview with Dave Thomson, March 16, 1998.

A number of students from Crescent Heights remembered how their Social Studies teacher evaluated them. Jackie Durkie, a 1948 graduate, recalled how she had a test a week on current events, so she had to pay attention or fail miserably.⁸³ Betty Wolfe recalled the test format was short answer and long answer questions with true and false, but no multiple choice questions. She said that the exams had current events questions, but she could not remember writing any current events quizzes.⁸⁴ Ken Shedden, a 1940 graduate, didn't have current events quizzes either. The tests he wrote consisted of short and long answer types with no multiple choice or true and false questions. He felt the course was dry as dust and they simply scribbled down whatever the teacher wrote on the board because that was gold for exams. He studied the notes they got from the board because that was what they tested you on and none of them objected to that.⁸⁵ Andy Robson, a 1940 graduate, agreed with Shedden. He remembered sitting outside studying and swatting flies away from his notebook. He said he "studied these notes cause I figured the exam is what I got written on these pages."⁸⁶ Cynthia Downe, a 1942 graduate, agreed with Mr. Robson. She explained that they would take the notes, memorize them and then cough them back up again at exam time.⁸⁷

⁸³Interview with Jackie Durkie, March 17, 1998.

⁸⁴Interview with Betty Wolfe, April 29, 1998.

⁸⁵Interview with Ken Shedden, March 20, 1998.

⁸⁶Interview with Andy Robson, March 24, 1998.

⁸⁷Interview with Cynthia Downe, March 19, 1998.

The new Social Studies program offered departmental exams in grade nine and twelve. The grade twelve exams had a new format of questioning which included mapping questions, multiple choice, short answer, fill in the blank, matching and essay. The departmental had a strong emphasis on citizenship, democracy, and current events. The Second World War helped to generate an interest and acceptance of this course content.

CONCLUSION

Progressive education for Social Studies in Alberta high schools in the 1940s was somewhat successful. The change in the new Social Studies curriculum from the old History, Civics, and Economics began in 1937. By 1939 the entire program had been revamped, led by progressive educationalist H.C. Newland and was legitimized by the Second World War. In it there were many new objectives to be met, beginning with the teaching of citizenship and democracy. Students were to learn how to become more educated citizens in society and not simply fall victim to rising dictatorships as seen in Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, or Communist Russia. A strong Canadian component was emphasized during the war.

A second objective was to make the classroom a lab. Students were to explore, investigate, research and discover for themselves and not simply to collect and memorize data. The educational process was to be more child-centered. Pupils were to participate, cooperate and become more tolerant as seen through the emphasis on group discussions, projects (committee work), presenting argumentative essays, and open forums. Tables were to be used for group study and desks were not to be in rows. More debating was to take place in the classroom.

The third objective was the emphasis on current events. Historian Amy von Heyking said Alberta educators “abandoned the teaching of history and relinquished the struggle to know the past.”¹ With the

¹ Amy von Heyking, “Shaping an Education for the Modern World,” Doctoral Thesis, University of Calgary, 1996, p. 271.

progressive revision came a world view which sought to remake society and saw little need to give students a sense of belonging within their historical experience. Students were not led to discover who they were through an examination of who they had been; they were set to the task of self-definition by imagining who they would like to become. The Second World War gave emphasis on the present a legitimacy, for the present did seem more important than the past.

The change in curriculum also brought about a change in the evaluation format. The History departmental exams were for grades nine to twelve and the questions were all short and long answer which focussed on fact based responses. The new Social Studies departmental tested only grades nine and twelve and dealt mostly with citizenship, democracy and current events. The format changed to include mapping questions, multiple choice, short answer, fill in the blank, matching and essay questions.

Progressive educationalists hoped to revamp the way teaching occurred. H.C. Newland said,

The new program is built on the principle that education is a social experience in the course of which pupils plan, initiate, and carry out, co-operative projects. The motivation of pupils is strengthened and the classroom work is vitalized through a variety of activities, which replace the verbalism and repetitive book-learning procedures of the old course.²

Nick Kach pointed out all the pedagogical changes that were to occur. Students were to become more tolerant and to have more freedom to

² John Chalmers, Schools of the Foothills Province, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 91.

develop naturally. They were to be more active learners and show more initiative. As Chief Inspector W.H. Swift said, education should be more related to the child's immediate environment. In addition, there was to be more social activity, and more of a spirit of inquiry rather than one of passive acceptance.³

Historians have felt the new progressive education was unsuccessful for various reasons. Some thought the poor standard of teachers available resulted in the demise of progressive education. Amy von Heyking cited H.C. Newland who said in 1945, "Until we have a body of well- trained teachers capable of teaching and guiding pupils intelligently through a series of related, vital, and purposeful activities, we shall fall short of our goal."⁴ Nancy Sheehan said progressive education required well equipped libraries, but they were few and resources were scarce. As well, she questioned the teachers' qualifications noting that most had normal school training and generally no university experience.⁵ Hilda Neatby claimed progressive education was, "anti- intellectual, anti- cultural, and amoral."⁶ The Cameron Report reiterated Sheehan's observation that teacher

³ Nick Kach, "The Emergence of Progressive Education in Alberta," in Exploring Our Educational Past, edited by Nick Kach and Kas Mazurek (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1992), p. 169- 170.

⁴ Amy von Heyking, "Shaping an Education for the Modern World," Doctoral Thesis, University of Calgary, 1996, p. 271.

⁵ Nancy Sheehan, "Education, the Society and the Curriculum in Alberta, 1905-80: An Overview," in Schools in the West, edited by Nancy Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson, and David C. Jones (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd, 1986), p. 45.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 46.

standards were too low, and had inadequate matriculation preparation. He added that some classes were deemed “frills”.⁷

Hugh Stevenson cited Inspector Swift in 1958. Swift questioned the impact of progressive education and felt it had little influence on practices in the practices in the classroom. Swift believed few teachers had been converted to Dewey’s ideas of child-centered schools and learning by doing.⁸ Nick Kach felt the progressive curriculum revision was too ambitious, the scope of the change too profound, and the conditions less than ideal. He claimed, “the time and resources for implementation [*was*] so short, that in retrospect it is no wonder that such a grand educational experiment was bound to flounder.”⁹

Kach and Kas Mazurek noted that the armed forces and war industries took many teaching personnel and that many school divisions lost all their male teachers. Some schools were force to close.¹⁰ To ease the shortage, student teachers were hired, and standards were relaxed. Kach and Mazurek explained,

This relaxation took two forms: shortening the period of preparation and lowering the entrance requirements.

⁷ Ibid, p. 46.

⁸ Hugh Stevenson, “Developing Public Education in Post- War Canada to 1960,” in Canadian Education: A History, edited by J. Donald Wilson, Robert Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet (Scarborough: Prentice- Hall,1970), p. 408.

⁹ Nick Kach, “The Search for an Educational Vision,” in Exploring Our Educational Past, edited by Nick Kach and Kas Mazurek (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1992), p. 146.

¹⁰ Nick Kach and Kas Mazurek, “The Cameron Commission and the Social Context of Educational Reforms,” in Exploring Our Educational Past, edited by Nick Kach and Kas Mazurek (Calgary: Detselig Enterprise Ltd., 1992), p. 197.

With respect to the first, beginning in 1942 high- ranking candidates were sent to rural schools after a five week session.... With respect to the second form of relaxation, of these admitted to normal schools in 1942, a very considerable number had low standing in grade twelve subjects as well as low scores on admission tests. These emergency measures continued until the end of World War II.¹¹

Robert Patterson argued that rural school teachers had no readily available source of professional help. Even inspectors who did visit were not always helpful.¹² Inspectors who did understand the progressive education philosophy found the quality of instruction to be rather mediocre. Patterson studied poor test results of normal school students who wrote the Thurston Psychological Tests and pointed out how more than 70 percent of the students enrolled in the one year teaching program had less than the matriculation standard.¹³ In addition, he noted that those teachers who received training at normal school seemed to “lack the confidence, courage

¹¹Ibid, p.199- 200.

¹² Robert Patterson, “Voices From the Past: The Personal and Professional Struggle of Rural School Teachers,” in Schools in the West, edited by Nancy Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson, and David C. Jones (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.), p.109.

¹³ Robert Patterson, “History of Teacher Education in Alberta,” in Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West, edited by David C. Jones, Nancy Sheehan, and Robert Stamp. (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.), p. 197.

and experience to enable them to break with traditional methods.”¹⁴

Patterson summarized:

The high school remained relatively unaffected by the new approach. The emphasis at this level remained one of subject matter mastery. Teachers were not convinced that the methodological innovations would benefit students at the secondary level in their attempts to master the academic program.¹⁵

Campbell Ross cited Robert Patterson’s questionnaire responses completed by retired teachers. The survey suggested that “Many classroom teachers felt too unprepared in training and underequipped in facilities to implement the program as designed.”¹⁶

John Chalmers questioned the teachers’ ability. He said teaching permits were offered to people “who had no training whatsoever and placed them in charge of classrooms.”¹⁷ Overall, Chalmers summarized the causes of the poor high school services:

These were: indifference or active opposition on the part of parents to secondary education for children,

¹⁴ Robert Patterson, “The Canadian Experience with Progressive Education,” in Canadian Education: Historical Themes and Contemporary Issues, edited by Brian Titley (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd, 1990), p. 106.

¹⁵ Robert Patterson, “Society and Education During the Wars and their Interludes, 1914-45,” in Canadian Education: A History, edited by J. Donald Wilson, Robert Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1970), p. 376.

¹⁶ Campbell Ross, “The Neatby Debate in Alberta: Clue to a National Dialectic,” in Exploring Our Educational Past, edited by Nick Kach and Kas Mazurek (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1992), p. 178.

¹⁷ John Chalmers, Schools of the Foothills Province (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 109.

opposition to increased taxes that resulted from improved high schools, lack of funds for good high school facilities, teachers, and equipment, lack of trained, competent teachers, lack of living accommodation for students, high cost of board and room, high wages paid to young people, enticing them to leave school for employment, lack of facilities for subjects such as industrial arts, home economics, agriculture, and commerce, and bad weather and poor roads.¹⁸

However, a strong argument can be made that some aspects of progressive education were successful in Social Studies at the high school level during World War II. Various sized schools did collect enough resources to provide satisfactory libraries and reference materials for Social Studies. In accordance with the progressive education theory, attempts were made to move away from the one textbook course and incorporate a variety of reading materials. Canadians therefore scrounged to get the necessary books anyway they could. The same could be said for the implementation of technology into the classroom. There were a few examples of movie projectors, slides, and the radio being used in Social Studies class. The A.T.A. provided an abundance of audio-visual material necessary for the new curriculum.

Examples can be seen of teachers who tried to create a more cooperative classroom and to make it like a lab. Some teachers posted maps, newspaper clippings and timeline charts. Some evidence showed that teachers attempted to assign committee work, generate discussions and have

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 124.

students become more active learners. A few classes had tables to allow for group study and attempted to have presentations and write argumentative essays. Progressive education and its child-centered approach was easier for teachers; they lectured less and students enjoyed the current events. The Second World War certainly boosted the success of the new Social Studies program and the pupils enjoyed debating, exploring, and discussing the war against Hitler and Mussolini.

The emphasis on current events in Social Studies was achieved and with great success. World War II generated great interest in modern affairs because most students were affected daily by it. Most knew of a brother, father, uncle, friend, or teacher who was fighting overseas. Parents listened daily to the radio and read the newspapers. Current events were stressed in grade 12 Social Studies as seen through the departmental exams. A large portion of the exam dealt with current events and the war. Many interviewees remembered learning about the war in Social Studies class and enjoyed studying it. Without the war, the new Social Studies would not have had the same appeal.

Throughout the conflict, the Social Studies curriculum changed to incorporate more citizenship and democratic content, and this aspect could be considered a success. A greater emphasis of Canadian content was also injected into the curriculum. The war helped to generate more active citizens out of the high school students. Many were involved in cadets, Red Cross, victory bond sales, rationing, and care packages. Teachers did struggle in understanding, presenting, and evaluating citizenship concepts

but did attempt to introduce it, and the war did assist in learning these concepts.

The Social Studies curriculum has changed over the past sixty years. The 1930 Handbook for Secondary Schools outlined the History, Civics, and Economics program. History 1 focussed on the Ancient and Medieval Ages, History 2 looked at British history from 1485 to the present, History 3 dealt with Canadian history, civics and elementary economics, and History 4 studied the general history of the modern age and English constitutional history.

With progressive education came the emergence of Social Studies in 1937 and a lesser emphasis on British history. Social Studies 1 dealt with the early times to the 1500s, Social Studies 2 focussed on the period 1500-1914, and Social Studies 3 addressed contemporary issues from 1914 to the present. During the early 1940s, Canadian democracy and citizenship themes emerged in all high school grades.

Social Studies in the 1990s has dropped the Ancient and Medieval history. Grade 10 Social Studies examines Canada's identity, government, and our emerging sovereignty from the English. Grade 11 Social Studies addresses such global issues today as the diversity between the northern and southern hemispheres, environmental issues, quality of life, and economic interdependence. As well, pupils study European history from the Renaissance to World War I. Grade 12 students look at the various political and economic systems and modern history from World War I to the present.

Social Studies now has much less British content than in the past. Following World War II, Canada slowly moved away from its close ties with Great Britain and more towards sovereignty and the United States. The curriculum today still stresses Canadian identity, democracy, and citizenship, but studying the present seems not as important as during the Second World War. The war gave the new focus of studying the present rather than the past a sense of legitimacy. Current events is still part of the program, but has scarcely the importance it played during the war. The Second World War brought the new Social Studies to life and helped catapult it to a success sometimes underestimated by historians.

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