

# Teachers scarce in Alberta

CALGARY (CUP) -- Alberta is suffering from a critical, and surprising shortage of teachers according to a newly released report by a professor of the University of Calgary's department of educational administration.

For several years the lack of jobs in the teaching profession has been getting a great deal of publicity, says Dr. G. Loken.

In a survey Loken made of graduate students and teachers in the province, some of the important problems facing teachers today are:

- violence on the school grounds.
- abused children
- the abuse of drugs and sex by students
- destructive criticism by parents and school boards, and
- government involvement in professional tasks

Many teachers today, Loken states, do not choose to teach. In fact, one out

of every eight teachers quit after teaching the first year. Many student graduates do not bother applying for teaching certificates.

Another important reason for the shortage of teachers in Alberta is the rate of immigration into the province.

In 1979, 45,000 people moved into the province, of these, Loken's study shows 10,000 are of school age. This figure added to the 37,000 births in Alberta that same year indicate serious cause for worry. These children will be entering the school system in five or six years, Loken says.

Enrolment at the U of C and U of A have dropped drastically in the last five years. So has the number of graduating students applying for teaching certificates each year.

According to Loken, this year the U of C's education graduating class in the faculty of education was only 450 students.

Last year Calgary's public school board alone hired 500 teachers. This shortage has led, says Loken, to the current trend of filling vacant teaching spots with teachers from other provinces, usually in the east, and other parts of the world.

In 1979, Loken's study shows 919 teachers were imported. Over 30 percent of these teachers were from Ontario.

Loken estimates that the number will be close to 1100 in 1980.

The current student-teacher ratio, according to Loken, is also a matter of concern. Officially in Alberta there are 17 students to one teacher. In

reality however, there are closer to 25 to 30 students per teacher.

At its worst, it sometimes rises to as high as 38 students to a single teacher. To simply maintain that ratio Alberta must find a thousand teachers each year.

Alberta can barely meet this need now and with enrolment dropping and teachers choosing other fields at the rate of 13 per cent per year it does not appear to be getting any better.

The public must change its attitudes about education, Loken says. They must be made aware of the problems teachers face and offer their support to the people responsible for education.

## PEI SITUATION

by Maureen Hartman

Prince Edward Island has no shortage of teachers at the moment, nor has it a surplus, according to Gerald Arsenault, dean of education at UPEI.

"I don't foresee too many active openings for a while," Arsenault said Tuesday afternoon. "However, I am extremely pleased about Loken's findings. Local teachers-to-be can look forward to placement in Canada. I feel that anyone who would get experience elsewhere would be twice as valuable here."

There are about 30 students in UPEI's one year B.Ed. program, and roughly ten or so in the four year program. Three years ago roughly 1/3 of UPEI graduate teachers got jobs, according to the Teachers Federation of PEI, but that number is now down significantly.

The current students to teacher ratio is 19.1 to 1, a spokesman for the Teachers Federation said. In res-

ponse to the above CUP story which states that "one out of every eight teachers quit after teaching the first year", the spokesman thought that fact was not accurate here. He also said that, although statistical data is unavailable, graduate teachers here tend to go into business and insurance, jobs which deal with people.

In a short report on the Loken study, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) states that, "Basic education enrolments are projected to grow from about 420,000 in 1980 to about 443,000 by 1985, with additional growth expected in areas of special education. The problem of teacher supply is exacerbated by a high attrition rate in Alberta and media coverage of teacher unemployment in Eastern Canada."

According to the AUCC teacher shortages also exist in Saskatchewan and British Columbia.



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