Gregor, Alexander and Wilson, Keith. *The Development of Education in Manitoba.* Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1984, 184 pp.

The writing of the history of education in Canada has undergone a transformation in the last twenty to thirty years. Classed as "whiggish" history, accused of being laudatory to schooling and branded as narrow because the history was confined to top-down developments and limited to public schools, early works on the history of education in Canada have been vilified. Publications such as Phillips, *The Development of Education in Canada* (1957), Johnson's *A History of Public Education in British Columbia* (1964) and Chalmers, *Schools of the Foothills Province* (1967) are examples of these earlier efforts. The publication in 1970 of *Canadian Education: A History*, edited by J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp and Louis-Philippe Audet, heralded a new phase. Although criticized as sympathetic to schooling, this major work revised earlier interpretations and brought to the writing of Canadian educational history some of the canons of the newer historiography.

Educational historians in Canada since 1970 have been researching the development of education in its broadest sense, looking at ethnic groups, women, locals, and children. They have concentrated on regions, on specific groups, and on other educational institutions. They have brought to their craft the newer methodologies and in the process have become more critical and more analytical. Their findings, with one exception, have been published as articles in journals or edited collections of readings. Except for Robert M. Stamp's *The Schools of Ontario*, syntheses based on this scholarship, at either the national or provincial level, have not been forthcoming.

The Development of Education in Manitoba is the first provincial history of education that has been produced for Manitoba. It takes the reader from the early history of Manitoba, through education in the Red River Settlement and into the Dual System at Confederation. There are chapters on the Manitoba Schools Question and on education in the period of bilingual schools. The final two chapters cover the period from 1916 to 1982. In other words, the book concentrates heavily on the early years, the church-state dispute and the compromise solution. Given the recent Supreme Court of Canada decision on the illegality of Manitoba's English-only laws there is no question that the most controversial, most interesting and most topical issue in Manitoba's history has been the language issue and its partner, religion.

Over the years the Manitoba Schools Question has been one of the few educational developments that have attracted the attention of general historians. Federal-provincial relations, the outcome of the 1896 federal election, the effect of limiting French in Canada to Quebec and of giving it no more status than Ukrainian, have all been grist for the mill of political and constitutional historians. To write a history of education in Manitoba and ignore this issue would be unthinkable. My difficulty with the heavy concentration on the years to 1916 in this book is that the story has been told many times before and little space is left for developments in the twentieth century. Interest in more recent changes have not had the scrutiny in Manitoba that they have had in other provinces, e.g. British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. Gregor and Wilson, therefore, have not had scholarly studies available upon which to base their study. This has made their task that much more difficult and perhaps accounts for the seeming imbalance in emphasis.

Since the story of the earlier years has been told before, I will concentrate on the final two chapters. Chapter VI, "Depression and World Wars 1916-1959," examines the educational system under three headings: legislation and growth; teaching and the curriculum; and society and the schools. It concludes that not much change or reform occurred during this time period because of the fundamental dichotomy between urban and rural values and governments which abdicated their leadership roles. The effect of two wars and a depression, the attitude toward teachers, the role of economics and the purposes of schools, especially the role of the high school and university, are some of the issues addressed in this chapter. Given the number of issues and their complexity, a chapter of thirty pages cannot do justice to these years.

"Restructuring the System 1959-1982," Chapter VII, reiterates, as its title suggests, the attempts to make the educational system adapt to the changing and pluralistic lifestyle of the 60s and 70s. Issues of religion and language resurfaced and the government responded with support for private schools and French bilingual, followed by French unilingual, schools. Schooling for Natives, for the handicapped, for vocationally and technically inclined students became possible. Teachers became better educated, specialized and organized. Universities expanded in number, in size, and in programs. This curriculum at all levels began to reflect the diverse and rapidly changing society. The Manitoba educational system of the 80s, argue Gregor and Wilson, is one in which the twin currents of change and continuity intermingle — one in which it is expected that the

values and traditions that have made Manitoba what it is today will be transmitted along with the skills, knowledge and ability to function in a rapidly changing technological society. These last two chapters introduce the reader to more recent and intriguing developments in Manitoba and beg for further detail and analysis. The authors have whetted our appetites, certainly not satiated them.

The inclusion of higher education in this history is a welcome change linking the various levels of education and acknowledging the universities as one aspect of the public educational system. However, the relationship among these levels needs to be examined much more closely. Included in the text are some delightful photographs which add to the story, lists of all the premiers, ministers of education and Catholic and Protestant superintendents — a handy reference. The text also contains a select bibliography, which, together with the footnotes, provides a comprehensive reading of the available sources. As Gregor and Wilson summarize,

> "Manitoba's history has been a microcosm of the Canadian dilemma: the conflicting claims of the two founding cultures, of the Native peoples, and of the numerous, and various ethnic groups who followed. Manitoba's efforts to reconcile those claims within an educational system which must also answer the legitimate expectations, social, economic and personal, of the individual and the larger society, provides valuable insights into how the nation can address its complex and challenging future." (p. 158).

This book is one small step in that direction.

Nancy M. Sheehan
The University of Calgary

Pollock, Linda A. *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, xi + 334 pp., $16.95 U.S. (paper).

In *Forgotten Children*, Linda Pollock asks whether a history of childhood is possible. Her answer is the following admonition:

> If... all the sources of evidence which are available were analysed separately, with full awareness of the problems pertaining to each source, and in bulk, then the prevalence of various attitudes to children and various child-rearing methods through the centuries would be revealed. Once this had been done, all the sources could be looked at together, a synthesis attempted, and in that way a more accurate history of childhood could be written than has been achieved hitherto (p. 67).

If that observation sums up the main intent of Pollock's study (and I believe it does), then *Forgotten Children* is a fascinating book for reasons I doubt that she had in mind.

"Is a history of childhood possible?" is a question profoundly disturbing to historians of childhood. As a sometime practitioner, I too have a stake in any answer. If Pollock's question is whether it is possible to know historical childhood experiences directly, my conclusion is that we cannot. Pollock's work demonstrates why, although it is theoretically possible in the sense that it is conceivable, the quest is practically impossible or better yet not worth the effort. However, before addressing the issue of whether a history of childhood is possible, I will discuss some troublesome qualities in the book.

I found the book replete with amazing statements. First, a few examples will suffice. Pollock cites the assertion by Stephen Brobeck that writers of advice manuals who are not parents "may not even have perceived behavioural and cultural patterns accurately." (p. 44). What can one say about such anti-intellectual twaddle? Second, at the conclusion of a summary of contemporary studies of child abuse, Pollock observed that evidence "demonstrated that child abuse does not occur in a normal parent-child relationship; but because there is something lacking in the relationship." (p. 41). Besides being a tautology, the statement runs afoul of Pollock's conclusion that there is no requirement that "past societies should have regarded children in the same way as Western society today." Let us assume that it is empirically demonstrated that children in eighteenth century England were reared in a much harsher manner than in mid-twentieth century. Given Pollock's statement, we may not necessarily characterize their treatment as abusive and yet we could detect a qualitative difference in parental behaviour (and sentiment?). To see differences between our world and the worlds of past historical actors is not to hold the past in contempt. What Pollock lacks is what Bernard Bailyn has called the historian's instinct, i.e., "the belief... that the elements of her world might not have existed at