

Hand in hand with this growing demand for better educational facilities, educators are striving to provide comprehensive programs at all levels to meet the needs not only of the university-bound but also of the great majority who require adequate preparation for early entry into the labour force. It is now accepted that vocational education for adults as well as for youths is a public responsibility which must be provided, as needed, throughout man's working life. Education of this nature is of national concern and has a direct impact upon material prosperity, the national economy and the standard of living.

The pattern of vocational education in Canada varies from province to province and there are variations within the provinces. However, there are three basic types of institute offering vocational education—secondary schools, trade schools and post-secondary institutes of technology. Many municipal school boards provide vocational courses as part of the regular secondary school program in technical or composite-type schools. Students in these schools get some general vocational training or training in certain specific fields, such as typing or auto-mechanics, along with instruction in general academic or cultural subjects.

Trade schools, on the other hand, are open only to those who have passed the provincial school-leaving age and have left the regular school system. These schools offer specialized training and their purpose is to develop competent tradesmen. Courses at the trade level do not usually require high school graduation; the grade level demanded, which varies according to province or trade, ranges from grade 8 to grade 12.

The third type, the institutes of technology, operate at a higher level of training. Enrolment in the institutes presupposes high school graduation or at least high school standing in such relevant subjects as mathematics and the sciences. Graduates from institutes of technology are awarded diplomas of applied arts or diplomas of technology and form an essential link between professional engineers or administrators on the one hand and qualified craftsmen on the other. Most of the institutes of technology and trade schools across Canada are provincially operated.

In addition to the vocational education and training provided by these three types of publicly operated schools, many private business colleges and trade schools offer a wide variety of business, trade and technical courses, some through correspondence. Vocational education is also carried out under a system of apprenticeship training. Such training is given mainly on the job, with classes taken at the trade schools either during the evening or on a full-time basis during the day for periods ranging from three to 10 weeks a year.

Recognizing the importance of a high level of occupational and technical competence in the economic development of the country, the Federal Government through the Technical and Vocational Training Branch of the Department of Manpower and Immigration assists the provinces in the development of programs of technical education at different levels—for youth preparing to enter the labour market, for trade and other occupational training and re-training of adults (pre-employment and up-grading courses), and for advanced technical training. To this end, the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act was passed by the Federal Government in 1961 to provide financial assistance to the provinces for vocational training. The following specific measures were agreed upon by the federal and provincial governments: (1) a capital assistance program; (2) nine other programs covering technical and vocational high school training, technician training, trade and other occupational training, training in co-operation with industry, training of the unemployed, training of the disabled, training of technical and vocational teachers, training for federal departments and agencies, and student aid; and (3) an Apprenticeship Training Agreement.