

Dollars and Cents
Don't Make Sense

By Mark Ledwell

During a recent discussion with a prominent and emerging young businessman, he attributed his success to the idea that "everything these days comes in dollars and cents". Considering the development of an empirical thrust in our educational system advocating facts and statistics, evidence would seem to indicate my friend correct. However, this same empirical thrust, though perhaps the key to the success of an aspiring young businessman, is equally responsible for a very one-dimensional means of educating. The end result is not a system of education that serves to liberate the mind, but one of indoctrination devised to preserve the social status-quo for those presently reaping its material rewards.

Is a system of indoctrination as opposed to education a good way to socialize members of a society? Cardinal Newman, in his essay, The Idea of a University (VI), appears to place the issue in its proper perspective. Newman identifies two methods of education: "The end of one is to be philosophical, of the other to be mechanical. The one rises toward general ideas, the other exhausted upon what is particular and external." The relevant point Newman makes is that the more knowledge rises towards what is particular and external, proportionately the more it ceases to be knowledge. Applied to the present system of empirical indoctrination, education is no longer an intellectual activity but rather a means of finding one's place in the job market and thereby fitting the mold of a social or economic class. Most important, any system of facts and figures is only one component or aspect of human knowledge.

Yet, who is to say that Cardinal Newman's concept of knowledge is final? Certainly, the empirical system has its supporters as shown by the young businessman. But, a look at the implications of a misused and overused empirically oriented means of socialization clearly illustrates serious and long term effects for all mankind. Education today

has generally become existential in its perspective, concerned chiefly with the here and now. Hence the concern with a here-and-now utilitarianism. Of course, history subjects are still made available; however, emphasis is placed less on critical explanation than on chronological data. As a result, students today are strung up on a logical positivism that stresses facts rather than the ability to learn. What results is a product of the system geared towards a package of information. This product has no need nor desire for knowledge - why be critical, why question? All that matters are "dollars and cents".

A human over-subjected to such crude empiricism is proportionately less a person but more a package of facts. Attitudes such as "don't rock the boat" and inferiority complexes that inflict fear of being one's self are characteristic of such a package. Fundamental to this package, of course, is the token of money handed down from above as a reward for minding your own business, and doing your own job while keeping a smile on your face and insisting that yours is a good life.

The question is then, how do we work to maintain or become ourselves in the face of a rigid system of indoctrination? Clearly, the answer must come from within education as our chief liberating mechanism. What must occur is a swing away from our empirically infested system to a projection of the arts. Not to say that facts and statistics should be discarded at all, but rather that a proper framework for understanding them be sought. Sought before society loses its intellectual activity and stimulation and becomes merely a collection of John Doe's.

...to the Editor



HOW DARE THEY
(letter to the editor)

by Brian MacGregor

Dear Public:

I feel compelled, from deep inside my conscience, to write this here article. You might even say that I'm driven, "called" to write about this threatening occurrence. It's with humility and yes, love, that I write to you, warning you of this evil in our midst: "Beer commercials on T.V.!"

It has recently come to my attention that this new cablevision is showing advertisements of alcohol. Not that I have cablevision, I don't even have a television, 'praise the Lord', but I read about it in the Guardian (our good Conservative paper). When I first heard about this here cablevision coming to P.E.I., I knew it was bad, and I told everyone, you can be sure. But who listens to an old woman?

Things used to be so good. I know what's going to happen now. All these people on P.E.I., most of whom don't even know what liquor is, are going to start trying it, just to see what it's like. You and I both know what's going to happen after that, not that I've ever taken a drink, praise the Lord. Alcoholism, that's what!

What's going to happen when our young people start watching these commercials, the poor innocents? Who will protect them when Satan is peddling his wares? When will society see what this filth will bring? Where will we turn? How?

Who will be there when the germs of this disease spread to our beloved university? Haw, you laugh, it could never come to that. I just want to say right now that if our students at U.P.E.I., smart as I know they are, start watching those beer commercials on T.V. they will succumb, and heaven help us when they do, to this awful deluge. And when this happens, and remember, I told you it would, it won't be safe to send our children from places like Tignish and Borden, where they don't even know the word alcohol, to our beloved university, with its pure roots (before it joined with the Catholics).

This is all I have to say. What can we do, you ask? I say, if you own a television, just don't get cablevision. And if you have cablevision, don't watch those American channels. I would just like to finish with these words, "If thy television should offend thee, throw it out!" Amen.

Miss Florence Baptist
(president of the Ladies Temperance
Movement of P.E.I.)

