

WHAT'S NEW IN EDUCATION?

In a two-part article the writer examines recent changes in education with particular reference to the Metro scene. Part I deals with the new look in schools, Part II with the new approaches in education.

PART I — THE NEW SCHOOLS

by ROBERT D. FERGUSON, Director of Publications,
Board of Education for the City of Toronto

THE "challenge of change" has become the standard cliché of education in the 1960s.

Yet "change" was once generally considered something that happened in a society outside the school, while the school itself was concerned with passing on the traditions of the past by means of a traditional teacher in a traditional 35-40 pupil classroom using a traditional question-and-answer method of instruction culminating in traditional written examinations. In recent years educational has been shaking itself loose from this traditional role and more and more responding to the continuing changes of the second half of the twentieth century.

The visible signs of education's response are the new schools being designed with an architectural flair unknown or impossible a decade ago. These schools may have imposing outward shells, but they are chiefly remarkable for their utility in meeting the pressing educational needs in the 1960s. And they may lead to the so-called "School of Tomorrow" currently on display in model form at the New York World's Fair.

THE SCHOOL OF TOMORROW

This School of the Year 2000 is based on the idea that education will be a continuing lifetime experience for everyone, and that each school will be a community centre serving a population of about 60,000. Core of the school is an electronic information retrieval system with access to all kinds of material in print or on audiotape or videotape. Many homes will be electronically tied to it by means of a Home Learning Console with two-way audio and video connections, so that much learning will take place in the home itself.

A picture of the model hardly suggests its size. Its base, containing cultural facilities to accommodate large groups for concerts, lectures, drama, and exhibits, is about 800 feet in diameter. The towers, containing the specialized learning areas, stretch like giantinker-tops 500 feet above the ground and are designed so they can be expanded vertically — a significant consideration in an era when land shortages may be an acute problem.

To those of us educated in a traditional school system the projected school of the twenty-first century looks more like a Rube Goldberg creation than a practical possibility for the future. Yet as one considers some of the schools being built today it is not hard to imagine the kind of evolutionary change that will bring us to that School of Tomorrow.

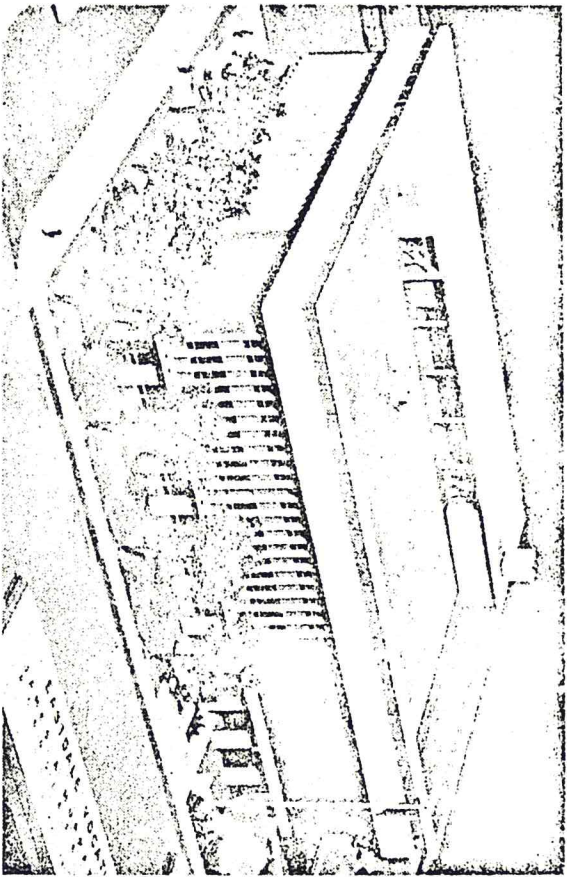
PARKWAY

The concept of vertical growth for the sake of land conservation is already illustrated in the striking architectural design of Toronto's Parkway Vocational School. Its six-storey centre block may be an indication of the coming trend in school buildings, as well as an illustration of the fact that schools need not be sterile, box-like structures, but should add something to the look and feel of a city changing and growing as it never has in its history.

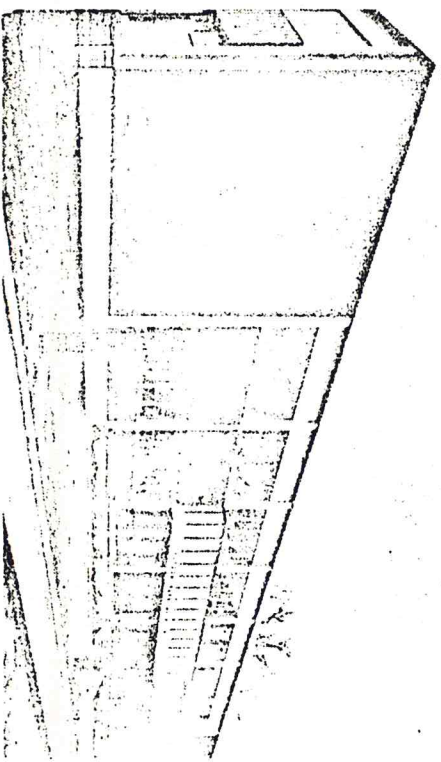
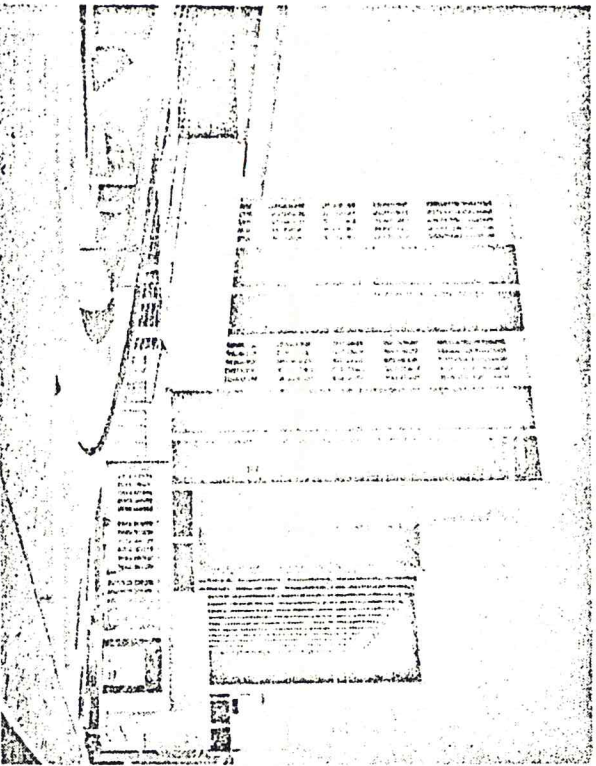
Parkway is, of course, more than a symbol of something new in school architecture. Built with money granted under the Federal-Provincial Technical Aid Program it represents the kind of cooperation on three levels — federal, provincial, and local — that may be the pattern of the future. It also represents a concept of schooling for a part of the school population that has received less than its share of attention in the past. Its students are the boys with little potential for academic education, those whose time and efforts are mainly spent learning some basic vocational skills so they can lead fuller lives and make a useful contribution to society. Courses in barbering, wood-working, motor mechanics, shoe repairing and a host of other trades are available to them.

While Parkway is for boys, two other new vocational schools in Toronto are for girls — Eastdale and Heydon Park. Still another type of school is Castle Frank perched on the side of the Don Valley across from Parkway and offering a program for high school age boys and girls seeking education below college entrance level.

If these new schools embody the latest advances in school architecture they also fulfill what every

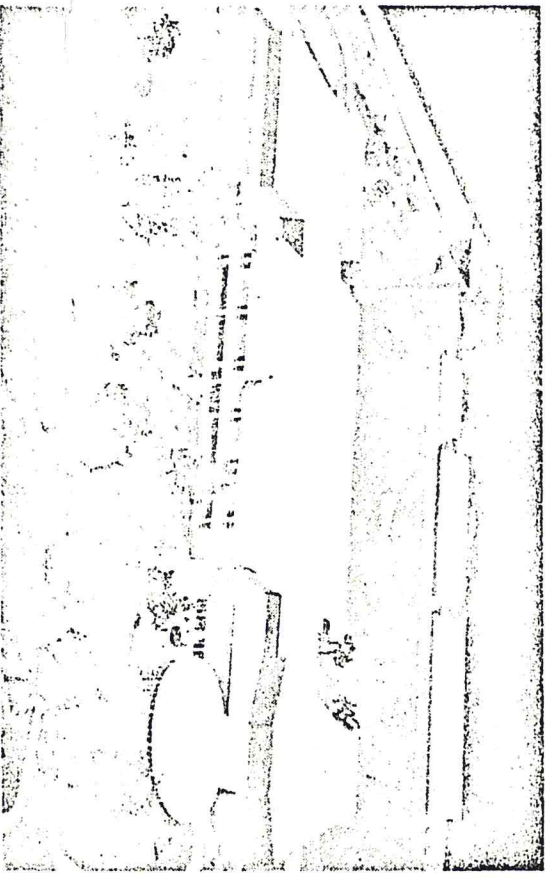


Just as Parkway Vocational School is for boys, Eastdale Vocational School (left) and Heydon Park Vocational School (below) are for girls. Built to help girls achieve the highest degree of individual development of which they are capable, the schools embody the latest advances in school architecture.



Dramatic design and new concepts in secondary schooling combine to make Parkway Vocational School a symbol of the forward look in education.

Structurally designed to meet academic requirements and to serve community needs, Toronto's Monarch Park Secondary School opened on September 8 of this year.



great educational thinker from Plato to John Dewey has said is the primary aim of education — to help boys and girls achieve the highest degree of individual development they are capable of.

The concern for the individual in today's school system is also seen in the schools and facilities being made available for those requiring what is called special education. Outstanding among these is the new Metropolitan Toronto School for the Deaf situated on Davisville Avenue in North Toronto and combined with Davisville Junior Public School. There profoundly deaf children learn to adapt themselves to a world of sound they may never know. Because the School is physically attached to Davisville School deaf children have opportunities to learn and to play with hearing children. One of the school's proud moments last year came when its hockey team won its group championship in competition with other North Toronto junior schools.

All of these schools — and others not mentioned — have made Toronto a North American mecca for educators interested in school architecture and the application of modern educational concepts, so much so that some principals, leading an almost daily parade of visitors, jokingly refer to themselves as professional tour guides.

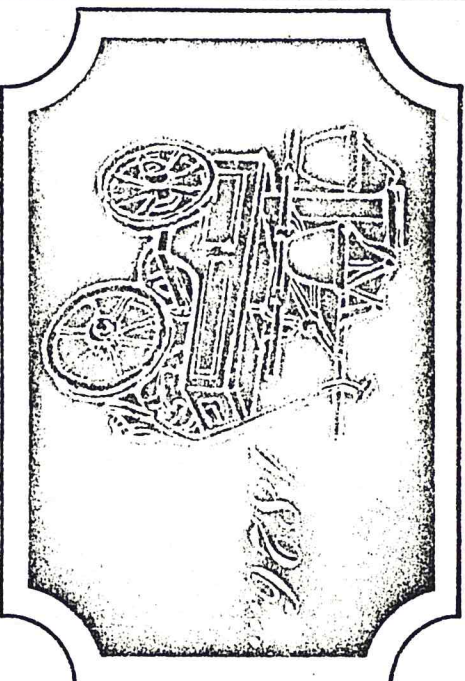
MONARCH PARK

The very latest in new schools has opened its doors to students only this month — Monarch Park Secondary School situated in Toronto's east end. Monarch Park is a standard secondary school offering Four- and Five-Year Programs in Arts and Science and in Business and Commerce, but it is also a school designed for community use. The three main parts of the building can be seen in the accompanying photograph. The east section (the left side of picture) comprises the gymnasium and swimming pool area which can be closed off from the rest of the school and used as a community recreation centre at nights, on weekends, and in the summertime. The west section of the school includes the auditorium and the cafeteria, and a circular wing containing the library, a study area, and a large group instruction room. The library is open for east-end students in the evening and on Saturday. The middle part of the building contains the main instructional area with its standard classrooms, science laboratories, music rooms, and work rooms and office space for teachers. There are many interior windowless classrooms with air conditioning and artificial lighting.

Principal H. J. Vallery says that it is in the field of instructional techniques that Monarch Park is making some departures from the traditional. One of these is the large group instruction or the "team-teaching" technique in which part of the year's work is presented as general lectures to a number of classes together, and part is handled in small seminar groups. On this subject Mr. Vallery says, "There are several advantages of large group instruction. For one thing, the most able teacher in any given area of the work will be presenting the

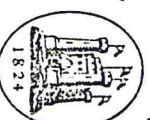
from the minutes of the

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**...it was resolved
to ship a fire
engine to Montreal
to be placed under the
management of the agents**

It may well be doubted whether there ever was a fire brigade at this time in Montreal, however, we do know that the FIRE CLUB of Montreal is doubtless the same institution as that whose minute book for the years 1786 to 1814 is in the library at McGill University. McGill himself was a member of the FIRE CLUB, as well as the Frobishers, Issac Todd and Alexander Henry, all noted explorers. While these fine pioneers were building Canada, Alliance Assurance Company Agents; then, as now, were serving the insurance needs of the Canadian public.



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lecture. The students, hearing the presentation from the most knowledgeable teacher, will be more appreciative and motivated. Large group instruction avoids the duplication of effort required when teachers must present the same subject material to a number of classes. It allows a concentration of audio-visual aids and technological equipment in one place, and therefore is more economical. It makes possible the scheduling of presentations by outside specialists, by University professors, or by experts in certain positions in community, business, or government life. To complement the large group instruction method, small group or seminar instruction is organized wherever possible. The seminar groups do not include more than 15 to 18 students (preferably the former number), and here student discussion supervised by teachers is emphasized as follow-up work to the large group. In the seminars, teachers are able to work much more closely with the individual students and assess their knowledge and progress more adequately. Teachers also have to change their approach in these groups, they have to move away from their traditional role at the centre of the stage, they have to become more skilled in encouraging and steering discussion and in establishing a closer rapport with their students."

One other factor of interest at Monarch Park is an extended school day. The classes will begin at 8:30 a.m. to allow each student one timetabled study or research period each day. "The day may

well come," says Mr. Valley, "when students will have much more time for independent reading, viewing, listening, writing, and working on automated learning devices. If this happens, the teacher's role will change too. He will work more with students on an individual basis and will suggest and guide rather than merely assign work."

Monarch Park, then, is a school that embodies the latest concepts in education. It provides a pleasing and challenging environment for young people and for teachers working as dedicated professionals, it recognizes the needs of students as individuals, it is adapted to the new technology, and it serves a broader recreational and cultural purpose as a kind of community centre.

Monarch Park — or any modern school in North America — may be a long way from the School of Tomorrow envisioned by the World's Fair people. But if we think of 1964 as a midway point it is surely no more impossible to imagine the School of Tomorrow in the year 2000 than it would have been to imagine a Monarch Park in the year 1928. And whatever direction education takes, some things are certain: there will be more emphasis on the individual, there will be closer links between the school and the community, there will be more experiments, more "new approaches" in curriculum and teaching methods.

(Next Month: Part II — The New Approaches)

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