W.P. WESTON, EDUCATOR AND ARTIST:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF BRITISH IDEAS IN THE ART CURRICULUM
OF B.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS
by
ANTHONY WILLIAM ROGERS
B.Ed. The University of British Columbia, 1968
M.A. (Ed.), The University of British Columbia, 1983

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Social and Educational Studies)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
June 1987

ANTHONY WILLIAM ROGERS
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Department of Social and Educational Studies

The University of British Columbia
1956 Main Mall
Vancouver, Canada
V6T 1Y3

Date August 15, 1987
Abstract

Using the biographical approach, this thesis examines the transfer of British art education methodology to B.C. schools. Early chapters make a close study of the school art curriculum in Britain and its comprehensive restructuring between 1890 and 1910. Later chapters analyse the transfer of these British ideas to B.C., showing how they eventually formed the basis of the British Columbia art curriculum.

As a British immigrant in 1909, William Percy Weston belonged to the dominant ethnic and cultural group then settling in B.C. With British training and teaching experience, he brought with him the belief, fundamental to British art education, that natural form was the basis of design and beauty. Never abandoning this notion, he spread his ideas well beyond the Provincial Normal School, where he was Art Master from 1914 to 1946. Apart from playing a major role in the art training of teachers he was largely responsible for writing the official provincial art text in 1924 and completely responsible for its 1933 revision. He dominated the 1936 rewriting of elementary and secondary art programmes which became a part of the province's complete overhaul of curricula.

Weston also became a prominent artist. Among the first to develop a new vision of the western Canadian landscape, he was an important member of the local artistic community. He finally
received national recognition, becoming a charter member of the Canadian Group of Painters in 1933 and the first B.C. Associate of the Royal Canadian Academy in 1936. Throughout the nineteen-thirties he exhibited extensively in national exhibitions and his work was chosen to represent Canada abroad.

This thesis shows how British educational ideas were sustained in B.C. by the predominantly British educational establishment long after they were rejected in Britain. Investigating reasons, often unforeseen, for curricular change, the thesis raises important questions about the inadequacy of much curriculum history with its emphasis on official policy and disregard for classroom practice.

In elucidating Weston's thought and practice contextually, the thesis points out the conditions which allowed Weston to have such wide influence, contrasting his educational conservatism with his artistic experimentation. Furthermore, it offers an explanation for the way in which school art education policy developed in B.C. and underscores the complex of reasons which encourages, or impedes, change in educational practice. Although ultimately Weston's predominance may have held up educational change in art within the province, he nevertheless brought a coherent and plausible philosophy of art education to B.C. schools, one that served the province well for three or more decades. His enthusiastic and able championing of that philosophy did much to encourage teaching of the subject.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I was tempted to omit the acknowledgements page for fear that I would leave out someone who gave me help. There were so many. However, among them all there were some without whose help the thesis would never have been completed. These I must mention here. Dr. John Calam, perhaps the first to encourage me in the present enterprise, acted as chairman of my committee until his retirement. Dr. J. Donald Wilson became chairman on John Calam's departure. He gave me the courage and the challenge to go ahead. His advice was always good and he pushed me to give of my best. Drs. Graeme Chalmers and William Bruneau also served on my committee and they made it a triumvirate of strength. Without the help of W.P. Weston's daughters, Doris Wood and Bette Parson, the thesis would probably have been impossible. They provided me with a wealth of material, information and advice. Acknowledgements often have a paragraph praising the writer's wife for assistance in typing, proofreading and other chores. My wife, Gillian Weiss, did none of these things. Her help was far more vital. A fine historian of education herself, she gave me unstintingly of her advice, encouraged me when the going was rough and never allowed me to lose heart.
"Essentially Imperial and British": the roots of B.C. art education in the schools.¹

The British have been a pervasive influence throughout the history of Canadian education whether we speak of individuals from Britain or the transfer to Canada of British educational structures or policies. In 1979 George Tomkins called for "systematic studies of how varied British influences have affected our curricula," claiming that "the whole century beginning with the Ryerson era. . .was British-oriented." In his recent monumental work, A Common Countenance, Tomkins makes the more specific claim that "the cultural content of the curriculum during the inter-war period remained essentially imperial and British." He points out too the "unconscious irony" that while Canadians perceived the British as "a model of rigorous academic schooling" and something to be emulated, British observers remarked on the "excessive academism and formalism of the Canadian curriculum." In other words, what was seen as Britishness in the Canadian curriculum was sometimes a deviant form of British educational notions.
This study uses the device of a contextual biography to explore the British influence, described by Tomkins, as it affected art education curricula in the schools of British Columbia during the first half of the twentieth century. A difficulty when speaking of influence is that it can be seen only through its effects. The question must then be asked whether those effects resulted from a proposed cause. While the answer can never be completely certain, a close study of both the cause and the claimed effect can provide sufficient correlation to be convincing. This work, through an examination of the life of one man, William Percy Weston, seeks to show how he brought his British training and experience to B.C. It looks closely at the nature of that training and shows its place in the broader field of art education in English board schools. In British Columbia, Weston soon found himself in a position from which he could spread his ideas widely. The ease with which these British ideas were accepted is explained by the nature of the British Columbian population at that time. The study also explains how and why the B.C. art curriculum deviated from the contemporary British one. While this thesis is a study of one man and one subject in one place at one time, it nevertheless allows for some broader understandings of education in British Columbia and perhaps even in Canada. At the very least the questions and answers provided here suggest new questions that may be asked of other curricula elsewhere.
A problem with any study of this nature is the paucity of secondary historical sources in several key areas. The scarcity, in Tomkins' impressive bibliography, of historical articles and books in Canadian curriculum history confirms this lack. Tomkins himself complains of "the neglect of curriculum history" adding that not even the prior studies which would allow "a full-blown history" have been done. Moreover, there are few well-researched histories of twentieth century Canadian art, and there is almost nothing at all on art education in Canada. Looking overseas to Great Britain, to investigate sources of influence, one finds that the history of art education there has been a little better served, but certainly not recently.

The search for books on the history of Canadian curriculum, let alone those which have some concern for art education, begins and ends with Tomkins' recent book, A Common Countenance. As Neil Sutherland says in his Foreword to the history, "It is not an exaggeration to say that [Tomkins] has put the field together into a coherent whole for the first time, and that later work will be written in his very long shadow." Sutherland points out that until Tomkins' work historians of education had ignored curriculum while curriculum theorists had ignored history. Such disregard by both historians and theorists seems odd when official curricula play such an important role in the implementation of government policies relating to schools. Tomkins' work provides a synthesis of what has been written on
the history of curriculum. For specific subjects in specific places, such as art education in B.C., he has sometimes been forced to rely on a very small body of work.

My M.A. thesis, "The Beautiful in Form and Colour: Art Education Curriculum in British Columbia between the Wars," traces the development of the art curriculum for the schools between 1923 and 1937. It treats the curriculum in three ways: as it was written in the official Programme of Studies, as it was taught at the two Normal Schools, and as it was taught in the schools. My research for that thesis found little written on the history of art education in B.C. apart from one relevant thesis and a very few unpublished papers which resembled gossipy anecdotes. The situation has improved little since, although some current research promises useful future results. George H.E. Green's thesis, "Development of Curriculum in Elementary Schools of B.C. prior to 1936," proved of some use. It is a straightforward account of the subject matter of its title. Providing little analysis, it relies chiefly on official Programmes of Study.

Turning to Great Britain one finds a little more on the history of curriculum with writers such as Ivor Goodson doing some recent work in the field. None, however, has dealt with art curriculum to any extent. Goodson provides a useful overview of curriculum history in Britain in Part One of his 1983 book
School Subjects and Curriculum Change. A general history of education which he particularly recommends as dealing with curriculum history to some extent is Lawson and Silver's *A Social History of Education in England*. Containing, however, no analysis at all of art education in any form, it serves as an example of a common problem for those writing about the history of art education. Such neglect of the subject is common in histories of education, as it is in curriculum histories, so secondary sources of information are very limited.

In the narrower field of the history of art education there is very little to be found since 1970. At that time Stuart Macdonald's *The History and Philosophy of Art Education* appeared. It followed hard on the heels of two other books on the same subject, Gordon Sutton's *Artisan or Artist* and Richard Carline's *Draw They Must*. *Artisan or Artist* provides a picture of the development of art education in Britain during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Sutton emphasizes the long tradition of British art education and elucidates some of the strands that were interwoven to create that tradition. Carline takes a somewhat similar approach, but also looks at art teaching elsewhere in the British Commonwealth. Unfortunately he says nothing about art education in Canada.

Macdonald's book has probably been the most influential and widely read of the three. It too stresses the importance of
developments in the nineteenth century. However, it is seriously flawed in that it virtually ignores art education in the schools at the end of the nineteenth century. As will become clear in later chapters of this study, the closing of the nineteenth century was a time when the nature of art education in the schools changed dramatically from being a technical subject to being an aesthetic one. Overlooking this, Macdonald simply leapfrogs mentally over about thirty crucial years.

All three of these books do deal at some length with the art curriculum. A weakness, however, is that their authors are art educators rather than historians. Adopting a presentist stance they fail to see the past as anything other than as a prelude to the glorious present. Unfortunately those in Britain writing in the field of art education history bring an interest in history to their passion for art rather than an interest in art education to their passion for history. A second weakness, which may arise out of the first, is the authors' common tendency to assume that officially prescribed curricula represent what actually was taught in the classroom. This study will show, as have others before it, that such an assumption cannot be justified.

Journal articles which deal with the history of art education in Britain or with art education curriculum also tend to rely on official documents for any period outside of the
Typical of such articles is E.J. Milton Smith's "Art Teacher Training in Britain (1852-1985) with Special Reference to Leeds." Ultimately the article seems to have the dual aims of castigating present government policy and extolling the author's role in art teacher training. The beginning of the article reports official government policy, assuming that it was followed slavishly, while the latter part relates what was actually being taught and how various people involved reacted to both practice and policy. Muddled in the recounting of official policy and partisan in the view of recent history, Smith's article is chiefly notable for its creative use of spelling and punctuation. Equally muddled, though grammatically better, is David Thistlewood's "Social Significance in British Art Education 1850-1950." Here Thistlewood fails to differentiate between the policies which related to elementary schools, to private schools, to art schools or to schools of design. Even worse he is clearly unaware of important changes in policy that occurred in the last part of the nineteenth century. These changes will be dealt with at length later in the thesis. Two should be mentioned here. He overlooks the fact that prior to legislation in 1890, which made drawing compulsory for boys, very few schools actually taught the subject. This leads him to the erroneous assumption that most children were exposed to the prescribed syllabus throughout the eighteen-seventies and eighties. In actual fact they weren't. He does not even mention the Alternative Syllabus of 1895, or the
furor which preceded its introduction, yet this curriculum was the official recognition of a major change in the approach to art education. In similarly inexplicable fashion he ignores a number of influential art educators to juxtapose Thomas Ablett, who left the public school system in 1888, with Marion Richardson, who wasn't even born until 1892. Perhaps an explanation of Thistlewood's approach to history can be found in an earlier article of his in which he says, "Much [art history] . . . has been passed on in the form of reminiscence, and it has been legitimate for scholars to add reminiscences or speculation of their own." (Italics mine.) I have found that scholars prefer evidence to unsupported speculation.

While it may be that there are a number of useful unpublished British theses on the history of art education in the United Kingdom, the lack of any detailed central registry of graduate theses coupled with the uncertain cataloguing systems of British universities makes them of limited availability at best. However, two have proven useful to this study. P.A. Evans' dissertation on the life of Thomas Ablett sheds some light on the early life of the first drawing instructor employed by the School Board for London. Lucy Burroughs' "Art in English Education 1834-1902" provides an uncritical narrative account of that period. The art education department of Leicester Polytechnic is in the process of designing a computerized registry of theses and papers connected with art education. In
the spring of 1985 they were experiencing difficulties with their computer programme which made it hard to retrieve and sort information, so this source was not available to me.

Art history is often not concerned with history, despite the name. As Douglas Cole pointed out in a useful survey of Canadian art history, writers in the field, "usually come from backgrounds and concern themselves with questions different -- often far different -- from those of the historian." This can limit the usefulness of histories of art to a study such as this. A further limiting factor when the subject is a western Canadian one is that writers on the history of art in Canada have usually been from Toronto or Montreal. The dominance of the Group of Seven in eastern Canada during the early part of the century has often led these writers to look at other developments in art as outgrowths of that group. Western Canadian artists have long complained that their work has been ignored or misunderstood, resenting their tarring as mere copyists of some distant clique. With government, book publishing and the National Gallery all centred in Ontario it has always been difficult, and remains so, to counter such lack of interest in the west. One book has managed to provide a British Columbian counterpoint, namely *From Desolation to Splendour* by Maria Tippett and Douglas Cole. Tippett and Cole disclaim that they are writing art history, but rather "an essay into cultural and intellectual history." Nevertheless their book provides the sole balance to other
nationally distributed histories. Chief among unpublished works is W.W. Thom's magistral thesis, "Fine Arts in Vancouver 1886-1930," useful as a compendium of information largely garnered from newspaper articles, but providing little or no analysis.

Charles Hill's *Canadian Painting in the Thirties* views all development in painting as resulting from the Group of Seven's influence, picturing British Columbian artists as seizing upon the work of that group for their inspiration. As curator of Canadian art at the National Gallery, Hill has a powerful position from which to spread such a narrow view. Denis Reid in *A Concise History of Canadian Painting* provides a slightly less extreme view, but still portrays B.C. artists as failing to develop their potential until Frederick Varley's arrival in late 1926. In his enthusiasm to portray Varley as some eastern seer he overlooks much else that was happening. Perhaps his wildest statement is to describe the B.C. College of Arts as "the effective centre of Vancouver's cultural life." This school, the product of pique on the part of Varley and his colleague, Macdonald, lasted less than two years. Although its impact was felt within B.C. art circles, it did not instantly become the focal point for B.C. artists, let alone the musicians, writers and others concerned with the varied cultural life of the city. J. Russell Harper takes a fairly sympathetic approach to western painters in *Painting in Canada: a History*, recognizing that they
were working to develop their own vision. Paul Duvall in *Four Decades* similarly shows some understanding of western painters. Despite their efforts to appreciate the development of B.C. painting as a response to western conditions, both Harper and Duvall nevertheless see such change as being peripheral to the important things happening on the Toronto-Montreal art circuit. In *Canadian Art: Its Origin and Development*, William Colgate made a serious attempt in 1943 to look at art in Canada with a national perspective. However, the work was seriously hampered by his reliance on correspondents for details of what was happening outside of Ontario. The book is interesting nevertheless for the way in which he relates the Group of Seven to other artists considered to be important at the time of his writing.

The removal of the Vancouver Art Gallery to new premises in late 1983 was accompanied by the publication of a comprehensive catalogue entitled *Vancouver Art and Artists: 1931-1983*. Useful for its short biographical notes on Canadian artists it is otherwise noteworthy for an essay by Lorna Farrell-Ward, "Tradition/Transition: the Keys to Change," which picks and chooses to provide an incomplete impression of art history in Vancouver from the nineteen-twenties on. Inadequately footnoted, it relies heavily on newspaper clippings, possibly picked up without acknowledgement from the Thom thesis, mentioned earlier. Some other articles, such as Joan Lowndes'
"The Spirit of the Sixties by a Witness" or Jack Shadbolt's "A Personal Recollection", are too personal, anecdotal and unbalanced to be considered seriously from a scholarly viewpoint. As is common with such fond remembrances, they are not even accurate. Most of the four hundred and forty pages are given over to self-laudatory exclamations about the recent past. Thus Tippett and Cole's *From Desolation to Splendour* remains the only scholarly overview of the development of painting in British Columbia.

A strength of *From Desolation to Splendour* is the authors' recognition that similarities in style between the work of artists in different parts of Canada often arose as a result of a complex of similar influences, rather than the influence of one group of artists on another. They go further, finding similarities of style to the work of B.C. artists in that of artists in New Zealand, Britain and the United States. From a common reaction "against English traditionalism. . .evolved an objective style." If it was derivative then it "was no more derivative than the Group [of Seven] itself." Given the anger of B.C. artists at being fobbed off as copyists of the Group of Seven and given the relative isolation of artists in the west during the nineteen-twenties and thirties, Tippett and Cole's argument is reasonable. Tippett has recently reiterated her earlier stand, calling for a re-examination of the history of Canadian painting in the early twentieth century from a
perspective other than that of the Group of Seven. She suggests also that the whole of English-Canada's cultural experience should be looked at in relation to that of other countries such as Australia and New Zealand. Cole has pointed out that one common influence for Canadian artists, and not just the Group of Seven, was that they were "converted to wilderness." This resulted from:

the phenomenal growth of Canadian cities and the resulting urban condition which, more than anything else, caused Canadians to seek wild landscape.

I will argue later that one must also take into account commonalities in art training. I will contend that these very commonalities led to somewhat similar reactions to the new stimuli of the Canadian scenery.

A biographical study of this nature requires that one look at the subject in his various roles as artist, art teacher and family man both in Canada and England. Published information about William P. Weston as an artist has been relatively easy to obtain. He became a prominent artist in British Columbia during his lifetime and had a national reputation. Many newspaper and magazine articles refer to his painting. Serious published histories of Canadian art deal with his place in that history. There are the catalogues of the shows where he exhibited and the evidence of the paintings themselves. Interviews with his colleagues and friends have been useful, although with the
limitation that theirs was the evidence of much younger acquaintances rather than of peers. Of his life as a teacher we have much less written evidence. From his early years in B.C. there are Weston's own official reports to the Vancouver School Board. Later, the official records are much briefer and more indirect. Most useful of all have been a series of interviews with his students, all of whom remembered him vividly. Even when their other memories of the Normal School had faded, they were generally anxious to reminisce on Weston. Of Weston as a family man, there is sparse written evidence. Few personal papers have been preserved, but those few that do remain were made available to me. Among them were many photographs which have been most useful. Their usefulness has been greatly enhanced by his daughters, Doris Wood and Bette Parson, who spent many hours putting them into context. Indeed, Weston's daughters have corroborated much of the personal information about him. Other relatives and friends of the family, both in Canada and the United Kingdom, provided additional personal information.

Although it is more than a century since Weston was born, the suburb of London, where he spent most of his early life, is remarkably little changed. Two of his childhood homes remain, as does his school and the art school which he attended. Many of the official records for the area are still available in the historical division of Battersea Public Library as are local newspapers and other local publications. All the minutes of the
School Board for London are available at the Greater London Record Library which also has many other records for the Board such as architect's drawings for the school at which Weston taught and even a photograph of his classroom. For information on Weston's teacher-training, the archives of Borough Road College proved invaluable, even though some records were destroyed by bombing during the Second World War. This source yielded Weston's original application, annual reports, student magazines, timetables, and a wealth of other detail. The history of the college, *A History of Borough Road College*, written by the archivist, George Bartle, provided additional material.

Although the last decade of the nineteenth century proved to be one of great change for art education in the elementary schools, researchers have paid scant attention to this period. My research revealed that not only was there change but there was considerable controversy about it. As that controversy coloured the way in which teachers approached the subject, and this in turn led to official change in the curriculum, it was necessary to explore in some detail the developments in the teaching of art and in attitudes to the subject from 1890 to 1905. As will be seen later, ideas in the resulting curriculum were brought to British Columbia and propounded here over a period of years. The records of the School Board for London again proved valuable and, in particular, the minutes of the Sub-Committee for Special Subjects. There can be found, in some
detail, how changes in the subject affected the schools. For
details on much of the controversy itself, and particularly as it
affected teachers, the library of the National Union of Teachers
was invaluable. The union's annual reports recount at length
their fight with the government about the teaching of art. Their
archival records suffered from bombing and so are of more limited
use. Very useful, however, are the complete sets of journals,
such as *The Teacher's Aid* and *The Schoolmaster*, for they give an
understanding of approaches that were then popular. The national
library of the Department of Education and Science is a treasure
trove of anything printed about education, whether published or
unpublished. Unfortunately, the cataloguing is so illogical
that, even with a complete reference, the library is often unable
to retrieve a requested item except by chance. Once that item
has been found then refilled, a researcher is unlikely to see it
again as it will then be virtually untraceable.

For all aspects of Weston's life, a most important
resource has been a five-hour interview which Weston gave in 1962
to a friend and free-lance broadcaster, Margery Dallas. The
original tape recording, which provided the material for a CBC
broadcast, has been preserved by the Glenbow/Alberta Institute.
While this free-ranging discussion verified many facts of
Weston's life, it was especially valuable in providing Weston's
feelings and opinions on many subjects.
The resources mentioned above by no means exhaust the list of those used. Those given here were useful generally as well as specifically. Specific references are footnoted throughout the thesis.

A person's life cannot be separated into its component parts even though some may be individually identifiable or discussed separately. Three different aspects of Weston's life are his family, his art and his teaching. The intent here is to put emphasis on his professional life within the context of his times. The personal is not ignored, but forms the backdrop for the professional, which I wish to put at centre stage. I do indeed wish to show Weston "as an actor in the historical process," as Robert Craig Brown has put it in his thoughtful 49 assessment of biography in Canadian history. However, my purpose is not so wide as Brown might wish, for he goes on to declare that the biographer should "disclose . . . as much as he can discover of his subject's private and public life." In this thesis, I concentrate more on the educator, and the influence Weston had on art education in the province.

I conclude detailed examination of Weston in 1941, some twenty-six years before his death. This is not because he ceased to be important after that date. Rather, he had reached a pinnacle in his professional life. As a painter, he would achieve no greater popular acceptance than he did in that year;
and as a teacher he was beginning to look toward retirement. Alternative dates might be equally justifiable. As a study of curriculum history, the re-issue, unchanged, of the 1936-37 curriculum in 1941, marked a plateau which would extend into the nineteen-fifties. The changes that would come in both the official curriculum then and in the actual curriculum of the classroom even before that time would not be of Weston's making.

This study of one man enables us to see something of the world in which he lived. In giving us one example of how British ways in education were brought to the province of B.C. and explaining why such ideas were so easily accepted, it supports Tomkins' claim, quoted earlier, that the inter-war curriculum was "essentially imperial and British." In no way does it support what has sometimes been described as "the great man theory." Weston was not the sole person who could wield a special power. Rather he was a competent man who happened to be in the right place at the right time. In the long run, as well as in the short, he did a great deal for the theory and practice of art education in B.C. and for the training of its teachers, although the benefits were not always those that he would have envisaged. In fact it is doubtful if he even realised the long term effects his work would have. After all, as one of his friends said, "He was always a very modest man."
NOTES

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5. Ibid., p. 253.


7. A. Ross McCormack speaks of "networks among British immigrants" which helped them maintain dominance. See "Networks among British Immigrants and Accommodation to Canadian Society: Winnipeg, 1900-1914," *Social History*, vol. XVII (No. 34), Nov. 1984, p 357.

8. Ibid., pp.443-481.

9. Ibid., p. 4.

10. Ibid., p. x-xiv.


12. Ibid.

13. Graeme Chalmers is currently (1987) investigating the life of David Blair, the first Art Master at the Vancouver Normal School. Letitia Richardson is writing a history of the Vancouver School of
My own research has been assisted by their advice.


22. The History of Education Society puts out annually a "List of Theses for Higher Degrees in British Universities," but it provides little necessary detail.


27. While in the past it has been common practice to consider "eastern Canada" as meaning anywhere east of Manitoba, there has been a recent practice of referring to Ontario and Quebec as "central Canada." Throughout this thesis I will use the term "eastern Canada."


29. Ibid., pp. 9-10.


33. Ibid., p. 190.


36. I have omitted any discussion of Barry Lord, The History of Painting in Canada: Towards a People's Art (Toronto: NC Press, 1974) as it seems to be little more than a political reinterpretation of whatever Lord remembers of history of Canadian art courses he has taken.


38. Ibid., pp. 14-33.

39. Ibid., pp. 142-51; pp. 34-41.

40. For example, Shadbolt recalls discussing communism with Charles Scott and Weston on the train East in 1941. In fact, Weston did not take the train, but flew. Ibid., p. 41.

41. Tippett and Cole, From Desolation to Splendour, pp.119-120.

43. Ibid., p. 560.


45. For example, I verified the date of construction of Putney Art School by inspection of the school's application for sewer connection in 1894.


47. The illogic could work to the researcher's advantage occasionally. The library happily photocopied a great deal of material without charge saying, "Because we have no photocopying service, we have no way of charging."

48. W.P. Weston in conversation with Margery Dallas in April, 1962. Tape recording from collection of Glenbow/Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alta. (Hereafter called Dallas tapes.): CBC radio broadcast, Portrait of an Artist, June 24, 1962, 10.30 p.m.


50. Ibid., p. 8.

51. See note 3.

CHAPTER TWO

"Gently comes the world to those/ That are
cast in gentle mould": Weston's early life
and schooling.¹

Throughout the nineteenth century London grew rapidly.
Its population almost doubled in the first half of the century²
and almost doubled again during the second. By 1900 the city
supported some four million people. As part of the development
of a complex industrial society, this growth led to great social
and economic change. The building of railways, new highways and
new dockyards resulted in considerable displacement of local
populations in the city centre, particularly in the poorer³
areas. It was not, however, a pattern of constant growth; rather
it was growth in fits and starts with slumps following boom⁴
periods. As people were displaced in the centre of the city new
suburbs grew up around the older settled areas.

Nevertheless, London remained a crowded mass of
people. The failure to develop mass public transport with low
fares until close to the end of the century meant that workers
could not afford to live too far from their jobs in the centre.
The growth of the city as the capital of a great industrial
nation brought prosperity to an increasing number, but for many
others it brought little benefit. As the city grew the problems of the poorer classes became harder and harder for any sector of society to ignore.

One area immediately to the south of the inner city was Battersea and it was here that the Weston family was living in 1870. Located at 20 Pearson Street William Weston supported a growing family by work as a teacher at Christ Church School in the same neighbourhood. Battersea was a working class area of the city. However, location on the southern boundary of Battersea did at least have the advantage of adjoining the northern boundary of the borough of Wandsworth, which was generally considered a better class of neighbourhood. The most spacious homes in Wandsworth bordered Wandsworth Common, which was at the top of a hill, while at the bottom of the hill were mean houses. In later years, one school inspector would describe Wandsworth as being divided into classes according to how far up the hill one lived. Pearson Street was definitely at the very bottom and this symbolised pretty exactly the status of teachers at that time. As time went by, the Weston family did move higher up the hill and into Wandsworth, but in 1870 they probably believed that they were lucky to live close to that borough.

A teacher at Christ Church School, a voluntary school in the National system, did not earn a good salary, so in 1875 William Weston moved into the new system of Board schools with a
considerable increase in pay. His new school was a little further from home, but the twenty-five per cent salary increase presumably made the move worthwhile. The Board schools had been set up by the Education Act of 1870 and the subsequent increase in the number of schools in turn created a great demand for teachers.

The Education Act of 1870 recognized that the system of voluntary schools was failing to educate a large part of the population. The Act neither enforced schooling nor did it seek to replace privately-funded by publicly-funded education. Rather, the intention was to supplement the voluntary system, where necessary, and to provide the means whereby local boards might enforce school attendance, if they wished. As elected bodies which did not discriminate between men and women, the school boards represented the first direct involvement of women in the political process.

In London, the first School Board brought a missionary zeal to their work. They estimated that there was an immediate need for 100,000 new school places but soon realised that they had underestimated by almost fifty per cent. As the Board moved to provide these places, teachers such as William Weston were the beneficiaries of the expansion. In 1870 teachers of the poor were themselves members of the poorer classes, but the creation of the Board system with the purpose of educating the previously
uneducated, the poorest of the poor, gave teachers the opportunity to rise above their origins. A new career ladder emerged. A teacher in a Board school had the possibility of becoming a Head teacher and might even move beyond this to become an inspector for the School Board. Even without advancement the demand for staff created by the new large Boards such as London led to higher real wages.

The improved salary must have been particularly welcome to William Weston. In 1875 he was thirty-six years old with a wife and five living children. In 1861 he had married Jane Smith, a farmer's daughter from Westbury in Wiltshire, just a year and a half after he had gained his teaching certificate. Their first child was born, and died, on their first wedding anniversary and a second child, born the following year, died at ten months of dropsy following measles. Nevertheless, after the disappointments of these two infants' deaths, there had been successful additions to the Weston family every two or three years starting with Henry, born in 1865. As a teacher in a voluntary school, William Weston's income would have been hardly enough for two people to live on, let alone for a family of seven.

The last child, William Percy, was born on November 30, 1879 and was commonly called Percy by his family. It was William Percy Weston, the subject of this study, who would eventually
move to British Columbia. Although the year of his birth in 1879 coincided with the onset of an eight-year depression in Britain, it was not a time of financial depression for the Weston family. In fact, for William Weston Sr., with a regular salary from the School Board for London and the job security brought by an expanding system, the depression may well have brought advantages.

In Wandsworth there was a considerable amount of house construction as speculative builders envisaged a great movement of people from the city centre. However, this movement did not happen, despite the development of the tramway system, and by 1882 one city surveyor reported that "there are an enormous number of houses empty at ... Wandsworth." Such an oversupply of housing kept rents low in the suburbs and by 1882 the Weston family had moved up the hill into Wandsworth proper to occupy a substantial new three-storey terraced home at 16 Alma Road. While the move had probably been precipitated by the demolition of Pearson Road to make way for a new railway line, the low rents would have helped make it possible. Added to this, the general depression led to a reduction in the overall cost of living, which, for the Westons, meant a rise in real wages. The move certainly meant a rise in respectability, for the new house was only a few minutes walk from the fine villas bordering Wandsworth Common. Compared to Battersea, it would have been an ideal place in which to bring up a family of six children.
It is uncertain how many years the Weston family stayed in the house at 16 Alma Road, but, when they moved again they maintained their position on the hill. By 1892 they had taken a slightly smaller but better-situated house on the next street at 20 Dempster Road. Given the sensitivity of the British working and middle classes to the slightest nuances denoting status, the new house would have been considered another step up in position. It was a semi-detached, rather than terraced, house with a corner position at the intersection of Fullerton and Dempster Roads. There was a bay window at the front and a conservatory at the rear. It would remain the family home until after Jane Weston's death in 1918.

The Weston family provides a good example of how a teacher in the Board Schools could achieve and reinforce a position as a respectable member of the middle class. While the houses were visible symbols of this respectability, it was the success of the children which provided more important evidence. Percy's five brothers and sisters all had some schooling at the secondary or tertiary level, earning scholarships to make it financially feasible, and went on to hold jobs of higher status than their father's. William Weston never rose above the position of classroom teacher in his nearly fifty years of teaching, but his children went further. The eldest, Henry, became a professional organist and choirmaster. He went to
Toronto to obtain a Mus.B. in 1887 at the age of twenty-two and ten years later read for a degree at Durham University. Frank, two years younger than Henry, had a B.Sc. and became a research chemist. Fred followed in his father's footsteps, as did his younger brother and sisters, and became a schoolteacher. He was later a department head in Scotland. Lillian was the elder of the two girls and six years senior to Percy. She became the head mistress of a private girls' school in London. Margaret, exactly two years younger than her sister, taught for several years in a London Board School and in later years would become a Justice of the Peace. Percy's career we shall follow in more detail.

The children's success suggests that they made a close-knit family. Although in some ways they may have been close, in others they definitely weren't. As adults they exhibited few of the traits that indicate warm childhood relationships. William Weston, for instance, did not appreciate Henry's musical talents and had given him very little encouragement. The elder Weston considered Henry had "brain fever" and so allowed it, but that was about all. Frank, with his B.Sc. and published research papers, was encouraged more. The fact that in later years he also had a fine villa facing Clapham Common in which to entertain his family may have contributed to his popularity as an adult. Fred married a Scottish girl and went to Glasgow where he seems to have had a closer relationship with her family. Lil was looked down on
because she never married and dark hints were made when she set up house with a woman friend. Margaret moved away after her marriage in 1902.

William Weston was a Sergeant-Major in the army reserves and this provided his main social outlet in his spare time. His wife, Jane, feeling somewhat neglected, complained that he spent too much time at the mess playing cards with his fellow reservists. Generally considered a rather cold woman emotionally, she nevertheless provided the emotional cohesion within the family. It was probably she who encouraged their various interests. What is certain is that she doted on her youngest, Percy, and that he returned the affection. In later years he always remembered her with fondness and ascribed any of his own good traits to her influence, refusing to allow that his father had played any central role in his upbringing.

Apart from a bout of bronchitis in infancy, Percy was a healthy child and suffered none of the usual childhood diseases. He must have been uncommonly fortunate in this respect for almost every year the managers of his school reported the onslaught of some childhood malady. Yet, when he finally left the school at age eighteen the head could only report his absence on two occasions - once for two weeks with influenza and once for a week with a cold.

School for Percy started at Eltringham Street Board
School, probably in January 1886, and would be a part of his life for the next twelve years. The school, one of many being built at that time, had opened only in 1885. It was a two-storey building designed for nine hundred to a thousand students, in classes that would have averaged about fifty students. The infants, that is children to about age eight, were on the main floor, the girls' and boys' divisions had separate classes on the upper floor. During Weston's time as a pupil a separate one-storey building was constructed at the far end of the playground to house the infants' classes. It opened in 1892 and presumably led to some reorganisation in the main building. Each of the three divisions operated more or less independently with a separate head teacher for the infants, girls and boys. There was a large hall for assemblies or for gym and adequate fenced playgrounds. The Eltringham Street school was at the bottom of the hill in Wandsworth, probably because land was cheaper there, and was quite close to a railway line which caused some distraction. Surrounding the school were humble workers' cottages and a small factory. It was not the best of locations. However, the school was modern with a staff dedicated to giving the best possible service to their charges.

Eltringham Street School was typical of the new Board schools that were being built around greater London. All followed a similar pattern and were designed to provide an environment that was conducive to learning. They were considered at the time
to have "a bright, cheerful appearance. The rooms are lofty, well ventilated and...well lighted." Today, one hundred years later, Eltringham Street School presents a drab face to the world, with its smoke-dulled brick walls, but once one goes inside it does indeed seem cheerful. It has changed very little over the years, and the many large windows make the most of the natural light. At the time when Percy Weston was there the Board made a conscious effort to keep the buildings well-painted and well-supplied with pictures, maps and diagrams and other requirements of the teachers.

Coming as he did from a house towards the top of the hill, Percy Weston probably represented the best class of child attending the school. The Board schools had been set up to provide education to those not reached by the voluntary system and Eltringham Street Board School had many poor children. The teachers regularly provided boots and clothing for needy children and contributed money to buy food for the "starving little ones." Some children came to school after completing early morning jobs and as a result were inclined to sleep in their desks. With so many undernourished and overtired children, it is not surprising that almost every year the school managers reported epidemics of childhood diseases. It might be measles, or scarlet fever, or whooping cough or diphtheria. On some occasions it was necessary to close the school and disinfect classrooms.
Despite these difficulties the school quickly developed a sound reputation. "The organisation is good and the work is well-planned. The teaching is vigorous and successful," claimed the Inspectors. In addition to the usual subjects taught in all schools Eltringham Street was designated as a school with a special interest in Woodwork and Art, a teacher being hired specifically to instruct in these subjects. The headmaster, William Corsie, also had an art teacher's certificate, so it seems reasonable that it was his special interest that may have led to the school developing this subject.

When Percy Weston started school in the Infants' division he had the advantage of an educational system which had become well-established during its sixteen years' existence and which was still expanding. In comparison to the voluntary schools, the board schools had much more adequate funding, could pay better wages to their teachers and provide modern buildings. From time to time throughout its existence the London Board was accused of extravagance by those who believed the working classes deserved or needed only the minimum of education, but the Board never subscribed to such a viewpoint. If Percy was to benefit in his later school life from the designation of Eltringham Street School as one with a special interest in art, he also benefitted at the beginning from the Board's progressive approach to infant education. While Froebelian principles were not new in
the kindergarten, the general extension of these ideas to the Board's infant schools was considered innovative and successful.

If achievement at school is indicative of a happy school experience then Percy Weston was a contented schoolboy. He stayed at Eltringham Street School until July 1898, first as a student and then as a pupil-teacher. While there he gained recognition for his art on several occasions. When he was ten he won the painting prize, a book called *From Powder Monkey to Admiral*, and three years later one of his pictures was chosen to be part of a London School Board exhibit at the world fair in Chicago.

This success may have brought him to the attention of Mr. Joseph Vaughan for the first time. Mr. Vaughan, an Assistant Drawing Instructor with the London School Board, had the responsibility of preparing such exhibits. In later years he would play a small but significant role in Percy Weston's life and their paths would cross several times before that. If he did not get to know of Percy Weston when preparing the world fair exhibit, Vaughan must almost certainly have got to know him the following year, when Eltringham Street School submitted some of young Weston's work to the exhibition of School Board art which was held annually at Hugh Myddelton School. This exhibition had been started in 1877 as a showcase for the work of London
elementary schoolchildren. To some extent it might be considered
an article of faith in the ability of the children. Faced with
so many critics of the system, the School Board for London had
found it necessary from the beginning to justify their
expenditure on the education of the working classes. Here the
Board tangibly demonstrated their success.

That a few clever boys or girls should produce drawings
or paintings of great merit would not be particularly
noteworthy; the significant thing is the demonstration
of what whole classes, under proper instruction can
accomplish.22

At this exhibition, which was also Vaughan's
responsibility, the fourteen-year-old Weston won two prizes. One
was a second for a still life, but the other was a Special Merit
Award for "Drawing from the Plant." The Special Merit Award was
indeed special, being better than a First, and was intended to
draw attention to exceptional work. The exhibition's focus might
be to show what was being achieved throughout the school system,
but there was still room to draw attention to the very best
work. As the overall standard was described as "admirable in all
respects," Weston's work must have been memorable. The
following year Percy again won a prize, this time a commendation
for an "Outline from Nature," but he did not repeat his great
success.

To find several references to one particular boy in the
official records of a School Board as large as London suggests
that his performance was much above the average in art. To a
great extent this must have been the result of his own ability,
but some credit should also go to the school. In 1894 the school
inspector reported that the boys' drawing was "excellent" at
Eltringham Street School, and on several occasions it was
mentioned that the school had a special interest in art and
woodwork.

In other subjects it is much harder to find references
to Percy Weston, with the exception of Her Majesty's Inspector's
report for October 1896, where it was reported that he had passed
well. Certainly he finished his school career "well" as he
obtained a Queen's Scholarship with first class standing. The
Queen's Scholarship exam was that taken by all pupil-teachers at
the end of their apprenticeship, a high first class standing
making entry into a good teachers' college possible.

When Percy Weston first became a pupil-teacher it would
have been as a "probationer" until he was fifteen, at which time
he and his parents would have signed a "Memorandum of Agreement"
with the School Board for London. Under terms of the agreement he
received special training at a pupil-teacher centre for part of
the week and worked under the direction of the head teacher, Mr.
William Corsie, for the remainder. While the agreement itself
only called for five hours per week of special instruction, in
actual fact pupils of the School Board for London spent half of
each day at the pupil-teacher centre. The Board paid the pupil-teachers three shillings per week for the first year and eight shillings per week thereafter. This was about one-sixth of what a beginning teacher would earn, so was probably a fair return for labour, given their inexperience and part-time work. For the student a great advantage was that training as a pupil-teacher gave a quasi-secondary education at a time when there was no provision for any secondary education under the Education Act.

By the time that Percy Weston became a pupil-teacher this method of training teachers was coming under attack. Throughout the eighteen-nineties "the general drift of educational opinion set strongly in the direction of ... growing scepticism [about the pupil-teacher system]." While critics of the system gave a number of reasons for their scepticism, not all their complaints could be justified in the case of the School Board for London. Two particular claims were that the pupil-teachers were given too much responsibility and that the training was too narrow. In London, both these criticisms were met, as far as was possible, by the system of Pupil-Teacher Centres, which the Board had pioneered. Despite these improvements it was still felt that the education available to prospective elementary teachers might be too narrow, but there was little that could be done officially on that score until the law was changed.
Unofficially the School Board for London provided its pupil-teachers with as wide a training as was possible. Some Pupil-Teacher Centres, such as the one Percy Weston attended, were specially built for the purpose and at all of them the School Board appointed as teachers "men and women of exceptionally high qualifications, the majority of them being University graduates." A student, fortunate to have a competent and sympathetic head teacher as well, had an opportunity to gain a better grounding in both pedagogy and knowledge. Certainly the training provided by the Board compared more than favourably with that given by the voluntary schools where the pupil-teachers "have to count as part of the staff of the school, and they cannot be spared [for training at a Centre.]

Once the Memorandum of Agreement had been signed, Percy Weston attended the Battersea Pupil-Teacher Centre on a three year programme. Classes ran from nine to twelve or two to five on Mondays to Fridays. Percy would have gone to either the morning or the afternoon session. On Saturdays all students were in attendance in the morning for a principal's assembly, followed by regular classes. For these, additional teachers were brought in as it was the one day on which all two hundred and fifty students attended at the same time. On Saturday afternoons the students took part in social or sports activities and, on some Saturday evenings, debates, entertainments or soirees were held.
It must have been a very busy life for the pupil-teachers who also had their responsibilities at their schools.

The busy life, the sports, the social activities, the occasional parties were all part of a conscious effort on the part of Mr. T.H. Huitt, the principal, and his staff to foster the feeling among students that it was a school of which they should be proud. In this effort, whether consciously or not, the centre was promoting attitudes of the Public schools. It was not, in their view, an institution to provide a cheap source of elementary teachers, but rather a centre which would produce well-trained teachers who could go on to continue their training at an advanced teachers' college or even at university. Such aims were not unreasonable as the centre had the staff and facilities to achieve them. There was a student-teacher ratio of about fourteen to one.

The modern building, specially designed as a pupil-teacher centre, had been in use for only two years when Percy Weston first attended there. In addition to the usual general-purpose classrooms it also had a science classroom, a chemical laboratory and a large art room. The adjoining elementary school made their physics laboratory available to the centre. A number of optional courses was available to students. French was taken by almost all of them. It was certainly not a place providing only the narrow training complained of by critics.
of the pupil-teacher system.

Percy Weston would appear to have been fortunate in his schooling. He started school at a time when the School Board for London had become well-established, but was still expanding aggressively and idealistically. His school was brand-new, with a head teacher who had a special interest in art and who would doubtless have encouraged Weston to develop his own interest in the subject. When he became a pupil-teacher he had the opportunity to attend a modern centre where the staff was dedicated to developing students to their fullest potential. He was perhaps fortunate, too, that he was not a year or so older. As things were, he was a student at the pupil-teacher centre during a period when the School Board for London was actively encouraging education beyond the seven standards of the elementary school. He may also have been fortunate not to be a year or two younger, for, in 1900, the Cockerton judgement temporarily put a stop to the School Board's efforts. In 1899, T.B. Cockerton, the auditor for the Technical Education Board of the London County Council disallowed certain School Board expenditures. This resulted in court action and the judgement in the following year made it very clear that school boards had no legal mandate to provide more than elementary education.

When Percy Weston was approaching the last year of his training at the Pupil-Teacher Centre he applied to Borough Road
College for a place in their two year teacher-training programme. Acceptance into this programme depended on his achieving a first class mark in the Queen's Scholarship examination. This he duly did. His application was accompanied by testimonials from his school, his minister and his doctor. These showed him to be a healthy young man who was well-thought-of at school and who had showed aptitude as a teacher. Once he was accepted, a supplementary application form indicated that he had had advanced instruction at the pupil-teacher centre in Science and Math, had studied French and that he had already obtained his drawing certificate. In granting this certificate, it is possible that Mr. J. Vaughan again came across Percy as among his tasks Vaughan had the responsibility to act as visiting art teacher to the pupil-teacher centres.

The life of a pupil-teacher was generally considered to be a very busy one and Weston's can have been no exception. There may have been additional responsibilities for Weston. In 1895 the Boys' Department of the school had started a monthly magazine which "has a large circulation and is eagerly looked forward to: it forms a valuable bond of interest between parents and school." It seems likely that as a talented pupil-teacher Weston would have had to accept some role in its production. Even if he did not, his leisure time must have been limited. Nevertheless he found time to indulge in several hobbies.

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One hobby of which he was very proud was the building of model boats. By the time he was fifteen he had built a detailed three foot model of a gaff-headed cutter. This was no clumsily-made model, but an exact miniature. The hull had keel and ribs, covered with planking and the sails were correctly rigged. It was a fine example of the model-maker's craft. Percy used to sail his completed model in a pond on Wimbledon Common some three miles from his home. Perhaps as he sailed his model he dreamed of being in his own full-sized boat on the open sea. If he did, then it was a dream that would come true, for in later years sailing would become a lifelong passion.

Another hobby which he would keep up for most of his life was photography. As a hobby he shared with his three older brothers, he may have learned the intricacies of developing his own pictures from one of them. If he did, then it was probably Fred who taught him, as this was the brother to whom he was closest in age and interests and with whom he felt the most empathy. It may also have been that Percy was influenced by Fred in his choice of career, for Fred, too, became a teacher with a special interest in art. More than anything else, Percy took pictures of his model boat, both during and after construction. If he also took pictures of his family, however, few of them have survived.

It may have been during his time as a pupil-teacher
that Percy Weston met his future wife, Jessie Bennett. The Bennett family lived on Geraldine Road which was not far from the Weston home on Dempster Road. Dempster Road was a turning to the north off East Hill, the main road to Clapham Junction, while Geraldine Road was a turning to the south off the same road. The Bennett family lived a little closer to Wandsworth Common than did the Westons and their house was a little more imposing. Jessie's father, John Bennett, was described by his family as a book-keeper and by himself as an accountant. Jessie did not attend the same school as Percy but, like him, she became a pupil-teacher, so it is most likely that they both went to the same Pupil-Teacher Centre. They definitely knew each other as teenagers and, as they did not attend the same church, the most likely place for them to meet was at the Centre.

By the time that Percy Weston left school to attend Borough Road College he had already met the person who was to be his future wife and had decided on his career. One may agree that Percy Weston was an able young man and assume that this explains his success, but there were other reasons, too. His childhood had been marked by good health, reasonable comfort at home and success at school. In other times and in other circumstances it is of course possible that he might have found himself in an equally good situation, but, for someone of his position in life, it is unlikely that he would have fared as well at an earlier time.
At the end of the nineteenth century in Britain there was still much poverty and distress, but equally there were many for whom the industrialisation of the country had offered great advantages. Government legislation and other major changes in society are usually discussed in terms of that society rather than in terms of the individual, but they may also be considered at the individual level. The Education Act of 1870, the development of mass public transportation, and the speculative building of the eighteen-eighties all affected Percy Weston surely and directly at the personal level. The Education Act increased the demand for teachers dramatically and so made it possible for Percy's father to improve his financial position. This same Act made it possible for Percy to have a better education and to develop his special interest in art. The growth of tramway systems led to speculative building, while the lack of cheap fares prevented the expected move to the suburbs. Consequently, suburban rents remained low, enabling Percy to grow up in much more pleasant surroundings. He was as much a product of his times as he was the result of his own abilities. This we must remember when later we look back on his life.

At the personal level, the development of public education towards the end of the nineteenth century provided new
opportunities for many children of the lower classes. One London student, at any rate, was enabled to pursue his education in general and his interest in art in particular. Did this same development provide as much opportunity at the official level for change in art education? This we will see in the coming chapters.
NOTES

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1. "Blackboard exercises; Gems from Tennyson; Sentences for Analysis and Parsing," The Teachers' Aid, vol. XXVIII, August 26, 1899, p. 514.


3. Ibid., pp. 160-1.

4. Ibid., p. 207.

5. Ibid., p. 323.

6. Information on the Weston family has been gathered from many sources. In particular, there have been a number of interviews with W.P. Weston's daughters, Doris Wood and Bette Parson, his sons-in-law Bob Wood and Mike Parson, his niece, Margaret Lea, and her husband, Cyril Lea, and his nephew's widow, Minnie Weston. The interviewees have also made available to me the limited number of family papers in their possession. Equally valuable have been W.P. Weston's own reminiscences in the five hour taped interview with Margery Dallas made in April 1962. (Dallas tape.) Other sources have included the British census, voters' lists, birth and death certificates, street directories, photographs and school board records.

7. St. George's-in-the-East, of which Battersea was part, was described as working class in a Board of Trade survey in 1887. Quoted in Jones, Outcast London, p. 215.


10. Ibid., p. 47.


13. The houses on Alma and Dempster Roads may still be seen, as may the houses of the Bennett family on Geraldine and Melody.
Roads, referred to later.


15. Testimonial by Wm. Corsie accompanying W.P. Weston's application to Borough Road College, May 1897.


17. Ibid.

18. School Managers' Annual Reports, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898. These reports were made each October following the end of the school year.


20. Philpott, London at School, pp. 35-6, 311-12.


22. Ibid., p. 57.


25. The Technical Instruction Act (1889) did lead to the provision of a small number of scholarships for technical education at the end of elementary school. This act made technical education a responsibility of local county councils and quite separate from the system of Board schools.


28. Ibid., p. 12.


30. Ibid., p. 111.

32. See, for example, Lawson and Silver, Social History of Education, p. 345, for a brief discussion of Public school attitudes.

33. Ibid.

34. Details of this important judgement may be found in most histories of British education. See, for example, W.H.G. Armytage, Four Hundred Years of English Education, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. 182-4.

35. W.P. Weston's application, with supporting documents, may still be found in the archives of Borough Road College, Isleworth, London.


37. School Manager's Annual Report, October 1895.
CHAPTER THREE

"To exercise a valuable aesthetic influence upon the working classes": the beginnings of revolution in art education.¹

During much of the time that Percy Weston was at school, and afterwards, art education was changing and developing so completely that it became an almost totally new subject. This period of change has been ignored by educational historians. It was, however, of such importance to the conduct of the subject, to the schools of the time and to Percy Weston himself that I propose to describe the change and its underlying causes in some detail. It is not enough simply to chronicle the results for, to understand the new approach that developed, it is necessary to appreciate the nature of the varied reactions.

The Education Act of 1870 recognized that the voluntary, government-assisted system of public education had failed to provide an opportunity for schooling to all the children of the English nation. As we have seen, a major aim of the Act was to provide that opportunity by supplementing existing voluntary schools. This movement towards mass public schooling in England was intended to create and develop an educational system for the lower classes which would fit them for a certain
station in life. Schooling for the middle classes and upper classes was, and had been for many years, available in one form or another; it was schooling for the masses that had not.

More than a hundred years later it is unlikely that our western society would tolerate a system so openly intended to educate children for a particular role in society. Late Victorian England, however, saw it as necessary for the happiness of the lower classes that they should be so educated. This is not the place to consider whether or not such thinking was right or justified, but it is important to recognize that such thinking was prevalent.

Because the system of state schooling created under the 1870 Education Act was designed for the education of the lower classes, the curricula developed for the Board schools were created to fit these lower classes for their role in life. The drawing syllabus, for example, was designed to be useful to students in preparing them to be artisans or skilled tradesmen. It was technical and not concerned at all with the aesthetic. In practice it was not widely taught during the first twenty years after the 1870 act. In 1887, for example, it was taught in only 505 out of 19,154 schools and in the previous year only 240 schools taught the subject.

There were a number of reasons why the subject was not widely taught. Not all schools considered it important, or at
least believed other subjects were of more direct use. "Is agriculture or drawing more important for a farmer's son?" was one specific question asked by school managers. Furthermore the grant paid to schools for teaching drawing was not only considered too small by school managers for the expenditure required, but the amount of that inadequate grant depended on the examination results of each individual pupil. To make things worse, the grant was given according to the overall standard of the class in some subjects, but not in drawing. In most subjects students could be "got up" for the exam but, since drawing relied so much on manual dexterity and so little on facts, cramming was not practical. This did little to make drawing an attractive subject for schools. As if the financial considerations were not enough, there was a practical difficulty for schools wishing to teach the subject. In order to teach drawing an elementary teacher was required to hold a D certificate which could be obtained only by taking special classes in drawing subjects and gaining a first class standing in the exams. Regular teachers could not, under any circumstances, teach drawing. This led to a circular result. Few schools taught drawing and so there was a small demand for teachers of drawing. With little demand teachers had no incentive to obtain the D certificate; thus few schools had teachers available who could teach drawing even if the school was interested in teaching it.

In 1890, however, a dramatic change led to drawing
becoming a widely taught subject. The immediate cause was a simple one, but the effects were far from simple. Giving the reason that it was useful for boys in all trades to be able to draw, the Department of Education made drawing a compulsory subject for boys. The inevitable expected result was a huge increase in the number of schools offering the subject.

It would be easy to assume that this increase was the only effect, but there were other results which were even more important. Reactions to the legislation were complex, varied and apparently unforeseen. Within ten years, their interaction pushed drawing from a technical to an aesthetic orientation. These varied reactions might be likened to the strands of a rope twisted tightly together. The whole can be seen but the parts are obscured. Unravelling the rope to reveal the separate strands enables us to appreciate each individual part while destroying the rope itself. I shall trace the more important strands, then reunite them, to show how they led to change and influenced the nature of what would become, in effect, a new subject.

Important in themselves, the effects of the legislation were also important for Percy Weston. As a student in a London Board School, he was certainly affected by the changes which were then occurring. Then, as a teacher, he was later trained in the ways of the new syllabus. Subsequently, it was these new ideas
which he brought to British Columbia.

The initial problems schools faced when the order came into effect in September 1891 were those of facilities, supplies, and teachers. There were no art rooms. Regular classrooms did not always provide enough space for drawing. Small schools lacked the funds to buy supplies and in some cases attempted to solve that particular problem by simply reducing the teacher's salary. Problems of facilities and supplies could be solved in one way or another, but schools did not have teachers who were qualified to teach drawing. Furthermore, there were too few places where teachers could train to qualify for the D certificate. The resulting attempts to solve the problem led to a five-year battle between the National Union of Teachers (NUT) and the government, altered radically the calibre of teacher who was teaching drawing and emphasised weaknesses in the traditional technical approach.

When the new regulation was published, the NUT leadership let out a howl of protest. In several series of letters to the appropriate government authorities, in meetings with the vice-president of the Council on Education and with the Secretary of the Department of Art and Science, the executive of the NUT pressed its case. At the annual conference of the union the matter was discussed in detail with great fervour and many resolutions made. The correspondence was published in the annual
reports, which also carried verbatim reports of the various meetings with the government. Local associations discussed the matter, bringing their own resolutions to the annual conference. Individual teachers wrote to the NUT. The Twenty-Second Annual Report (1892) carried 386 excerpts from teachers' letters and 34 different resolutions of the conference and local associations which all concerned drawing. Other annual reports did not devote quite as much space to the matter, but nevertheless, drawing was discussed at some length in all annual reports from 1890 to 1895. Teachers around the country, it was asserted, were being victimized, were frightened and demoralized. There was certainly some reason for concern, but whether teachers urged the NUT to protest or whether the NUT encouraged teachers to complain, the result was the same. The NUT had a cause that it thought it could win and which consequently it may have felt simultaneously would further its aggressive efforts to increase its membership.

Teachers were fired if they did not have the D certificate, claimed the NUT. Teachers without the D could not find jobs. The requirements for obtaining a D were so onerous that many teachers could not qualify. Teachers did not have time for the hours of study anyway and, in many cases, classes in drawing were not available. Teachers were going blind practising their drawing skills at night. Family life was being ruined because teachers studying for a D had no spare time. The list of complaints was almost endless.
The problem of the teacher without a certificate to teach drawing was exacerbated by the fact that if an unqualified teacher taught drawing the school was unable to claim any grant. Consequently there was nothing to be gained by bending the regulations. The government's reaction was to allow teachers to teach drawing temporarily without a D certificate, thus allowing 8 schools employing them to claim a grant. However, this did little to lessen the fears of teachers. In practice they found that school managers hired teachers with the D rather than some otherwise equally qualified teacher without.

At the present moment, almost the first question put to a candidate for a post is: "Have you got the 'D'?" - not, as it should be, "What are your general qualifications? What experience and success have you had in school-work generally?"

As the NUT rightly said, the difficulty was that the government's temporary concession might be rescinded at any time. They pointed this out to the government at every opportunity and eventually the Education Department undertook to adopt more specific regulations. First, they agreed in July 1892 that should the regulations be changed at a later date any teachers who were teaching drawing on or before January 1, 1893, would be exempt from such new regulations. Then in May 1894, a special drawing certificate for older teachers was introduced. Those who had started teaching on or before September 1884 might obtain such a certificate without examination if their school had two
satisfactory reports in drawing before the end of 1896. These two amendments to the regulations represented a considerable triumph for the NUT. For art education they meant a significant change in the approach to teaching the subject. For the first time drawing was being taught by teachers who had not been trained in technical drawing and who, given the small number of schools teaching drawing before 1891, had probably had no formal drawing instruction themselves as students. They brought to the subject their own impressions of what drawing ought to be, impressions entirely untrammelled by formal training. Certainly, they were required to follow a quite specific syllabus, but, as we shall see later in the chapter, the syllabus itself was to change and be made more flexible.

The pressure from the NUT for changes in the certification required to teach drawing was by no means its only concern. It was in fact only one aspect of its total dissatisfaction with the notion of the subject being made compulsory. This dissatisfaction arose in part because the NUT saw compulsion as connected with "payment by results," a system which was in its death throes. "Payment by results" required good work before paying for it, they claimed, yet it was the lack of funds that often prevented good work being done. As far as drawing was concerned:

The rational method of obtaining the teaching of drawing in all schools would be to equip all schools with the means of teaching drawing before demanding
that drawing shall be taught. But, by the topsy-turvey system still in vogue, that process is reversed: drawing is made obligatory as a means of compelling the schools to equip themselves for teaching it. The drawing grant paid to the small schools, which form a majority of all the schools, is insufficient to provide the means of teaching drawing, and hardships without number are the result.\footnote{13}

Directly connected to the argument over "payment by results" was the NUT's concern about the lack of flexibility in programmes. The need to pass an exam in order to gain a grant led to complete standardization of the curriculum. Teachers taught children to pass the examination rather than considering the best way to teach art. A grant that was not reliant on results would encourage a greater variety of programmes, it felt. "The Department fixes its tests, and varies its grants; we say to the Department, "'Vary your tests and fix your grants,'" argued the NUT.\footnote{14}

The broader intent of the NUT's arguments would tend to get lost in the immediate arguments over art education, but the push for more flexibility in both the testing of drawing and in the syllabus would finally be effective. The NUT was not alone in seeking a varied syllabus and a change in testing. In fact, its voice may not have been the most effective one in achieving this. Nevertheless, its high profile arguments must have helped to create the atmosphere in favour of change.

In addition to the argument about the certification of teachers of drawing the NUT had other contentions all of which
affected that atmosphere. Drawing should be an optional subject in all schools, an elementary teaching certificate should cover all subjects, the grant for drawing should not be based upon the standard achieved in the school and the grant should in any case be higher, inspectors of drawing should be competent (the NUT stated unequivocally that "as a rule" they were not) and the requirements for an art teacher's certification should be much less rigorous. This last point would seem at first glance to gainsay the argument that a "D" should not be required, but the NUT's point may have been that there was no objection to optional additional qualifications. Alternatively they may have been simply hedging their bets.

The concern over teacher qualifications for the D certificate was complicated by the fact that responsibility for art education was divided. The Department of Art and Science controlled the examinations and the granting of certificates for art teachers while the Education Department was responsible for teacher certification and the curriculum in the schools. It was an uneasy alliance. The Department of Art and Science had long had a reputation for rigidity and conservatism while the Education Department was the spearhead of an aggressively expanding system. The problem would not really begin to be solved until 1898 when the Education Department took over responsibility for all aspects of art education in the public school system.
The government's argument for drawing as a compulsory subject was simply that, when it was optional, it was not taught except in a very few schools. Two Royal Commissions (Samuelson, 1884 and Cross, 1888) had recommended that drawing be made compulsory and it was seen by the government as being a "useful" subject for all boys. The NUT's position was that while drawing might be "useful" for some boys (and for girls, if it came to that) there were other subjects that would be more "useful" in many cases. As one teacher wrote when asked if drawing should be optional rather than compulsory: "In all schools, Yes; as also Carpentry, Farming, Cookery, Laundrywork." There seemed to be general agreement among rural schools, if we can judge from teachers' letters to the NUT and resolutions to the annual conference, that some form of Agriculture course would be far more "useful" to country boys. The government, on the other hand, thought differently. A circular to Her Majesty's Inspectors, dated June 2, 1891, stated:

My Lords are not prepared to admit that instruction in Drawing is unsuitable for boys to be employed in Agriculture. It is admitted to be useful to those who are to be Mechanics (especially Carpenters), and an agricultural worker would constantly find an advantage in being able to turn his hand to carpentry, or other work requiring skill beyond his ordinary avocation. Moreover, the training of the hand and eye which Drawing secures cannot fail to be of use in many of the operations of husbandry.

Apart from its strong stand on the usefulness of drawing, the circular is interesting for the implicit assumption that the
children attending the elementary schools would inevitably be working class and menial manual labourers, a further indication of the class structure of English schooling.

Concerns about the competence of inspectors were interconnected with concerns about examinations, with the type of examination and with the whole role of the Department of Art and Science. Examinations were the order of the day during the latter part of the nineteenth century and these exams were conducted by the inspectors. It was therefore considered most important that the inspectors should have some knowledge of drawing. In the NUT's opinion this was not always so, for, they said:

The Education Department maintains Inspectors of Teaching who cannot teach, the Science and Art Department appoints Inspectors of Drawing who cannot draw.¹⁸

In meetings with the Education Department the NUT backed up its complaint with specific examples, but recognized that the problem was mostly the result of the strength and intransigence of the Department of Art and Science. That department's response to complaints was that the lack of knowledge of certain inspectors wasn't really important as all examination papers were marked again by an independent and knowledgeable examiner in London. The counter argument to this was that the independent distant examiner did not take into account special problems a school might have and did not know how the examination had been conducted. Examples could be found to support this counter
argument. In one London school which attracted the attention of high education officials because of the success of its innovative programme, the independent examiner criticised the school for not having covered an aspect of the syllabus, then was forced to withdraw the criticism when it was pointed out that the real problem had been that the inspector had failed to conduct the appropriate test. Lack of communication seemed often to be a problem when dealing with the Department of Art and Science.

The Education Department was sympathetic to some of the concerns of the NUT and, as we have seen, they conceded that teachers need not necessarily hold a D certificate in order to teach drawing. On the other points the Department was not so forthcoming although in time most of the NUT's concerns would be met in one way or another. However, that would take some years. As far as making drawing a compulsory subject the Department had no qualms. As the Vice-President of the Council said:

There was very great difficulty in immediately making drawing compulsory. . . . We, however, are so satisfied with what has already been brought about that we intend to adhere to the policy.20

Although the Vice-President went on to assure the NUT that no hardship would be suffered by any schools that had difficulty in introducing the subject, there can be no doubt that many schools and teachers did feel pressured by the requirement. However, by 1895 practically every school had complied with the regulation and, as a result of the concession about
certification, most of the teachers of drawing were untrained in the subject. Without some sort of concession about certification it would have been difficult to implement the regulation. The NUT's campaign helped to determine the particular nature of that concession. That particular nature would prove to be a key factor in changing the whole approach to the subject, thus emphasising the importance of the NUT's role.

With thousands of teachers now teaching drawing for the first time, it is perhaps pertinent to pause and consider how their attitudes to the subject may have differed from those of the specialists who had taught drawing previously. A very important reason to suspect that these teachers had a different approach is that now for the first time drawing was being taught by many women teachers. When the subject was optional it was taught only by teachers trained in drawing as a technical subject and only boys and men were taught technical drawing. But as soon as drawing became a general subject it ceased to be the preserve of male teachers, particularly in the small rural schools which made up the majority. Women had traditionally been brought up to believe that drawing was an aesthetic subject and so it seems almost inevitable that they would have taken this perception into the schools with them.

A second reason why teachers may have brought a different approach to drawing into the schools at this time
resulted from the changing aspirations and social status of teachers. As Harold Silver has pointed out, teachers "had crossed the divide which separated the [working] class from which they came and the first levels of the classes where power and authority lay." The growth of professional organisations, such as the NUT, the improved training at colleges or even universities, and perhaps most of all the improved financial status of teachers in city Board schools, all combined to justify teachers in feeling that as a group they had risen above their working class origins. W.P. Weston's father, William Weston, provides a specific example. As we have seen, his move from a voluntary school to a London Board School in 1875 gave him an immediate increase in salary of better than 25%. By the end of the century his salary had almost doubled again to 165 pounds per annum without any increased responsibility. This was by no means a large amount but was, nevertheless, considerably more than even a skilled artisan might earn. When one considers, in addition, that the cost-of-living in 1900 was twenty per cent less than in 1880, it is clear that William Weston would have been justified in thinking that his status had improved.

If William Weston had risen in the ranks of teachers to become a headmaster, or even an assistant, his salary might have doubled again. This leads to the contention that, by the last decades of the nineteenth century, teaching had become an avocation which could be a career. Neither was the post of
headmaster the limit for the aspirations of an ambitious
teacher. While the Education Department's inspectors had for
most of the century been a patronage appointment, this changed in
the eighteen-nineties, largely due to the efforts of the NUT. In
1893 the Executive of the NUT was able to report: "The prolonged
efforts of the Union to secure a system of justly promoting
certificated teachers to the Inspectorate have at last met with
some measure of success." Much earlier than this the large
local Boards, such as London, had been appointing their own
inspectors and these had always come from within the system.
Such opportunities for advancement helped to make teachers feel
that they were members of the middle class. The middle class may
have had some difficulty in accepting teachers, but teachers had
little trouble in attempting to embrace the middle class.
Studies have shown that upwardly-mobile people, such as teachers
were in the late nineteenth century, tend to adopt the trappings
of the class to which they aspire more rigidly than do those who
are confident in their status. As drawing had always been an
aesthetic subject for the middle class, it is reasonable to
suppose that teachers would tend to adopt this view along with
other middle class values. Certainly the Westons provide an
example of a family which had moved into the middle class.
Whether or not it was a conscious symbol of a change in class
status when William Weston moved his family up the hill into
Wandsworth, his children seemed secure playing a middle class
role. It would be going too far to suggest that the middle class aspirations of teachers were a cause of curricular change, but they may have helped to create a climate which would welcome such change when it did come. The introduction of women as teachers of drawing and the middle class aspirations of teachers were two of the most important indirect strands in the development of art education.

Another way in which a new view of art education was brought into the schools was through the use of peripatetic art teachers. Their use was officially suggested as one way in which a small school might obtain the services of a qualified drawing teacher. Given the small amount of the drawing grant, however, small schools could not afford to pay such a teacher and it was larger Boards which did appoint peripatetic art teachers. In London peripatetic teachers were appointed to give art instruction to students who were adjudged by their schools to be particularly talented. Although these teachers actually taught very few of the students in each school, in addition to their teaching they brought in new ideas and provided motivation and assistance to the regular teachers as a part of their role. In the school at which W.P. Weston taught, Brandlehow Road School, a Miss L.G. Wells was appointed at the end of 1901. She gave "special instruction in drawing" to 25 girl pupils on Thursday mornings and to 22 boy pupils on Thursday afternoons. As there were some 700 students at Brandlehow Road, not counting the
infants, it is clear that her direct influence on students was limited. However, it is likely that Miss Wells did have some influence on the school as a whole. Considered by the inspector to have "very good" teaching skills, it is likely that her indirect influence was just what the Board intended.

The use of peripatetic art teachers in the London Board Schools was just one aspect of the whole approach to art education in the capital. Because London's was the largest school system in the country with a dynamic aggressive Board it had considerable influence in shaping public education countrywide. Other large Boards also had influence, but none more so than London's. As one of the chroniclers of the School Board's history said in 1904:

Moreover, this was a case in which it might truly be said that, "what London does today England will do tomorrow." Hundreds of smaller Boards have modelled their bye-laws chiefly on those of the London Board and have been influenced consciously or unconsciously by the liberal spirit of the first Board.

The way in which drawing developed in London is therefore another strand in the web that was woven to create the new approach to art education.

A discussion here of drawing in London explains an important set of developments in its own right, illustrates the kind of influence that a number of large Boards had, and shows the direct influences on W.P. Weston, who was both student and
teacher within the London system. By 1900 the art master at one of the foremost "Public Schools," Harrow, described himself as "humiliated. . .by the altogether wonderful results which art-work in our Public Elementary Schools has already produced." He felt this humiliation because he believed that the Board schools had surpassed the private schools. He found that the art education was particularly notable "in the great towns - Birmingham and London, for example" and he was sure of the reason too.

The principal cause of this success in our Public Elementary Schools is the enlightened character of the teaching which recognises that children desire something in work which is entirely enjoyable and beautiful, a wise admixture of play with work, the two going happily together hand in hand.  

I made the point earlier that the Department of Science and Art strongly resisted change and development in art education. Despite such a view on the part of the Department, the School Board for London had, from its very beginning, encouraged teaching of "an enlightened character," adopting a curriculum "setting forth what is ultimately desirable rather than what is at present attainable." Such high aims may well have been largely due to Professor T.H. Huxley, the educational reformer and scientist, who chaired the first curriculum committee soon after the first Board's election in November 1870. The School Board for London never did believe that only very basic schooling was sufficient for the working classes.
For art education, which is our interest, the liberal curriculum provided the opportunity for the subject to be taught. In the country generally, drawing, in any form, was comparatively rarely taught until after the 1890 legislation enforced the subject. The exception was London, where drawing was seen as a desirable part of the curriculum from the very beginning of the Board. The curriculum committee may have had technical drawing in mind when they included the subject, but, given Huxley's concern for the beauty of nature and art, it seems likely that they meant more. In any event, we shall see that as drawing developed in the London schools, it became far more than technical drawing. It was also important that the Board left it open for "extra subjects" to be taught "at the discretion of the managers." Towards the end of the nineteenth century this was particularly pertinent for art education as the government-imposed regulations became less onerous and the Board could press for more flexibility.

Indicative of the Board's interest in drawing as a separate subject was the appointment in 1882 of T.R. Ablett as the first drawing instructor. Ablett held this position until 1887 and set precedents that would influence the whole course of art education in London. These formed the beginnings of another strand which would stretch to the changes at the end of the century. Ablett came to the London School Board with a reputation as a progressive art teacher. Although only 34 years
of age he was already considered to be at the forefront of art teaching. With a background entirely in private schools, he looked at drawing, as did Huxley, as an aesthetic subject believing that art education for children should "increase the capacity for enjoyment and culture in the realms of natural beauty and of art." The fact that the London School Board chose such a man suggests the direction in which they wished drawing to develop.

As Ablett's work had attracted the attention of no less a personage than A.J. Mundella, the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education, it may have been through Mundella's influence that he was appointed as the first Drawing Instructor of the London School Board. Ablett's views on art education in the London schools can be summarized from a speech he gave in 1884. He considered that the teaching of art in the past had been something of a failure and that those who had received art training in schools found:

that our system succeeded only in rearing a race of artistic pygmies. Some who have had the training we give speak of it as a grind, and to profess themselves quite unable to recommend their friends to try it... There can be no doubt but that the vast majority who learn under our present system lose their zeal... It seems as though the art-workers' genius were a delicate plant which seldom survived our well-meant attempts at cultivation.39

If the old ways were a failure then how might art be taught? As other subjects should be taught, thought Ablett, through the
child's interests.

If it be true that nothing is of the least use to young children but what interests them, should we not leave the development of technical skill to arise naturally from a delight in the practice of painting? ... Let care be taken that advance in technical skill be not gained at the expense of enthusiasm, and all the possibilities it brings with it, or by reducing the intellect to a stagnant state. 40

"A delight in the practice of painting" was definitely not the technical approach to drawing that was being taught to teachers who sought the D certificate.

Ablett stayed as Drawing Instructor for five years. After his resignation there was a gap of nearly two years, then two Drawing Instructors were appointed to replace him. Ablett himself founded the Royal Drawing Society, and continued to promote the teaching of art. The Drawing Society held annual exhibitions of children's art work and conducted drawing examinations for schools. The schools which took these examinations were private schools, but the influence of the Drawing Society was much wider than this. Ablett himself continued to have a direct influence on the London Board Schools by holding short courses for teachers.

It should not be supposed that Ablett was the instigator of the Board's policy. When the School Board for London sought him out and gave him the opportunity to promulgate his ideas, the policy was already formed. However, it was
definitely Ablett who, given the opportunity, established the pattern for the development of drawing as a aesthetic subject.

That drawing tended to be thought of as an aesthetic subject in London was not only due to the direct influence of Ablett and his successors. There were a number of indirect factors. Manual Training was taken as a separate subject as early as 1885 and separate Manual Training Centres were set up at schools. This helped to point up the difference between drawing as a technical subject and drawing as an aesthetic subject. Furthermore, it took some of the pressure off the teacher in the classroom as he or she had no responsibility for Manual Training. Another indirect factor was that starting in 1877 the Board held an annual exhibition of work done by school children in London. By the eighteen-nineties there was the separate annual exhibition of art work at which W.P. Weston had won awards as a student. Providing examples of what was considered desirable, it drew work from all the London schools. A total of 130 prizes were awarded in a number of categories and the exhibition drew teachers, parents and children - some ten to fifteen thousand of them, it was reported in 1894. The thrust of this exhibition was that drawing was an aesthetic subject. It must have reassured any teachers who were uncertain that they were on the right track in not thinking of drawing as a technical subject. In 1890, George Ricks, an assistant to Ablett's two successors, had told the managers of the London Board Schools, "We want [students'] minds
imbued with a love for all things beautiful, whether in form or colour," and this was what these exhibitions showed.

By the mid-eighteen-nineties the two drawing instructors who had been appointed after Thomas Ablett, D.W.F. Langman and A. Wilkinson, had been joined by two assistants, George Ricks, mentioned above, and Joseph Vaughan. Langman and Wilkinson were also the Inspectors for Drawing, so had considerable power to influence what went on in the classroom. Their influence became even stronger at the very end of the century when alternatives were allowed to the official curriculum. In the meantime the drawing instructors were active promoting art. They pressed regularly to expand the system of peripatetic art teachers, encouraged the designation of specific schools as ones having a particular interest in art and supported the appointment of pupil-teachers as pupil-teachers in art. Certainly at the Board committee level they were enthusiastic advocates of art as an aesthetic subject while in the schools they seem to have been equally enthusiastic and helpful.

To this point I have been discussing attitudes, individual beliefs and the qualities desired or required of teachers. I have shown how there was growing feeling that art should be treated as an aesthetic subject. However, except in a few places such as London, the subject was not widely taught in any form until the Code required it. Consequently, serious
discussion about the nature of the subject was limited until that
time. I have ignored until now what was in fact required to be
taught as art, or drawing. In other words, I have ignored the
prescribed curriculum.

A problem with drawing as a subject was that it alone
continued to be "controlled" by the Science and Art Department.
This was not so important before the subject was made obligatory
in 1890 as those affected by the Department's dictates were few
in number. However, as the number of those teaching the subject
grew dramatically in number, so too did the complaints. The
syllabus and examinations prescribed by the Science and Art
Department changed little over the years and many felt that this
was in large part due to the Secretary of the Department,
Major-General J.F.D. Donnelly. Rigid and intransigent, he
accepted change grudgingly and the syllabus remained equally
rigid.

The Department of Science and Art replaced the
Department of Practical Art. Its original role was to promote
science and art in order to increase the competitiveness of
British industry. It operated separately from, but in concert
with, the Education Department. The relationship has been
described as that which exists between Siamese twins. While
there could be good co-operation between the two organisations,
there could also be strife and this was particularly so in the
latter years. Formed in 1853, the Art and Science Department's offices were situated on a country estate in South Kensington, then a suburb of London. The estate was one of three purchased with the profit from the Great Exhibition of 1851. Because of its location the Department was often known commonly as "South Kensington" and the methods of art education it propounded were sometimes referred to as the "South Kensington system." In 1856 Lieutenant J.F.D. Donnelly, a Royal Engineer, was seconded to the Department to be in charge of cutting down trees on the estates. Donnelly was a young veteran of the Crimean war, but after his arrival at South Kensington he was to spend the rest of his working life there, in time becoming its dominant personality. He finally retired 43 years later when the Department ceased to exist in 1899. Early on in his career Donnelly was involved with the introduction of the system of "payment by results" and remained a keen advocate of the system. In 1874 he became Director of Science and by 1882 he was Secretary and permanent head of the Department. As he rose through the Department's ranks he was also promoted by the army, finally becoming a major-general. He was knighted by Queen Victoria. Whether or not he was always of a conservative nature Donnelly certainly resisted suggestions for change in the eighteen-nineties, making it clear that he did not favour any loosening of the regulations regarding drawing. The older ways were quite satisfactory in his view. His conservatism must have been a restricting force in
the development of art education. However, it was not only with respect to drawing that he would be out of sympathy with current views, for the Education Department itself found him difficult in his later years.

The needs of commerce for an educated work force was one reason given for making schooling compulsory and the drawing syllabus had originally been written with this in mind. Schools of design, which were intended to supply industry with designers and craftsmen who could compete with continental manufacturers, had similarly been developed with such an aim. Their failure may have shifted the argument to the elementary schools. As Quentin Bell pointed out, the school curriculum followed a system which had been introduced by Henry Cole in the eighteen-fifties with a curriculum that:

had nothing to do with aesthetic feeling, nothing to do with nature or the imagination; it was established not for the benefit of the pupils but for that of their prospective employers.

The syllabus did change a little in detail over the years, but by and large it remained the same, while education changed around it. By the 1890's it was as out-of-date as "payment by results", the much maligned system of grants to which drawing continued to be tied. Because a school's grant depended directly on the results of exams, schools followed the syllabus slavishly. The syllabus did suggest that teachers might go beyond what was laid down, but it seems doubtful that many did. "Payment by results"
led inevitably to teaching to exams.

The drawing syllabus was divided into seven sections according to the seven Standards. Until 1894 it was not allowed to group students of different Standards together as could be done in other subjects. This made it extremely difficult for small schools to teach drawing. It was virtually impossible for one or two teachers to teach seven different groups at the same time following a rigid curriculum, or even more than seven groups in schools where girls did not take drawing. The seven Standards were roughly equivalent to the seven Grades of Canadian schools except that, as passing each Standard depended on exam results, a wider age range of children at the lower Standards might be found in Victorian English schools. In the early days of compulsory education in London, for example, as many as eighty per cent of all the students of all ages in some schools were below Standard I.

Looking at the syllabus for 1895, the last edition before major changes took place, one finds it little different from that for 1886. Standards I and II were restricted to drawing of geometric figures, with and without the ruler, of "lines, angles, parallels and the simplest right-lined forms." This was all. With an hour and a half of drawing weekly, drawing must have become rather tedious for seven and eight year olds. Standard III continued the drawing of geometric figures with
rulers, and introduced "freehand drawing of regular forms and curved figures from the flat." Freehand in this context did not mean drawing freely, but copying exactly without the use of rulers or other drawing aids. Standard IV added drawing to scale and continued the type of drawing from earlier years, but at a more advanced level, while Standard V added "drawing from rectangular and circular models and from easy common objects." Standard VI continued the work done in Standard V and Standard VII continued the same work except that alternatively the drawing of common objects, drawing of casts, or drawing in light and shade were allowed. Also it was allowed to draw "plans and elevations of plane figures and rectangular solids in simple positions, with sections."

Obviously the framers of the syllabus saw drawing as a technical subject. The thousands of teachers who were faced with this syllabus after the subject became compulsory may well have groaned at the thought of teaching it. Those schools which could afford it would almost certainly have purchased sets of large cards on which the required exercises were displayed. This made the teaching easier. There was a thriving market in this sort of teacher's aid, but teachers recognized that this did not give children any grounding in art. However, as a reviewer of such sheets noted in the *Educational Times*:

> [Drawing sheets]. . .supply a distinct need. . .and will result at last in the satisfaction of examiners.
> [They] will prove to be a very convenient and successful
So the teachers used aids they did not like to teach drawing in a way that they did not like, to students who did not like it. The teachers' resentment at having to teach such a curriculum was yet another strand in the development of art education.

There were, of course, still other strands which influenced the development of art education. I have demonstrated to this point that drawing was in fact not a technical subject, despite the view of the Department of Science and Art and despite the syllabus being written from that stance. It was the movement away from such a view towards an aesthetic one, and the pressures in that direction, which contradicted the official view. The developing aesthetic view was actually helped by the strong push to strengthen technical education. The promotion of technical education emphasised the difference between the two subject areas and perhaps reduced the pressure on art education to train artisans. The report of the Royal Commission on Technical Education (Samuelson Commission) led to the Technical Instruction Act of 1889 and was also influential in bringing about the provision of the Revised Code for 1890 which made drawing an obligatory subject. So even the impetus for obligatory drawing
was not because it was an aesthetic subject, or at least not entirely so. However, as we have seen, the change was a crucial one in the development of art education.

While pointing out that technical education was developing along different lines, I must re-emphasise that drawing (or art education generally) could not be disentangled from technical education. The drawing syllabus was almost entirely structured as a technical subject, yet the emphasis was changing despite the syllabus, despite the inspectors, despite the exams, despite, in other words, the Department of Science and Art. The change was abetted by the more enlightened within the technical education movement, not least by Sir Philip Magnus. Magnus, a member of the Samuelson Commission, and with his finger in every technical education pie, saw compelling reasons for teaching drawing to all children. Certainly it would provide industry with a wider choice of candidates for further training, but he saw drawing as an educational discipline in itself and as important to society in general, for:

it is in raising the standard of taste, in making people dissatisfied with ugly shapes, and with tawdry arrangements of colour, that the teaching of drawing may help to exercise a valuable aesthetic influence upon the working classes. A general elevation of taste cannot fail to work an improvement in the social condition of the people.55

So Magnus supported drawing as an aesthetic subject for social reasons. Nevertheless he supported it, as did others connected
with technical education.

We have looked at individual strands, a view which to some extent is artificial for the rope they form ceases to exist when untwisted. While we have not looked at all the strands, sufficient have been presented to indicate the nature and strength of the cord. It is now time to reform the rope and to identify some threads that have been implied rather than discussed.

By the middle of the eighteen-nineties practically all schools were teaching drawing and pressures were mounting to change the syllabus. The notion of an alternative syllabus was being mooted and there was pressure from small schools for the existing syllabus to be modified so that students might be grouped more simply. The Department of Science and Art moved slowly and grudgingly towards allowing some change.

A new syllabus consisting of three parts appeared in December 1895. The old syllabus, which continued virtually unchanged, made up the first part. Then there was a "scheme of instruction in small schools" which allowed the old syllabus to be very much simplified. Lastly, and most important of all, there was the "Alternative Syllabus of Instruction in Elementary Schools." Reaction to the Alternative Syllabus was immediate and enthusiastic. The teachers' journal, *The Schoolmaster*, perceived it as being revolutionary and extolled its virtues in
an article subtitled "the Art Studio at School", saying:

This is the interesting part of the syllabus. It proposes a complete revolution in the methods of teaching drawing, and, if at all generally introduced, the drawing lesson will suggest the art studio more than the elementary class-room.58

In retrospect the Alternative Syllabus was not quite as revolutionary in itself as The Schoolmaster suggested, but it was revolutionary in that it accepted drawing as an aesthetic subject and it embraced the principle that it was not necessary for all schools to follow exactly the same syllabus of work. This in itself undermined the system of rigid examinations beloved of the Department of Science and Art - a single exam for each Standard would no longer suffice - and in time it opened the way to further alternatives. It was the impetus for change for which some, such as Ablett, had been seeking. In fact it was the beginning of the end for the Science and Art Department.

The Alternative Syllabus was the work in large part of Ebenezer Cooke. He was one of the older art educators in the country, but this did not prevent him from having what were considered to be very modern ideas. His views were well-known to teachers and in order to fully appreciate the impact of the new syllabus it is necessary to know a little of his background.

Cooke was the son of a village schoolmaster. Having taken drawing classes from John Ruskin at Workingmen's College, he became a lifelong admirer of Ruskin's views on the teaching of
drawing. In 1875 he became a founding member of the Society for the Development of the Science of Education. A teacher in a boys' school, he also taught drawing to adult students of the Froebelian method at Camden House School. Whether this experience developed his interest in Froebelian teaching or whether the interest was already there, it matters not; what is important is that he was a keen Froebelian in general, though rejecting Froebel's emphasis on the straight line. Schooling could be improved, he believed, by carrying Froebel's methods beyond the Kindergarten.

Cooke's interests in the science of education and in Froebel's methods might be described as symptoms of his educational approach. He was also a friend of the philosopher and psychologist, James Sully. He provided the child art work that Sully used for his book *The Human Mind* in 1892, which analysed the nature of perception. Long before, Cooke and Sully had discussed the nature of child development, the use of imagination and "the unfolding of all the child's powers." In 1894 Cooke translated Pestalozzi's *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*, an assignment that may well have grown out of his association with Sully.

Cooke had much in common with T.R. Ablett and at the International Health Conference of 1884, referred to earlier, his reaction to Ablett' paper showed an empathy of views. Certainly
they were united in their opposition to South Kensington and the attitude of the Department of Science and Art.

It is an interesting question why Cooke was chosen to write the Alternative Syllabus, given his public opposition to South Kensington and given his well-known views on art education, which were totally against the principles of the Department of Science and Art. One suspects that he may have been assigned to the task over Major-General Donnelly's objections. However, it is not a question that need be answered here; that Cooke did write the Alternative Syllabus is enough. After his retirement Donnelly made somewhat waspish comments about Cooke's work suggesting that Cooke was not really responsible for the syllabus. Reinforcing the notion that Donnelly may have objected at the time, it seems to have been a case of sour grapes given the success of Cooke's work. Cooke's other contemporaries seem to have had no doubt that he was the author of the syllabus and he was so identified publicly.

What in fact was so different about this curriculum that it was thought to be revolutionary? Its first and most obvious feature was that the straight line was virtually banished. The old syllabus had been based in large part upon geometric drawing, as we have seen. The Alternative Syllabus was based upon Ebenezer Cooke's system of drawing curves, on brushwork, on memory drawing, and on a limited amount of
geometric or technical drawing. Perhaps most important of all, the syllabus was based on the principles of the infants' school "adapted to the needs of older scholars," which reflected Cooke's keen interest in Froebelian theory. In particular, Cooke quoted from an Education Department circular on the subject so that there would be no doubt what he meant. It was so important to his approach to art education that I repeat it here:

The following passages in a Circular on the subject (Education Department circular 262, 6th February 1893) may be noted:- Two leading principles should be regarded as a sound basis for the education of early childhood.

(1) The recognition of the child's spontaneous activity, and the stimulation of this activity in certain well-defined directions by the teachers.

(2) The harmonious and complete development of the whole of a child's faculties. The teacher should pay especial regard to the love of movement, which can alone secure healthy physical conditions; to the observant use of the organs of sense, especially those of sight and touch; and to that eager desire of questioning which intelligent children exhibit. All these should be encouraged under due limitations, and should be developed simultaneously, so that each stage of development may be complete in itself.

** You should direct the attention of teachers to the chief consideration which underlies true methods of infant teaching, viz., the association of one lesson with another through some leading idea or ideas.61

For drawing, the extension of the principles of early childhood education into later years was a radical departure and would not have been overlooked by teachers. To reinforce the
point Cooke also specifically made the suggestion that drawing might be coordinated with other subjects. For teachers generally it must have seemed as though they had suddenly been set free.

Another aspect of the Alternative Syllabus that must have given the appearance of more freedom was Cooke's system of "free-arm" drawing. Today, late in the twentieth century, we might find his system very structured, but, when it was introduced, it was far freer than what had been required up to that time. For one thing, it was open-ended with Cooke suggesting a number of times how the exercises might be developed beyond the ideas presented in the syllabus. Free-arm drawing also required that, where possible, the students should get out of their desks and work standing and with big arm movements. This too was in contrast to the close and fussy work of the old syllabus and in line with Cooke's Froebelian beliefs.

The fact of the matter was that the Alternative Syllabus was seen as being new in almost every way. Brushwork had not played any part in the old system and colour had had no place at all. Drawing from memory had been mentioned but almost in passing. Now it was an important part of the work of every Standard. The drawing of "common objects" had been suggested before, but now it was suggested much more strongly as well as drawing from nature.

The Alternative Syllabus was indeed a turning point in
art education in Britain both for what it suggested directly and for what it implied. Perhaps most of all it was important because it showed that the old ways were not necessarily written in stone. It may have seemed that they were, for there had been very little change in the requirements since schooling became compulsory. One could argue that during the period of great expansion, when it was remarkable in itself that so many children were getting some education at all, it had been enough to have a syllabus and that change had not been necessary. The effort had been to teach the children; what was taught may not have been seen as so important, particularly in a subject which wasn't much taught anyway. Once the subject became obligatory - and at a time when the pressures of expansion of the system were less - the old ways were seen as difficult, or even impossible. It was then that the various strands we have examined in this chapter came together to draw forth a new approach. The new approach was Cooke's Alternative Syllabus. It was not to last long in its original form but this was not to lessen its importance either. It proved to be the catalyst for a new order in art education and in the reaction, the old syllabus disappeared forever.
NOTES

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2. I use the terms "technical" and "aesthetic" as they were commonly used by nineteenth century educators. Technical: pertaining to mechanical or industrial arts. Aesthetic: pertaining to an appreciation of beauty, and, by extension, the skills needed to depict that appreciation.


4. Sadler, *Special Reports*, v.1, p.70. The years 1885 and 1886 were exceptions to this, but except for these two years drawing was always examined as a specific subject.


6. In particular, meetings were held with the Department of Education on March 5, 1892 and with the Department of Science and Art on July 22, 1892 and February 15, 1896.


9. Ibid., p. ccxxvi.


12. First introduced in 1862, "payment-by-results" tied the amount a school could earn in grants to the students' results in annual examinations. Modified considerably in 1882, the system was abolished in 1890 except for those subjects under the control of the Science and Art Department.


14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., p.ccxix.
16. Ibid., p. ccxli.


18. 22nd NUT Annual Report, 1892, p. xxxvii.


20. 22nd NUT Annual Report, p. ccxxxiii.

21. For a brief discussion of women and drawing in the nineteenth century see Linda Nochlin "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists" in Thomas B. Hess and Elizabeth C. Baker (eds.) Art and Sexual Politics (New York: Macmillan, 1971), pp. 28-9. See also Alicia C. Percival, The English Miss Today and Yesterday (London: George C. Harrap, 1939) where the point is made several times that for girls art and drawing were aesthetic subjects. In particular she quotes evidence to the Cross Commission by a Board teacher, Miss Burgwin, who spoke of the liking of girls for "pretty things" in drawing, p. 270. For a more general discussion of the rising status of teachers generally, and of women in particular, and of the attitudes of women in the nineteenth century see Frances Widdowson, Going Up into the Next Class (London: Hutchinson, 1980).


24. For average wages of various classes of workers see Jones, Outcast London, p.216.

25. Ibid., p. 326. Also see Great Britain. Parliamentary Papers, 1905 v. lxiii, p. 32.


28. SCSS, December 20, 1901, p. 137.
29. SCSS, October 26, 1903, p.299.
30. SCSS, March 30, 1903, p. 258.
33. Ibid.
34. Minutes of School Board for London quoted in Philpott, London at School, p. 36. Date not given.
35. Philpott, London at School, pp. 33-5.
37. Sutton, Artisan or Artist, p. 161.
40. Ibid., p. 227-8.
41. Philpott, London at School, p. 58.
44. For a discussion of Donnelly's role and his army connections see Sutton, Artisan or Artist, p.117.
45. Armytage Four Hundred Years of English Education, p. 119.
46. For evidence of his viewpoint see, for example, his two meetings with the NUT in July 1892 and February 1896. 23rd NUT Annual Report, pp. cl-clvi; The Schoolmaster XLIX: 1262 (March 7, 1896), pp. 413-6.

47. Armytage, Four Hundred Years of English Education, p. 177.


49. Ibid., p. 261.

50. Philpott, London at School, p. 44.

51. 1895 Syllabus, p. 4.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.


55. Magnus, Educational Aims and Efforts, p. 278.

56. That this movement was without Donnelly's approval he made clear in his letter of March 3, 1894 to NUT, quoted in 25th NUT Annual Report, pp.clxxii-clxxiii.

57. 1895 Syllabus., pp. 16-29.


60. 1895 Syllabus, p. 16.

61. Ibid.
CHAPTER FOUR

"It fills a lad with the spirit of the artist delighting in his work": the revolution completed.¹

The new Alternative Syllabus may have been seen as revolutionary in itself, but it would be wrong to assume that it caused an instant revolution. It was greeted with initial surprise and pleasure, then with criticism. It is doubtful whether many schools were using it some six months later. If teachers did not begin to use it immediately, the date of its publication, when the school year was already underway, must have been at least partly to blame. In the long run, however, it was used with varying success. Its most enduring importance was that it showed that there could, after all, be change in drawing and it established the subject as an aesthetic one.

In this chapter I will trace some of the initial reactions to the Alternative Syllabus, show how it was put to use in London, and how it led to further development of drawing as an aesthetic subject, some of it inevitable and some the result of new attitudes. I will show how the Alternative Syllabus was itself replaced and why. It will be seen that the introduction of an alternative, against the wishes of Sir John Donnelly,
effectively weakened the stranglehold of the Department of Science and Art by undermining the rigid system of examinations. The culmination of years of pressure from various groups, it enabled a swing to a new officially-sanctioned view of art education in the schools, all within a remarkably short time. While these developments are important in themselves, they have added importance here for they tell us something of the educational climate of the school system within which Percy Weston was being trained to be a teacher.

In London, initial reaction to the Alternative Syllabus was immediate and positive. The Drawing Instructors, in a report to the Sub-Committee on Special Subjects on December 2, 1895, described it as "undoubtedly a very good one." They suggested it might be better for schools to continue using the old syllabus until the Alternative Syllabus had been tried out in one school. However, they recommended that the method of drawing suggested in the Alternative Syllabus should be used widely even though schools continued with the old syllabus. The Drawing Instructors lost no time in finding a school to test the new syllabus. Within days of its official publication at the beginning of December they had a London school which would try it out. This was the boys' division of Alma School in Bermondsey where "the Headmaster and all the Teachers on the staff are wishful to give it a trial."
There is evidence that Alma School was a school with a headmaster and staff who were keen to try out innovative ideas. In the same year as they tried out the Alternative Syllabus the school also became involved with another experiment, this time in "Domestic Economy to combine theoretical and practical in Domestic Economy, Cookery, Housewifery and Laundry work," subjects which had previously been treated separately. The school's name came up regularly in reports to the Board about interesting activities within the system, and always in a positive way.

It is not surprising that the first school to use the new syllabus may have had an above-average reputation. There is little point in running a pilot project where other factors may make failure likely. So the success, or otherwise, of the Alternative Syllabus at Alma School should not be taken to mean that it would necessarily be successful generally. Nevertheless, it is worth looking closely at the Alma School experience as it gives a good picture of the programme in practice.

If Alma School was a particularly successful school, this was not because it was situated in a good socio-economic area. In fact it was in a very poor area of the city. Bermondsey was a district south of the Thames considered to be a part of Inner London. Its population relied on the dockyards and the leather tanning trade for employment. With both these
industries having been in a state of chronic decline since the 1880's, family incomes were aided by the wives undertaking low grade home employments such as fur pulling and paper bag making. There was some casual seasonal work in jam factories as well, but this did not amount to much. From the point of view of available work, therefore, it was not a particularly attractive place to live. At the same time there were problems caused by road widening schemes and the building of new warehouses which led to the displacement of many residents and the disruption of the social interactions of the community. Bermondsey could hardly be described as a desirable urban community. Yet its school provided a model for others. This said much both for the school and for the dynamism of the School Board for London.

The staff at Alma School decided to introduce the new syllabus because they were of the opinion that the old "Syllabus of the Science and Art Department did not evoke the highest powers of the boys, and that it did not create or foster the love of art." There was some discussion as to whether the syllabus should be introduced gradually or all at once and it was with some pride that the Headmaster reported:

After careful consideration of my resources, I decided to at once take up (sic) the system throughout the school in its entirety. ..in a school to which any boy in the neighbourhood may legally claim admission while there is room, and each boy in the school has been taught.

The decision was made easier by "the enthusiastic and hearty
co-operation of my staff" and despite the fact that the new materials needed did not arrive until six months after the experiment had been started.

Because class sizes were large, ranging from 50 to 70 boys, it was found necessary to introduce the various forms suggested by the syllabus to the whole class, who copied them, before the children moved on to produce their own work. Copying, however, was always seen "not as the end but the beginning of the scholar's own work." Leaves, plants and flowers were brought into the school from time to time for the children to use as models, but there were difficulties in doing this. Bermondsey just did not have such things in anything like the quantity needed for a class. Working class London of the nineteenth century possessed no parks, no green spaces. It was a wholly urban, built-up environment.

The school saw the new syllabus as being essentially a course in design. Teachers found great advantages over the old syllabus in the much wider range of activities possible and the wider range of materials used. Observing that the children carried over what they had learnt into other subjects, they believed that the students' success in art work gave them a greater confidence that they could achieve well. The Headmaster was pleased with the intense interest that the boys displayed and summed up his impressions:
It affords what has been lacking in our elementary system of education, an effective means of cultivating the imagination, both artistic and scientific. It trains the eye to behold beauty, the mind to conceive beauty, and the hand to produce it. It fills a lad with the spirit of the artist, delighting in his work instead of that of the workman performing his task.  

The test of whether the enthusiasm of the staff of Alma School was justified came in November 1896 when the pupils had their drawing examination. As the first exam to be given to students taking the new syllabus, it drew a number of influential observers. Mr. Armstrong, the Director of Art at the Department of Science and Art, attended in person, bringing three department heads with him. General Sir John Donnelly, however, did not attend. The examination took place from 9 to 12 in the morning and, despite the daunting number of dignitaries observing, the pupils performed well. The school received an "Excellent" rating. Armstrong himself made public comment as to the high standard as soon as the examination was completed and, as it turned out, this was just as well.

In the last chapter, a common complaint about the system of examinations enforced by the Department of Science and Art was discussed. With the intention of ensuring a common standard, all exams were sent to the Department where they were re-marked by an independent examiner. However, it was claimed that in practice more problems were caused than were solved. An example was given of the independent examiner criticising one
school's results because, he said, that school had failed to
cover all sections of the course. The school in question was
Alma School. The examiner proposed to lower the rating. The
school reacted angrily, pointing out that the whole course had
been covered. It was simply that the local examiner had not
tested certain sections and that was the Department's problem.
The independent examiner was referred to Mr. Armstrong. The
criticism was withdrawn unequivocally and the "Excellent" rating
remained. A good example of something about which the NUT had
long complained, the incident is also an indicator that London
schools, and the Board administrators, were willing to stand up
to the Department bureaucracy.

In April 1896, once the experiment with the Alternative
Syllabus was underway at Alma School, the School Board for London
authorised any London school to apply for permission to use the
new curriculum. In time a number of schools did make the change
and it seems likely that a similar pattern was followed
throughout the country. There was slow growth in the number of
larger schools giving up the old ways. The Alternative Syllabus
was not so appealing to smaller schools, however, as, at the same
time as it was published, the Board of Education brought in new
regulations for small schools. These gave the opportunity to
modify the old syllabus significantly so that it might be taught
to only two groups instead of seven. This was a great advantage
which, in effect, provided a second alternative.
However, even for large schools, the new syllabus did not meet with universal approval. The Principal of the Battersea Pupil-Teacher Centre for voluntary schools, for example, regretted the move away from geometrical drawing. At least one member of the NUT executive found it too difficult. On February 15, 1896,

a deputation from the National Union of Teachers waited upon Major-General Sir John Donnelly, at South Kensington, with reference to the regulations respecting drawing in the elementary schools.

This meeting was not primarily concerned with the Alternative Syllabus, but rather ranged over all aspects of the newly published syllabus. With respect to the Alternative Syllabus one NUT executive member suggested:

that they were pleased to find the department offering them alternative courses, but the new alternative syllabus was one which he would like to see the Department itself try on an average school. It was absolutely beyond the conditions of school life. They wanted an alternative course which would suit the different localities of the country. There was no reason why it should be cut and crystallised, but they did want a scheme which was reasonable, and the new scheme was not. . . . Mr. Waddington thought the case might be met by an arrangement similar to that adopted by the Education Department, that is by accepting schemes suggested by the teachers. He thought that might give a little play to ingenuity among teachers.

The comment about the difficulty of the alternative course also had other implications. As was seen in the last chapter, there had been grumbling in some quarters about making drawing compulsory in 1890. Some teachers thought that other
subjects would be more useful. For rural areas agriculture had often been suggested as the alternative. Once the subject was compulsory, however, the argument had shifted to calling for different drawing classes for industrial areas and so on. This argument was being put forward here. The comments about the "arrangement similar to that adopted by the Education Department" may well have been a careful criticism of the Department of Science and Art's refusal to move with the times as quickly as did the Education Department. In other words the argument against the Alternative Syllabus may have been largely a strategic ploy to enable these other comments to be made. Donnelly himself clearly did not understand the theoretical approach behind the Alternative Syllabus; neither did he approve of it. His interjection in response to the comment quoted above made this clear: "the Department would be very glad if anyone could suggest a satisfactory alternative scheme." He went on to describe what he felt should be the basis of a drawing course and, in effect, gave a thumbnail sketch of the old syllabus. Yet again Donnelly was resisting change.

This meeting of the NUT executive with Donnelly, and the publicity it received, indicates the importance of the discussion about drawing at this time. Given that Eltringham Street School had a special interest in art, opposition to drawing as a compulsory subject there was unlikely. However, it seems probable that, as a pupil-teacher, Percy Weston heard the
arguments for and against the subject and formed his own opinion. He would hear similar arguments about the relevance of art in the school curriculum for the rest of his teaching life.

While the meeting with Sir John discussed the Alternative Syllabus the main reason was to ask for change in the system of inspection, examination and financial grant. The NUT did not want a fixed examination on a certain day, but wanted intermittent inspection and an inspector's report. Concomitant with this change they wanted all schools to get a single level of grant rather than one based on achievement. In addition they sought some special financial consideration for small rural schools. These had difficulty "earning" sufficient grant, given the small number of students, and had insufficient staff to teach many different groups at the same time. As usual the deputation got little satisfaction from Sir John. After two hours they thanked him for receiving them, then left. There were no tangible results from this meeting, but the NUT had expressed concerns that were widely held. Change would eventually come. One wonders whether the NUT executive discussed the age of the Secretary of the Department of Science and Art and speculated on his possible retirement leading to a more open approach to problems. If they did, then future events would show them to have been justified in so doing, but for the next year or so things went on in the same way.
The change finally came on March 31, 1898 when the Education Department took over the administration of grants for Drawing and replaced the annual examination by a system of periodic inspection. This was exactly what the NUT had been seeking for so long. Major-General Sir John Donnelly's retirement occurred the following year.

In the two years between the NUT meeting with Donnelly and March 1898 the Alternative Syllabus was adopted by a number of schools in London but the majority were discouraged by the rigid examination system. The exams were based upon the old syllabus and the Alternative Syllabus did not cover the same material; so adopting the new was a risky business when the grant depended on exam results. As soon as inspection was substituted for exams, however, there was a flurry of activity and the Sub-Committee for Special Subjects of the School Board for London reviewed applications from schools to adopt the Alternative Syllabus at almost every meeting. In June 1898, Wilkinson, one of the Drawing Instructors, commented that excellent results had been obtained in every school in which the Alternative Syllabus had been introduced. He went on to say that the exhibits by Alma School at the annual exhibition of school work in London "were, in themselves, worth a long journey to see."

The passing of control of Drawing to the Education Department also opened up the possibility of further alternative
syllabi. Wilkinson made it clear that this was in his mind when he added, "Now that Inspection is taking the place of examination it is quite possible to adopt either the Alternative or any other systematic Drawing Syllabus." If the Alternative Syllabus was the hinge which allowed the door to open to new ways in art education, the passing of control from Donnelly and the Department of Science and Art removed the doorstop.

With the door wide open the Drawing Instructors leapt to take advantage of the opportunity. Schools were encouraged to take up the Alternative Syllabus, but, at the same time, Langman and Wilkinson had further ideas. Wilkinson was quick to devise a syllabus of his own for the London schools and a year later Langman too had written one. These did not come into use immediately, but eventually both would be widely used in London.

Following the course of art education in London gives an impression of just how the subject, and attitudes to it, were changing. When Wilkinson praised the Alternative Syllabus in June 1898, he commented also on what he believed was needed in a drawing syllabus and on what he considered weaknesses in the London schools.

Drawing from natural leaf forms and Memory drawing are very much neglected. I am hoping more time and attention will be given to these subjects in future...[they are] of immense value ....Memory drawing is of immense value in training both hand and brain.

Wilkinson's own syllabus, which appeared before
November 1898, presumably stressed these "neglected" areas, as had the Alternative Syllabus before it. At about the same time school Heads were questioned about drawing. They responded that the drawing programme should not be tied so closely to the seven Standards. This would allow more flexibility both in the curriculum and in the amount of time that was devoted to the subject. Such opinions would seem to be in tune with current thinking in London.

Four months later, however, Wilkinson seemed less keen on such suggestions. Coming down strongly against any proliferation of drawing syllabi in the schools, he complained about "our present order of go-as-you-please, and the many vague amateur-drawing schemes afloat." Perhaps this new wish for a single syllabus had been encouraged by a belief that his own new syllabus was the logical choice. At the same time his colleague, Langman, supported him, advocating a standard course for the School Board for London which would stress memory drawing and nature drawing. While Wilkinson was advocating his own programme the Board had been having some correspondence with the Education Department about the Alternative Syllabus. It developed that, when the Education Department took over from the Department of Science and Art, the Board should not have assumed that approval for the introduction of the Alternative Syllabus in any school would be automatic. Toward the end of March 1899, however, it was reported that the matter was resolved and that the "Board
will be at liberty to allow the scheme to be taken in any school they may deem suitable." The Board now had blanket approval to introduce the Alternative Syllabus. They apparently assumed also that they could obtain approval for any other scheme that they thought suitable. In fact, at the very same meeting, there was a request from a school to use Wilkinson's drawing scheme.

Once the Board began to approve the Wilkinson syllabus for use in the schools, they submitted it to the Education Department for official approval. In June 1899 the Department responded, with some reservations as the syllabus went beyond what was generally considered drawing to include hand and eye training. Wilkinson replied that it was indeed his intention to include hand and eye training because the schools perceived that it was needed. This may well have been a response to concerns of some schools about the eclipse of drawing as a technical subject. It was also an indication of a very different approach to curriculum. No longer simply imposed rigidly from above, the syllabus could now be modified from below. This was a most important development. Resubmitting the syllabus for approval, Wilkinson gave an undertaking that at least one and a half hours a week, the minimum requirement, would be devoted to the drawing portion of the course. The Department agreed and there was no further mention of the problem. As some twenty-five schools had already adopted the Wilkinson syllabus by June, this was probably just as well.
In the days of the Department of Science and Art, such deviation from an approved syllabus would not have happened. As the 1898-9 school year drew to a close the Drawing Instructors were enthusiastic about what had been achieved under the new regulations. They reported that it had been "a memorable year" because there had been no examinations. The standard of drawing they found was high with both the "old" and the Alternative Syllabus being used. The old syllabus continued to be the most widely followed, but teachers were interpreting the instructions for either course more liberally and were introducing modifications of their own. No doubt, the replacement of examinations by inspection allowed the Department of Education to take a much more encouraging view of teacher innovation. The Drawing Instructors also reported that the Royal Parks in London had agreed to supply "flowers, leaves, etc." to schools on a regular basis for use in drawing and botany classes. When the offer was passed on to the schools 253 of them immediately responded. This was surely an indication of an increased interest in drawing from nature, exercises which the Drawing Instructors and the Alternative Syllabus were emphasising.

Looking at developments during the last decade of the nineteenth century it can be seen how the introduction of compulsory drawing in the Revised Code of 1890 led to inexorable pressures on the existing system. These were lessened to some
extent by the introduction of the Alternative Syllabus in December 1895. However, the Alternative Syllabus itself caused pressures by re-emphasising the difficulties and inequities of the examination system and by showing that there could be another viewpoint about the drawing syllabus. The long overdue removal of drawing from the supervision of the Department of Science and Art automatically meant the demise of both examinations and "payment by results" simply because the Education Department did not work in that manner. The lack of examinations also opened the way to innovation and enabled the Education Department to be more flexible.

In London, Wilkinson's "drawing scheme" was taken up by an increasing number of schools. In December 1899 Langman, the other Drawing Instructor, wrote a "Suggested New Drawing Syllabus" and, by the summer of 1900, it too was approved. From now on London schools were divided between those who followed Wilkinson's, those who followed Langman's and those who followed the official syllabus. Not surprisingly, the schools which followed Wilkinson's were in the area of the city he supervised, while those following the Langman syllabus were supervised by him.

With the emphasis on natural forms and memory drawing these two curricula had much more in common with the Alternative Syllabus than with the older one. They were in tune with the
popular thrust in art education at this time as was evidenced by the many books and writings. Wilkinson's was the freer of the two syllabi and it was the one that W.P. Weston followed as a teacher.

In December 1901 the Board of Education issued a new syllabus for drawing. In London it was received with something less than enthusiasm despite the fact that an unbiassed observer might think it resolved many of the criticisms directed against the old syllabus while carrying forward the ideas of the Alternative Syllabus. Certainly it made very clear that the old idea of drawing as a technical subject was now officially dead. Langman was less critical than Wilkinson but he said that he could not recommend the new syllabus overall. He did praise the attention given to mass forms as opposed to outline and he liked the examples of lettering and the plant drawing from nature. Wilkinson, on the other hand, called it:

...indefinite, incomplete and faulty. There is not enough in it for all the standards of classes for one year's work. ... I can scarcely believe that this syllabus is issued with any idea of the seriousness, improvement in and importance of the subject of Drawing as it has been taken for many years in schools under the London Board and I might safely add in schools under the Birmingham, Leeds and other School Boards.

The drawing instructors decided that they would not actively encourage schools to take up the new syllabus. They left it up to the schools to request it. Meanwhile they continued to
promote their own syllabi and kept careful count of the schools using them. Between the time they issued their opinion in February 1902 and the end of the summer term thirteen schools applied to take up the Wilkinson syllabus and sixteen to use the Langman. By the end of 1903 there were 172 school departments following the Wilkinson syllabus and 151 following the Langman syllabus. Even so, this still left 186 schools to follow the official syllabus, but the Drawing Instructors kept no tally of them. In London the pattern of art education was set for the remainder of the decade.

At about the time that the Drawing Instructors were criticising the 1901 syllabus they and the Superintendent of Method issued a memo on the co-ordination of drawing and design. This summed up in brief form the aims of the drawing programme in the London schools, whichever syllabus was followed. There was to be an emphasis on drawing, which included painting we must remember, and students should be led to an appreciation of mass as opposed to outline. It was particularly recommended that students should be drawing the simple familiar objects, rather than formal geometric ones. At all levels, memory drawing was to be stressed.

While the London Drawing Instructors were somewhat critical of the 1901 syllabus, possibly for competitive reasons, it should not be assumed that such a negative opinion was
common. Despite their comments it was used in London and throughout the country. Despite the freedom Boards were now allowed in writing their own curricula, few took advantage of the opportunity. This was made clear in the introduction to the syllabus, which was issued as a separate circular and signed by G.W. Kekewich, the Secretary of the Board of Education. He lamented:

> It is to be regretted that so little has been made of the liberty accorded to [school] managers for submitting, for approval, courses of instruction in Drawing which are suitable for their schools.40

The new syllabus grew out of what had gone before, and was intended to reflect the changing realities of the beginning of the new century. It was accepted without any great controversy. The reason for teaching drawing was made clear in the very first paragraph:

> The Board regard instruction in Drawing as an important means of cultivating in children a faculty of observing, comparing, recollecting, and thinking about all sorts of objects with a view to represent them in an intelligent and careful manner; and of developing a sense of beauty.41

This was a far cry from the old syllabus which was now abandoned entirely. Its introduction had started, "The Standards of examination in Drawing for Scholars are as follows:" and beauty or appreciation of beauty had never been mentioned.

The 1901 syllabus went to some lengths to make it clear that it was not providing materials to be copied by students. It
was made equally clear that the syllabus should not be seen as limiting teachers to covering its contents. It was better to teach from one's own experience and "Teachers should be encouraged to teach what they themselves know and can do." But, whatever was taught, they should encourage students to observe more accurately, to compare and to recollect. For a young teacher, such as Percy Weston, this freedom must have seemed like an exciting challenge. Certainly he would later reflect similar values in his own practice.

The new syllabus put emphasis on drawing with a variety of instruments, with both firm and flexible points. Brushwork was recommended, but colour work was suggested without being stressed. Drawing from nature and drawing from "actual objects" was repeatedly mentioned and children were to be encouraged to choose what they wished to draw. While there was no doubt that the authors wanted accurate drawing, they went beyond this, encouraging children to develop abstract designs and to go beyond reality to "inventiveness." Some simple perspective was advocated and some display lettering was encouraged. Memory drawing was seen as a part of every lesson. There was no emphasis put on what was to be taught to each Standard. In fact, the syllabus was not divided up in this way at all. It was left to the teachers to "devise graduated and progressive methods of instruction." The comparative freedom of the 1901 syllabus reflected its aesthetic nature. Activities were designed to lead children to
an appreciation of beauty rather than merely to the performance of a mechanical skill. It may too have been a tacit acknowledgement of the better training and greater confidence of teachers.

In 1905 the Board of Education published a book designed to assist teachers in planning their courses. Titled Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers it included a short chapter on Drawing in which the suggestions of the 1901 syllabus were clarified and expanded upon. The greatest emphasis was placed on "the important aim of cultivating the aesthetic side of the scholar's nature. The scholar should be taught to perceive and appreciate beauty of form and colour." In so doing the chapter corrected what may have been seen as a lack of emphasis in the earlier work. There was also some emphasis on encouraging the child's "inventiveness" and as a part of this discussion the teacher was encouraged to correlate drawing with other subjects. In one respect the curriculum continued to look back to the nineteenth century methods in its advocacy of the classic forms. The author's efforts to justify this advocacy suggests that there was some criticism by others of the notion that "the proper study of the classic models is essential to a right conception of the principles of beauty." However, in the approach to colour work and the encouragement of the imagination the suggestions were more in tune with up-to-date ideas. Colour theory was to be dealt with developmentally in an elementary way and various
tints, colour harmonies and colour contrasts were to be explored. Imaginative expression was to be seen as developing along with skills and not in advance of them, but the teacher was reminded that the child's immaturity was to be respected and that expectations which were too high would be counter-productive.

Taken together the 1901 syllabus and the 1905 Suggestions give a picture of a curriculum which was based on the principle of the orderly growth of skills and the development of aesthetic appreciation. The world around was to be used for models while natural forms should be considered as the basis for all design. Colour use was to be studied. Drawing from memory had a central role. There should be a correlation between art and other subjects. Copying was an element of the course, but only as a limited exercise, and it was stressed that the child should move beyond this to more creative work.

Was this curriculum actually taught in the schools? Up until 1898 there could have been little doubt about whether the prescribed syllabus was taught. The rigid system of examinations ensured that the curriculum was followed. However, once the system of inspection was substituted it was much easier for schools to deviate from the curriculum if the inspector concurred. Also, as we have seen, there was official encouragement for the development of other syllabi by individual Boards or schools. So it cannot be assumed that all schools
followed the syllabus put out by the Board of Education. Nevertheless the system of inspection did put pressure on teachers to follow some formal syllabus and in most cases this would undoubtedly have been the official one. Even in London the Wilkinson and Langman syllabi were more variations on the official theme rather than significantly different curricula.

If one looks outside the syllabus at books and articles on art education that were intended for a reading audience of teachers one finds that the philosophy they espoused and the practical suggestions they put forward were in tune with the official syllabus. If one reads the reports on art education presented at conferences and suchlike one finds that the opinions expressed are not fundamentally opposed to the official view. A good indication of the popular view may be found in The Teachers' Aid. Subtitled "A Practical Journal for Assisting Teachers in the Work of their Schools and in their Private Study" this popular magazine appeared weekly. It was full of hints for teachers, exercises that could be used in various subjects, short anecdotes, and even recipes for teachers too busy to cook properly. Every week there would be drawing lessons suggested. It is evident that, as the syllabus changed, these lessons reflected the change in approach. I will take examples of articles from 1898-9 and from 1908-9 which illustrate how the popular view reflected the official.
During the spring of 1398 the magazine carried a series of four articles on brushwork. The author introduced various brush strokes and then illustrated how they could be combined in various ways. It was stressed that the examples given were no more than that and the class should go beyond them. All the examples were based on natural forms with the exception of some geometric borders given in the first article. The articles were firmly grounded in the method suggested by the Alternative Syllabus and expanded on the brushwork given therein without departing from its approach.

The following year a series began titled "Designs in Geometric Figures" which ran irregularly throughout the year. The unnamed author's intent was to take advantage of the "numerous educational innovations recently introduced" and in particular those concerned with design. He felt that "no subject gives equal scope to the daring originality and keen powers of observation so inherent in most child minds." As with the other series the work suggested was an outgrowth of the Alternative Syllabus. This blending of skill development with the growth of creativity, with the expression of creativity relying on some very exact and formal drawing, represented an approach that began with the Alternative Syllabus and which would be popular right through the first decade of the twentieth century.

Perhaps indicative of the great growth in the viewpoint
represented by the Alternative Syllabus was an article in August 1899 running counter to that viewpoint and entitled "A Warning." While the author praised the "great change that has taken place in the teaching of drawing," he feared that technical drawing would be forgotten. He drew attention to a paper given at the NUT annual conference by George Ricks of the London School Board, which gave the same warning. They did not wish to return to the old ways, but, at the same time, they felt the skill of technical drawing could be useful to a child in later life. However, technical drawing disappeared from the syllabus two years later. The majority would seem to have been in favour of the change.

Moving on to 1908 we again find an emphasis in The Teachers' Aid on brushwork and on design, but at a more sophisticated level than was seen ten years earlier. A conventionalized iris, for example, was used as the basis for a repeating tile design. It was used in a repeating border also and finally in a formalised plaque. There was no accompanying text at all, so the assumption must have been that teachers would understand the implications and complexities of the patterning without any verbal assistance. Such visual aids were not uncommon by 1908 and were not restricted to formalised designs.

A different approach to the drawing lesson was to be
found in the magazine of early 1909 when a series of articles entitled "Notes on a Lesson" appeared which suggested that the drawing lesson should be correlated with nature study. The author's intention was that children would observe and study the plant, then use it for a number of brushwork exercises in which the plant, or parts of it, would be drawn both naturally and in the stylised form popular at the time. The author did not leave things there, however, as he suggested that these lessons could be followed up by oral and written compositions. This was a much more sophisticated approach to teaching and the articles were notable in that all three subjects held their own without becoming overshadowed by the others. From the viewpoint of the art lesson it was in the pattern of careful and accurate observation followed by experimentation and creative design as recommended by the official syllabus.

While articles such as these cannot be taken as apodictic proofs that teachers were following the official syllabus, they do provide a convincing indication. It is important to understand that The Teachers' Aid was a popular magazine and as such would be expected to give its readers what they wished to read rather than making some esoteric argument. It is one thing to argue that there was pressure on teachers to follow the officially approved syllabus. What these articles show is that teachers wanted to.
I alluded earlier to an article whose author worried that technical drawing was in danger of being overlooked and I pointed out that in fact technical drawing disappeared from the syllabus. There are two observations about technical drawing that should be made here. First, it was this period that saw great growth in secondary education. This meant that there was much less pressure on elementary education to provide all the skills that a child might need in order to enter the adult world. Thus there were other opportunities to attain technical skills. Second, there was a movement within the elementary schools to provide manual training as a separate subject and technical drawing could survive under this umbrella. It was not that those arguing for technical drawing lost the argument; the problem was solved in a different way and this made it much easier for drawing to develop as an aesthetic subject.

While a popular magazine for teachers provides an immediate and valid impression of current interests in education, it is a little harder to gauge the popularity or influence of ideas from books. Circulation figures are not available and there is such a wide range of books available that almost any viewpoint could be argued. However, there are some indications that can be gleaned. As soon as the Alternative Syllabus was published the educational publishers swung into action. Within a week, for example, George Philip and Son had an advertisement in The Schoolmaster headed "BRUSHWORK in Elementary Schools. As
recommended in the Alternative Syllabus. . .just issued" in which
two books were announced. There was a "Revised and Enlarged"
edition of Water-colour Brushwork by W.H. Wilson and William
Nelson, while "Preparing for Immediate Publication" was Brushwork
by E.C. Yeats. Since brushwork and the use of colour were two
areas new to the curriculum, these books appear to have been
timely. No doubt, publishers were prepared to cash in on the new
approach. Just looking at titles of other books published during
the next ten years one finds A Book of Studies in Plant Form, The
Anatomy of Pattern, Nature in Ornament, Lessons on Decorative
Design, Decorative Brush-work and Elementary Design, Line and
Form and so on. Books which referred to brushwork or design or
natural forms in their titles seemed to be favoured by
publishers. This confirms the approach of The Teachers' Aid.

We find a similar range of interests at art education
conferences. In particular there was the Third International
Drawing Conference which was held in London in August, 1908. The
first such conference had been held in Paris in 1900 and the
second in Berne four years later. While these conferences
brought together art educators from across Europe, the location
of the 1908 conference led to British domination of the
displays. In connection with the conference there was an
exhibition of art work from schools throughout the country which
gave a comprehensive impression of how art education had been
developing in Britain. In a leading article The Schoolmaster

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discussed this exhibition. The writer's declared purpose in his review was "to throw some light on the position of Drawing in the British elementary schools of to-day." Written by an outsider it provides a good countercheck of what those within the school system were claiming. By and large, the article confirmed that "there is ample evidence of progress, remarkable progress." The old methods had almost disappeared to be replaced by a view of drawing as a means of expression and creativity. The old method of copying had been replaced by:

training faculty instead. Purely imitative work is used but sparingly. Natural objects are studied and the hand is trained to reproduce what the eye observes, with all the adventitious aids of colour. . . . It is quite clear that the governing idea of the Drawing course is now the gaining of free command of whatever medium is employed—pencil, brush, or chalk, . . . Numberless exhibits from widely-separated parts of England show. . . . attempts to reproduce the appearance of natural objects. . . . Teachers everywhere are broad awake to the immense educational value of elementary design as a part of the Drawing course, and in saying this we speak of elementary schools pure and simple. . . . the Drawing exhibits. . . .point to a revolution in ideas, and a beneficent revolution.56

In city and country schools throughout the nation it would seem that natural forms, colour, and design had taken over. There were some who had not been "converted" but they were in the minority.

During the spring and early summer of 1909 the London County Council also held a conference on drawing. This conference took a somewhat different form from the International
Conference as it involved the visiting of art classes in London schools and the examination of different schemes of art education in the schools. Rather than a conference in the accepted sense, it was an overview of how drawing was taught in the London schools. An important indication of the attitude towards art education in 1908 was that no suggested syllabus was given in the conference report lest it "might tend to cripple the teacher, and to produce a very undesirable uniformity of work." Although the report was deliberately non-directive, the six Infant School representatives and Ebenezer Cooke were unable to agree with the other forty-eight members of the conference, so both a majority and a minority report were issued. The disagreement arose because the minority felt that the majority report "neglected or ignored certain important educational factors." Principally they argued that the majority ignored the way the child develops his perceptions, the view of development proposed for some years by Ebenezer Cooke, himself one of the minority. However, there does not seem to have been broad disagreement about what was in fact being done in the London schools.

Perhaps most importantly, the members of the conference found and praised a wide variety of practices and thought among teachers. Despite this divergency, or perhaps because of it, they also found that "many objectionable features of the drawing lesson have almost disappeared in recent years among which. . .the much abused old drawing copy."
Agreeing that "the teaching of drawing should follow the course of the child's natural development," all the conference members believed that drawing must be considered as a part of general education rather than as a special training. The report stated that there were three primary objectives in the teaching of drawing:

(1) to train the eye and hand of the pupil; (2) to develop a faculty of clear and definite representation; and (3) to cultivate the appreciation of beauty of form, line, colour and proportion.  

However, the report went beyond these three aims to discuss and advocate imaginative drawings which, it felt, "should be judged not according to their strict accuracy, but rather according to the evidence that is shown of original observation and thought." Remembering that "drawing is to the child a natural means of expressing its ideas," such imaginative drawing should be accepted "without discouragement". It was considered important that there should be a balance between the formal and informal drawing of children. This approach indicated a significant change in the attitude towards art education compared to that which was current fifteen or so years earlier. We have traced the developments that brought about the change and we have seen how the notions expressed in this report were not necessarily new to London teachers. However, the report brought together ideas that had been expressed within the system, organised them and gave them the force of formality. It provided
a synthesis of art education in London and it enables us today to
gain a better understanding of how the subject was perceived.

The formal training envisaged by the report was a
blending of older and newer ideas. "Copying has been abused," the conference members said, "[but] if intelligently done has
great value." At the same time they approved of drawing from
nature, found that "colour is naturally associated with form,"
advocated a study of colour theory and were keen to see some
integration of drawing with other subjects. Geometrical drawing
they liked, not only for the older idea of its being useful for a
tradesman, but also for the newer one that it was a useful aid in
design. Memory drawing continued to be thought of very
favourably.

The report went beyond discussion of the syllabus to
make a strong plea for providing a school environment which would
give children an appreciation of beauty and colour. Schools
should have collections of beautiful objects, there should be
good copies of appropriate pictures on the walls and those walls
should be painted so as to enhance the art work.

The congruency between the 1901 Syllabus, the 1905
Suggestions for Teachers, the journal articles, the books newly
published or republished, and the opinions expressed at
conferences, strongly suggests that the curriculum followed in
the schools was in fact close to that laid down by the Board of
Education. It was a plan for art education that was far divorced from that pertaining before the Alternative Syllabus was published and one which had progressed some way beyond the Alternative Syllabus itself, although it remained true to the spirit of the Alternative. The Schoolmaster had been right in 1895 when it had described the Alternative Syllabus as something of a revolution. However, it was a revolution within the existing system. It did not totally reject what had gone before, but it adapted and changed the old practices and, through a series of compromises, achieved a new vision of art education.

Those sitting down at the 1908 London County Council Conference could not have foreseen that this revolution would soon be overtaken by another which would be far more fundamental. It would reject totally the idea that skills should precede creative endeavour and would focus on the imaginative expression of the child. This new revolution would be so far-reaching that it would largely overshadow that which followed the introduction of the Alternative Syllabus. Consequently, the division between the old and the new ways would be placed much later chronologically by some writers. However, it is important to recognize that there were two revolutions: the first brought about change within the system and the second rejected the system itself. Our main concern is with the first revolution, for it was the results of that one which would have their effect in British Columbia at a later date. But it should not be forgotten
for its own sake either. It led to a fundamentally different approach to art education without abandoning what were perceived as the more successful elements of the old. By advocating a diversity of thought and practice, it may well have provided the breeding ground for the ideas that would later destroy it.
NOTES


2. SCSS, December 2, 1895, pp. 72-3.

3. Ibid.


5. For information on Bermondsey and Inner London generally at this time see Jones, Outcast London, particularly pp. 27, 40, 86, 166, 169.


7. Ibid., p. 102.

8. Ibid. p. 104.

9. Ibid., p. 103.

10. Ibid., p. 114.


12. Ibid. See also The Board Teacher, January 1, 1897, p. 20.


16. Ibid., p. 415.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., p. 416.
19. SCSS, February 7, 1898, p. 156.

20. For example, May 9, 1898 - Michael Faraday School; May 23, 1898 - Conway Rd. and Lollard School; June 27, 1898 - Netley St. School; July 11, 1898 - Lavender Hill School.

21. SCSS, June 27, 1898, p. 236.

22. Ibid.

23. SCSS, November 2, 1898, p. 210; SCSS, May 28, 1900, p. 44.

24. SCSS, June 27, 1898, p. 236.


27. SCSS, March 20, 1899, p. 360.


30. SCSS, July 10, 1899, p. 381.

31. The Wilkinson syllabus, as a particular document, was not found. However, a good idea of it may be found in references to it and to Mr. Wilkinson's ideas of art education. See SCSS, June 27, 1898, p. 236; SCSS, March 3, 1899, p. 252; SCSS, June 26, 1899, p. 271.

32. SCSS, December 11, 1899, p. 87; SCSS, August 14, 1900, p. 50: "A New Syllabus in Drawing," The Schoolmaster LVII:1514, (September 8, 1900), p. 400.

33. The Department of Education had become the Board of Education in 1899 by virtue of the Board of Education Act: 1901 Syllabus.

34. SCSS, February 3, 1902, p. 336.

35. SCSS, February 3, 1902, p. 334.

36. Ibid.

37. SCSS, May 25, 1903, p. 23.

38. In March 1903 there were 509 Board Schools in London with an enrolment of 549,677. Philpott, London at School, p. 49.
39. SCSS, March 17, 1902, p. 113.
41. Ibid.
42. 1895 Syllabus.
43. Board of Education, Circular 514, p. 2.
44. Ibid., p. 1.
46. Ibid., p. 66.
47. Ibid., p. 67.
48. Jeanie J. Cameron, "Brush Drawing - Practical Hints for Teachers," The Teachers' Aid, vol. XXV, February 19, 1898 (pp. 484-5), February 26, 1898 (p. 508), March 5, 1898 (p. 531), March 12, 1898 (p. 555).
49. The Teachers' Aid, vol. XXVIII, April 29, 1899 (pp. 102-3), June 10, 1899 (pp. 256-7), September 2, 1899 (p. 537).
52. For example, see also "For the Drawing Lesson - A Study in Wash," The Teachers' Aid, vol. XLVII, November 4, 1908 (p. 167).
53. John W. Gorton, "Notes on a Lesson," The Teachers' Aid, vol. XLVII, February 3, 1909 (pp. 472-3), March 6, 1909 (pp. 570-1).
55. The Schoolmaster, LXIV (July 10, 1908), p. 125.
56. Ibid., p. 126.
58. Ibid., p. 3.
59. Ibid., p. 6.
60. Ibid., p. 11.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid., p. 12.
63. Ibid., p. 13.
64. Ibid., p. 14.
65. Ibid., pp. 14-16.
66. Ibid., p. 19.
67. Ibid., pp. 16-19.
69. See, for example, Macdonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, throughout which Macdonald barely mentions the Alternative Syllabus.
CHAPTER FIVE

"Thoroughly capable teachers - well-equipped, earnest, fair-minded Christian men": early years as a teacher.¹

While change was occurring in the art education curriculum and indeed in the whole approach to the teaching of the subject, Percy Weston was pursuing his own career. Having been accepted as a student by Borough Road Training College, he started there in September 1898. So popular was this college that he had actually applied for entry more than a year previously, writing in his best copperplate hand on May 10, 1897:

I beg leave to ask permission to sit at the ensuing Scholarship Examination at your college with a view to entering for two years training.²

The response to this letter had been a package containing an application form to be completed by Percy Weston, and testimonial forms for his school, his doctor and his minister.

Percy completed the application form as soon as he received it while the other forms were completed during the next six weeks. The thrust of the questions was to ensure that the candidate was a healthy Christian of good character.

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Consequently, the first two questions of the application form required Percy to agree that he would engage in teaching as "Christian service" and that he would "acquaint" children with the Scriptures "without using your influence in favour of one sect of Christians or another."

This strong non-denominational, yet Christian, emphasis was due to the Borough Road Training College's role as a teacher-training college of the British and Foreign School Society. The College had developed from the monitorial school for the poor originally established by Joseph Lancaster in 1798 on the Borough Road in London, hence its name. By the time that Percy Weston applied to enter the institution, it had moved to the pleasant outer London suburb of Isleworth. So well-known and respected was the college, however, that it had retained the old name after the move in 1890.

As may be expected with any institution, nearly a century old, there had been some periods when it fared better than at others. In particular, the great expansion in education after the 1870 Education Act had enabled the school to grow and prosper. By the time that Percy Weston applied, Borough Road Training College was able to turn away any applicants who did not obtain a first class standing in the Queen's Scholarship exam and could choose from among those who did. So as in his public schooling, because Percy Weston was born towards the end of the
nineteenth century, he had opportunities that would not have been available to someone of his class at an earlier time.

The facilities at Isleworth were excellent. The central building was a handsome neo-gothic pile surrounded by eight acres of land. The building was approached along a half-mile chestnut drive through the playing fields. It looked like an institute of higher learning and it tried to live up to its appearance. When the new buildings were officially opened on June 13, 1890, the Vice-Chairman of the London School Board said that he "would not rest content till the students were admitted so well grounded as to be prepared to enter upon something in the nature of a university education." By the time Weston entered the College in September 1898, students were actively encouraged to take external degrees of London University. Each year a few, though not Weston, did.

Probably the least attractive aspect of the facilities of this residential college was the quarters for the students. Nevertheless, each young man had his own sleeping cubicle complete with a bed, chair and a chest of drawers, while at the end of each hallway were communal showers. Although there were no lights in the cubicles it was common practice for students to stick a candle into a bar of yellow soap. On the other hand facilities were being regularly improved at the college and the start of Weston's two years of study coincided with the opening
of improved science laboratories and of a "practice school" nearby.

Weston was one of seventy-one new entrants into the College, two of whom came from Egypt. It was usual at Borough Road College for one or two students each year to come from either Egypt or Siam (now Thailand) and for one or two of the English graduates to go and work in those countries after completion of their courses. Percy Weston certainly considered so doing in later years. When Percy started at Borough Road he chose Chemistry, Mathematics and French from among the list of "special subjects" which he would like to study. The list did not include drawing or art. His tutor, however, later noted in the margin "French weak especially pronouns."

At the end of his first year Percy Weston gained first class marks, coming twenty-eighth out of sixty-five students in the first part of his exams and eighth out of sixteen in the second part. At the end of his second year, however, he gained only second class standing, coming forty-eighth out of sixty-one in the first part and twenty-fourth out of thirty in the second. It is possible that the drop in standing in his senior year may have been due to his involvement in theatricals as he and another student designed and built the sets for The School for Scandal, the College's annual play. Or it may have been due to an increased interest in his drawing classes. In the
1899-1900 year Mr. J. Vaughan, the Assistant Drawing Instructor with the School Board for London, became the visiting drawing master for that year. Mr. Vaughan and Percy Weston were already acquainted, as we have seen, so this further crossing of paths provided another opportunity for the one to influence the other.

If Drawing did occupy more of Weston's time in his senior year, and later events would suggest this may have been so, it did not make up a major part of his formal timetable. His two years gave him a thorough grounding in pedagogical theory and practice. The Principal at this time was Mr. H.L. Withers and "for fresh ideas that stood up to the test of the classroom... [he] had a keen enthusiasm." He emphasised teaching practice and, in addition to teaching in local schools, students gave "criticism lessons" to classes of children who were brought into the College or who participated in field trips. These "criticism lessons" were quite elaborate with the designated teacher planning and discussing his lesson with fellows before the event then analysing it afterwards with groups of peers. Herbartian psychology and Froebelian kindergarten methods were studied and a woodworking workshop had been equipped in 1895.

The timetable was published as part of the annual report. Regular classes were from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and in addition there were some classes in the evenings between 6 and 9
p.m., a time which was otherwise reserved for private study. Seven to eight a.m. was also shown as being a time for either private study, exercise or drill and the afternoons were left open for games or other physical activity. The emphasis on physical activities was based in part on a perceived need to improve the overall health of the students and in part on a belief in the moral and character training possibilities of games and sportsmanship. Stressing these attributes in his report each year, the Principal provided a chart which gave the average age, height, weight, chest, biceps and calf measurements of students, correct to two decimal places, as evidence of the efficacy of exercise. Percy Weston can hardly have helped any improvement in these figures during his stay at Borough Road. He was quite thin. In the medical form that had accompanied his application, the doctor had described him as "growing much in last few years but I have no doubt will turn out strong and well as soon as he stops growing." In later years, however, he continued to be described as tall and very thin.

The games and sports had yet another aspect. They helped to foster a team spirit within the College itself, to make the students feel that they belonged to an organisation worthy of their support. This feeling was further encouraged in the year that Weston started at Borough Road by the institution of the first annual inter-collegiate sports. Certainly the attitudes displayed by students writing in the College magazine, *The B's*
Hum, would suggest that there was a strong sense of identity with the College.

All-in-all, Borough Road Training College provided students with a strong grounding in teaching procedures, a sense of group identity, pride in their college and their profession and considerable development of academic skills. By the end of the nineteenth century the staff of the College saw themselves playing an important role in tertiary education. Their encouragement of students to take external university degrees attests to this view. The great expansion in popular education since 1870, the improvement in teacher status which made it worthwhile for a young man to contemplate teaching as a career, and the growing recognition that all classes were entitled to a decent education, all combined to give an opportunity to Percy Weston that it is most unlikely he could have had at an earlier time. This sort of opportunity was nevertheless still largely restricted to those of Percy Weston's class who were willing to become teachers. There had long been some who foresaw:

a great educational ladder, the bottom of which should be in the gutter and the top in the University, and by which every child who had the strength to climb might, by using that strength, reach the place for which nature intended him.\(^{20}\)

In practice, however, access to the ladder was difficult except in those few areas where the need for trained people could not be ignored.
On July 6, 1900, Percy Weston completed his training at Borough Road Training College. The same year, older brother Frank gained a B.Sc., with first class honours, from the University of London. Perhaps Frank's degree detracted a little from recognition of Percy's own efforts, but, as Frank had been away from the family home for some years, it probably did not. As with Percy, Frank's progress could be ascribed in part to the new opportunities opening up in education. Frank had joined the staff of the Regent Street Polytechnic, London, in 1893 as a chemistry instructor and had studied for his degree on a part-time basis. He would later become head of the Chemistry Department and become known for his original research, but in 1900 it was his degree that was another source of pride for the Weston family.

Percy was one of sixty-nine "well-equipped, earnest, fair-minded Christian men" to graduate from Borough Road that year. Not one of Percy's fellow-students had failed. This was not because the examination standards were low but rather because Borough Road Training College was among the best in the country. In the teachers' certification exams, Percy Weston's class had obtained the highest percentage marks in the nation for Theory of Teaching, Geometry, Political Economy and Drawing. Given Percy Weston's later importance as an art educator, this last is particularly interesting. As the College students had not obtained a similar high mark in Drawing the previous year, it is
a reasonable speculation that Mr. Vaughan's introduction as Drawing Master may have contributed significantly towards this result.

The exams had been taken in June and Percy Weston may well have already been interviewed for a teaching position with the School Board for London. His hiring was officially noted in a resolution of the School Board in which he was assigned to Brandlehow Road Board School (Boys' Department) as a probationary teacher at a salary of 90 pounds per year. As the average salary obtained by Percy Weston's class at Borough Road was 85 pounds a year he probably felt quite satisfied with his success.

He may also have been pleased that Brandlehow Road Board School was in Putney, a suburb adjoining Wandsworth, within an easy half-hour's walk of his home. The school was a brand-new one and in actual fact was still under construction at the time he was assigned to it. For his first year the Boys' Department operated out of three temporary iron buildings in neighbouring Deodar Road. Temporary iron buildings were quite widely used in Victorian London and were particularly popular with the School Board for London in situations such as this one. They were moved from site to site as needed. With accommodation
Figure 1.

Room G, Brandlehow Road School. Weston spent his first year teaching in a temporary iron building while the new school was being constructed. This was his first proper classroom. This photo was taken in 1908. Although Weston was still at the school, the teacher shown is not him.
for 212 in the three rooms, an average enrolment of 221 and average daily attendance of 210, working conditions cannot have been very good. No doubt the sight of the new school being built just across the way encouraged the teaching staff. The building was occupied at the beginning of the following year.

The new school had a layout which had become fairly standard with the School Board. It was a three storey structure housing Infants on the main floor, girls on the second and boys on the third. The building was thoroughly up-to-date with both central heating and electric light. Percy Weston was assigned to Room G on the third floor. (See Figure 1.) This room was in the North-East corner of the building and had large windows which gave a view over the houses on Putney Bridge Road to Wandsworth Park beside the river Thames and beyond to Hurlingham House. The room itself had accommodation for 56 boys and, in addition to the usual classroom equipment, was set up for science experiments.

While the official records do not show the age of children that Percy Weston was assigned to teach, the headmaster taught in Room A and almost certainly taught the eldest boys. Weston's classroom, Room G, was the farthest in letter and physical position from the head's, so it is likely that he was teaching the youngest boys who had just moved up from the Infants' department at age eight. As he was the only inexperienced teacher on staff, this would also suggest that he
enrolled the youngest children. In addition to the main building the Brandlehow Road Board School complex included separate buildings housing Woodworking shops, laundry rooms and other facilities for the teaching of Domestic Science. The school acted as a centre for the teaching of Manual Training and Domestic Science and children from neighbouring schools were brought in for these subjects.

The move into the new building led to an increase in enrolment, which filled the 358 boys' spaces available, and to an increase in staff from five to eight teachers. As one teacher retired at this time, four new people were brought in. Three were well-experienced teachers while the fourth, Phineas H. Phillimore, graduated from Borough Road Training College the year after Percy Weston. The headmaster, Mr. Frank W. Parker, had himself graduated from Borough Road some twenty years earlier and so he may have had a preference for teachers from there. At any rate he seems to have been sufficiently satisfied with Percy Weston's abilities to take on a second teacher with similar training.

At the time that the teachers had been working with the limited facilities offered by temporary buildings, the school inspector had remarked on "the excellent tone of this school" and "the cheerful working aspect of the boys." His good impression
of the school was reinforced after the move.

The school is being very successfully carried on in the new buildings. The usual difficulties of organisation are well met, and much progress has been made with a very suitable syllabus of work. The keen interest the boys take in their work and lessons, and the regularity and punctuality of the attendance are marked features of the excellent discipline.32

The following year he found, "The school is making most creditable progress under capable organisation, watchful supervision and sound methods of instruction." Such positive comments give a very good impression of the school. Perhaps even more significant is the lack of any critical comments, for school inspectors were rarely reticent about pointing out shortcomings.

The official reports give no hint of the internal organisation of the school. As Frank Parker had a Bachelor of Arts degree, Phineas Phillimore had a Science degree and Percy Weston was pursuing his interest in art, it seems likely that there was some platooning along these lines. Percy Weston started taking night school classes in art at the same time as he started teaching, continuing these classes throughout most of his teaching career at Brandlehow Road School. About halfway through his night school studies he was granted "Art Class Teacher's Certificate," number 6810, on December 14, 1904. It is unlikely that he would have pursued these studies so assiduously if he had not had the opportunity to make practical use of them. There was a visiting art teacher who gave "special instruction in drawing" to a few boys on Thursday afternoons, as was detailed in Chapter Four, but her influence was quite limited.
Weston began his evening studies at the Putney School of Art in September 1900. The school had started as an offshoot of the South Kensington School of Art in 1883 and had moved into brand-new premises on Oxford Road, Putney, in 1895. It was situated no more than five minutes walk from Brandlehow Road Board School. Evening classes were held from 7.30 to 9.30 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays and the curriculum was advertised as including the art syllabus of the Board of Education. In fact the evening classes were all clearly designed with the needs of teachers in mind. They started a week or so after the elementary schools in September and finished a few weeks before the end of the regular school year. Each year Percy took two courses. He started with Freehand Drawing of Ornament and Drawing in Light and Shade from a Cast, obtaining a first class standing in both. Until 1908 he took two subjects each year. He never failed a course, but, if he did not get a first class pass, he would repeat the examination the following year. As he had obtained his Art Teacher's certificate in 1904, his studies after that date must have been for personal interest and betterment. By 1908 he had taken examinations in sixteen art-related subjects and had received a first class mark in eleven.

While there was some considerable variation in the percentage of first-class marks given in each subject or in each year, some idea of the standard may be gleaned from the
examination results for one year. In 1906, for example, a total of 51,879 papers were written at the evening art examinations. Of these, 10,068 were first class papers while 20,287 were failures. In that year Percy Weston gained a First Class in Anatomy and the examiners reported: "On no previous occasion, within our experience, have the results of the examination been so good." With a forty percent failure rate even a second class pass was worthwhile and Weston's high number of first class marks is noteworthy. However, it is interesting to note that his first class marks tended to be in the first years of his studies and that he did not receive a Second until 1904, while after that date he received only two Firsts. Certainly he was working at a more advanced level as the years went by, but this drop in achievement also fitted a pattern that can be seen earlier. At Borough Road he had high first class marks in his first year and slipped to a low second class the following year. At school he had achieved extremely well in his first submissions to the exhibition at Hugh Myddelton School, but his work had been unexceptional the following year. Whether this indicated a lack of staying power, or whether, once he had proved to himself that he could do something, he had no desire to impress the world, or whether there was some other reason, we cannot tell. However, in later years there would continue to be interests that he would persist in doggedly, while in others he would appear to lose interest.
One unflagging interest of his was painting. Many years later he lamented that he had not had the opportunity to take more painting classes at night school and that this interest he had had to develop on his own later. Indeed only two of the examinations he took involved painting. What his art studies did give him was a strong background in Drawing and Design. They also gave him the essential skills he would later need to be considered for a teaching job in Vancouver.

Outside of school and his evening studies, Percy Weston's life fitted into a pleasant pattern. He moved back home to 20 Dempster Road after his two years' residence at Borough Road Training College and into a household of teachers. His brothers were married by this time and had moved away, but his two sisters, Lillian and Margaret, were still at home. Lillian was a teacher of infants at Swaffield Road Board School in Earlsfield while Margaret was a teacher of girls at Belleville Road Board School in Wandsworth. Their father was still teaching boys at Harwood Road Board School in Fulham. These schools were all within easy distance for a determined walker but in different directions. One can imagine them fanning out each morning, North, South, East and West, to bring education to their charges. Was it with a sense of dedication or missionary zeal, or was it merely a job? We cannot know, but we do know that Percy came from a family of teachers and that for much of his life his closest colleagues and friends were teachers.
He certainly continued his friendship with Jessie Bennett who would eventually become his wife. Also a teacher, she had received her training at another of the British and Foreign School Society colleges, that at Norwich. Graduating in 1899, the year before Percy, she also went to work in a London School. She was assigned to the infants' class at Merton Road Board School, Southfields. Within walking distance of her home, this school, like Percy's, was a new one. She too had to contend with working in temporary buildings and, when the new building was finished, to accept a flood of new entrants, from five to seven years of age, who were attending school for the first time simply because previously there had been no school accommodation for them.

It was considered something of a tradition that Percy Weston would go for tea at the Bennett home on Sundays. As Jessie had seven sisters and two brothers, this was undoubtedly a lively time. In good weather tea would be preceded by a cycle ride, for Percy and Jessie were both keen cyclists.

During the summer holidays of 1901 they joined a group of other young people for a cycling holiday in the Lake District. Included in the group were Percy's sister Margaret and her friend, Edward Haworth. Edward was also her brother-in-law, for his sister was married to Frederick Weston. They all stayed at Farm End Cottages in Coniston in an area which provided good
opportunities for cycling. There were the relatively level roads along the valley floor or the more challenging hills over the fells. The holiday was generally considered to be a great success and soon after Margaret and Edward announced their engagement. For Percy the holiday gave him the opportunity to do some painting. His *Moonrise, Lake District, Cumberland* dates from this time. This is the oldest Weston landscape painting known and it seems likely that, if not his first, it was the first with which he felt satisfied. It is certainly the oldest landscape painting that he kept.

*Moonrise* depicts a typical Lake District scene with a stone bridge over a small tarn and the fells rising up behind. Trees overhang the bridge. The painting may best be described as being in the pretty tradition of English landscape painting. The colour sense is good and the design is competent. The eye is led up towards the moonlit sky and composition holds together well. There are no figures in the picture and the only evidence of humanity is the man-made bridge. As a painting there is little exceptional about it in itself, but, as an early Weston, it does give some hint of his strong sense of colour and design used to depict unspoiled nature. These would all be distinguishing features of his later work.

The following year Margaret and Edward's romance culminated in their wedding at Wandsworth Parish Church on June
25th, 1902. After the wedding a family reception was held at brother Frank's house in nearby Clapham. Financially Frank was the most successful of the family and had the largest home. Consequently family parties were usually held there.

Percy, a witness at the wedding, sketched the marriage scene on a scrap of paper from his vantage point in the organ loft. He was in the loft because it was his responsibility to pump the organ whenever older brother, Henry, who was a professional organist and played for the ceremony, was at the Parish Church. Percy said he did not enjoy the task, but it must have contributed to the regular church attendance which had gained comment from the minister on the testimonial accompanying his application to Borough Road some years before. Such comment had undoubtedly been in his favour. In later years he was not known for his church attendance. He may also have enjoyed the opportunities it gave him to see his brother who was somewhat estranged from the family. Percy and Henry enjoyed a number of similar interests, particularly in painting and photography, and Henry may well have encouraged his younger brother to pursue his own interests, with or without family encouragement. The older brother may well have fuelled Percy's own lukewarm feelings towards their father for Henry himself undoubtedly felt that his own musical success had come about despite paternal opposition.

Margaret's marriage took her away from the family home,
but, when school started again in the autumn of 1902, there were two fewer teachers, rather than one, leaving home in the mornings. This was the year in which William Weston, Percy's father, retired. He had been a teacher since 1859 and had seen great changes in British education. He had joined the School Board for London in 1875 and, without accepting any greater responsibility, for he remained a classroom teacher all his life, he had seen his salary improve remarkably and had been enabled to give his children a good education themselves. He retired on what he likely considered to be an adequate pension and lived to enjoy it for another twenty-two years.

Perhaps Margaret's marriage gave Percy ideas. At any rate he and Jessie Bennett became engaged the following year. However, it would be another five years before they married. There was no compelling reason for the long engagement other than financial. While the School Board for London employed married women, they may have had reservations about employing both partners in a marriage. Also married people often have children which restricts one partner from working. They had already decided that they would like to emigrate and that they should save for that purpose. Percy hoped that they would be able to go to Siam. This apparently exotic choice of destination would have resulted from the ties between Borough Road Training College and that country so it may have been Percy's dream to go there since his student days. In the meantime they continued their
established pattern of life.

During their summer holidays they made several trips to Cornwall, with Perranporth, on the county's northern coast, becoming a favoured destination. A peaceful watercolour sketch of nearby Holywell Bay was painted in 1903. The sky is hazy and the sea is calm. Just offshore lie the Gull Rocks at the end of Penhale Point. In this small landscape, as in so many of his later ones, there is no hint of human influence. However, the pleasant sands of Holywell Bay he found less interesting than the rugged Cornish cliffs and it was in painting these that he practised his painting skills. One he liked so much at the time that he had himself photographed in front of it in 1907 and again in 1909, but today none of these other paintings survive. He looked back to his holidays in Cornwall with the first painting he made in Canada, but this was later.

In 1907 Percy Weston was shown on the Voters' List as renting two rooms in the family home. This move towards independence was prompted by thoughts of marriage and, on April 11, 1908, Percy Weston and Jessie Bennett were finally wed. Siam was still being considered as their eventual destination, but in the meantime their honeymoon was spent in Cornwall. The following year their first child, Bette, was born on May 31, 1909.

During the years that Percy and Jessie were planning their futures a number of apparently disconnected events were
coming together to change whatever plans they had. Percy's brother Fred had moved to Glasgow so that his wife could live closer to her family. He was teaching art in a Glasgow school. In 1904, Joseph Vaughan had left his position as Assistant Drawing Instructor with the School Board for London to become the Superintendent of Drawing and Manual Instruction with the Glasgow School Board. Meanwhile, Reeves and Sons, the well-known suppliers of artists' materials, had adopted a policy of occasionally sending out respected educators to represent them, to give talks and to promote their products. In 1903, Vaughan went to Vancouver on behalf of Reeves and Sons and, while there, was asked if he could recommend someone to fill a position at the High School.

When Vaughan went back to Glasgow he suggested to Frederick Weston that he might be interested in the job, but Fred's wife was unwilling to go so far from her family. Fred then suggested his younger brother in London as a candidate. Vaughan, of course, knew Percy Weston and made the recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools in Vancouver that the position be offered to him. This was duly done, the post was accepted and Siam was forgotten.

The move was harder on Jessie than on Percy even though both were in favour of it. His family did not have very close ties and he had an exciting new job to go to. Jessie, on the
other hand, was close to her family and in the last few days before leaving there were tearful family parties of farewell. Percy's parents travelled with them to Liverpool to say goodbye and posed cheerfully on the boat deck for a final photo.

In addition to their belongings, a new baby and, one must assume, a veritable mountain of diapers for the two week journey, what else were they taking with them and what might they feel that they were leaving behind? Jessie Bennett was leaving her teaching career behind her, for she would not teach in Canada. She was also leaving a large family that she would always miss, but was taking with her a strong sense of duty to her husband and their baby. Percy was leaving few ties behind him. With him went a thorough training in what was considered one of the better teacher-training colleges and eight years further training for art education. He had nine years' experience as a teacher in a large school system. He was the product of a time when new ideas were developing in education and when art education for children had undergone profound changes in an orderly manner. He already had aspirations as a painter. Both presumably took hopes and dreams for their new life in a new country. Perhaps too they took a few fears. Nevertheless, on July 29, 1909, Percy and Jessie Weston, accompanied by eight week old Bette, set sail for Canada.
NOTES


2. The name "Borough Road Training College" was that used at the end of the nineteenth century. The name was later contracted to "Borough Road College" and it was often referred to simply as "Borough Road."


5. General details about Borough Road Training College, unless otherwise identified, are taken from G.F. Bartle, A History of Borough Road College, (Isleworth: Borough Road College, 1976).


7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.


10. See "List of Students Men," issued by British and Foreign School Society in 1924 and covering the years 1859 to 1924.

11. "Form to be filled up by Freshmen entering College." Completed by Percy Weston on September 14, 1899. Tutor's note dated Nov 9, 1899. Borough Road College Archives.


13. The B's Hum, January 1900, p. 29.


16. Ibid., p. 56.


21. Original manuscript to obituary notice written by Percival J. Fryer and published in *The Journal of the Chemical Society*, April 1923. Mr. Fryer sent his original manuscript to the family as a mark of respect and it has been kept by Frank Weston's daughter-in-law, Minnie Weston.


23. Ibid., pp. 66-7.


25. Annual Report of Borough Road Training College, 1899-1900, p. 64.

26. Some idea of the construction of these buildings may be obtained by inspecting what may be the sole remaining example of its type, a men's public urinal in Star Yard, off Lincoln's Inn Field, in the City of London.


28. Architect's drawings for this building may be seen at the Greater London Record Library.
29. Brandlehow Road School was destroyed by bombing during World War II. Today little remains of the structure and there is a small primary school on the site.


34. See the Prospectus of Putney Art School, issued annually. Greater London Record Office.


36. Ibid., p. 27. The names of the examiners were given as Professor A. Thomson, M.A. M.B., and Professor R. Howden, M.A., M.B.

37. W.P. Weston, Dallas Tapes.


43. Cornish Coast, 1909.

44. Voters' List, 1907, Battersea Division, voter's registration number 13976.

45. Dallas Tapes.

46. Letter from Dr. William Gunn to Dr. Robinson, dated August 2, 1910. B.C. Provincial Archives. Reference GR457.
CHAPTER SIX

"To rely absolutely on ourselves for what we felt like doing": early years in Vancouver.

When the Weston family stepped off the train in Vancouver towards the end of the second week in August 1909 they were stepping into what was almost literally a new world. Vancouver was nearing the end of a decade of unprecedented growth. From a small town it had grown into a city of almost a hundred thousand people and the boom showed few signs of ending. When one emerged from the solid, brick C.P.R. railway station at the foot of Granville Street, one faced an urban landscape that seemed designed to impress, while behind was a bustling port. It was not the metropolis of London by any means, nor was it the already aging suburbs of Wandsworth and Putney, but it was new and exciting.

Whether or not it was a conscious symbol, Percy Weston made a change that did in fact symbolise his new life in a new land. He changed his name from Percy Weston to Bill Weston. He had never liked the name Percy, or Perce as he was often called within his family. As William was his first name, the change was quite legitimate. In England, however, his father had the same
name, so to have made the change there would have caused confusion. Once he was in Canada there was no such problem and henceforth he was always known as Bill, except to his wife who was used to the old name, habitually calling him Percy.

Bill Weston and his family established themselves in a rented house on the edge of the bush near King Edward High School and almost immediately looked around for a lot on which to have their own house built. When they left England their savings had been augmented by a gift of money from Bill's father, and, while it seemed that in Vancouver "everyone was out making money on real estate," the Westons prudently ensured their future. As the name Bill symbolised a new life, so perhaps this new house symbolised an intention that theirs was no temporary move and that they saw themselves as part of Vancouver's future.

The new house at 356 West Thirteenth was not far from their first rented house in Vancouver and, like it, looked out on open land. Although the forest had been cleared some years before, now the aspens were growing up again. Thus to the north the Westons could look out on an urban environment and in the other direction on open country. This would be Bill Weston's future as an artist. A product of an urban environment, he would always live in an urban environment, yet would always look out to the countryside with appreciation.

As the Weston house was being built, the finishing
touches were being put to another new, but grander, building less than four blocks away. Described by the Province newspaper as "an architectural gem. . .of Oxford design", this was the new Provincial Normal School. The school had opened in 1901 in borrowed quarters and moved into its new home in October 1909, the official opening being in January 1910. It occupied an imposing position on Fairview Slopes next to the Model School, completed in 1906. It was not far from King Edward High School and together these educational buildings dominated the southern skyline as seen from downtown. The Westons undoubtedly passed the Normal School many times and within five years it would take up as dominant a position in Bill Weston's life as that it occupied in 1909 on the skyline.

As had happened with the move of Borough Road College to Isleworth in 1890, the new building of the Provincial Normal School had brought forth comparisons with more prestigious educational establishments. In this case it was with Oxford University. Today we might think it presumptuous to compare a normal school with a famous university, but in 1909 the Provincial Normal School was the province's only school of tertiary education. There was still no university established in British Columbia and in fact wrangling continued about its proposed location. To be sure there was the University College of B.C., but this was providing only a limited programme under the auspices of McGill University in Montreal. It was not a B.C.
Bill Weston came to B.C. to work for the Vancouver School Board as an art teacher. In 1909 the School Board served 3,345 students with a staff of 216 in fifteen schools. It had doubled its size within the past five years and would continue to expand in like fashion. The Annual Reports of the Vancouver School Board showed a concern with providing a good education which might be favourably compared with that provided elsewhere in Canada. At the same time the casual reader of these reports might be forgiven for thinking that the main preoccupation of the Board was with their new modern buildings, for the reports were peppered with discussions about and pictures of the physical plant. Methods of heating and lighting the schools were explained. There was even a photograph of the new toilets which flushed automatically when a user stood up. A closer perusal shows a keen interest in all the aspects of running an expanding system, with matters of curriculum, staffing, quality of education, class sizes, medical health, and so on, all having their place. The buildings were the symbol for "the present magnificent modern school system [whose] beginning was thirty years ago."

Attached to the Manual Training Department of the School Board, Weston was assigned to King Edward High School to teach Art. As students took Art only in their first year at
high school, he also did some teaching at elementary schools in the city. The year passed smoothly and he enjoyed his teaching assignment. He began to develop good friendships with several members of the Manual Training Department and got to know John Kyle, the Drawing Supervisor for the Vancouver School Board. He must have entered his second year of teaching expecting another successful year of the same. However, in November the unforeseen resignation of the Drawing Master at the Provincial Normal School led to John Kyle's obtaining that post and Weston moving into the position of Drawing Supervisor. The position led to substantial increases in salary and responsibility. It was a challenge he accepted confidently.

Outside school he found himself with further new opportunities. Almost as soon as he arrived in Vancouver he joined the British Columbia Society of Fine Arts (BCSFA), later known as the British Columbia Society of Artists, and he remained a member all his life. The society had been formed in the spring of 1909 with the intention of bringing artists together. This was just a few months before the Westons arrived, so Bill Weston could not quite claim to be a founding member. The members of this small new group hurried to ask him to join as soon as they realised that here was a new artist in the city. As John Kyle was a founder member it is most probable that it was he who suggested Bill Weston. A major aim of the society was to hold regular exhibitions and they went so far as to require members to
exhibit or lose their membership. With non-members being permitted to exhibit also, for many years the BC3FA provided the chief opportunity for Vancouver artists to show their work.

These artists were, in the main, amateur painters in the sense that they were unable to make an adequate living from painting. With some, such as Emily Carr and Weston himself, today being thought of as important in the history of B.C. art, it is easy to forget that their painting was perforce a part-time activity. "It was a queer society really," said Weston, "because the members were doing everything except paint, except for Tom Fripp." In fact Thomas Fripp was the only artist in the city in 1910 who made his living from painting. Fripp realised that he must paint the Canadian landscape in an English style if he wanted to sell; so this he did. English trained, it was not difficult for him, but he freely admitted that he was not interpreting the landscape as he wanted. Weston admired this honesty while regretting the necessity for such "pretty" pictures. Nevertheless these paintings were influential in Weston's development.

Tom inspired me with his mountain pictures. (I) decided that I would eventually be able to know them and paint them. Teaching was keeping me so I could paint as I pleased.

Weston's respect for Tom Fripp did not extend to the others in the BC3FA who were producing somewhat similar work and had a similar English training. In later years, in fact, he had some
very harsh words to say about them. For him the difference between Fripp and the other BCSFA members was a matter of honesty. He felt that most of the artists were pretending to do great work whereas Fripp admitted he was not. On the other hand it was hardly surprising that they were painting in the English style, for the audience was itself largely British. More than 75 percent of the citizens of Vancouver were of British stock.

The artists too were mainly British or had British training. For example, among the early members were: Emily Carr, Victoria-born but just back from training in London and Paris; S.P. Judge, an English commercial artist who gave art lessons privately; Stanley Tytler, now selling insurance, who had been born in India but had trained in the British manner in Australia; John Kyle from Glasgow. So it went on. Perhaps the only one who was free from any direct British influence was Statira Frame. With no formal training, she was able to develop her vision in her own way. Even she, though, must have been affected by the work of her fellow artists and certainly she was impressed by the work of her friend, Emily Carr.

It was through Statira Frame that Bill Weston met Emily Carr when he was invited for tea. From all accounts Carr and Weston enjoyed each other's company and they would always remain on friendly terms. Emily Carr was not one of those for whom Weston ever had harsh words. In fact, he ranked her with Tom
Fripp as one of Vancouver's two artistically honest painters. While Fripp painted tritely and admitted it, Emily Carr was alone in painting uncompromisingly with no concessions to popularity or fashion.

One wonders what was Weston's opinion of his own early work, but at least for his first submission to the BC3FA exhibition in 1910, he could not be accused of painting B.C. in the English style. Returning to his sketches, his first "Canadian" paintings were on English themes. Only one of the four pictures that he exhibited remains. Paintings with which he was not content he would usually destroy, but On the Cornish Coast he kept. The scene is clearly a view of the cliffs at Perranporth. The painting is bold, but it is closer to being a picture postcard than it is to being a dramatic interpretation. Perhaps there is some hint of the mature Weston in the treatment of the rugged cliffs, but if so it is no more than that. As his first exhibit with the BCSFA, the subject matter and the competent technique no doubt assisted his acceptance as a worthy member. However, he was not only concerned with acceptance as a BCSFA member. He also felt that as he was now an art teacher, painting must become more than a pastime for him. It had to become a part of his life.

Even if painting was becoming more important to him it was not his only leisure activity. Setting up his darkroom at
home, as he had in England, he continued his hobby of photography. He built himself a small sailboat and began what would remain a lifelong interest. To some extent these two pastimes overlapped, for many of his photos were of boats and of the sea. There are no paintings of British Columbia from these earliest years, but there are photos. A good number of them are of the sea and of the coastal mountains that he would paint so often in the future.

The photos are interesting because he brought a painter's eye to their composition and some of them foreshadow the paintings to come. In particular there are some that he took on a memorable trip in August 1913 when he went with some friends in a rented motor boat up the Sechelt Peninsula. He took pictures of cloud-shrouded mountains rising up from the sea, sometimes with dark islands forming a closer barrier. One he took of the trunks of dead trees still standing above the underbrush, but in this he could not isolate the image from the background as he would later be able to do in his paintings. The most obvious difference between the photographs and the later paintings was that people often figured in the photos. In his paintings he would deliberately omit the human element, but this did not mean that he was insensitive to his fellow-man.

The trip in the motor boat, "The Wynot," was an indication of his enjoyment of his friends. It was a glorious
adventure that the ten friends recorded in a fine leather-bound diary titled "The Cruise of the Wynot." They left from Vancouver on August 2nd, returning on August 8th. In between they had travelled up the length of the Sechelt Peninsula and then on up Prince of Wales Reach, Princess Royal Reach and to the head of Queen's Reach where they had perforce to turn round. The motor gave constant problems, but seemingly this added to the adventure. As five of the adventurers were from the Manual Training department of the Vancouver School Board they were no doubt confident that they could repair any breakdown. The friends gave each other nicknames for the journey and Bill Weston was "The Paint Slinger, Six Foot of Smile."

The trip was important for Weston because it took him into almost virgin country for the first time and gave him the opportunity to sketch the coastal mountains. It may also have been his introduction to the Sechelt Peninsula. Later the Westons would have a camp at the southern end of the peninsula near Gibsons. Views from there would provide a major inspiration for Bill Weston's paintings. Whether or not the sketches he made on this trip led to later paintings is unknown, at any rate none survive. He said in later years that when he saw the natural grandeur of B.C. he was determined to learn to portray it. As the first known Weston paintings of the mountains date from 1923 and he said that he had been destroying his work as unsatisfactory for "five or six years" before he kept any, it
seems likely that he had still to begin recording what would become his exclusive subject, the natural beauty of the province.

The friends came back from their trip determined to repeat it. However, exactly a year later the world was plunged into war. Some of the group returned to England to fight or die, but, except for its start, the war would pass Weston by.

When World War One began the Bill Weston family was in England paying what would be their only trip "home" to see their families. The war cut short the visit and sent them hurrying back to British Columbia. Except for this disruption of holiday plans the war had little, if any, effect on the Weston family. Unlike many of his British compatriots, Bill Weston did not enlist. Perhaps he felt that at age thirty-five and with a young family his responsibilities were at home. He did not talk about his reasoning.

The visit to England had from several causes. They had been in Canada for five years and Jessie Weston was homesick for her family. They had had a second daughter, Doris, in February 1912 and were anxious to show off their family to relatives. As Bill Weston had just obtained a new and even better job, they could afford to go. The new position also gave them the time to go, for Weston was able to leave the Vancouver School Board at the end of May and so have the summer free.
When Weston became Drawing Supervisor for the Vancouver School Board he was following in John Kyle's footsteps. Now John Kyle left the Provincial Normal School to work for the Department of Education and Weston again followed in his footsteps becoming Art Master at the Normal School in Vancouver. The move was a turning point in Weston's career. He would keep the post until he retired in 1946. It gave him a responsible and influential position, financial security and sufficient time off to paint. With its preponderance of female students the Normal School also put him constantly among young women. Many of his friends have attested that, in a very correct way, this was his favourite environment.

But before the job with the Normal School started, the Westons went to England. Their visit was upset a little at the end by the start of World War One, but not seriously so. The beginning was marred by the unexpected death of his brother, Henry, who died suddenly at the beginning of June 1914 just before the Bill Westons arrived home. It was perhaps typical of the family that the death did not seem to spoil the visit unduly. Henry had always been the odd brother who didn't quite fit in and his death was treated as coolly as he had been treated in life. With mail and travel being relatively slow, it is probable that the Bill Westons did not learn of the death until they arrived in England, by which time the family had got over
the shock. They left Vancouver on Friday, June 12, 1914, and arrived in England about two weeks later. "Wot O," wrote Weston, "won't we av some fun."

And fun they did have. Brother Fred came down from Glasgow for a family reunion. Fred was the brother to whom Bill felt closest and his attendance was a particular pleasure. If Bill's family was admired and his good fortune in Canada praised, no doubt he was expected in his turn to be impressed with the rest of the family's success. Margaret had her own children to display. Lillian was headmistress of a girl's school and Frank was a successful research chemist with several publications to his name. The summer was a happy one but Bill Weston had no desire to stay. The west coast of British Columbia was now his home. In fact after the assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand sent Bill and his family hurrying back to western Canada, he never wanted to return to England. He never took another trip outside of Canada and indeed did not even leave the province for another twenty-seven years. Jessie would have bouts of homesickness all her life and would have liked very much to visit her family again. But, even though she was too nervous to make the journey on her own, Bill Weston would not go with her. Although his refusal to accommodate his wife's wish for another visit suggests some deeply felt disinclination, he never admitted to anything more than a lack of interest. He rarely talked of his life in England either. It was no longer "home".
In part, his contentment came from his love for the natural grandeur of B.C. It also came from his satisfaction with his work. At the time of his trip to England he looked to the Normal School post only as promising an exciting future, but he could look back to almost five successful years as Drawing Supervisor for Vancouver School Board. It had been a good promotion for him in 1910. Initially supervising a teaching staff of some 250 teachers, most of whom taught art, his responsibilities grew rapidly as the system expanded. Within a year and a half the chairman of the Management Committee was suggesting that Weston needed an assistant. While the assistant never materialised, the job continued to grow. Although the Vancouver School Board covered a smaller area of the city than it does today, it was nevertheless the largest board in the province and was probably the most influential.

The role of Drawing Supervisor was largely concerned with the training of teachers to teach art, since it was official Board policy that drawing should be taught by the classroom teacher rather than by a specialist.

We wish it to be clearly understood that we do not favor having all the teaching in any class room done by specialists in [drawing]. Intelligent teachers can learn to teach drawing as well as they can learn to teach writing or arithmetic, and they should do so. Supervisors discharge their duties when they teach the untutored teacher to teach their special subject, and then see that they do it.
As Drawing Supervisor, Weston was able to use his British training and experience. He showed his commitment to the tenets of the British drawing curriculum in his writings. In his very first report as Supervisor, he wrote:

More attention should be given to original work. The students can draw from objects or copies with success, but they should be able to use what they have so learned. Memory drawing or design gives the student the opportunity to exercise his own judgment and also the power to create for himself, and therefore, it should follow the copying and object work.

He expressed satisfaction with the colour work and with geometric drawing. All of these comments would have fitted happily into any discussion of the art work in British schools.

The following year he drew attention to the two aims of teaching drawing: "for the practical work of commercial life, and to cultivate good taste and appreciation of the beautiful." He went on to write of the importance of "natural forms." Such statements could have as easily come from either the British 1901 Syllabus or the 1905 Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers. As the Suggestions had put it, it would be "a safe foundation for either utilitarian or aesthetic aftergrowth," and it went on, "Special attention should be paid to instruction in the principles of beauty."

By the time of his third report he felt able to praise the progress that had been made in memory drawing, this "hitherto
somewhat neglected branch of our work," and to comment on difficulties encountered by staff in teaching nature drawing. He also praised:

Design work [which] shows the most satisfactory results, some of last term's work being really excellent and showing a great advance in freedom of treatment, arrangement and colour.\textsuperscript{11}

Again this suggests an emphasis on British practice and has much in common with the 1905 Suggestions.

Weston may not have been responsible for introducing a British flavour to the Vancouver School Board's Drawing curriculum, but he encouraged it. His predecessor, John Kyle, was also British and many of the teachers would have been British. Kyle in fact had given a paper at the annual meeting of the Dominion Educational Association in 1909 entitled "The Adaptation of Nature Study to Design," which was a fair reproduction of British thought in art education. Kyle had come to B.C. in 1906, only three years before Weston but had brought with him the results of a British training and experience which were from a slightly earlier period. This was probably due quite simply to the fact that he was eight years older than Weston and in his teacher-training had missed the revolution in art education that had been symbolised by the 1895 Alternative Syllabus. Both had had a fine arts training, but Weston was bringing a more up-to-date view.
So when Kyle moved to the Provincial Normal School he brought to that position a view of art education that was compatible to Weston's. Recognition of this was shown by Weston in his last report as Drawing Supervisor when he expressed the belief that the new teachers coming from the Normal School "know better what is expected in this subject [drawing] and consequently are able to take hold of the work more readily." The Art Master who preceded Kyle at the Normal School had brought a copy book approach to the teaching of art and in fact wrote a series of art copy books. Although that series remained an official text in B.C. until 1924, under the influence of educators such as Kyle and Weston this approach to art education had begun to change long before.

Weston's assumption of the post of Art Master at the Provincial Normal School was therefore a continuation of British influence in school art education. He stayed at the Normal School for the rest of his working life. His was a position in which he would be able to exercise great influence on art teaching in the schools. It gave him great personal satisfaction. His daughter recalled:

He loved the whole thirty-two years that he worked. He said that whatever you do you should decide what you want to do for yourselves because you've got to be happy. He said, "I don't get a lot of money, but I'm happy." 45

In part his happiness in the job must have resulted
from the confidence brought by his excellent qualifications. In five years with Vancouver School Board he had gained experience of all levels of public schooling and he knew both the strengths and weaknesses of the system. Having had a thorough training both as a teacher and as an artist, he was confident in his own abilities. He believed strongly that the success of art in the schools lay in a good grounding in technique, but with a variety of expression. He was now in a position to ensure that new teachers in B.C. obtained that grounding. When he enrolled his first class in September 1914 the Normal School in Vancouver was the only teacher training establishment in the province. While the following year a second Normal School was opened in Victoria, the Vancouver school always had about double the enrolment. Weston continued to have a direct influence on the majority of new teachers in B.C.

While obtaining the post at the Normal School was a significant event in Weston's life, the job itself could not be considered an event or series of events so much as a continuum in which there was gentle change and development. Always remaining true to the principles and theories of art education with which he started, Weston always insisted that an education in art should be based on learning the basic skills of drawing and design. It would be too harsh a criticism to say that Weston's teaching was unchanging, but his theoretical approach was definitely consistent. A set of notebooks made by a student in
1920 were true to the principles of the 1901 Syllabus and the 1905 Suggestions and showed a remarkable similarity to a set of notebooks made by another student in 1934. When these same notebooks were shown to a student from 1942 they elicited the comment, "Oh yes, that is the sort of thing we did." This certainly suggests that his teaching was stuck in some sort of rut for many years, but his students each year enthusiastically accepted his teaching as new and exciting. Whether or not his consistency was a good thing, it did much to keep alive in the schools the British ideas of art education which Weston brought with him. His position at the larger of the two Normal Schools was an influential one and for many years there were few strong counter-ideas to provide a challenge. Besides, the predominantly British educational establishment in a predominantly British province provided fertile ground in which these British ideas could grow.

The summer that the Westons were in England saw the start of a summer school for teachers in Victoria. It was organised under the auspices of John Kyle who had just moved over to Victoria to become director of technical education. The summer school was held again in 1915, but the following year was cancelled because of wartime restrictions. However, it was resumed in 1917, thereafter it becoming an annual event. Weston went over to teach art that year and during the next twenty-two years he would miss only two summer sessions. Summer school
became part of the regular pattern of his life, providing him with yet another opportunity to spread his ideas, this time to practising rather than new teachers.

As his teaching life was falling into regular patterns, so was his life outside of school. He bought another sailboat, "The Pathfinder", in 1915 to replace one he had sold in 1913 and from now on he would always own a sailboat until well after his retirement. He joined the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. His wife would sometimes crew for him but she was not greatly interested in sailing. When his elder daughter, Bette, became old enough she took over as his regular sailing partner and they spent many happy hours on the boat together.

Bill Weston enjoyed the sailing races organised by the yacht club but the boat was also a good excuse for a family outing or a picnic with friends. These friends came from within his existing circle of acquaintances, sharing his teaching and artistic interests. In particular they were Charles Scott, who had replaced Weston as Drawing Supervisor and who would later become the Principal of the Vancouver School of Art, and S.P. Judge and his wife. Judge was the commercial artist Weston had met when he first arrived and would, in the small closed world of Vancouver art education, be Scott's replacement at the Vancouver School Board when Scott moved on. The Judges were not favourites with the Weston children as they thought them "toffee English"
with an inflated view of their importance. Bill Weston had a low opinion of Judge as an artist; nevertheless the friendship persisted.

At about the same time as he bought "The Pathfinder" Weston also bought some land at Granthams Landing on the Sechelt Peninsula just north of Gibsons. The family used this property as a weekend and holiday retreat and it became a favourite sailing destination. Initially they camped on the land, but in time they built a cabin. With its view of Keats Island and Howe Sound, this summer home would later provide inspiration for many of Weston's paintings.

The Weston family's trip to England in 1914 marked a division in their lives. The first five years in Canada had been a time of family and professional growth and the putting down of roots. Jessie and Bill Weston had completed their family by the addition of a second daughter, had built a house, and had established their patterns of family life. Professionally, Weston had risen quickly to gain a position of influence within the Vancouver school system as Drawing Supervisor, then had risen again to a position which offered him the potential to influence the development and teaching of art in schools throughout the province. The holiday in England had confirmed Weston in the view that his future did not lie there. If he retained any hankerings to visit England again, these were effectively lost.
with the death of his mother just six weeks after the end of the war. She had provided him with his closest emotional tie with the past.

After the English visit we find the Westons' family life changing slowly with time rather than dramatically. Bill Weston had his work at the Normal School. From 1917 he had the summer school at Victoria. He had sailing to give him a hobby and a physical outlet. His active membership in the BCSFA put him close to the centre of Vancouver artistic life. The family was financially secure. It was a pleasant pattern of life, but it was a pattern established by Weston. Jessie Weston was fiercely loyal to her husband, but the life established was not really the one she might have chosen. She had to fit in. Their elder daughter Bette recognized this.

Well they didn't really like the same things. She wasn't an artist and that was hard. She liked playing bridge and he didn't. She didn't like boats and he did. ... He had all these interests and just kept doing them. She'd complain but he just didn't pay any attention. He was a very determined person.\footnote{In later years some of their friends thought that the comments became increasingly critical, but she never allowed others to say anything against her husband. To complain was her privilege for all the years of support.}

With its regularity and routine Bill Weston's life might have become ineffably dull. That it didn't may well have
been because these smooth patterns in much of his life enabled him to be daring in others. As an artist he would work to develop new ways of interpreting the landscape of British Columbia and as an educator to bring a coordinated cohesive view to the curriculum.

The ten years after 1914 were significant for Weston as an artist. It was during this time that he came to grips with the problem of depicting the British Columbia landscape in a way that he felt would do it justice. He was dissatisfied with the English manner of landscape painting used by himself and his peers, but he had little idea of the alternative. So he set to work "to study and know these things and the best way was by drawing and painting them constantly." Because he did not keep work with which he was dissatisfied or which he felt was transitory in style, there are few paintings before 1923. However, sufficient remain to show his development as an artist and in later years he wrote and spoke to his friends about this period. He found it was an advantage that B.C. was relatively isolated from the rest of the country. "We were cut off, as they say, by the Rockies from the east and we had to rely absolutely on ourselves for what we felt like doing." Consequently in his art he was relatively unaffected by outside influences.

In particular Weston felt that he had already developed his distinctive style by the time that the first Group of Seven
exhibition was held in Vancouver at the beginning of the twenties. Weston was very sensitive to later comparisons of his work with that of the Group of Seven. He himself admired the work of the Group, but he felt that what they were doing was something different from what was being done in B.C.

It seems to me that the west cannot be painted in the same manner as the east and that the outlook in the west cannot be judged by the same standards as that in the east. For instance I have heard criticism that western landscape painters omit human interest. This is often true but there is a reason. The east is much older in settlement than the west and the country carries the mark of man's handiwork. The west is much less touched by man's work.

Western artists did indeed come to feel ignored by the art establishment in Ontario and Quebec, or merely fobbed off as copiers of the Group of Seven style. It is therefore important to appreciate that at the time when Weston was experimenting for ways to depict the grandeur of B.C., the eastern Group did not have the status it would later achieve and was relatively little known on the west coast.

It was the natural beauty of B.C. that Weston wanted to paint for "man seems puny and his slight inroads are comparatively insignificant," so he consciously omitted the human element.

B.C. with its rugged mountains, tumbled beaches, huge forest giants and beautiful tree forms... appealed to me strongly. ... All these forms have been affected by and moulded by the elements -- wind, rain, frost and
snow in one way or another. E.g. erosion in mountain forms, changes in structure in living forms. The study of this is most interesting and has been the main force behind all my drawings and paintings.⁵⁵

When Weston was asked by an interviewer whether he felt that his mature style had been developed by 1926, he replied, "I had got what I wanted by 1926 although I wasn't always sure how I would do it. I was still learning and I still am." He cautioned his questioner about assuming that there had been any sudden change in his style and the year 1926 was not a date chosen by Weston as representing any turning point in his artistic life. Looking at his pictures, the year 1923 in fact seems to have been a more crucial one. Paintings that he kept from that year were in a variety of styles. There was the English landscape style, there was a yacht race in a somewhat bolder style (Round the Mark, Dinghy Race) and there was a quite new style which seemed to be already well-established. Given that Weston had destroyed other paintings which were transitional in style and with which he was dissatisfied, these "new" paintings were probably the result of earlier experimentation and the first not to be destroyed. In this series, painted at Granthams Landing, he is clearly forcing his way towards a new interpretation of the B.C. coast. In 1923 he took the summer off from teaching summer school at Victoria, something he did on only one other occasion when he was very sick, and he painted at Granthams Landing. It seems reasonable that he deliberately devoted this summer to extending his insights.
The painting simply titled Grantham Camp perhaps gives us an example of the "old" and the "new" Weston in the one work. It depicts a small shack nestling into the countryside and set before a lowering sky. The dark clouds blotting out the last persistent rays of sunlight could belong in many an English landscape painting. The shack, however, has been effectively placed in the scene with a few coarse brush strokes. Similarly, the wild growth of the foreground has been depicted with an economy of brush. Between the shack and the stormy sky a fir tree seems uncertain whether it is an Old or New World tree. The soft line and gentle blending of colour are undoubtedly English, whereas the unfussy treatment of the foliage is not.

In complete contrast to Grantham Camp is Afterglow - Granthams Landing. With its almost monochromatic use of colour, confident brushwork and hard edges, it heralds Weston's new approach. As a picture it is not particularly noteworthy, for it lacks Weston's usually tight composition. It is simply the mountains across the sound catching the last of the evening sun. It is the bold approach which is interesting and the attempt to capture the rugged grandeur of the mountains.

Camp at Granthams Landing, a much more tightly controlled design with its close depiction of a cabin among the trees, is in many ways a very different picture to Afterglow. At the same time the predominance of orange and the very restricted
use of colour deny this difference. The sharpness of the shadows and the angularity of the trees would have no place in an English landscape. The very lightness of the background and the hints of sky and sea suggest the vastness beyond. The careful design and the use of analogous colours are examples of techniques encouraged by Weston's British training. As did other British immigrants in Canada, Weston used his traditional skills to produce new visions.

The paintings which resulted from the summer of intense activity undoubtedly were the work of a mature and confident artist, but they were not paintings which could be instantly recognised as "W.P. Westons." In later years Weston would be accused of having an unchanging style, but in fact his style continued to develop. Weston saw his painting as reflecting the subject matter.

It wasn't really so much a change in approach but as I moved around I'd see something new. I'd move around the province and for a while I would be painting a different subject. . . .I had a spell of those [beach] paintings and before that I used to get up in the mountains with the students and then I painted quite a lot of snow pictures.57

Undoubtedly these 1923 paintings are the result of a new departure for Weston, but they represent the beginning of a new interpretation rather than its completion.

The 1917 painting, From My Window, showed no hint of the development to come and there is only one other Weston
Camp at Granthams Landing. Painted in 1923 as Weston sought new ways to interpret Canada, it is in marked contrast to his 1910 painting, On the Cornish Coast.
picture from this period which is still in existence. This is 
*Tug - Vancouver Harbour* painted in 1919. In the bold and glowing 
treatment of the sky and the swirling smoke from the tug's stack, 
we can see the beginnings of change and an attempt to interpret 
the local scene more boldly, but in the softness of the style the 
painting is more in keeping with the English tradition.

In August 1918 six year old Doris caught her first 
salmon, using the worst fishing line in the family's possession 
because no-one thought such a young child could catch anything. 
She still keeps a photograph of the event. In October Bill 
Weston bought his first car. Bill and his daughters posed in it 
proudly outside their new garage while Jessie took their 
picture. It all was part of an unruffled family life. The 
photos of this life had an additional role. They were evidence 
of the family's success and copies were sent back to their 
parents in the London suburbs as proof. In November the war 
finally ended. This meant little to the life of the family, but 
professionally it led to change.

Although the ending of the war coincided with a small 
drop in student enrolment at the Normal School, within a year or 
two the numbers crept up. The new building had been operating at 
close to or a little above its capacity of 250 students almost 
since its opening; by 1921 there were one hundred more students 
than could easily be accommodated and for the next four years the
situation worsened. The peak year was in 1923 when, in September, 405 students squeezed into the building. There had been some change too in the character of the student body. Returning soldiers, anxious to complete their educations, increased the percentage of students who were male. Such students were also more mature. A changing of enrolment standards at the end of 1920 and the elimination of the half-year course tended to lessen further the number of immature students.

The pressure of numbers cannot have made the task of teaching easy, but teachers and students took the difficulties in stride. For staff it meant classes of fifty, or even sixty, so that "only the very splendid attitude of the students towards existing conditions made it possible to carry on." This did not leave a great deal of time for planning much variation in courses but there was still a full range of extra-curricular activities, each one sponsored by a different staff member. Bill Weston sponsored a hiking club, taking the students on long rambles in the Coast mountains. A favourite destination was Grouse Mountain and the sketches he made on these excursions would provide the raw material for later paintings. Weston thoroughly enjoyed such social contact with his students. Each year he also invited students to go sailing and would crowd as many as he could into the sail boat for a cruise around English Bay.

Other extra-curricular activities sponsored by staff
included literary, debating, dramatic and athletic societies. This type of social involvement must have done much to account for the very high level of enthusiasm displayed by students in the School Annual and for the warmth of student memories. Until his retirement in 1920, there was a conscious effort on the part of the principal, William Burns, to foster school spirit and his successor, Mr. Donald Robinson, continued "to develop among the students the best school spirit." Even though students attended the Normal School for only one year, they did identify with it closely. For Weston certainly it provided an excellent working environment, and the very low turn-over in staff suggests that his colleagues were similarly content.

The ending of the war led to thoughts of the future and to renewed pressure for an art school in Vancouver. In 1921 the B.C. Art League was founded to work towards the establishment of such a school. Bill Weston became a member as did Charles Scott, who had replaced Weston as Drawing Supervisor in 1914 but had actually been absent on military service for most of the war. The Vancouver School Board expressed some interest in starting such a school and Scott was in a good position to encourage this interest.

Belief in the need for an art school was all part of a more general feeling in Vancouver that the city had grown-up. As Weston, the British artist, had grown and matured by 1923 to
become a Canadian painter and interpreter of B.C., so too had the almost British city of Vancouver grown to become the Canadian metropolis on the west coast. It was "the dizzy decade" of growth and change. Post-war depression gave way to expansion and prosperity and Vancouver seemed a good place to be. Weston had decided that this was so years before, but the very confidence of Vancouver must have been encouraging to an artist who felt he was successfully breaking new ground.

That Weston kept his paintings from 1923 is a strong indicator that he felt he had achieved the new approach he was seeking in his art. By this time too he was secure in his work with nine years of successful teaching at the Vancouver Normal School and secure in his family life. He had two healthy children and a supportive wife. He owned his own home and had a summer home as well. It was a time when the future seemed promising. For Weston at any rate, the future would live up to this promise.
NOTES

1. W.P. Weston, Dallas Tapes. He was talking about the isolation of the people of B.C. from both Eastern Canada and the rest of the world.

2. W.P. Weston, Dallas Tapes.

3. See W.P. Weston, From My Window painted in 1917 which shows what can be called the rural view.


8. See, for example, "Report of the Chairman, ARVSB, 1909, p. 3.

9. ARVSB, 1912, p.35.

10. ARVSB, 1903, p.5.


13. Ibid.

14. Weston's starting salary with the Vancouver School Board was $100.00 per month. It was increased to $130.00 on his promotion and went up to $150.00 the following year. ARPS, 1910, p. Alxxxviii; ARPS, 1911, p. Acii; ARPS, 1912, p. Acxv.
15. The British Columbia Society of Fine Arts, Constitution and By-laws, Vancouver 1910, p. 3.


17. BCSFA, Constitution and By-laws, p. 7.


20. W.P. Weston. Undated handwritten note prepared for a lecture on B.C. art, probably on behalf of UBC Extension Department. Weston worked for the Extension Department during WWII and after his retirement in 1946.


22. Census of Canada, 1911, vol. 2, pp.426-7, shows 75% of the men and 84% of the women as being of British stock.


24. W.P. Weston, On the Cornish Coast, 1909. The catalogue shows that he also exhibited Eastbourne from Beachy Head, Sunset Effect, and Ferryboat.

25. W.P. Weston, Dallas Tapes. His refusal to keep work with which he was dissatisfied has also been confirmed by both his daughters.


27. He said this a number of times. For example, a handwritten note to Dr. Ben Kanee, December 23, 1965.

28. W.P. Weston, Dallas Tapes: his first known painting of mountains is Western Lions from Grantham's Landing, 1923.

29. His liking to be surrounded by young women became a family joke. Friends have also often referred to it. See, for example: Elmore Ozard, interview October 1983; Betty Marsh, interview with Cal Opre, 1974; K. Pratt, interview November 1984.


31. Letter to Lillian Weston written May 21, 1914 but never delivered. It sank with the wreck of the S.S. Empress of Ireland, was recovered by divers and returned to Weston in December 1914 by the Dead Letter Office.
32. In 1941 Weston attended an art education conference in Kingston and Ottawa. Apparently it was the promise of a plane ride, his first, rather than the conference or the visit to Ontario that appealed to him.

33. With most schools being small there was almost no platooning and each teacher would have been responsible for teaching the whole curriculum. Even as late as 1929 the then Drawing Supervisor found that half the teachers in the district taught art. ARVSB, 1929, p. 103.

34. ARVSB, 1911, p. 26.

35. Until January 1929 the area now covered by Vancouver School Board was divided into three separate boards, Vancouver, South Vancouver and Point Grey.


37. ARVSB, 1910, p. 22.

38. ARVSB, 1911, p. 32.

39. 1905 Suggestions, p. 66.

40. ARVSB, 1912, p. 38.

41. Ibid.


43. ARVSB, 1913, p. 40.

44. David Blair, Blair's Canadian Drawing Series. Toronto, Copp Clark and Company, undated.

45. Doris Wood, Weston's daughter. Interview, April 1983 at Port Moody, B.C.

46. Isobel Johnston (1920), Marjorie Clark (1934), Joan Thompson Warn (1942).

47. Interview with Bette Parson. Okanagan Landing, B.C. August 1983.

48. Ibid.

49. For example, Elmore Ozard in interview at Eagle Harbour,
October 1983.

50. W.P. Weston in a personal note to Dr. Ben Kanee written on December 23, 1965.


52. Ibid.


54. Ibid.

55. W.P. Weston in a personal note to Dr. Ben Kanee written on December 23, 1965.


59. Ibid., D.M. Robinson, Principal, Vancouver Normal School.

60. ARPS, 1921, p. F45.


CHAPTER SEVEN

"The very essence of good teaching and good leadership": a feeling of success.¹

If Weston saw the summer of 1923 as a significant one for himself as an artist, he may have seen the previous winter as being equally significant for himself as an educator. The provincial Department of Education had perceived the need for a new art text for teachers and decided that they would prefer a locally-produced book. Accordingly they approached Bill Weston and Charles Scott and asked them to write one. No doubt the two men were pleased at the recognition of their talents that was implied by the request, but in fact it was no great honour. The Department really did not have any other local educator whom they could ask. John Kyle in Victoria had the fine arts training, but was fully occupied as Director of Technical Education. Harold Dunnell, Art Master at Victoria Normal School, was a misplaced Manual Training teacher. There were very few secondary art teachers while elementary teachers, even in the few large city schools, were not subject specialists. Only Weston and Scott had both fine arts training and experience of teacher education. They agreed to produce the book and Weston was launched on a new
aspect of his career. He was now a writer.

Weston and Scott were close friends at this time and, at Scott's urging, a mutual friend, Spencer Judge, was brought in to be the third member of the team. Scott, of course, was Drawing Supervisor for Vancouver School Board, which was Weston's previous job, while Judge by this time was working as art teacher at King Edward High School, which was Weston's original post in Vancouver. As was common in educational circles at this time in B.C. all three were British and British-trained. Their teaching experience was restricted to city schools, and mostly Vancouver schools. Scott acted as editor and writer while Judge's particular role was to provide a short section on secondary school art at the end of the book. In actual fact the chief writer and illustrator was Bill Weston. At least half of the book can be shown to be his work and it is probable that a good part of the remainder was his as well.

2

Weston believed that one reason he had been approached by the department was because some time earlier he had written a critical letter to them complaining about provincial policy regarding university education. He had received only a terse reply. "They told me to shut up or else." Provincial educational policy was seen to be outside of his mandate. Now, however, the department was countering his complaint by giving him the challenge to do something about art education at the
provincial level. The fact that his criticisms had not been well-received may also have been a factor in the decision to ask Scott to be senior author instead of Weston. As Weston was the most senior educator of the three writers, it might have been expected that he would be the chief author. Although on paper he was not, he did much of the writing. "The result was that others got the benefit of my [efforts. The department] made me work for it."

The writing of the book took up much of Weston's spare time during the winter of 1922 to 1923 although writing was perhaps not the most accurate term. In addition to the sixty-eight pages of text and course outlines there were seventy pages of illustrations, both in colour and black and white, which had to be prepared. Weston took over the family living room and "as soon as he came home he'd go in the front room...and he'd work on it for a couple of hours every day." As the book neared completion, Weston had some additional work. He and Scott had similar standards and ideas, but Judge's contribution turned out to be of inferior quality. Although they did not wish to hurt Judge's feelings, neither did they wish to spoil the book. Consequently, at Scott's urging, Weston carefully retouched Judge's art work. Even with retouching, Judge's illustrations did not match the rest in quality, but they were acceptable. Scott and Weston never told Judge and, if he noticed, he never said anything.
There were the normal delays between the writing and publishing of the text and the book finally appeared in 1924 as *Manual of Drawing and Design* but was commonly referred to in Department of Education publications as *The Teachers' Manual of Drawing and Design*. By 1925 the B.C. *Programme of Studies* had been rewritten to take note of the change in text. In fact the twenty books and booklets (some in series) which had been listed for Drawing in 1924 were now replaced by the single new text. The 1925 *Programme* made extensive reference to the book, proudly proclaiming the Department of Education in Victoria to be the publisher. Although the text had in fact been published by Thomas Nelson and Sons of Toronto on behalf of the Department, Nelson's were never mentioned.

The introduction of *The Teachers' Manual of Drawing and Design* made clear that on paper the official curriculum of the Department of Education had now changed considerably. Even though the programme for Drawing had been interpreted by Britons and teachers who had themselves been trained in the British manner, the curriculum had been somewhat North American in approach. For example, copy books had always been a North American luxury which had never played a significant part in British education. In B.C. they had had a major role until this time. Now the long out-of-date copy books of David Blair and the rather vague American Prang series of art texts were gone. The
American School Arts magazine was no longer recommended. Some British teacher references had also been discarded, but it was the demise of the Blair and Prang books in particular which was important. These were the books that had been in the hands of the children.

What replaced them? For teachers the text provided a unified approach to the subject and it expanded the role of drawing, particularly in the lower grades. It encouraged the teacher to introduce new ideas to the class, to get away from copying, and it assumed that all could learn to draw adequately. Weston thought the new text brought the curriculum up-to-date, but it was undoubtedly British art teaching in the tradition of the 1895 Alternative Syllabus and the 1901 Syllabus. Two of the tenets of those syllabi, and of Weston himself, were stressed in the text: the importance of drawing as a basis for all art and the role of design.

One key tenet was treated somewhat ambiguously. Memory drawing was advocated in some places and in others was cautioned against. This ambiguity may well have resulted from a disagreement between Scott and Weston. Unlike Weston, Scott did not believe in memory drawing as an exercise. However, the drawing curriculum in the Programme of Studies was not ambiguous at all, stating, "Memory drawing is a powerful aid in stimulating observation." One can but suspect that Weston may have had more
input into the writing of the new curriculum than did Scott. Despite Weston's occasional disagreements with the Department of Education, this would be reasonable given his regular attendance in Victoria as a teacher at the summer school and his personal friendship with John Kyle.

It must be remembered that the British 1901 Syllabus, the culmination of years of development in art education, was an attempt to bring about change within an existing system. As such it had roots which went back many years. So too did the Manual of Drawing and Design sometimes show its older British origins. The illustrations of historic ornament, for example, clearly came from Owen Jones' 1856 book, The Grammar of Ornament. In Plate 44 (page 106), figure number one is Jones Plate VII, example 21, simply turned up the other way, while figures two to five were taken from Jones' plates XVI and XVII. Similarly, other illustrations were based on Jones' work. The authors acknowledged that Jones' was the standard work on the fundamental principles of design. Indeed The Grammar of Ornament was still in print more than fifty years after its initial publication.

While the similarity to The Grammar of Ornament could be shown graphically, the affinity with the 1901 Syllabus was in the content. The Syllabus stressed drawing with both firm and flexible point, it emphasised drawing from nature, it dealt with analysis and comparison of form. So too did the Manual. Both
Figure 3.

A variety of illustrations from A Teacher's Manual of Drawing which might easily have come from an English art manual at the turn of the century.
suggested that the work should progress from drawing in outline with straight lines, to the use of curved lines, then to an appreciation of light and shade and to the use of colour. The *Manual* put greater emphasis on colour work than did the *Syllabus*, but it could be claimed that this omission had been corrected by the 1905 *Suggestions*. More than anything it was the clear logical progression in skill development that marked the *Manual* as being in the British tradition.

Opposed to the British tradition one might place the American tradition which looked rather to providing the teacher and the students with a little training in many art activities rather than a thorough grounding in a few. This is not the place for a detailed study of American art education, but elsewhere in Canada the American emphasis on self-expression rather than skills did have a strong influence. Ontario was an example of this where the 1916 Ontario Teachers' Manual *Art* provided a marked contrast to the B.C. *Manual*. In it the emphasis was on "illustrative drawing" and variety of approach, while the development of skills was coincidental. The Ontario manual was following a trend which had started in 1904 with that province's revised programme of studies. The manual itself dominated the art education curriculum in the elementary schools until 1937 and clearly showed the influence of Dewey and the "New Education".
The American influence was not restricted to Ontario by any means. An example of where it had an equally strong influence, but with very different results, was in New Brunswick. There the art programme was based upon the Augsburg Drawing Series. D.R. Augsburg was the Director of Drawing in the public schools of Oakland, California and by 1901 his text was in use in New Brunswick. It was also to be found in Nova Scotia. A "Canadian Series" was put out in 1906 and reprinted a number of times. While Augsburg specifically claimed that his books were not copy books, they really were. What may have made them different from copy books in Augsburg's eyes was that he suggested additional drawings that children might make. New Brunswick continued to rely on this turn-of-the-century series until 1933. At that time a "revised" version was put out by H.H. Hagerman of the Fredericton Normal School as the New Brunswick Drawing Course. The revision barely extended beyond the title page and was an example of blatant plagiarism. As a result New Brunswick art education in the public schools remained tied to older American notions that had been discarded long before in Ontario and elsewhere.

By the time that the Manual of Drawing and Design was published in 1924 the Vancouver Normal School was beginning what may well have been one of the most difficult periods for Weston and his staff colleagues. Staff had been "hoping for some years for an enrolment which the Normal School can comfortably
accommodate but each year sees our hopes deferred." The school continued to be overcrowded. In September 1924 there were 379 students beginning classes. It was the second highest enrolment seen and, as if that were not enough, the school had to endure a five day inspection before the year was even properly under way. The repercussions from that inspection were to cause considerable concern to the school.

The inspection resulted from the government decision to commission a survey of the school system. The survey, the first since the Department of Education had been set up in 1872, was conducted by J. Harold Putman and George Weir, brought in by the Minister of Education. The myriad tests that school inspectors had to give throughout the fall of 1924 gave the survey the semblance of scientific objectivity, but in the end Putman and Weir were "compelled to rely largely on our own judgement." It was therefore a very personal and sometimes idiosyncratic view of schooling in the province.

The survey is often seen as having been extremely influential in the development of public education in B.C. with the recommendations of the surveyors acting as catalysts for change. In actual fact the survey was less influential than some have maintained. The surveyors definitely made recommendations as though they were their own, but often these were suggestions that had been made many times by others. In
the case of the Normal School it can be made very clear that
Putman and Weir were more chroniclers of change rather than
agents of change. Their criticisms of shortcomings in the Normal
School programme most often resulted from conditions that the
school itself had been trying for years to alter. Such
criticism, which increased the Normal School's frustration with
its working conditions, was a factor in their very angry reaction
when the survey was published.

Harold Putman and George Weir submitted their report to
the Minister of Education on May 30, 1925, who released it to the
press and the public at the B.C. School Trustees Association
29
meeting in Victoria on October 13, 1925. The Survey of the
30
School System proved to be a mixture of enthusiasm and vitriol.
The commissioners gave an impression of self-confidence, indeed
arrogance, and were willing to criticize everything from major
concerns to reorganization of teachers in a single school in
31
order to economize on staff. Indicative of the tone were
criticisms inherent in their descriptions of some citizens who
submitted briefs. These they labelled as "ignorant" or
"self-interested" or "choleric and irresponsible critics whose
volubility in demanding alleged educational reform varies almost
directly as their ignorance."

Putman and Weir were extremely critical of both the
33
Normal Schools. This caused consternation among the staffs in
Victoria and Vancouver who first learned of the criticisms from the newspapers. Once they had received a copy of the survey, Bill Weston and his colleagues travelled over to Victoria to consult with the Victoria Normal School staff. They then all quickly complained to the minister.

It seems clear that they had several good grounds to complain of their treatment. The commissioners had criticised not only the institutions themselves but had also faulted the integrity and competence of the staffs. Putman and Weir declared that "approximately one quarter of the staff is lacking in the scholarship and professional training necessary for normal school work." After damning with faint praise they made a blistering attack on the teaching of handwriting. They assumed that the highly structured situation which pertained at the beginning of the first term continued for the whole year even after the organisation had been established. Having laid the blame on the Normal School for certain practices, they then made recommendations for improvement as though these were their own when the Normal School itself had been crying out for years for such changes. Among such complaints were the lack of Home Economics and Manual Training facilities, inadequate library facilities, the lack of staff to take Psychology and Educational History classes, the need for more teaching practice and rural school experience, the admittance of underqualified students. Putman and Weir ignored the Normal School's efforts to bring
about these changes and blamed the school.

At the time the commissioners paid their visit to the Vancouver Normal School the staff were concerned with establishing procedures and providing direction for a new entry of students in a building that was very overcrowded. Under such conditions it would be reasonable to expect explicit instruction with strong direction in a highly structured situation. Putman and Weir did in fact receive and, in time, report such an impression. They assumed this approach continued all year. This would be another cause for the Normal School to complain. They felt particularly bitter as, following the week-long visit to the School, the two men left and paid no further visits.

The immediate result of the staff's visit to the minister, the Hon. Dr. MacLean, was that Dr. MacLean made a strong statement in the Legislature saying that the criticism of the Normal School staffs "had been unduly severe." He went on to praise both the Normal Schools and their staffs. With his statement the minister seems to have defused what could have been an explosive situation.

Such high-placed public support must have given the staffs a feeling of confidence and perhaps security. Certainly there were no staff resignations which could be attributed to the surveyors' harsh criticism. Indeed, there were very few changes in staff in the future. The Minister's support may have also led
to the Vancouver Normal School finally getting the extra staff and facilities to expand their programme. He was indubitably responsible for the law being changed to make every classroom in the province available for teaching practice. Putman and Weir had clearly hoped for a complete restructuring of the Normal Schools. This did not happen. Instead the schools were ultimately able to gain the improvements they had themselves sought.

Apart from the great unease that the survey caused, it had little direct influence on Bill Weston. His art programme was not interfered with; he lost no colleagues as a result of it. Coincidentally there may have been some change in his teaching at about this time as he had the new text to use. However, as the text had arisen out of his work rather than being a new influence, it would have been a convenience more than anything.

One change, which has been incorrectly ascribed to the *Survey*, did affect Weston. This was an alteration in admission standards through the raising of both academic prerequisites and the minimum age of students. In fact this had been done at the instigation of the Normal Schools in January 1925 well before the *Survey* was submitted. While credit must be given to the Vancouver Normal School who had been pressing for the change for a number of years, their final success was as much a recognition that the supply of teachers had finally caught up with demand as
it was due to their insistence. The practical result was to end
the chronic overcrowding from which the Normal School had
suffered for so long.

While in some respects the Survey was merely typical of
the self-assessments then in favour with school systems
throughout the continent, it also showed that British Columbia
was growing up. It was less a frontier province and more a
product of modern civilisation. Nowhere was this attitude more
apparent than in the city of Vancouver. It was, by 1925, a
bustling, cosmopolitan, port city with skyscrapers, streetcars
and electric interurban trains. Ferries swept across the harbour
to connect the growing communities on the North Shore with the
city so that all could benefit from the excitements of twentieth
century urban life. The Survey of the School System came out in
the same year as the Second Narrows bridge opened to train and
car traffic, while downtown steam cranes were hoisting the steel
beams into position for a huge new Hudson's Bay department
store. If more proof were needed of Vancouver's urban
sophistication it could be found in the newspapers' almost
gleeful pursuit of urban crime stories. Newspaper reports on the
Survey itself were quickly and completely forced out by a
particularly exciting murder case which enjoyed all the trappings
of abduction, drugs and hints of sinister deviation among the
41 highest families in the city.
Another symptom of this drive to be seen as a modern city had been the B.C. Art League with its campaign for an art school. By the time the *Survey* was completed the campaign was drawing to a conclusion. In June 1925 the Vancouver School Board made the final decision to start one. By October of the same year the school had opened with temporary accommodation in the School Board offices. Among the most active campaigners had been Weston's friend and fellow author, Charles Scott. For Scott his campaigning had a double advantage: not only did Vancouver get the school, but Scott got the principalship of it.

When Scott moved over to the School of Decorative and Applied Arts, as the art school was known, his position as drawing supervisor was taken by the third author of the textbook, Spencer Judge. In art education the lines of promotion thus appeared to be quite rigid. This may have been so, but at the same time the art education world was a very small one and there would have been relatively few candidates for promotion. As we have seen, Kyle, Weston and Scott had all used the position of drawing supervisor as a rung on the promotion ladder. While Judge went no higher, Kyle, Weston and Scott did and each achieved his own pinnacle of influence on the provincial scene. Despite all three men being concerned with art education in some way they did not conflict and each was willing to lay claim only to his own kingdom.
Kyle was officially in charge of technical education for the province, but was in the right place to play a part in policy decisions. He had a special interest in the summer school for teachers, in which there was a strong art component, and, almost as a sideline within the Department of Education, he loaned out slides of art work. Quite often he gathered up his slide projector and bustled off himself around Vancouver Island to talk on art and show his slides.

At the School of Decorative and Applied Arts Scott set himself to create an empire in tertiary education "parallel in many ways to a university...devoted to the higher branches of Decorative and Applied Arts." He saw the school as providing an art education with "values as definitely commercial as they are aesthetic." Year after year he hammered home this point in his annual report to the Vancouver School Board. One might question whether it was the commercial or the aesthetic aspect of art which was most important to the students when Scott had hired such a freewheeling spirit as Fred Varley to teach them painting, but, whichever it was, the school was catering to a group whose educational needs were not being met elsewhere. When, in 1929, the Department of Education agreed that graduates of the four year programme at the art school could go on to take the Normal School course and would then receive an art teacher's certificate, Scott was careful to point out that this was not the major interest of the school. The art school was not encroaching
on the Normal School's usual clientele of elementary teachers. Any such art teachers would be trained to meet the special needs of the new four year high school course.

By and large Bill Weston was teaching students who had no particular interest in the fine arts. His concerns were to train them to teach art in elementary school and to raise their own aesthetic consciousness. Lacking the specialised interest of those at the art school, these students might well be antagonistic to the subject. So, in part his job was to convert them. With hundreds of students passing through his classroom each year he would influence many more than would Scott or Kyle, but it would be a much more general influence. Nevertheless, with more than half the new teachers in the province passing through the Vancouver Normal School, this was a considerable influence. A possible competitor for this position of influence might conceivably have been the art master at the Victoria Normal School, but, in fact, he never was.

From the opening of the Victoria school in 1915 until 1931 the art master there was Harry Dunnell. He had originally been brought out from England in 1900 by the Macdonald-Robertson movement to organise the Manual Training programme in B.C. Although he was an accomplished watercolourist, he never really considered himself an art teacher and taught a very conservative course. John Gough, his successor in 1931, had no art training
apart from what he had received when a student of Dunnell's some years earlier. He always thought of himself as a misplaced Social Studies teacher. In any case, since Victoria was the smaller of the two normal schools, even had there been a more aggressive art master there, the influence would have been limited.

So, while Kyle, Scott and Weston were all concerned with art education, they kept their spheres of influence separate. In some areas of education, among the coterie of school inspectors for example, there were strong group interactions, but that did not hold here. On the other hand the three men could work on occasion in each others' sphere without difficulty. In particular, Bill Weston, who was preeminent at the Normal School, worked happily for John Kyle at the summer school each year. During the regular school year he also taught evening and Saturday morning classes for Charles Scott. He could move from one sphere to another and play a different role in each.

This group independence extended beyond art education to other areas of art in British Columbia. The BCSFA operated quite independently of the B.C. Art League, although the same people might often be members of both - Bill Weston and Charles Scott providing examples of this. When the Vancouver art gallery finally came into being in 1931 it paid little heed to Canadian
art and artists, from B.C. or elsewhere. When the gallery grudgingly allowed local artists to display there occasionally, their works were relegated to the less desirable upper floor. Influenced by H.A. Stone, its chief benefactor and first president, the gallery seemed unwilling to concede that any local developments could be important.

If the art gallery thought that art in Vancouver was unimportant, local artists, and perhaps the art school in particular, felt that the gallery's emphasis on the traditions of British and other European art was irrelevant. At the same time the School of Decorative and Applied Arts itself might have been considered as an outpost of British influence, for most of its instructors were British-trained. Even Fred Varley, a member of the Group of Seven, that most quintessential of Canadian painting groups, was a Yorkshireman. As the art school established its reputation Scott looked exclusively to the British for his new staff. He hired Varley in 1926 and the same year he brought out Jock Macdonald from Glasgow to teach Design. The following year Scott's sister-in-law, Grace Melvin, came from Scotland for a visit, but stayed and joined the staff. Despite the rhetoric, it was British art ideas that were understood in British Columbia even when individuals were reacting against them. The province, with double the number of British immigrants to be found elsewhere in Canada, remained a place where the ideas of Weston could be understood.
Once the furor caused by the Putman and Weir *Survey* was over, the Normal School in Vancouver settled down again into its routines. The staff knew they had the support of the Minister of Education. They finally had an enrolment suited to the size of the building. In addition, during the next year or so, the staff was increased and the building was improved, allowing a greater range of courses to be offered. Except for those inevitable changes brought about by age, illness or marriage the staff did not change much, so that by 1940 a student could refer to them as "wise and benevolent old things" who had been there for many years. Putman and Weir had conceded that the Normal School staffs were underpaid. Their salaries never did improve in relation to other teachers, and so they weren't there for the money. The most likely reason they stayed so long was that they found their work satisfying. This was certainly so in Weston's case.

If the teachers found their work satisfying, did the students find the teachers satisfactory? The answer would seem to be that they generally did. In 1931 the "wise and benevolent old things" were reported by students as providing "the very essence of good teaching and good leadership." The sterile approach, which was condemned so roundly in the *Survey* that Putman and Weir themselves said their criticisms "may appear to constitute a sweeping indictment of the normal school faculties,"
wasn't the one that the students reported. The students felt that "in classrooms and out of doors we have met as one large family and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves." One student who was a member of that "family" in 1931 recalled the Normal School as being:

a pretty good place. . . . I can't remember any of [the teachers] being duds. Their knowledge of subject matter was excellent, which was probably why they were chosen. . . and it was teaching rather than lecturing.  

He came away from the Normal School feeling that he had accomplished something and that he was ready for his future.

It wasn't just this one young man who felt this. Student after student in yearbooks and reminiscences made similar positive statements, remembering their Normal School year warmly. Even allowing for the patina of charm that time seems to bring to past memories, the degree of enthusiasm with which ex-students remembered their Normal School experience indicates that the school met the needs of its clientele. It was not that the Normal School was reformed, but that the surveyors missed the essence of the school in their visit so early in the school year. Had they gone later they might have seen the special projects, such as that reported by the newspapers in March 1925, with the students being given "a free hand." They might too have gained a better understanding of the close relationship between staff and students that seemed to be built up quickly
during the year and the extra-curricular activities which played an important part in developing that relationship.

Between the Putman-Weir Survey and a student perceiving the Normal School staff as "wise and benevolent old things," there were fifteen years of relatively untroubled operation. These fifteen years included what is often considered the most severe financial and social upheaval of the twentieth century, the Great Depression. It is easy to assume that education must have suffered also, but in fact such an assumption would be largely erroneous. While individuals had difficulties and some schools, particularly in rural areas, had funding problems, the institution of education in the province suffered very little.

Education budgets were cut back and teachers accepted salary cuts, no doubt feeling virtuous for doing so. School Boards had to fight hard to justify their budgets. Although a casual glance at the statistics might suggest that education was in dire straits, in fact this was not so. Depression brought with it a dramatic price deflation, so fewer dollars were needed than before the depression. Applying the Department of Labour cost-of-living index to provincial education expenditures it can be seen that purchasing power on a per capita basis rose during the nineteen-twenties and continued to rise through the nineteen-thirties. This was so despite a growing student population (See Table I). The only year which did not fit the
general pattern of steadily improving education budgets was 1928 when there seemed to a surge in spending. A closer look at the budget for that year shows the sharply increased expenditure to have been due entirely to an exceptionally heavy capital outlay on new school buildings. Included in that capital budget was likely the cost of the new Home Economics room at the Vancouver Normal School.

As happened with the education budget generally, that for the Vancouver Normal School was reduced for the years 1932 to 1937 although, since the dollar increased in purchasing power, this did not really create a hardship for the school. Bill Weston's salary was reduced as well, but he was still better off than he was throughout the nineteen-twenties (See Table II, p. 215.) At the time of the cutbacks, however, he probably compared his current salary with the previous year's and hoped he would not have to do too much belt tightening. Only later would it have become apparent that he was not really worse off.

In considering figures such as salaries and budgets which have been converted using cost-of-living indices, some caution must be exercised. The index is designed to be most accurate when applied to the average consumer. It does not take into account all aspects of the economy and ignores factors that may be unique to specialised fields such as education. However, despite such difficulties, cost-of-living indices do indicate
Table I. Per Capita Costs of B.C. Education: 1921 - 1939.

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<td>45297</td>
<td>36471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
<td>47030</td>
<td>38361</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures taken from B.C. Department of Finance Annual Report and Department of Labour Cost-of-living Index.

Table II. Annual Budget for Vancouver Normal School and Annual Salary for W. P. Weston for the Years 1924 to 1940 given in Actual Dollars and in 1913 Dollars.
trends. A major change, up or down, in the index will certainly mean some change in that direction. In the cases of the Normal School budget and Weston's salary, the trends are consistent and cannot be dismissed.

There were additional indications that the institution of education was not suffering unduly during the economic downturn. Particularly one would have expected new programmes and developments to be deferred or cancelled if educational funding had been in truly dire straits. They weren't. As we shall see, there was a new text introduced for art education and the curriculum for all subjects was completely revised. In other areas of education the correspondence school was considerably expanded, the summer school for teachers was continued and great interest was shown in the modern developments of educational radio and film.

Those connected with the Normal School who suffered from the depression the most were probably the students themselves. In some cases they went to the Normal School because their parents could not afford to send them to university. Some had to delay their teacher training because they were needed to work in the family business. All saw the fees of the school rise considerably. But, whatever the problems, on graduation most of them would find teaching positions somewhere in the province. Local school boards often accepted the responsibility
of placing their own students when they returned home with their teacher qualifications, rather than hiring from outside. If the local school board was not hiring, or if the student felt very strongly that he or she did not want to return home, then there were always the more remote communities which needed teachers. Teachers in B.C. during the depression did not worry too much about getting a job, although they might worry about where it would be. In a time of high unemployment such confidence was valuable. It must surely have encouraged the positive attitudes that Normal School students displayed.

For Bill Weston the depression would be a matter of concern, but his teaching life did not deviate from its well-established path. The nineteen-twenties saw his daughters in their teenage years and he continued to enjoy their company. Bette became his frequent sailing companion. Together they would sometimes sail over to their camp on the Sechelt Peninsula while Doris would accompany her mother on the Union steamship. He enjoyed the races organised by the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club and sailing continued to be his favourite recreational outlet. He continued his sponsorship of the hiking club at the Normal School and would combine hiking expeditions with sketching.

As an artist the year 1929 was important for Bill Weston, perhaps as important as 1923 had been. In 1923 he felt that he had learned how he wished to portray the natural grandeur
of the province although he was still developing the painting techniques to do so. The paintings he made in 1929 show that those techniques were almost second nature to him. In the six intervening years he had kept only a few of his works so it is clear that he felt his art was still in transition, but Yacht Race from 1926 confirms what he had shown in 1923. Here was an artist with a bold conception of reality. The painting is unusual in that it includes human figures and is of human activity, but it is also very much a depiction of natural forces. The boats fly before the wind over a whitecapped sea, the curve of the sails echoing the sweep of the clouds. It is a compelling rendition showing Weston's strong sense of design and colour. It could never be thought of as in the "English style" of which Bill Weston was so critical, but it did suggest that thorough British training in design and colour theory which, of course, Weston had had.

Despite Weston's criticism of those artists who brought their English perceptions with them, there were occasions when he too could produce an "English" painting. From time to time, when he sent a painting back to a relative in England, he carefully painted in a style he felt that they would understand. A example of this is Skyscape - Cloud over Howe Sound which went, in 1925, as a wedding present to a niece in England. The soft sunlit cloud and the gentle green pasture have little in common with the rugged scenes he more usually portrayed. It was a duty painting
which one suspects was little seen in Vancouver.

The year 1929 was one of great painting activity for Bill Weston. In some part the motivation may have been his new summer camp. The old one at Granthams Landing had been given up in 1928 and a new property bought at Garrow Bay. Being just south of Horseshoe Bay, it was much easier to get to by road yet could still provide a challenging sail from Vancouver. From Garrow Bay Weston had a new view of Howe Sound and he set to work to paint it. Five major paintings resulted from that summer with the mountains and the sea providing the dominant theme. In contrast to these were two winter paintings of snowladen trees.

The two winter paintings were titled Snow Sentinels - Grouse Mountain and simply Hollyburn Mountain, but both had a very similar theme. They showed trees so laden down with snow that they bowed down as though tired with holding up so much weight. The trees were an image to which he would return a number of times and Hollyburn Mountain would be repainted as Winter Fantasy some eight years later. The inspiration for these winter paintings was twofold. Winter hikes with his Normal School students took him into the North Shore mountains where he made sketches, but he also went back to some photographs he had made in December 1914 of similar trees. In some respects these pictures seem to have little in common with his paintings of the more rugged coastal scenery, but in other respects they are as
much a depiction of B.C. Having seen how the snow transformed the
countryside, he wanted to show the change.

The forays into the mountains were not to continue for
much longer, however. In the early spring of 1931 Bill Weston
took his student hikers up Grouse Mountain. During the day he
fell and hurt his leg. The injury led to phlebitis and he was
laid up in bed for the best part of five months. When he was
first taken ill the doctors feared that he might never walk
properly again and he became deeply depressed. His bed was moved
into the dining room to make his care easier and his wife and
younger daughter, Doris, took over the nursing duties. Their
best efforts did little to ease his depression and it was a
colleague, John Ewing, who helped him to take a more positive
view of the future. The Weston family would always believe that
it was Ewing who was responsible for Weston's recovery because he
restored Weston's spirits. John Ewing, a former school principal
in North Vancouver, joined the staff at the Normal School to
teach psychology in 1929. He and Bill Weston became friendly.
When Bill took sick Ewing realised his depressed condition, so
visited him daily and encouraged him not to lose heart. Perhaps
Ewing brought his talents in psychology to bear. At any rate
Weston began to feel that he would beat the doctors' troubling
prognosis.

Among other suggestions, Ewing encouraged Weston to
start planning his art courses for the following school year. As he began to feel better Weston did indeed do this by preparing some new charts that he could use in demonstrating various techniques. While he was in course of this work a representative from Thomas Nelson and Sons, publishers of the Manual of Drawing and Design in 1924, came to see him. Now the Department of Education was interested in producing an updated version of the book. Weston was enthusiastic about the project but Charles Scott was not, feeling that his responsibilities as principal of the School of Decorative and Applied Arts took up all his time. So the publishers, promising to undertake the new text themselves so long as the Department made a commitment to buy it, sent their representative to Bill Weston. He was very complimentary about the work that Weston was preparing for his Fall classes and suggested that it would fit well into the book. He then asked Weston to do the book without Scott. Weston agreed but stipulated that if Scott was not involved then he would do it alone. He was not willing to work with Spencer Judge after the difficulties with Judge's work on the previous book. Scott was furious. He accused Weston of having gone behind his back in order to get the assignment and he felt it was unfair of Weston not to work with Judge. In fact he went further, accusing Weston of having approached Nelson and Sons in the first place with the intention of getting the job for himself. The accusations were unfounded, but they effectively ended what had been a close friendship.
Weston always felt that it had been his new ideas for his school work that led Nelson's representative to ask him to write the book. If he had not been ill, he would not have had time for them; thus something positive came out of an otherwise bad period.

Another positive result of the illness was that his friendship with John Ewing became stronger. They remained close friends for the rest of Ewing's life.

The illness left Weston with another legacy. While he made an almost complete recovery, he was left with a weak leg. As a result he could no longer make long hikes into the mountains. This meant he sometimes had to take a more distant view of the scenes he wished to paint than he might have done previously. In part he overcame what he saw as a disadvantage by taking field glasses with him on his painting expeditions, but it was not quite the same as walking up the mountains. In later years some of his critics claimed that his use of field glasses led to inferior paintings, but Weston never felt that his work was unduly hampered.

All in all it might be claimed that his 1931 illness was another turning point in his life. One longstanding friendship was ended, but another was cemented. His approach to his painting may have been altered. His role as a writer was enhanced. His family felt that in addition he came out of his
illness a much more self-confident man. "Dad was always a very quiet man," said his daughter, Doris. "After his illness he talked much more and was more confident in his opinions."

He was not able to teach at the 1931 summer school in Victoria and returned to the Normal School only in September. However, he was able to work on the book during the summer. He adapted some of his new material intended for school and prepared other new illustrations. He wrote the text and his daughter, Bette, typed it for him. He did not pretend that the book was totally new in concept but "he said [the first edition] wasn't finished and he had to finish it off."

Even though the text was almost completely rewritten, it was not very new or radical. Memory drawing was stressed much more than in the 1924 text, more freedom in planning the year's work was given to the teacher, but Weston's basic approach had not changed. His own illustrations from the earlier text he retained. The book remained a product of Weston's British training. While again the debt to Owen Jones was acknowledged, now Weston went further and quoted Jones extensively. In fact he gave Jones' "Propositions" 8 through 13 almost verbatim, changing only their order. He gave no reason for his choice and there was no hint that there were any other "propositions" or that these were Jones' own words. He wrote only that they were "recognized as fundamental principles of Design in the standard work of Owen
There were other indications too that the book looked back to Weston's old British training rather than forward. He listed two books by Lewis F. Day in his Bibliography and then copied exactly some designs from an 1898 book of Day's, *The Anatomy of Pattern*, that was not even in the Bibliography.

Before accusing Weston of plagiarism it should be understood that it was a common British practice to reproduce what were thought of as traditional or "historic" designs without acknowledgement, while Jones' was indeed "the standard work." More than anything, this lack of acknowledgement tied Weston's thinking to the old British ideas. Although today we might frown on Weston's practice, it is still a much more trivial matter than the case of the New Brunswick text books referred to earlier.

Also tying Weston's thinking to the old British ideas were the age and place of publication of his source books and of those in the Bibliography. The Bibliography, in fact, was almost identical to that in the 1924 text with only one title being dropped and two added. Of the twenty-seven titles listed, most had probably been published before the First World War and at least nine of them are so dated. However, as it was often the practice not to show the publication date in school texts, it is not possible to be more precise. Only five of the texts had been published in North America. This lack of change in the Bibliography also reinforces Weston's statement that the new text
was finishing off a job started with the first text, rather than being a completely new work or one with new insights.

Despite his illness he produced two major paintings in 1931, Peaks of Silence and Scrub Pines. One interesting point is that Peaks of Silence provides a close view of the mountaintops seen more distantly in Canada's Western Ramparts and even more distantly in the 1929 painting, The Sentinel. It was perhaps the first result of Weston's need to rely on field glasses.

As Weston, recovering from his illness, was painting and writing, Vancouver and the province were feeling the effects of the depression. The summer was long and hot, the unemployed continued to pour into the city and, in the fall, relief camps were set up for the first time. Yet all of this passed Weston by. He cannot have been unaware of the economic conditions and he was doubtless concerned by them, but in large part they were irrelevant to him. In 1931 Weston's depression was a personal one and would be lifted by his recovery.

The Great Depression would never prostrate his spirits. There would be threats of vast government cutbacks in spending, such as the Kidd Report, but they would remain only threats. They could have brought the educational machine to a shuddering halt, but, as we have seen, any actual cutbacks were offset by price deflation. For Weston they would mean little.
NOTES

1. Provincial Normal School Annual, Vancouver, 1931, p. 12. In an editorial the editor is explaining why students are supportive of the Normal School.


4. Ibid.


6. Ibid., and W.P. Weston, Dallas Tapes.


9. A student's copy book for art usually had drawings of common objects, both natural and manmade, with a space beside each picture in which the student could copy the illustration.


12. For Scott's views on memory drawing see his first report as Drawing Supervisor. ARVSB, 1914, p. 45.


16. For a fuller discussion of the development of American methods in art see Frederick M. Logan, Growth of Art in American


18. The term 'illustrative drawing' was used throughout. An idea of its pervasiveness can be seen in the course of study. Ibid., pp. 1-15.


20. D.R. Augsburg, Augsburg Drawing (Boston: Educational Publishing Company, 1901). The Canadian series was distributed by A. and W. MacKinlay, Ltd., Halifax, and appears to have been identical to the U.S. edition.

21. Ibid., inside front cover.

22. H.H. Hagerman, New Brunswick Drawing Course Graded Practice Books (Educational Department of New Brunswick, 1933).


24. Ibid.


26. Fifteen out of the nineteen inspectors commented on the mass of tests and on the length of time required to give them. ARPS, 1925: Putman and Weir, Survey, p. VI.


28. Jean Mann, "G.M. Weir and H.B. King: Progressive Education or Education for the Progressive State?", J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones, Eds., Schooling and Society in Twentieth Century British Columbia (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1980), pp.91-118, also makes the point that suggestions in the survey were not original with the authors. She suggests further that it was an
essentially conservative document.


32. Ibid., p. 5.

33. Vancouver Province, October 14, 1925, p. 30.


37. It is entirely possible that the annoyance of the Normal Schools' staffs was not merely the result of the criticisms in the published Survey. In at least one other case Putman and Weir made further criticisms "more directly than seemed in good taste in our report" by means of a private letter. This was to the Vancouver School Board and constituted a slashing attack on the Municipal Inspector. No similar letters to the Normal Schools have been found, but, if such were sent, they were probably just as direct and derogatory. (See Vancouver School Board "Minutes", November 16, 1925.)

38. Vancouver Province, November 13, 1925, p. 18.

39. Among others, Johnson, History of Public Education in B.C., p. 213, ascribes the change to Putman and Weir.

40. Victorian Colonist, January 24, 1925, p. 4.

41. The incident was the murder of Janet Smith, a Scottish maidservant in a Shaughnessy mansion. The case remains unsolved to this day and occasionally still "makes the papers."

42. Letia Richardson is presently engaged on a study of the Vancouver Art School in which the B.C. Art League's campaign is detailed. "The Social History of the Vancouver School of Art,"

44. Charles Scott was initially appointed as Headmaster with Thornton Sharp as Director, but by January 1926 Scott was both Principal and Director and the term "headmaster" had been dropped.


47. ARVSB, 1930, p. 117.

48. Putman and Weir reported that 78% of all B.C. teachers trained in the province (Survey, pp. 182-4). Two out of three of these went to the Vancouver Normal School.

49. For a discussion of the Macdonald-Robertson movement see N. Sutherland, Children in English-Canadian Society, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 182-201.


51. Ibid.


53. W.P. Weston, Dallas tapes.

54. Ironically, Charles Scott had been on the committee choosing the initial art gallery collection. His recommendations to include modern Canadian art had been ignored.

55. William G. Black and N. Vivian Jones joined the staff in September 1926. In 1929 a Home Economics room was opened under the direction of Margaret Maynard.


60. *Annual*, 1931, loc. cit.


62. For example: Marjorie Jack (1933-4), Nina Joyce (1933-4), Nita Burgess (1935-6), Violet Sketchley (1938-9), Joan Thompson (1941-2).


64. See, for example, Minutes of Mission School Board for December 9, 1931, April 15, 1932, June 1, 1932. The Board first accepted the teachers' "donation" of 4% of salary, then later reduced salaries unilaterally, but agreed to continue all staff.


66. Interview with W. Gilmour Clark, October 1982.


68. Ibid.

69. Interview with Nita Burgess, May 1983: Interview with Nina Joyce, January 1983. Teacher turnover remained high in rural areas. This in itself suggests jobs were not too hard to come by.

70. The five Garrow Bay paintings were *The Sentinel*, *Evening*, *Copper Cove*, *Copper Cove*, *Howe Sound*, and *Garrow Bay*.


73. Interview with Elmore Ozard, October 1983.


77. See Jean Mann, "G.M. Weir and H.B. King, loc.sit, pp.97-8, for a concise summary of the Kidd Report's main recommendations.

78. Political threats can be as common as political promises. One example of a serious threat would have been the Kidd Report which, if implemented, would have led to a huge cutback in government spending. Ibid., pp.446-8.
CHAPTER EIGHT

"Art...man's supreme retort to the ugliness of life": a mature influence.

After his recovery from the leg injury and its subsequent complications, Bill Weston's life as an artist provided the most dramatic contrast through the nineteen-thirties. Textbook writing and curriculum development were also irregular, yet important features. Summer school provided a small repeating highlight. Sailing was less important than formerly, but was always there. The Normal School provided a smooth background of security and continuity, while his family life fitted in with the rest and unobtrusively held all together.

As with the earlier text, Weston's concentrated writing effort was followed by a lengthy pause before the book actually appeared in late 1933. Weston's first opportunity to expound on it was at the Victoria summer school in July 1934. Following an interview with him, the Victoria Colonist claimed that the book met "the need for some radical change in the methods of teaching drawing to children" and was a product of "the progressive attitude of the Provincial Department of Education."
In fact, there is no evidence that the Department of Education directly influenced the book's content. It clearly reiterated Weston's long-held beliefs on art education, providing a backward rather than a forward look. However, this was not the author's intention, nor was it the public perception. The Victoria Colonist gave the headline, "Drawing Methods of Today Radical Change from Past," to its interview with Weston about the new book and his introduction of it at the summer school for teachers. "One need only scan the pages...to realise the reasonableness of Mr. Weston's contention," enthused the reporter and related Weston's work to the findings of "child psychology" and the needs of the "modern teacher." "The manual is a fascinating exposition of Mr. Weston's conviction," the reporter said, and quoted Weston on his objectives.

Little children use their drawing as a language. The aim of the teacher, therefore, should be to make the forms as simple as possible. The child wants symbols, and the teacher should be able to give these for any given object -- a bird, a house, ships, trees, people, and all the objects of Nature. . . .The simpler and the more definite the form presented, the better will be the mental picture of the pupil.4

Weston structured his summer course with this aim firmly in mind:

Teachers in the Summer School, therefore, are occupying part of their time with the "symbols" of objects, first in outline, then in two-dimensional mass drawings, in three-dimensional drawings, and, finally in colour.5

This was a repetition of the approach taken in the 1924 text. A
similar progression of skill development had been suggested in the British 1901 Syllabus, except that the use of colour had not been discussed there.

The programme outlined in the new text was definitely one of the orderly development of skills. Weston's presentation of that programme was greeted by his students "with enthusiasm" according to the newspaper account. At the same summer school, however, these students also "much enjoyed" the guest lectures by Marion Richardson. Considered an innovator in British art education, Miss Richardson had been brought out on a lecture tour financed by the Carnegie Foundation. She believed that "[The adult] is overimpressed by skills. He fails to realize that the real purpose of Art is to express emotion." Her ideas were far removed from those of Weston. It is interesting that she was making such comments at the very same time that Weston was introducing his "new" ideas. There was a contrast there to be questioned, but in their enthusiasm for both, none of the students seemed to notice.

Marion Richardson's visit to Victoria pointed up the extent to which British art education in the schools sometimes deviated from British Columbia practice. She herself believed that after her talks the listeners would "given permission, . . .gladly abandon the formal syllabus of work which hitherto had guided them." However, she was perhaps overly enthusiastic in
her opinion. Even in Britain, where she was influential, she did not represent a majority view. The British adherence to public examination in art for secondary students tended to discourage experimentation in teaching methods and Richardson was sometimes disparaged as representing the "slosh" school of art.

Neither was her own assessment of her lectures always that of her hosts. In Edmonton, where she lectured before coming to B.C., the Dean of Arts and Science praised her as a speaker but thought "the gospel she preaches is not acceptable by any means to all before whom she speaks." In Victoria Bill Weston did not find any great surprises in the methods she advocated, writing, "Her point of view is not new, of course, and we try to follow similar methods in our primary grades." Although they had "some very interesting talks," they did not always agree, so, after taking her to visit Emily Carr, "we parted company." For her part, Richardson feared that "B.C.'s very [art education] programme is likely to hinder rather than help."

Richardson and Weston did have at least one common trait. It had nothing to do with art or art education, but was probably a key factor in the acceptance of their views on art education. They were both somewhat charismatic figures with the ability to impart to others their own enthusiasm for their beliefs. "We thought he was just it," enthused one student about Weston and her adulation echoed the comments of his students.
throughout many years. Richardson was perceived as "an unusually good speaker. . . and sets up an excellent current of sympathy between herself and her audience." One can but speculate as to the relative importance of the ideas and the personalities of zealots such as Weston and Richardson in promulgating their viewpoints. Certainly their ability to provide an emotional influence would explain the enthusiasm of one rather inexperienced group for two differing sets of ideas.

Weston's ability to excite his students about art teaching in the schools must also have been an important element in his success as a teacher. It would explain too why he was able to present a relatively unchanging programme of instruction over such a long period of time. It was as much his personality as the content of his programme that made him a success within the Normal School.

However, his charisma as a teacher does not supply sufficient reason for the lack of change in his programme. The nature of his clientele provides another. Each year he had a completely new set of students. As these students were usually quite unsophisticated about art, almost any programme would be new to them. They found Weston's classes "quite exciting because it was something I hadn't seen much of before." He encouraged this newly awakened interest and, as a fellow teacher put it:

There was almost a reverence, a feeling about the inspiration he gave. He seemed to be able in his
teaching to find some facet. . .where they had some latent ability.\textsuperscript{18}

Furthermore, his encouragement of this "latent ability" gave the student the opportunity to enjoy what he, or more often she, felt was a creative success, but within the limits of abilities. Weston challenged students to be "as advanced as you like; but. . .not beyond your knowledge or strength."

Perhaps the most important reason why his programme changed so little is tied up with the very nature of reform. Once the desired changes have been brought about, the reformer inevitably becomes a conservative who protects the results of those changes as long as he believes in them. On his retirement in 1946, Weston told his successor that his ideas had outlived their usefulness. In the nineteen-thirties, however, there was no hint of any such concern.

Yet another reason why he was so successful at the Normal School was that he became one of the most well-known western artists of the interwar years. His students thought of him not only as a teacher, but also as an artist. He would usually have one of his larger canvases displayed in the classroom. Such a visual reminder was not really necessary, but students were impressed. His reputation gave him additional stature.

From his arrival in B.C. Weston had been a regular
exhibitor at the art shows of the BCSFA. In 1931 he became that association's president, holding the position continuously for eight years. He finally gave it up because he felt it was unhealthy for an organisation to have an unchanging executive. As we shall see, he was among the first western artists to be exhibited regularly in Toronto and Montreal.

It was an unfortunate fact of life, and one about which B.C. artists complained constantly, that to be thought of as an important Canadian artist one must be shown in the east. Yet the Ontario and Quebec artistic establishment had little interest in the west. By the late nineteen-twenties the discontent in western Canadian art circles had reached fever pitch. In 1930 the National Gallery in Ottawa sent out its assistant director, H.O. McCurry, on a fence-mending mission. He carried promises of reform and an invitation to western artists to take part in an all-Canada show at the National Gallery. Of course this did not instantly destroy that eastern arrogance which accepted eastern artists as the only important innovators, but it did lead to some improvement. Weston was among those who took immediate advantage of the situation.

In 1930 Weston showed paintings and drawings at four public exhibitions in Toronto, Montreal and Murray Bay, Quebec. The following year his work was displayed at the National Gallery in Ottawa, the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (RCA) in Montreal.
and at the Art Association of Montreal exhibition. For the next twenty years he exhibited regularly in Ontario and Quebec. He was accepted as a major western Canadian painter. In 1931 the National Gallery bought his "very interesting picture", *Canada's Western Ramparts*, for its permanent collection, and in 1932 his drawing, *The Summit*.

In 1933 Lawren Harris wrote to Weston on behalf of Hart House, University of Toronto, asking to buy *Cheam*. Harris claimed that Hart House had "the best permanent collection of Canadian pictures, outside of the National Gallery." He added the inducement that "every one of us here [in Toronto] is represented in the collection and also a number of Montreal artists." As funds were limited he also mentioned that "the artists have, in every case, let their pictures go for the amount of the available fund." Weston duly sold his picture for $250.00.

The concern of Hart House to own a painting of Weston's had doubtless been increased by a most significant event in Bill Weston's artistic life. In 1933 the Group of Seven was reconstituted as the "Canadian Group of Painters." The change recognized the developments that had taken place in Canadian art since the Group of Seven had been founded. The charter of the Canadian Group of Painters stated its purpose as being:

> to promote closer co-operation among the artists of Canada who have for a period of years expressed a kinship in their interpretation of the Canadian
Weston was invited to become a charter member and accepted the invitation with satisfaction. This new Group went a little way towards lessening the eastern dominance of Canadian art. However, it did not correct the matter by any means. As no proxy voting was allowed and annual meetings were held in Toronto, continued eastern control was assured. Western artists could participate on eastern terms.

Somewhat ironically the first showing by this new Canadian association was not in Canada but in the United States. Under the auspices of the famous soupmakers, H.J. Heinz Company, the Canadian Group of Painters displayed their work in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Twenty-nine Canadian painters showed sixty-one pictures. "Their work is strongly redolent of the Canadian soil and has a distinctively national flavor," said the catalogue writer. Two of these works were Weston's. At the end of the summer the show was brought to Toronto. The Canadian Group of Painters would never achieve the prominence of the Group of Seven, but it undoubtedly gave status. Its members were accepted as being at the forefront of Canadian art.

Weston sent two pictures to Atlantic City, Peaks of Silence and Finis. They were displayed flanking a Lawren Harris canvas, Pic Island. The three paintings formed a compatible grouping. If there was a visual empathy between Weston's and
Harris's work, there was a certain empathy between the artists also. Some years earlier Harris had written to Weston expressing an interest in promoting his work in the east, on the assumption that he was a young man who would benefit from such patronage. When Harris later met Weston and discovered that the proposed protege was six years his senior, his interest waned. Weston was amused by the incident. He liked Harris although he thought his constant chatter about theosophism tedious. Some eastern critics have suggested that Weston's work was strongly influenced by Harris. Weston himself denied this. Undoubtedly any artist is likely to be influenced to some extent by his contemporaries, but there are other telling reasons for apparent similarities in style. It seems much more likely that resemblances in the work of artists such as Weston and Harris were more the result of similar European training and the new attempt to interpret the Canadian scene.

**Peaks of Silence** Weston had shown a number of times previously in Montreal, Ottawa and Vancouver, but Finis he had shown only in Vancouver in 1932. It was a powerful study of gnarled tree roots cast up on a rocky beach in Howe Sound. The tortured and twisted roots dominated the canvas and contrasted both with the sharp angularity of the rocks of the shore and the smoother forms of the distant mountains. It was very much a British Columbia scene. At the same time it was a very controlled and formal design, precise in both form and colour.
In this respect it had much in common with Harris's work, but the two artists' creations could never be confused.

Bill Weston was not alone among B.C. artists in being a charter member of the Canadian Group of Painters. Varley, of course, had been a member of the Group of Seven and so was one of the instigators of the new group. Emily Carr, Charles Scott and Jock McDonald were also members from the beginning. While their early membership was indicative of their standing within the Canadian artistic community, it did not mean that their work was necessarily admired by the community at large. For many they were the representatives of the "wave of modernism" that, a year or two earlier, one Vancouver critic had called "an extraordinary phenomenon." He complained that it resulted in "a wilful obscurity" and was glad to see that some other artists were "still sticking to their good old style."

If membership in the Canadian Group of Painters did not bring instant approval for Weston outside of art circles, his election to another group, three years later, did. In 1936 he was elected as an Associate member of the Royal Canadian Academy. He was the first British Columbian to be brought into the association and his membership in such an august and respectable organisation brought praise from both artist and non-artist. A congratulatory letter from the Director of the National Gallery was quickly followed by another from the Superintendent of
After offering his congratulations and noting that there was only one other associate member "west of Ontario" the Superintendent, S.J. Willis, went on:

The Minister, I am sure, will be greatly pleased to hear of the honour that has been conferred upon a member of the Normal School staff. I feel that the distinction has been most worthily bestowed.

The minister undoubtedly was pleased for the following week he wrote himself to congratulate Weston. "I guess the Ministry finally thought I was alright," commented Weston later.

When Weston's life during this period is looked at in summary it can be appreciated that this official approval was the culmination of several eventful years. Just as he began to see his work shown and appreciated in eastern Canada, he suffered the leg injury which led to the only really serious and protracted illness of his life. The illness coincided with the start of his eight years as president of the BCSFA. While still unwell he began to rewrite the art text and this was finally published not long after he joined the Canadian Group of Painters. Coincidentally with the return of his health came recognition of his importance as an artist both locally and nationally. His new text enhanced his position as an art educator and enabled him to influence more directly the provincial curriculum. The educational hierarchy began to appreciate him as an artist and not only as a teacher.
His position as one of the most prominent artists in Vancouver may have been made more secure because, during this time, three of the other well-known local artists became distracted by a bitter conflict. At the Art School Frederick Varley and Jock McDonald lost patience with Charles Scott over his hiring practices. The dispute erupted over what they perceived as unfair preferential treatment of his sister-in-law, Grace Melvin. In consequence of this McDonald and Varley resigned in 1933 and set up a competing school, the B.C. College of Arts. "A great pity as it is likely to wreck both schools," wrote Weston. Instead the B.C. College of Arts failed within two years while the Art School prospered. Varley soon went back to Ontario and McDonald slowly faded from the local scene.

If the appearance of A Teachers' Manual of Drawing late in 1933 gave Weston some direct influence on the art curriculum in provincial schools, his influence was much enhanced a year or two later. In 1934 the Department of Education, now with Dr. George M. Weir as its minister, decided that the curricula for the public schools should be completely rewritten. Weston played a major role in the revision of the art curricula. Weir had pressed for curriculum revision in his first speech as Minister in March 1934. However, whatever the reasons given for making this review, B.C. was doing no more than were most of the other provinces. The process had started in Saskatchewan in 1929 and that province had been reacting to the stimulus of the British
Hadow Report. Saskatchewan's lead had been followed by Nova Scotia and Alberta before B.C. began its revision, while Manitoba and Ontario were not far behind. As the editor of The B.C. Teacher commented:

There is probably no place between the Pacific and the Atlantic where a man could throw up a stone without danger of its falling upon the head of somebody engaged in rewriting a Programme of Studies. Bill Weston's was one of the heads on which this imaginary missile might have landed.

The names of those on the general curriculum revision committee were announced in The B.C. Teacher in June 1935 although the members had actually been chosen some months earlier. Bill Weston was the sole appointee to the committee for the revision of the elementary art curriculum and was appointed chairman of the committee for secondary art. The curriculum revision committees were instructed to produce a new Programme of Studies for elementary schools by September 1936 and for secondary schools by the following year.

The Minister of Education, Dr. G.M. Weir, took a close personal interest in the revision. He gave the committees specific instructions as to how they should proceed and to which educational theorists they should give heed. He drew particular attention to the 1925 Survey of the School System which he and Harold Putman had written and to the chapters with which the
committees should be familiar. Well-known as a Progressive, the
Minister left no doubts as to what he wanted. During the
preparation of the revision he drew together in Vancouver various
of the committees in order to reiterate his expectations. He
spoke more of the importance of knowledge and of ways of learning
than of specific classroom subjects. Three subjects, however, he
did speak of.

Dr. Weir gave once again his credo as to the basic
importance of Art, Music, Physical Education. . . .Art
he described as man's supreme retort to the ugliness of
life.50

To Bill Weston was left the task of suggesting just how that
retort might be worded.

Somewhat similar sentiments as to the importance of art
and music had been expressed in the Survey of the School System,
although then the third subject had been literature rather than
physical education. At that time Weir and Putman had claimed:

art and music with literature. . .have the most direct
bearing on the leisure part of man's life. It is of
supreme importance how man spends this leisure time.51

In typical fashion they had followed up the admonition with a
condemnation of Canadian taste. They had gone on to advocate the
teaching of art to meet the needs of industry also. With this
argument they had echoed British sentiments that had been current
nearly a century earlier. Now in 1936 Dr. Weir seemed to be
expressing a more Progressive viewpoint.

When the Programmes of Study were finally in place the Minister wrote to Weston congratulating him on "the splendid contribution you have made and are making to educational progress in British Columbia." Perhaps the Minister wrote similar letters to the chairmen of other curricula revision committees. In a way, though, this letter did put the stamp of ministerial approval on Weston as an educator as, in the same way, Weir's letter of the previous November had represented approval of Weston as an artist. The Minister's opinion of the curriculum revision was that it represented "the outstanding educational achievement of the school men of British Columbia." Calling teachers "the sentinels and pathfinders of the new Social Order," Weir stated, "Health is the first objective of education."

If Health was the first objective, it was, however, not the main objective. "Character," stated the new elementary Programme of Studies, "may be said to be the main objective of education." This was certainly not a new idea; Herbert Spencer had said the same thing eighty-four years previously. "Education has for its object the formation of character," he wrote in Social Statics. Nevertheless, such an approach was indisputably seen to be Progressive and up-to-date, in line with the Minister's wishes.
Similarly the elementary art curriculum was couched in Progressive terms. It was no longer called Drawing, but Graphic Arts: Art Appreciation. At first glance it seemed to represent a significant change in approach. There was a more extensive bibliography than in the old Programme of Studies and a section on art appreciation had been added. The layout of the guide had been altered with the work presented across five columns headed respectively: Specific Aims or Objectives; Subject-matter, Activities or Projects; Materials; Method; Desirable Attainments. Some of the activities previously included under the heading Drawing were now in a separate section titled Practical Arts. Here, in accordance with Progressive thinking, there were suggestions of how art could be coordinated with Social Studies, but in the primary grades only. It was considered to be "impracticable if not impossible" in the intermediate grades. The section on Practical Arts also included activities that were considered manual arts, so the new guide did not allow an exact comparison with the old. However, a careful comparison, as far as was possible, indicated few substantial differences and Weston's Teachers' Manual of Drawing continued to be the recommended text. In fact, despite the new bibliography, it was the only text referred to for the different art activities - and it was referred to constantly. Despite the new Progressive rhetoric, the supposedly new curriculum was largely a continuation of the older ideas.
The art appreciation section was innovative for the elementary school insofar as the curriculum now made explicit what had previously been implicit. The avowed aim of art appreciation was "to cultivate the feeling for order and beauty in the creations of Nature and Man." Such terminology was more the language of the nineteenth century than that of the twentieth and yet again suggested Weston's beliefs and the older impetus for the programme. To find corroboration of this suggestion one had only to look at the suggested list of pictures. They were mainly old masters and a quarter of them were by English artists. Only one was identified as being by a Canadian and no twentieth century work was included.

While in fact the curriculum was largely a new presentation of the old, it was accepted as new at the time. To give it its due, it did not seem so flagrantly old-fashioned when considered in context with the rest of the Programme of Studies. Also it was meant to be interpreted while the reader kept in mind the section headed "Aims and Philosophy of Education in British Columbia." In good Progressive fashion this stated unequivocally that schools were "to develop citizens, or subjects, according to the prevailing or dominating ideals of the state" for the joint aims of "social stability" and "social progress." For the individual, schooling was "to aid him in his own self-growth or self-realization" which required "the
development of critical thinking, of openmindedness and freedom from prejudice, unimpeded by unregulated emotion."

The aims of the new curriculum were not unique to British Columbia. As Sandiford pointed out in 1938 similar aims were common to the school curriculum revisions being made across the country. Such sentiments he saw as examples of an increasing American influence on Canadian curricula, despite the efforts of some provinces to ascribe the influence to the British Hadow reports. Tomkins has recently supported Sandiford's early opinion by noting that the Hadow reports themselves had in fact drawn upon American Progressive notions. However, it was "characteristic political sagacity" to point to British rather than American influence. Interestingly, Sandiford took heart that Canadian conservatism would "prevent education from becoming as sloppy as that found in some schools of the United States."

When the new elementary curriculum went into force in September 1936, a foreword made it clear that it was expected to need revision and criticisms were "urgently solicited." In actual fact it survived without radical revision and had not even been amended eleven years later. One reviewer in The B.C. Teacher enthused, "I am a convert! A new spirit is abroad in the educational world of British Columbia; a new purpose and a new outlook." Far less enthusiastically, the editor of the magazine
Indubitably the finger marks of hurry are on the books. . . . There are thoughtful teachers who question the infallibility of the Committee's Confession of Faith in the matter of educational aims and philosophy.\textsuperscript{72}

However, he went on to praise the time and effort expended and the recognition that the Programme was "an outline of suggested activities rather than a table of prescribed methods and factual subject matter." Bill Weston's own later opinion was: "The new curriculum? I think it went as a bit of a fizzle." In 1985 Tomkins said much the same thing in more academic language as part of his careful analysis of the Progressive movement:

\begin{quote}
The rhetoric and reality of change were far apart. . . . The new interwar educational establishment resisted powerful external and other forces, and thereby preserved the traditional academic values of the school.\textsuperscript{75}
\end{quote}

The secondary art curriculum appeared a year later than the elementary one. It was less obviously a result of Weston's many years of teaching, being the product of a committee that included art teachers from six Vancouver schools and one in Victoria, plus the director of the Vancouver Art School and the Vancouver Drawing Supervisor. Thus it formally brought together Charles Scott, Spencer Judge and Bill Weston for the first time since the 1924 art text. The reunion showed in the continuation of the older British ways. However, with art being an optional non-matriculation subject in the high schools, the secondary curriculum was relatively less important than that in the elementary schools. As Charles Scott pointed out some time later
when commenting on this curriculum: "There appears little hope of advancing art education in the province until the subject is given due credit in the high schools." The relevance of the secondary curriculum revision in Weston's life was as a symbol that the rift with Scott and Judge had been healed.

The year following the implementation of the new secondary curriculum saw Bill Weston teaching at the Summer School for Teachers in Victoria for the last time. He had first taught there twenty-two summers before and in between he had missed only two sessions. No other teacher came close to that record. The summer school gave him a relaxed setting in which to expand on his views to practising teachers. Well-remembered were the regular sketching trips on which he took his students. Weston would take his own sketchbook and an umbrella to shade him from the sun. The umbrella, always white so as not to upset the colour values, became something of a trademark for which Weston was remembered in these summers. Another regular feature for his art students during the nineteen-thirties was tea with Emily Carr. Each year he would take them to her studio and over tea they would view her latest paintings. Weston always maintained his friendship with Carr. He could perhaps have claimed credit for a small part in her success as a writer. When, in 1934, she expressed to him her frustrations with writing, he persuaded her to take a course in writing at the teachers' summer school and he himself drove her to and from classes.
During this last summer in Victoria, Weston gave a series of seven lectures on art appreciation to the general student body as he had in some previous years. These were a great success. He spoke of art in modern commercial design, of sculpture, of decorative stone age art. He discussed composition and he gave a history of Canadian art. It was a wide-ranging discussion but it always came back to Weston's central belief that "the first thing they must study was Nature." This was the message he had been giving consistently and conscientiously to teachers in B.C. for nearly thirty years. While it was the last time he carried it to the Summer School, it was not that his overall influence elsewhere was diminishing.

By the late nineteen-thirties Weston was being described as "one of Vancouver's most prominent artists" and his words carried the weight of this success. His friends attested that he never sought fame, but there is little doubt that he achieved it locally and to some extent nationally. After his election to the Royal Canadian Academy his paintings were exhibited even more widely. In May 1937 his Castaways was selected for the Artists of the British Empire Overseas Exhibition in London, held as part of the Coronation celebrations at the Royal Institute Galleries. The following year the National Gallery sent his Canada's Western Ramparts to the Tate Gallery in London for an exhibition titled "A Century of Canadian Art."
1939 the National Gallery chose *Castaways* as one of the Canadian paintings, and the only B.C. painting, to be shown at the World's Fair in New York. At the same time as he was getting this wider exposure he continued to exhibit regularly in Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto and in travelling shows that toured the country under the auspices of the National Gallery or the Royal Canadian Academy.

What was the work that he was showing at this time? *Castaways* was one of a series he painted along the seashore exploring the forms of the washed up tree trunks and roots. Unlike *Finis*, here the driftwood does not dominate the scene, but rather the trunks and rocks of the shoreline lead the eye towards the calm sea and the distant mountains. Far less tortured than the earlier *Finis* or some of his other seashore pictures, such as *Tangled Beach* or *Beached* from the following year, *Castaways* was nevertheless described by a London reviewer as:

"full of an intensity which turns sometimes to the dramatic and sometimes to the fantastic and bizarre and is full of the malignancy of primeval forces. ... [It] may be brutal and even coarse in its directness, but it is always exact and positive." 

Weston was particularly amused and said:

"It made me smile because "malignancy" was the last thing in my mind. It was characteristic of our beaches. ... with all these old bleached logs and these other logs that weren't so bleached lying there. It was Ten Mile Point near Victoria."

Driftwood certainly did not dominate his work during
The mid-thirties and his paintings covered a wide range of subjects. The only subject sure to be omitted was the human figure and it was but rarely that even the works of man would be depicted. He did paint a series showing shacks along the Victoria waterfront, perhaps partly because his daughter, Doris, liked them. Occasionally a building or a road would find its way into a painting, but mainly it was the mountains, the sea and the forest that he depicted. "Trees are one of the few things that are beautiful when they are dead," said Weston. "I like to show the way they struggled and lived." In the 1936 canvases Metchosin and Battle Scarred, for example, it is dead or dying trees that fill the space, while in the 1938 Lifeforce a gnarled cedar forces its way upward defiantly. Twisted from its usual form by the buffeting of nature, the tree nevertheless prospers. Behind, the snowcapped mountains do little more than hint at the fierce natural forces to which the tree is a testament. Rugged yet beautiful, calm yet with the possibility of fury, this picture sums up much of the British Columbia reality that Weston sought to glorify. Certainly the way in which he used colour, the formalization of the design and the very precision with which he applied his paint all suggest the British training that was common to artists in English-speaking Canada at the time. The use to which that training was put, however, set Weston apart from both the British artists and from other Canadian artists. The old skills served his new vision well. Perhaps this very
Life Force. Painted by Weston in 1937 and exhibited in Vancouver, Victoria and Toronto in 1938 and in Montreal in 1940. In his personal list of paintings Weston subtitled the work as "Old Tree Mt. Baker".
success as an artist of the twentieth century was a factor which influenced him to advocate the old methods as a teacher.

In other works Weston painted the mountains with a crispness that gave a strong impression of the clarity of western skies. He caught the snow clinging in north facing crevices in summer and covering everything in winter. Occasionally he returned to an image he had first seen on Grouse Mountain in 1914 to paint the trees gently bowing their heads under a mantle of snow. Always it was British Columbia with its mountains, trees, and coasts.

In 1939 Bill Weston did very little painting. He was caught up in the building of his new house. The only two paintings that he produced were of views from the new property. The new home he designed himself while its location was a compromise with his wife. He wanted to build at Garrow Bay, near Horseshoe Bay where they had their summer home, but Jessie Weston was adamant that it was too isolated and she refused to consider living there permanently. The compromise location was on Dogwood Avenue, a short street running off Granville Street just south of 52nd Avenue in Vancouver. Jessie still thought it was too isolated, but at least it was close to public transportation. The Weston home was only the second house to be built on the street and, at the time, the property was surrounded by woods.

The house that Bill Weston designed was modern and
simple in appearance. Basically it was two cubes placed side by side with a third cube on top. Family living area was in the two lower cubes and the upper cube was Weston's studio. As far as Jessie Weston was concerned the best part was the studio, a luxury they had not had in their previous home. So, after thirty years she finally got her husband to move his easel out of the living room. While she appreciated his skill and success, she never reconciled herself to the demands that his painting made on the family life. "Don't you wish your husband was something other besides a painter?" she once plaintively asked another painter's wife.

Weston designed his house keeping in mind his belief that form must follow function. The good modern building, whether large or small, "had dropped sentimentalism and gone direct for its objective of maximum light, space and airiness," he claimed. Soon after his own house was completed he wrote:

A good example of house design [is] where interest in the outer form is the result of interior planning. These houses at present are rather severe, but this will no doubt be modified in time. This is the logical swing of the pendulum away from the over-decorated houses of the late nineteenth century.

The house, as finally built, met all his criteria for good design. Its use dictated form and size, and it was indeed rather severe in its outward appearance.

As soon as he moved into the house he set to work to
lessen its outward severity by designing a garden. He trundled his wheelbarrow into the surrounding woods, bringing back young trees to provide a counterpoint to the stark verticals and horizontals of the house. He dug flowerbeds and planted the flowers of which he was so fond. "Nature is the only and ever open book of design. She has more decorative forms than we can ever dispose of," he had once told his students. Now he allowed nature to soften the lines of the house.

As a design the house was as modern as they come in Vancouver, as was Weston's art. Elsewhere, perhaps, the design would not have seemed quite so daring. After all the notion of design following function had been extolled by the Bauhaus movement in Germany in the nineteen-twenties. But this was not elsewhere and both house and art were accepted as new. The house with its spacious studio symbolized Weston's success as an artist. Its location in a newer area of the city in a subdivision of spacious lots intended for the more affluent of the middle classes, represented Weston's success in life. The garden surrounded Weston with constant examples of what he considered the very basis of all good design.

When the Westons moved into 1419 Dogwood Ave. it would not have been unusual if they reminisced a little about the
Figure 5.

The Weston home at 1419 Dogwood Avenue, Vancouver, not long after its completion. This house was designed by Bill Weston. Living quarters were on the main floor and he had a spacious studio upstairs.
past. Did they remember leaving Wandsworth thirty years before and think about how far they had come? For both of them it had been a long journey in more ways than one. Certainly life was far removed from what it would likely have been in the suburbs of London. Together they had shared the joys and cares of parenthood and had seen their grown daughters go out into the world on their own. Jessie had remained a housewife and provided the home support for Bill. Hers was a very private life. Bill Weston on the other hand found himself described as "one of Vancouver's most prominent artists" and often reported in the newspapers. As an art educator he was revered by his students on the one hand and respected by the Minister of Education on the other. The official curriculum for art education in the schools was largely his own work and the official text book was his. He must surely have thought of himself as a successful man. If he had any real regrets it was that he had too little time either to paint or to indulge in his hobby of sailing.

With the move into the new house Weston might well have sat back and done a little less. He was, after all, nearly sixty years old. Instead he followed in his well-established paths. He continued to paint and to teach. The start of the Second World War closely followed the move into the new house. As the first had tended to pass Weston by so did the second. He
exhibited in Vancouver and in the east as he had always done. He seemed to have reached the peak of his influence, and perhaps he had. In 1941 a series of events would apparently confirm his position as both artist and educator.

In April 1941 Weston had a show in the Vancouver Art Gallery. As was usual, since Weston was a local artist, the gallery had hung his work in one of the lesser galleries. It happened that the wife of the Governor-General, Princess Alice of Athlone, paid an official visit to the gallery. The following day she returned unannounced and purchased one of Weston's paintings. It was a gift for her husband. Overnight Weston went from being a successful artist to being a popular one which is not necessarily the same thing. He was much amused at the public reaction and the resulting fuss. The newspapers made much of it, but some of the other local artists were reported to be jealous. At the same show Weston was exhibiting *Yesterday, Today and Forever* and this was bought by the International Business Machines Corporation. The company was establishing a permanent collection of recent North and South American art. One hundred and three paintings were assembled and first shown at the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto as "Contemporary Art of the Western Hemisphere." They then became part of a touring exhibit. Weston was very pleased at the selection of this painting. He felt it was a more significant indication of his worth as a painter than the chance sale of an oil to Princess
In June 1941 there was a national conference of artists at Kingston, Ontario under the auspices of Queen's University and the National Gallery to discuss the role of the artist. As if to further demonstrate Weston's importance as both artist and educator, the Department of Education decided to send him as a delegate. As the decision was made too late to take the train, the Department sent him by air. It was Weston's first flight and he was most impressed by the experience. In fact he spoke of the flight much more than of the conference. It was his first trip outside the province since the visit to England in 1914, and it was to be his last. He enjoyed meeting with his fellow-artists in eastern Canada, but his kinship was with the natural features of British Columbia rather than with people.

Yet another event in 1941 pointed to Weston's success as an art educator. It was one which he may not have even seen as significant himself. A new edition of the Programme of Studies was put out by the Department of Education and the sections on art education were reprinted unchanged.

If these events of 1941 highlighted Weston's strengths, they also pointed to his weaknesses. He continued to show as a mature man, a pattern in achievement that he had early displayed as a schoolboy. Having succeeded exceptionally well in a student art show, the following year he seemed content to submit
competent, rather than exceptional, work. As a student at Borough Road College, he gained first class standing in his first year, then dropped to a second class standing in the following year. As a painter, he had received recognition from the Canadian Group of Painters, from the RCA and from inclusion in major international exhibitions. However, he had not shown much competitive spirit to follow up such success. He was content to wait until a chance visit from a princess brought him popular appeal. He had little interest in attending the first national conference of Canadian artists and went only at the behest of the Minister of Education. When there, he said nothing. As an educator, he was content to continue along his own paths once he had achieved the changes he sought, without spreading his ideas beyond those who were his immediate responsibility. He was happy to serve on the curriculum revision committees, playing a major role, but there is no evidence to suggest that he sought the position. He wrote the art text because asked. He did not seek the assignment. None of this suggests a lack of ability. It does suggest a lack of aggressive drive, a certain humility. As the opposite of pride, this can be considered a moral virtue, but, in a competitive world, it can restrict the able to the lower echelons of leadership.

After the excitement of 1941 Weston continued at the Vancouver Normal School for another five years, delaying his retirement until a suitable successor had returned from war
service. In a lengthy newspaper interview in 1943 his qualities were well summarized by this description:

A notable, unassuming and characterful figure. .
.endowed with a good measure of commonsense and constructive thinking, his mature opinion and proposals are listened to with respect.103
NOTES

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4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.


7. See Bruce Holdsworth, "English Art Education between the Wars," Journal of Art and Design Education, 3:2, 1984, pp.161-179, which shows Richardson's importance to British art education and relates her work to that of other art educators.


10. The term "slosh" was reported by Clifford Ellis in Athene, the journal of the Society for Education through Art, Summer 1947. Quoted by Sutton, Artisan or Artist, p. 281. Here, "slosh" means to splash liquid aimlessly.


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15. Interview with Violet Sketchley, Vancouver, March 1983. She was Weston's student in 1938-9.


17. Interview with Marjorie Clark, Nov. 1982.

18. Interview given to Cal Opre, April 1974, by Elmore Ozard, Weston's successor at the Vancouver Normal School in 1946.


20. For example, Marjorie Clark, Nina Joyce, Violet Sketchley and Joan Thompson Warn all retain vivid memories of his paintings.

21. Every western artist complained at one time or another about eastern art circles ignoring the west. See, for example, W.P. Weston, Dallas tapes.

22. Western artists continue to make similar complaints today. See, for example, Charles Hill, Canadian Painting in the Thirties (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975) which portrays western artists as copyists of eastern innovation.

23. Letters from Eric Brown, Director, National Gallery of Canada, dated March 6, 1931 and March 21, 1932. The works were purchased for $225.00 and $25.00 respectively. Letters in possession of Doris Wood.


25. Ibid.


28. For photographs of the display and a review see Frank Bagnall, "Canadian Artists' Show," Saturday Night, Oct. 21, 1933, p. 16.

29. Harris's letter has not been preserved, but both Weston's daughters remember it vividly.
30. Robert Swain, Coast, The Sea, and Canadian Art (Str. The Gallery, 1978), no pagination but see entry headed "W.P. Weston" accompanying illustration 33. Swain questions whether Weston was influenced by Harris.

31. The argument for the common influence of European training leading to similarities in interpretation has been well made in Tippett and Cole, From Desolation to Splendour.


33. Ibid.


35. Ibid.


37. W.P. Weston, Dallas tapes.


39. For a detailed discussion of the dispute see Richardson, "The Social History of the Vancouver School of Art."


41. See Tomkins, A Common Countenance chap. 10, pp. 189-213, for a comparison of the various revisions.


43. Ibid., p. 474.


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48. For a succinct discussion of the various interpretations of the term "progressive" see J. Donald Wilson, "Some Observations on Recent Trends in Canadian Educational History", p. 18, in J. Donald Wilson, An Imperfect Past (Vancouver: Centre for the Study of Curriculum and Instruction, UBC, 1984)


50. Ibid., p. 13.


52. Ibid., p. 93.


55. Ibid. See Mann, op. cit., pp.112-13, for a discussion of Weir's notions of Social Order and their political implications.


58. The notion of schooling to form character had been suggested from time to time in B.C. throughout the century. See Timothy A. Dunn, "The Rise of Mass Public Schooling in British Columbia," in Wilson and Jones, Schooling and Society, pp. 32-4.


60. Ibid., pp. 164-203.

61. Ibid., p. 187.

62. Ibid., p. 150.

63. Ibid., p. 151.
64. Ibid., pp. 7-15.

65. Ibid. p. 7.

66. Ibid.


68. Tomkins, A Common Countenance, p. 194.

69. Sandiford, loc. cit. The logical connection behind an apparent contradiction such as that between progressivism and conservatism has been well-explained by Tomkins, op.cit., pp. 189-90. B. Anne Wood, however, finds such a blending of conservatism and progressivism merely naive on the part of "Putman and his colleagues," a term which presumably includes Weir. This rather unkind assessment is not borne out by the facts. Weir and Putman were far more sophisticated in their educational thinking than Wood gives them credit for. The statement is, however, in tune with Wood's presentist approach to her subject. Idealism Transformed (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), pp. 192-3.

70. Programme of Studies, loc. cit., p. 5.


73. Ibid., p. 52.

74. W.P. Weston, Dallas tapes.


78. Interview with Marjorie Clark, Oct. 1982.

79. W.P. Weston, Dallas tapes.


83. Several friends have spoken of his lack of interest in public acclaim. For example, Betty Marsh in an interview with Cal Opre, April 1974. Elmore Ozard, Oct. 1983.


87. W.P. Weston, Dallas tapes.

88. Victoria Harbour, Shacktown (1934); Flotsam, Victoria Harbour (1935); Abandoned (1935).

89. W.P. Weston, Dallas tapes.

90. For example: *Mount Shuksan* (1936); *The Far Place* (1936).

91. For example:*Erosion* (1936); *Hollyburn Ridge* (1935) or *Shadows, Grouse Mountain* (1937).


95. W.P. Weston, *Art Appreciation, A Course for Study Groups,* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, Department of University Extension, n.d.) Lesson 3, p. 9. Although not dated the course was almost certainly prepared in 1941 or 1942.
96. The house was torn down in 1985 and replaced by a much larger one.


98. "Artist Honored," Vancouver *Province*, April 3, 1989. Weston's own scrapbook contained twenty-two newspaper clippings referring to himself or his work during the twelve months before the quoted article.

99. Some time before Weston had referred to how he would spend his spare time if he had more of it. He had certainly not been any less busy since. C.97. Scott, "B.C. Laureate in Art," Vancouver *Province*, Nov. 28, 1986.

100. See, for example, "Princess Alice Buys Painting by City Man," Vancouver *Province*, April 19, 1941; Mildred V. Thornton, "Picture Sold to Princess," Vancouver *Sun*, April 19, 1941; Browni Wingate, "Speaking of Pictures," Vancouver (News-Herald, May 10, 1941. Elmore Ozard (interview, October 1983), Weston (Dallas tapes) and Weston's daughters all recalled some local artists making unkind comments.


102. Andre Bieler and Elizabeth Harrison. *Proceedings of Conference of Canadian Artists*, (Kingston, Queen's University, 1941.) Weston's name occurs only in the list of those in attendance.

CHAPTER NINE

"The very essence of the land of his choice": conclusions.¹

By the end of the Second World War, Bill Weston was sixty-five years old and looking forward to retirement. Although not officially concerned with the choice of a successor, he nevertheless took an interest in the matter. During the late thirties he had got to know Elmore Ozard, a young Vancouver school teacher whose students' art work impressed Weston. He used to borrow some of this work to show to his own students at the Normal School. When Ozard went into the Navy during the war, Weston corresponded with him. War's end found Ozard in Halifax. Weston wrote advising him that the Normal School job would be available and encouraging him to get back to Vancouver as soon as possible. Ozard took the advice and was offered the position on condition that he complete his university degree within one year. This he did, so Weston finally retired in 1946.

Retirement gave Weston more time to paint, but he did not immediately give up teaching. He continued to give courses for the extension department of UBC and he gave lessons to various adult groups. In 1948 he made a lecture tour through the Interior of the province.
As he grew older he taught less, but he painted vigorously until he died. His subject matter changed, even though he continued to paint the natural beauty of British Columbia. During the war he had spent two summers at New Denver on Slocan Lake in the West Kootenays as a volunteer teaching Japanese student-teachers who were interned there. Several bold paintings of the area had come out of those trips. In 1946 his elder daughter, Bette, had married and moved to Okanagan Landing near Vernon. After nearly forty years of painting almost exclusively at or near the sea coast, Weston found himself both inspired by the scenery of the dry Interior and with a good reason for travelling there.

He did not give up his old subjects by any means but he spent more and more time painting in the Interior. After the death of Jessie, his wife, in 1953, Weston liked to gather up a friend or two for a sketching and painting trip. Elmore Ozard and Gordon Smith were frequently his companions, although they were by no means his only ones. At some stage in the trip they would inevitably visit with Bette and her husband, Mike. Sometimes they would go on to the East Kootenays where Margaret Stewart, one of Weston's former students and a good friend, was now a housewife in Fernie.

The style of his paintings changed subtly as he grew older. The colours were a little softer, the design was a little
less dramatic. Limestone Peak, Fernie, which he painted when he was eighty, provides a good example. While the mountain rears up sharply and characteristically to the sky, it is set in a more gentle landscape than one might expect from Weston. In Alouette River, painted in 1966, the artist had come full circle. It might almost be one of his early English paintings from the Lake District, so gentle are the brush strokes and so subtle the colour. One is tempted to say that this is the old man returning to the ways of his youth, but the expert precision of the work expresses a maturity of vision that no young artist could match. Alouette River was perhaps the last picture he completed. Weston died on December 20, 1967, less than a month after his eighty-eighth birthday. At the time he had two canvases partially completed. As with Alouette River, the brushwork is soft, the colours subtle. Nevertheless they are mature works. Perhaps the change in style was not a reversion to youth but a searching for a new approach. We shall never know.

Of all the satisfactions during his retirement years, there were few to match his enjoyment of a show at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1959. Titled "Fifty Years of Painting in B.C.," it was a retrospective of Weston's work since his arrival in the province. The show was opened by Mayor Tom Alsbury, who described it as showing "the very essence of the land of his choice." At the time it was one of the most important retrospective shows that had been seen at the gallery, and four
hundred and fifty people, "the largest crowd in several years," attended the opening. "Even his enemies were there," claimed a friend. Weston thoroughly enjoyed the show's success, not because it brought him more public acclaim, but because it gave him the opportunity to see his work displayed so well. The public enjoyed it, according to the *Vancouver Sun*, because:

> In lofty mountains, swirling cloud forms, magnificent trees, and driftwood of fantastic beauty, he reveals his innate reverence for nature's handiwork, and has recorded his impressions with the skill and assurance of a dedicated artist.

In 1959 Weston was feted by the artistic community. He remained in the public eye until his death. Since then his importance as an artist of the period has sometimes been overlooked. This may be as much because his works rarely come onto the market, as it is the result of serious reassessment. He is forgotten because he is no longer in the public eye.

This biography of Weston, with its emphasis on his professional life, has shown the role of one man in the fields of education and art in British Columbia. At one level it has shown simply what he did. At another it has demonstrated how ideas may be brought from one nation to another as part of the cultural training and background of an individual and how those ideas may be affected in the new country. On the one hand Weston's educational ideas flourished largely unchanged, nurtured by the predominantly British educational establishment in B.C. and
unfettered by the restraints and counterbalances of the older society. There was no hugely different stimulus to provoke change. On the other hand as an artist Weston found his perceptions challenged by the vast panorama of nature—rugged, dramatic and unmodified by man. His British training and experience were insufficient in themselves. A new vision was needed.

It may well be that his ability to inspire his students, his charisma in fact, was his major importance as an educator. Coupled with this was his consistency of vision. He presented a coherent and persuasive notion of how art should be taught to more students over a longer period of time than anyone else in the province's history. For thirty-two years more than half the teachers in the province received their art training from Weston. For thirty years, if teachers wanted to consult a text on art education, they consulted the book that he had either written alone or had had a major hand in writing. For a similar period of time, whenever teachers referred to the official Programme of Studies they were referred to that text. For eighteen years that very Programme of Studies, for the elementary schools at any rate, had been penned by Weston. It was a very personal, persuasive and pervasive influence.

There can be little doubt that the very success of this strong influence discouraged change in the art education
curriculum of British Columbia. In today's fast-moving world we think such lack of change to be potential stagnation, and something undesirable. Even so, we must weigh the positive effects of Weston's influence against the negative effects of lack of change in the curriculum. We must further consider to what extent official dicta on curriculum are followed or ignored.

My previous study examined art education in the schools of British Columbia during the interwar years. It specifically considered the official curriculum and the way in which it was interpreted and taught. What student-teachers learned at the two Provincial Normal Schools was often very different from what was prescribed in the official curriculum. This was less true at the Vancouver Normal School after 1936, when Weston had played a major role in rewriting the programme, but even then there were discrepancies. When graduates of the Normal Schools began teaching, what they taught as art education in their classrooms often bore little resemblance either to the official Programme of Studies or to their training at Normal School. Weston's students did, however, take with them a positive attitude to art education and an appreciation of the importance of the subject. If the curriculum was not to be followed anyway, then this positive attitude must have been more valuable than any change in that curriculum. It at least gave them the confidence to tackle the subject.
A compelling argument can be made that Weston's central role in the 1936-7 curriculum revision gave a longer life to old-fashioned ideas of art education by dressing them in a new coat. The further argument that such immobility was to the disadvantage of the province is not so compelling. To be upheld it must be shown that the new ideas that would have likely replaced the old would have been an improvement. It would also have to be shown that there were others with the ability and standing to introduce them. In fact, as we have seen, the art education community in B.C. was very small and there was no-one besides Weston who could have played his role. Given provincial patriotism, it is unlikely that any outsider would have been received with favour. The 1936 art curriculum was dressed up in the terminology of "Progressive" education. It would have been a "Progressive" curriculum to go with the terminology which would have been acceptable. Fifty years later, these "Progressive" notions have been largely abandoned. In the long run they did not offer more than did Weston's older vision. Overall, it is clear that while Weston's central role may have been an impediment to curriculum change in the province, his enthusiastic championing of art education in British Columbia has been an inestimable advantage.

As an artist, Weston was definitely among the first to develop a new vision of the west coast and, if one wants to press
the matter, one could make an argument that he was chronologically the first. His long history of involvement in the B.C. art scene, his role at the centre of the BCSFA, the example given by his work, and his early recognition by the eastern art establishment all make him most important to the development of an indigenous art form in British Columbia. Such would be the case even if he were not judged a first class artist in his own right. I would suggest that he is, but this is largely irrelevant to his importance as an innovator in the larger history of B.C. art. To rank him among the artists of the province is, in any event, beyond the scope of this thesis.

On art education in Britain, this study has examined how government legislation to achieve a particular desired aim can have important consequences beyond those contemplated. Although the events happened nearly a century ago, the results still have relevance for us today. British government legislation to make art education a part of every school's syllabus was undoubtedly successful. What was totally unforeseen was that it would lead also to the nature of the subject changing dramatically. In the 1890s, art education changed from a technical orientation to an aesthetic one. Hindsight suggests that it may have been an inevitable result as, coincidentally, the legislation forced generalist teachers into teaching the subject. They had very different training and aesthetic backgrounds from those specialist teachers who had been the
exclusive instructors of drawing previously. As was pointed out earlier in this thesis, the transformation in British art education which occurred during the last decade of the nineteenth century has been overlooked by other researchers. They have also overlooked that an official syllabus does not ensure that it is taught, and so more work is needed to determine what was and what was not taught and why.

The examination of this British exercise in curriculum change under pressure also illustrates the role a teachers' organisation, specifically the NUT, can play in affecting curricular change. In this case the NUT was not deliberately seeking to change the curriculum but to protect their members. It also shows how the NUT used an issue concerning curriculum legislation to further its own ends in being seen as the champion of teachers' rights. A further study would be justified to consider this issue's importance from the union's point of view.

An understanding of this period of change in British art education was essential to the present study of B.C. curricular history as it explains the training and conceptions that these immigrants from Britain brought with them. Implicit throughout the thesis has been the immigrants' assumption that these imported British ideas would be accepted. It has been shown how the cultural dominance of British immigrants made such expectations of acceptance reasonable, and not just in art
education. British ideas were widely accepted in all fields. It has been outside the scope of this thesis to consider how or why counter notions from less numerous or less socially dominant immigrants were ignored.

This study demonstrates how the personal ability, and indeed charisma, of one man enabled him to have a significant effect on B.C. art education over a long period of time. It has not been suggested that William P. Weston achieved his dominant position solely because of his teaching ability, but rather that he was an able man who happened to be in the right place at the right time. This good chance was assisted by the absence of others with the ability or interest to oppose his rise. Where there were potential competitors for Weston's place in education, such competitors found different, but parallel, fields in which to carve out their own fiefdoms. An historical study of the Vancouver School of Art, presently (1987) in train, explores Charles Scott's role in B.C. art education. It affirms that Weston and Scott, who were the two most likely to compete, had parallel rather than competing roles. Each appears to have allowed the other his own territory.

This study shows that it is not enough to examine official curricula in order to write a history of curriculum, but that it is essential to examine the role of individual educators, whether writers of curriculum, interpreters of the same, or
Here one man's life has been examined. Future studies should assess those who came after him. It would be instructive to examine the role of Weston's successor at the Normal School, Elmore Ozard. He, too, played his role over a lengthy period of time. Not only did he teach at the Vancouver Normal School but he moved over to the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia when that faculty absorbed the Normal School in 1956. He became chairman of the Department of Art Education within that faculty. By the time he retired in 1974 he had been a leader in art education for twenty-eight years. During those years there had been great developments in education in B.C. The end of the Second World War brought growth and change. There were further revisions in art education curricula. The transfer of the Normal School to UBC brought major changes in teacher education. At the same time it could be claimed that the British influence continued in art education at UBC under Ozard, despite his Canadian birth and training. So many of the art education department were British. For example, Sam Black, Penny Gouldstone, Michael Foster and Gordon Smith were all British-born and Black, Gouldstone and Foster were British-trained.

A case might be made that Weston's long tenure at the Normal School had held up curriculum change in art education within the province. Reaction to his retirement would be worth studying. It could be suggested that after World War Two
"Progressive" education made some inroads into B.C. art education but had limited effect as that movement was already dying. All of these possibilities deserve further study.

When Weston retired in 1946 he told his successor, Elmore Ozard, to throw away his text book because it was time for a change in art education. He had faith in Ozard's approach to art education, and so the text did not matter. Ozard believed that he did bring a more up-to-date view of art education, but Weston's influence as an educator persisted in the thousands of teachers he had trained, the last of whom may have only recently retired.

As an artist Weston often led the way by providing a new vision of British Columbia and by playing a full role in the artistic life of the province. He played a lesser role as a teacher of artists, but then it was never his intention that his teaching should produce artists. He was a trainer of art teachers. For some of his student-teachers his example and encouragement opened up a new world and they became artists in their own right. He always played a limited role through night schools and the university extension programme in reaching out to those with a more direct interest in painting. Just by being among the first western artists to be recognized by the eastern art establishment he provided a valuable model and challenge to other artists.
It was as an art educator that Weston had a great and unique influence in the province. He brought with him a clear and workable notion of what art education in the schools should accomplish. If anyone had asked him to explain his philosophy of art education, he would likely have been bemused by the terminology, for that was not the language of his generation. Nevertheless, though the term might confuse him, the idea behind it did not. He had expressed his beliefs firmly throughout the years. Here, we should perhaps draw together some of the major precepts of them. He believed passionately in the dominance of natural form over all aspects of design. To understand design, one had to study nature. To understand beauty, one had to study nature. To express that understanding, it was essential to develop adequate skills. While not all people might develop those skills sufficiently to be described as artists, all could do so sufficiently well to make a worthwhile statement. The study in itself would heighten one's awareness of nature, and thus of our world and of humankind itself. As aesthetic appreciation is restricted to the human animal, Weston considered that to nurture this appreciation was essential for humanity's improvement. The training he espoused over many years was but one way of raising that aesthetic consciousness. It was a method that he found workable. The conventionalisation of natural design led students to appreciate the complexities and order of nature in a simpler form. While the study of colour again
allowed a greater appreciation of the order of nature, it also
demonstrated those combinations of colour found in nature and
thus those that were aesthetically acceptable. Memory drawing
helped to fix the images of nature in the mind as did constant
practice. He did not believe that his approach to art training
was the only one, hence the admonition to Ozard to abandon his
book, but he knew the approach worked for his students. He did
believe, however, that nature was central to any true
understanding of art, design or aesthetics. At one level such a
belief reaffirms his connections with notions of art at the turn
of the century. At a more profound level it provides a link to
much of our human culture.

The 1936 elementary art curriculum, with which Weston
was so closely connected, was reprinted without change in 1941
and 1947. In 1954 the Department of Education issued another
edition titled *Programme of Studies for the Intermediate Grades, 1954* in which the art curriculum had been completely rewritten.
This new art curriculum put great emphasis on the child's
creativity and very little on the development of skills. It was
a clear rejection of Weston's belief that skill attainment must
precede or accompany growth in creativity. Whereas Weston had
pointed to the central role of design, the necessity of teaching
basic colour theory and the importance of memory drawing, the
1954 curriculum largely ignored such matters. Although this
curriculum was reissued and revised from time to time, it
survived almost intact until 1985 when it was itself rejected. The 1985 curriculum again recognized the necessity of skill development and of an understanding of the elements and principles of design. The teaching of colour theory with its specialised vocabulary was reintroduced. Even memory drawing was indirectly suggested.

It would be foolhardy to suggest that Weston continues to influence the B.C. art programme. The 1985 curriculum is a very different and broader document than Weston's 1936 curriculum, but it does reaffirm much of the method that Weston advocated. Whether this is an indication of the rightness of Weston's ideas or simply that the wheel has turned full circle, we cannot know. That may become apparent when the wheel has turned again. Nevertheless it is a fitting vindication of Weston that notions similar to those he espoused for so long are again advocated. It is a confirmation of what his friend and successor at the Normal School said of him in 1974:

I still believe he had an amazing future feeling about art education and education in the schools and what really art could do for people. . . He was one of the early pioneers and great leaders.22
NOTES


2. Interview with Elmore Ozard, October, 1983.


4. Among the paintings that resulted from his New Denver experience were Thunder Weather, Mount Denver (1944), Mill Creek, Slocan Lake (1945), Mount Denver (1945), Slocan Lake (1945), Afternoon Sun (1946) and Red Mountain (1947).

5. When he died, Weston was living at Port Moody, having moved there from Dogwood Ave. the previous year to be closer to his daughter, Doris.

6. Mac Reynolds, "Cabbage--It can Be Art," Vancouver Sun, April 24, 1959.


8. Ibid.

9. Interview with Elmore Ozard, October 1983. Who "the enemies" were was not specified. However, Weston could be quite critical of his fellow artists, as we have seen. This led to temporary falling-outs. Here, Ozard may have been thinking of Jack Shadbolt in particular.


12. Rogers, "The Beautiful in Form and Colour." See, in particular, pp. 82-125.

13. David Thistlewood, "Social Significance in British Art Education," Journal of Aesthetic Education, Spring 1986, pp. 71-83, is a recent article which ignores the changes in the orientation of the art curriculum during the eighteen-nineties. It furthermore assumes that the official drawing syllabus in the previous decade was widely taught although in fact very few schools taught the subject.
14. Manual Training provides another example of how British influence was formally encouraged. Harry Dunnell had been brought out from Britain to set up the programme in 1900 and John Kyle later took over its direction.


17. As Tomkins has pointed out, a study of the official curriculum "may obscure (and be obscured by) the reality of the curriculum actually taught." A Common Countenance, op. cit., p. 1.


19. For example, Joan Thompson Warn of Gibsons, B.C. left teaching to pursue a full-time career as a painter.

20. Programme of Studies for the Intermediate Grades, 1954 (Victoria, Queen's Printer, 1954). A Foreword claimed the guide to be a reprint of the 1947 edition and not a revision. In fact it had been heavily edited and the art section was entirely new. The claim seems inexplicable.


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