

Curricular Reform in Social Studies: An Analysis of the Cases of Saskatchewan and British Columbia

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This paper analyses the activities of secondary social studies curriculum committees in Saskatchewan (1970–1972) and British Columbia (1978–1981) during periods of significant change. In both provinces, the procedures and politics of curriculum change pitted traditionalists against progressives in a sharp ideological struggle.

Dans cet article, l'auteur analyse les activités des comités responsables des programmes de sciences sociales au secondaire en Saskatchewan (1970–1972) et en Colombie-Britannique (1978–1981) au cours de périodes marquées par des changements profonds. Dans les deux provinces, le choix des méthodes et des politiques ayant trait aux modifications de programme a donné lieu à une vive lutte idéologique entre les traditionalistes et les progressistes.

INTRODUCTION

This paper offers an historical analysis of the activities of secondary social studies curriculum committees in Saskatchewan (1970–1972) and British Columbia (1978–1981) during periods of significant change, and as crucial initial steps were taken to prepare teachers to implement them.¹ Data included governmental memoranda, minutes, unpublished briefs, letters, reports, and published articles. These data were supplemented by the author's recollections. The analysis explains both curriculum design development and the emergence of opposition to them from significant sectors of the educational community; these were characterized by two episodes of what Tomkins called ideological struggles over worthwhile knowledge (1979, p. 12).

THE CONTEXT FOR CURRICULAR REVISION

Impetus for Revision

Curriculum committees appointed to revise programs are advisory. However, they have traditionally had a powerful role in deciding on curriculum changes and played a crucial role in the episodes under discussion.

In both Saskatchewan and British Columbia, the Ministry of Education initiated curricular revision. In Saskatchewan, curricula in social studies were getting too old. The senior curriculum (grades 10, 11, 12) had been in place since 1963, the junior secondary (grades 7, 8, 9) since 1967, although the elementary (grades 1 to 6) by 1970 was in the final developmental stages of revision. In British Columbia, too, the secondary curriculum (grades 8 to 11) and the elementary (grades 1 to 7) had been in place since 1968 and 1974 respectively.

However, in British Columbia, two reports on the state of social studies, one by an ad hoc committee on social studies revision (1975) and the other by an assessment team (1977) headed by Ted Aoki, a respected social studies educator from the University of Alberta, gave new impetus for change. In addition, the Ministry of education under Patrick McGeer had published the *Guide to the Core Curriculum* (1977a). It called for a goals-oriented approach to curriculum and instruction, an approach which if applied would require considerable curricular revision. The Ministry of Education launched a curriculum revision of social studies grades 1 to 11 (the last year of compulsory social studies). It hoped to construct a logically sequential program. The Ministry further decided not only to effect significant changes in curriculum but to invent a developmental "process" that would serve as prototype for subsequent revisions in other subjects (B.C. Ministry of Education, *Minutes*, Secondary Curriculum Committee [BCMSCC], January 24, 1979).²

Intellectual Climate

In considering subsequent events, remember that the intellectual climate of curricular revision was different in each case. Saskatchewan revisions began in the early 1970s in a heady atmosphere of optimism and relative affluence. Ideas of such American theorists as Bruner, Fenton, and Morrisett, to mention only a few, enjoyed widespread popularity, or notoriety, depending upon the ideological stance of individual teachers. Innovative programs in the United States—the Amherst Project, the Harvard Public Issues Project and Man: A Course of Study (MACOS)—seemed to promise substantial improvements in the teaching of social studies in Canada as well. Moreover, among Canadian educators, Hodgetts' blasts (1968) at the mediocrity of the teaching of history reverberated across the land. In response to Hodgetts' critique, the Canadian Studies Foundation (CSF) was established to stimulate improved teaching practice and curricular design in the study of Canadian history, geography and literature. In Saskatchewan CSF's innovative spirit was evidenced by the work of Project Canada West, which attracted enthusiastic participation from teachers in examinations of urban land use in Saskatoon, analyses of the role of Canadian literature in the teaching of social studies, and the like.

The first meetings of Saskatchewan's curriculum committee evoked the reform-mindedness of the time (Saskatchewan Department of Education, *Minutes*, Secondary Curriculum Committee [SMSCC], 1970 November 6, 7). However, these same meetings showed the relative lack of expertise of committee members in curricular development. Members were more concerned to find a theory of social studies education and to get on with a new curricular design, than to develop a paradigm of effective and substantive change. This emphasis on product rather than process is understandable in view of the contemporary absence of scholarly work on the process of curricular revision (see Fullan, 1982). That lacuna contributed to the developers' ultimate failure. In the beginning, however, the prevailing winds of reform made the Saskatchewan committee optimistic that teachers would see the wisdom of its proposals, and would march to the drumbeat of reform.

In contrast, curricular revision in British Columbia was undertaken almost a decade later, when the exhilaration of reform was beginning to wear thin. The developers, however, were unaware of the shift in intellectual climate. They evinced at first the optimism of their Saskatchewan counterparts. In retrospect, a clear reaction had begun in both Canada and the United States to the innovations of the 1960s and 1970s. MACOS, hailed by reformers as a most innovative program in social studies, had become the target of a conservative outcry in the United States against inquiry- and values-oriented teaching of social studies (Dow, 1975). In Alberta a similar furor over a values-oriented curriculum had triggered public controversy between "progressive" teachers Haas (1979) and their traditionalist colleagues. In short, the issue was whether social studies were to be taught in a less didactic and more interdisciplinary and experiential way or in expository fashion that emphasized history and geography. The ideological struggle spilled over into Saskatchewan, contributed significantly to the frustration of the developers there, and became infused with the larger back-to-the-basics movement sweeping the continent in the late 1970s. Curriculum developers in British Columbia were caught in an ideological time warp. They bathed themselves in the sunlight of progressive reform, unaware that the sun was declining.

On the other hand, British Columbia developers had advantages over their prairie predecessors. They knew more of the complexities of curricular revision and the provincial "state of the art." For instance, the social studies consultant, responsible for recommending the appointment of members to the curriculum committee and secretary, had enjoyed the luxury of one year's leave to plan the developmental process. He consulted knowledgeable people within and without the Ministry. Further, the recently concluded *British Columbia Social Studies Assessment* (1977b), a five-volume empirical study of social studies in the province, provided committee members with a comprehensive overview of shortcomings of existing curricula and directions for future revisions.

The committee members, unlike their Saskatchewan colleagues, devoted considerable attention to discussing developmental processes (BCMSSC, 1978 October 25 and 1978 December 4, 5). But despite an auspicious beginning, the committee was ambushed in the end by political forces whose ideology differed sharply with its own.

Political Context

The politics of education worked to the disadvantage of the British Columbian developers. Historically speaking, group exclusiveness and self-interest, rather than co-operation, have characterized relationships among constituent educational groups in the province. These characteristics were manifested in a number of ways. For instance, whereas the Saskatchewan committee often met in facilities provided by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), British Columbia meetings were invariably held at the Ministry. Moreover, unlike British Columbia, Saskatchewan committee minutes were circulated to STF's central office. Indeed, STF executive assistants attended meetings as observers, a move unthinkable in Victoria. In essence, the curricular process in Saskatchewan was less formal, relatively relaxed, and characterized by close interaction between Ministry, STF, trustees and school administrators. This was true even of cost-sharing for orientation sessions to the new curriculum (SMSSC, 1972 April 20, 27). Traditional frictions and jealousies did exist, but, in the end, co-operation was the rule.

In British Columbia, on the other hand, although the Ministry genuinely sought wider participation in development, lack of close co-operation among groups on such issues as cost-sharing and implementation was evident from the outset.

In the long run, developers in both provinces inadvertently provoked opposition from significant educational groups, and this opposition, prompted in part by the committees' procedures, contributed to widespread disinterest in their proposals.

FACTORS INFLUENCING DEVELOPMENT

The Curriculum Committees

The membership and procedures of the respective curriculum committees had key significance in the course of revision. In both provinces care was taken to select knowledgeable and experienced educators. Respective Ministries made every effort to facilitate appointment of teachers by assisting local jurisdictions to pay substitutes for teacher members of committees. It was the professional characteristics of the membership that in the end most influenced the process of development. For example, the Saskatchewan commit-

tee of 13 consisted at the outset of 5 practicing teachers, 1 professor of history, 4 university professors of education and 3 school superintendents. The committee in British Columbia consisted of 4 practicing teachers, 1 school trustee, and 1 professor of education. Both committees included curriculum teacher-consultants seconded by the Ministry for short terms.

At the outset, the high profile of members who were practicing teachers enhanced both committees' credibility among teachers and encouraged a harmonious environment for deliberation. However, underrepresentation of professional historians and geographers helped lead to subsequent opposition to proposed revisions. In Saskatchewan, underrepresentation quickly became non-representation as the sole historian and his successor withdrew from in the early stages of debate—whether from ideological discomfiture or lack of available time remains unclear. In any case the withdrawal undermined the credibility of the committee among historians and geographers.

In British Columbia a similar problem developed because the curriculum branch chose to sue historians and geographers to react to revisions, rather than to admit them to committee decision making. Although academics may promote their own disciplines, and although infusions of disciplinary argument might have prolonged debate, both committees suffered from a rigorous academic critique. In the long run, early debates among schools-oriented educators and academics might have led to workable consensus on proposed revisions. Certainly it would have blunted what was to become implacable opposition from the halls of academe.

Not only did the composition of the curriculum committees affect the quality of the finished product, but other constraints at the outset narrowed the developers' field of vision. In Saskatchewan the curriculum committee was heavily influenced by the work of a predecessor, the Ad Hoc Social Studies Committee, of whose 19 members 9 were practicing teachers. This committee met on three occasions from 1970 January to March and recommended the following:

- (1) that social studies should be compulsory at the Grade X level,
- (2) that optional social studies courses should be designed for Grades XI and XII,
- (3) that the new social studies courses should be interdisciplinary rather than disciplinary in nature, and,
- (4) that the members of the revision committee "be persons basically interested in an integrated approach." (Saskatchewan Department of Education, *Minutes of the Ad Hoc Committee on Secondary Revision*, 1970 March 13)

Although Saskatchewan's Department of Education³ denied that these proposals were binding, the die was cast. The new committee would operate from an *a priori* commitment to construct curriculum based on an interdisciplinary approach, in contrast to existing courses in history and geography.

The selection of the secondary curriculum committee gave evidence of this interdisciplinary presumption, especially since 8 members of the ad hoc group also were appointed to the new committee. The presumption was strongly reinforced when, at the second meeting of the secondary committee, the chairman of the already working elementary social studies committee outlined his committee's newly created curricular design. The elementary curriculum (grades 1 to 6), he argued, was based on a multidisciplinary model with emphasis on sequential development of concepts, the "expanding horizons" theory of content selection and discovery-inquiry approaches based on the work of Jerome Bruner (SMSCC, 1970 December 10, 11). In the interests of articulation and of a sequentially developed program, how else could the new secondary committee proceed?

In British Columbia the constraints of the committee mandate (i.e., as in Saskatchewan, the recommendation of proposed curricular revisions to the Ministry) were even more forcefully enunciated. In a memorandum to the committee, later published in provisional drafts of the new curriculum, the Ministry declared that,

The compulsory part of the Social Studies Curriculum will be based on the disciplines of history and geography, broadly defined, incorporating, where relevant, aspects of the other social sciences. . . .

It is expected that a major part of the program will be devoted to the study of Canada, including its history and geography, how it is governed and its place in the world community. . . . (*Terms of Reference, Management Committee* [1978], p. 1)

The Ministry went on to instruct the committee to consider published curriculum guides, the *Guide to the Core Curriculum* (1977), the *Report and Recommendations of the Secondary Social Studies Review Committee* (1975) and the *British Columbia Social Studies Assessment* (1977b). Moreover, administrators from the curriculum branch made it clear that they envisioned curriculum development based on considerable public input through so-called reaction panels and consulting groups. In addition, specific deadlines were introduced to speed up "production" (BCMSSC, 1978 December 4, 5 and 1978 October 25, 26).

In the end the committee was able to function within these constraints. It had little difficulty agreeing to public involvement. It objected from time to time, with considerable success, to unrealistic deadlines proposed by senior officials at the Ministry (BCMSSC, 1978 October 25, 26). Moreover, the suggestions of the Secondary Social Studies Review Committee and the *Guide to the Core Curriculum* posed few problems since they were vague and allowed considerable freedom of manoeuvre.

Interpretation of the findings of the *British Columbia Social Studies Assessment* (1977b) did pose a problem. The assessment team had discovered that

among British Columbians at large, there was only "slight" agreement on the question whether history and geography should be maintained as a major organizing feature of new curriculum (Vol. 1, p. 100). This view ran counter, it seemed, to the Ministry's dictum on the pre-eminence of those disciplines. The committee finally developed a framework consistent with the public's view, and Ministry officials were assuaged by the committee's argument that the new framework did meet the Ministry's prescription for the inclusion of both history and geography "broadly defined." Some teachers, on the other hand, interpreted the Ministry's dictum in a more literal sense and were shocked at what they construed as a lack of historical and geographical content in early drafts of the curriculum (British Columbia Teachers' Federation, 1981, p. 17).

Procedural Influences

In both provinces, curriculum committees arrived expeditiously at major decisions which in effect committed them to a particular curricular design. Within six to eight months of their initial meeting the committees agreed:

- (1) that the new curriculum should be interdisciplinary in nature,
- (2) that it should be considerably different from its predecessor,
- (3) that general goals should serve as the basis for selection of curricular content,
- (4) that history and geography should be treated in a thematic fashion with general goals,
- (5) that skill development, especially in inquiry, and the treatment of issues should be prominently featured,
- (6) that a variety of approaches to teaching including role-playing and the use of simulations should characterize the new curriculum and,
- (7) that Canadian studies should be emphasized. (SMSCC, 1971 April 28, 29; BCMSCC, 1979 April 23, 24, 25)

The expeditious decision making of these Committees was remarkable since teacher- and administrator-members were unable to devote much of their time to the project.

Two factors may account for this. First, some tasks were assigned to members of small groups. This approach especially helped with the elucidation of the "scope and sequence" of content. Similarly, editorial work was consigned to the consultant. However, facilitating these procedures, they contained seeds of future problems. Work undertaken by small groups tended to be subject to stringent time lines and defended by either forceful individuals of cohesive group action, thereby lessening the effectiveness of

incisive and critical debate in large group sessions. Similarly, editorial work undertaken by overburdened consultants escaped necessary critical reading by members subject to professional commitments.

The second factor that accelerated decision making was bureaucratic pressure to show productivity (SMSCC, 1971 January 7, 8; BCMSCC, 1978 October 25, 26). Both committees succeeded in pushing back unrealistic schedules, but pressure continually plagued their work and resulted in short-circuiting of critical debates on major decisions and in growing impatience with divergent views from the outside world.

It is difficult to be sure exactly which documents or reports were influential on the committees. However, references to certain documents do surface in the minutes. In Saskatchewan, such innovative teaching materials as *World History Through Inquiry* (Massialas & Zevin, 1969) and *Tradition and Change in Four Societies* (Fenton, 1968) were considered as exemplars (SMSCC, 1970 December 10, 11). Similarly, there were occasional references to Edwin Fenton and other prominent writers in the field (SMSCC, 1970 December 10, 11 and 1971 February 18, 19, 20). Finally, a draft of Alberta's social studies curriculum provided a framework for dealing with values. The framework was modified by the committee for use in Saskatchewan (SMSCC, 1971 January 7). Although brief references to other teaching resources and articles appeared, only those mentioned above considered in depth by the committee and, with the possible exception of Alberta's curriculum, were not decisive influences. It is more likely that the prevailing methodological tendency of the committee determined the selection of source materials for consideration than vice versa.

In British Columbia, the *British Columbia Social Studies Assessment* (1977b) no doubt influenced the committee. Indeed one committee member had served on the assessment team and from time to time emphasized its findings in internal debates. As mentioned above, the assessment team's finding that the public did not strongly support history and geography as chief organizers of curriculum, buttressed the committee's predisposition towards an interdisciplinary approach. Similarly the assessment team's report of strong support for the expansion of Canadian studies was reflected in the committee's suggestions for revision (*British Columbia Social Studies Assessment, 1977b, Summary Report*, p. 15). Articles and papers reproduced for committee's use including those of such theorists as Benjamin Bloom and Kieran Egan, to cite only two, and a collection of position papers from a recent conference on social studies curriculum at Simon Fraser University (Social Studies Conference, 1978) were circulated. They did not seriously figure collectively or individually in the deliberations of the committee.

Whether these ideas infiltrated the design is difficult to say. The resultant curricular framework did not reflect exact congruence with any one of the

papers considered by the committee. In any case, if such infiltration occurred, it likely did so more by accident than design. The committee tended to hammer out drafts in the cut and thrust of debate rather than after scholarly reflection. Curriculum guidelines from other provinces, again notably Alberta, had more impact. These documents did affect the committee's approach to the role of inquiry and the handling of values—not in the sense of replication but rather as “sounding boards” for reaction and construction of new models (BCMSSC, 1979 June 14, 15).

More significant was the impact of individuals and groups outside the committee. To a limited extent, senior bureaucrats from department heads to the level of associate deputy minister exerted some influence. In Saskatchewan, overt bureaucratic interventions were minimal. At the outset, the Director of Curriculum attended meetings of committee, mainly to explain departmental policies and precedents. Once the committee began serious decision making he withdrew from deliberations. Departmental concerns about committee expenses and slowness of deliberations were voiced thereafter through the consultant. *Laissez-faire* became the order of the day in Saskatchewan because bureaucrats believed the committee to be on track. Moreover, senior officials shared with the committee a comfortable lack of awareness of the growing unease among traditionalist teachers as rumours spread about the new curricular design.

Senior civil servants in British Columbia took a more active interest in the operations of the committee. The Ministry at the outset unveiled its plans to use the process of revision in social studies as a model for future revisions, emphasizing maximum public involvement. The committee at once approved of the proposal since it was in accord with members' beliefs about wide involvement of teachers, especially in the process of revision (BCMSSC, 1978 September 20, 21). To monitor the process, the Director of Curriculum attended early meetings of committee. He endeavoured as well to explain policies, roles, and mandates. Once the committee set to work, however, the Director faded from the scene, only to reappear when signs of methodological opposition to the new curriculum began to emerge in 1979 January.

When opposition among teachers and academicians is increased during the spring of 1980, senior civil servants expressed their concerns about the tentative design in meetings with the committee (BCMSSC, 1980 February 20 and March 4). Although uneasy about the role of history and geography in the draft, senior bureaucrats in the end expressed agreement with its direction. The committee laboured on in relative freedom, although it failed to achieve one of its cherished objectives, an approval in principle of its draft by the Minister himself.

Extra-committee advisors and interest groups were somewhat influential. In Saskatchewan, the previous ad hoc revision committee, as mentioned, did

establish fundamental working guidelines for revision, and the advance work of the elementary committee was a powerful precedent. Equally significant were individual teachers, who piloted the design for the new grade 10 course in its initial stages. They provided very useful practical suggestions on resources and on approaches to instruction. They did not, however, influence the main direction of the new curriculum. Nor did they express serious reservations about the design. In effect, volunteer teachers shared the outlook of the committee. This is no small wonder since they were recruited by committee members. However, the association of local superintendents raised concerns about the grade 10 course in the drafts produced in the spring of 1971 (SMSCC, 1971 October 21, 22). The superintendents criticized the committee's initial draft of a tentative, inveighing against its unintelligible language, the absence of history and geography and the paucity of suggestions for teaching resources. Though assuaged by Departmental assurances of further revision and future field testing, school administrators remained sceptical about the revisions and in some instances supported traditionalist teachers who refused to teach them.

In British Columbia, three external groups affected the work of the revision committee. First, the elementary review committee, struck subsequent to the establishment of the secondary group, exerted influence directly through an intergroup meeting in which "articulation" problems were discussed (BCMSSC, 1979 March 9). Although the elementary committee did not seek to impose a particular design on the secondary group, it did contribute to an awareness of the need for close attention to an integrated K-11 social studies program, and its existence resulted in the subsequent appointment of two elementary teachers to the secondary revision group.

Other groups also influenced the committee's progress. The Ministry solicited outside advice from two "reaction panels" of about sixty people each, two-thirds of them teachers, who were to react to the committee's initial draft goals. React they did, as did two like groups to the initial draft of the proposed scope and sequence of content. Similarly, nine "consulting groups" were requested to suggest content for the new curriculum according to specific instructions (BCMSSC, 1979 January 24, 25; 1979 April 23, 24, 25).

It is very difficult to discern the impact of any one group upon changes in the committee's draft proposals. As to goals, reaction panels on the whole agreed with the general principles proposed by the committee, but with considerable disagreement over their wording. On scope and sequencing of content, reaction panels pressed concerns about themes at each grade level and highlighted potential difficulties, for example, in teaching economics-oriented content to grade 8 students. Teacher panelists especially pointed to insufficient quantities of history and geography and to an overemphasis on Canada, a portent of ideological storms to come.

The consulting groups offered similar concerns. As in the Saskatchewan case, all outsiders often had trouble interpreting the language used by the committees (BCMSCC, 1979 January 24, 25).

In summary, outside groups tended to be mixed in their reviews of the new curriculum. Non-teaching panelists gave evidence of genuine enthusiasm. A few teacher-panelists evinced downright antipathy.

The committee responded by enlarging the non-Canadian domains of study at each grade level and moving the teaching of economics-related content to grade 9. Historical segments were highlighted in the proposal by the use of sub-titles, such as "Canada past" and "World past." In addition, a skills list, including historical and geographical items, was drawn up and attached to the revised draft (Appendix, *Social Studies Curriculum Guide*, 1980). In the end, the committee stuck to its guns, favouring an interdisciplinary curriculum with an emphasis on Canadian studies. The time and effort expended by outside reactors caused the curriculum committee to make only minimal changes. In the political struggle that followed widespread publication of its revisions, the committee's case was thus weakened.

The Role of Ideology

It was the insularity and theoretical homogeneity of both committees that rendered them generally impervious to significant external pressures. Insularity resulted as both committees developed cohesion and sorted out the respective roles of members. As roles became clearly defined and work began to progress smoothly, the committees acquired a presumption of superiority of knowledge over "outsiders." Indeed, forced to wrestle with underlying principles in the give and take of internal debate, both committees gained an understanding of curriculum development superior to that of their teaching colleagues. This superior understanding effectively insulated both committees from suggestions for substantive change emanating from groups or individuals perceived as not fully cognizant of the numerous factors pertinent in the evolution of a provincial curriculum.

Popkewitz defined ideology in the educational context as "a complex framework of interrelated beliefs, norms, values and expectancies about what it is that ought to go on in a classroom" (cited in Van Manen, 1979, p. 6). Ideology, in this sense, also contributed to the imperviousness of the committee to the slings and arrows of criticism and discontent. Moreover, both committees arrived at ideological homogeneity early in the game. Of the group of 13 Saskatchewan developers, 7 could be construed as progressive in their views; they supported strongly the notion of an interdisciplinary approach emphasizing on John Dewey's ideas on inquiry or reflective thinking. Three committee members were traditionalist in ideology, favouring reten-

tion of history as the basic foundation of any social studies curriculum, and reluctant to undertake substantive curriculum change without painstaking study. Three members, mainly administrators, at the outset maintained a neutral stance. The views of some members were very clearly stated in position papers presented to the previous ad hoc committee of which they were also members. The rest made clear their positions during the committee's deliberations.

Within six months the traditionalists on the committee were in complete disarray. One had resigned from the committee to fulfill other professional responsibilities, and his replacement, sharing his viewpoint, rarely attended. Another was appointed consultant to the committee and in effect was silenced through a shift of role to that of recorder and resource person. The third capitulated to the progressives in the face of superior numbers.

In British Columbia the committee, a much smaller group, contained no adherents to the traditionalist cause. All were committed to the progressive position, as their curriculum showed.

Such ideological homogeneity was not surprising. After all, what teachers other than those interested in change or disenchanted with the traditional curriculum would volunteer for curriculum committees? Moreover, in both cases organizers made special efforts to secure the services of innovative, change-minded teachers. It is precisely such teachers who mainly comprise the progressive camp among teachers in the two provinces. Both committees, largely because of ideological solidarity, arrived at consensus on curricular design with relative ease. To be sure, there were other internal forces at work that at times hindered consensus-building. The interplay of dominant personalities, for example, created some friction and, on occasion diligence and cogent arguments by forceful personalities did influence specific details of curriculum. However, general ideological agreement led to the relative ease with which the new design came into being. What contributed to ultimate rejection of the design by many teachers was their rejection of that ideological position.

Opposition grew by leaps and bounds with wider dissemination of early drafts. To their credit, both committees had encouraged public reaction, especially from teachers. The Saskatchewan group had informally invited volunteers to try out new courses and to offer suggestions for revision. This led by 1972 to widespread advertising for volunteers who would undertake the task after a four- or five-day immersion workshop in the new curriculum. In British Columbia, as outlined above, reaction panels and consulting groups offered their opinions and in 1980 April draft copies of the new curriculum were circulated to all school districts for reaction.

Given the opportunity for reaction, however, the opposition roared out of the closet. The clamour that ensued resulted, in the Saskatchewan case, in

failure to achieve total replacement of the old curriculum. From 1973 until the present, both old and new courses have co-existed, their implementation determined by local schools. In British Columbia, implementation of the controversial secondary part of the curriculum was deferred. A compromise design was eventually agreed for implementation commencing in 1985.

What are the reasons for such opposition and why was it successful? In both cases, significant groups of teachers formed the hard core of opposition, abetted by outraged university faculty and ably assisted by powerful sectors of the educational establishment. For example, meetings of Saskatoon and Vancouver heads of social studies departments presented united fronts against the new curricula on the grounds of lack of historical content (SMSCC, 1972 January 6, 7; BCMSCC, 1980 July 21). At other times, professional meetings of social studies' teachers were characterized by heated attacks on the new proposals. For example, at a meeting of the Saskatchewan Council for Social Studies' Teachers, one member deplored the downplaying of history in the curriculum. "History," he said, "provides students with roots. People have instinctive needs to orient in time . . . there is no guide to the future except history. . . ." (Barnett & Baumgartner, 1983, p. 17). In British Columbia, dissidents in the Fraser Valley East Teachers' Association organized a special conference on the new curriculum highlighted by a keynote address by a teacher from Ottawa who had written a stinging indictment of the new curriculum. His paper lambasted the draft proposal as illogical, ill-conceived, and ahistorical (Patton, 1981).

University faculty, primarily from the departments of history, geography and classics, deplored the demise of their disciplines in the proposals. Their critiques were usually conveyed in letters to the respective curriculum branches. Some, however, wrote directly to the Minister or his deputies, prompting on at least one occasion intervention by a senior bureaucrat (BCMSCC, January 30, 1979). These critiques were usually well drafted and made some positive comment on the general direction of the new curricula. At times, however, denunciations were harsh and acerbic, attacking the pernicious influence of fuzzy-headed "professional educators."

Educational organizations also played a role in the rise of the opposition, not so much in Saskatchewan as in British Columbia. School administrators and local teachers' associations, primarily in the metropolitan centres of Saskatoon and to some extent Regina, joined the dissident cause. The STF, remained generally aloof from the fray, although its permanent secretariat generally favoured the progressive ideology of the new curriculum (SMSCC, 1970 December 9, 10). In British Columbia, the BCTF fully endorsed the cause of the opposition for reasons having more to do with the process of curriculum development than with its substance. The executive decided to exert pressure on the Ministry to relinquish a measure of control of curricu-

lum development. The BCTF responded to the draft proposals of April 1980 by directing districts not to respond in view of a perceived unrealistic deadline for response (June 1). The BCTF's executive wrote to the Curriculum Branch to demand that the Ministry appoint to curriculum committees *only* teachers recommended by the BCTF and that those members should accept curriculum policies approved by BCTF.

The battle was joined and the BCTF became increasingly critical of the new curriculum. In November, 1981, its Representative Assembly passed a motion of censure of the Ministry for having "no practicing teacher on the committee" (Representative Assembly, 1981, p. 1). Despite disclaimers from teachers who were members of the committee (Cristofoli, 1982), the BCTF held to its public position. By December, relations between the Ministry and BCTF had become so strained that the Federation directed its membership not to participate in curriculum projects at the Ministry. In effect, the new curriculum, to its detriment, was caught in the middle of an educational Mexican standoff.

CONCLUSIONS

In retrospect, the reasons for failure to secure widespread support for both curricular revisions are clear.

Errors of judgment in procedures fostered a negative response among teachers to initial drafts. First, lack of representation of professional historians and geographers on the committees heightened suspicions among academics about an interdisciplinary curriculum and contributed to their campaign against it. Second, although both committees made efforts to involve teachers in the developmental process, in the end such involvement did not bring about wide acceptance of the revisions. In British Columbia, the well-intentioned decision to use consulting groups and reaction panels as sounding boards backfired when the committee made only minimal use of outsiders' suggestions.

The politics of education also contributed to developers' failures to achieve minimum consensus among teachers. Significant and powerful groups joined in opposition. In Saskatchewan, professional historians and geographers joined disgruntled teachers and anxious school administrators to forestall conversion to the revised curricula. Moreover, despite endorsement by the executive of the STF, the revisions never totally replaced the old curriculum which, to this day, survives in many schools in the province. In British Columbia, academics also lined up in opposition, joining vocal dissidents among teachers. When the executive of the BCTF threw its weight behind the dissidents the cause of the new curriculum was doomed. Only when the Ministry went back to its drawing board, agreeing to give more

weight to history and geography, did the storms of opposition abate.

Procedures and politics exacerbated the ideological struggle between traditionalists and progressives in both provinces. Both sides were unprepared to horse-trade, to compromise, to seek a middle ground. Ideological divisions ran too deep.

NOTES

¹ This paper is a revised version of a presentation to the annual convention of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, Vancouver, 1983 June.

² In British Columbia the committee responsible for curricular revision was called the Management Committee. However, to eliminate confusion in the text I have substituted the term "Secondary Curriculum Committee." I have similarly described the Saskatchewan committee, although its official designation was Division IV Curriculum Committee.

³ The term "Department of Education" is used in Saskatchewan to designate the Ministry. For ease of discussion, the term "Ministry" is used throughout the text when developments in both provinces are discussed comparatively.

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