

Branding the Classroom: Commercialism in Canadian Schools, 1920–1960

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From the 1920s until the early 1960s, a number of commercial companies placed advertisements in teachers' professional magazines offering a variety of free, but branded, teaching aids. While the issue of commercialization in schools has become prominent in the last decade, contemporary debates have ignored the historical roots of this phenomenon. Similarly, despite the growth of youth and consumer culture in the first half of the twentieth century, historians have not examined schools as sites of commercialization. Advertisements in teachers' magazines capitalized on the social and educational concerns of the period, linking, for example, products to patriotism, their use in the school health movement, or their relevance to the methods and aims of progressive education. Intended both to enrich classroom resources and to promote products among teachers, pupils, and parents alike, commercial teaching aids offered needed resources to cash-strapped schools and in turn provided companies with a new market site.

Des années 1920 jusqu'au début des années 1960, un certain nombre d'entreprises commerciales ont publié des annonces publicitaires dans les revues professionnelles à l'intention des enseignants, offrant à ceux-ci un éventail d'aides didactiques, mais associées à des marques. Bien qu'il soit beaucoup question de commercialisation dans les écoles depuis une décennie, les débats contemporains sur la question ne font nullement mention des racines historiques du phénomène. Dans le même ordre d'idées, malgré la croissance de la culture jeunesse et de consommation durant la première moitié du XX^e siècle, les historiens n'ont pas étudié les écoles comme lieux de mise en marché. Les annonces qui paraissaient dans les revues destinées aux enseignants capitalisaient sur les préoccupations sociales et scolaires de l'époque, par exemple en liant les produits au patriotisme, à leur usage dans le

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mouvement pour la santé à l'école ou à leur pertinence pour les méthodes et les buts d'un enseignement progressiste. Les aides didactiques commerciales, qui avaient pour but tant d'enrichir les ressources pédagogiques que de promouvoir les produits auprès des enseignants, des élèves et des parents, offraient aux écoles à court d'argent des ressources dont elles avaient besoin et ouvraient aux entreprises la porte à un nouveau marché.

IN APRIL 1939, Lifebuoy ran an ad for its “Clean-Hands” Campaign in the teachers’ magazine *The School*. For almost a decade, Lifebuoy had been encouraging teachers to include its campaign as part of students’ classroom work. In comic-strip format, the ad showed one female teacher exclaiming to another that running the Lifebuoy campaign was a “Grand Time,” creating interest in hygiene among students through active participation in the campaign and, in the process, promoting “good health” and “regular attendance.” Lifebuoy offered free “printed rules, score cards, gold stars, merit badges, [a] classroom Honour Roll — cakes of school-size Lifebuoy Soap and Wash-Up Charts” for every pupil. In the one-month programme, teachers would impart basic rules of hygiene, encouraging students, with their Lifebuoy soap in hand, to wash their hands four times daily: before breakfast, before dinner, before supper, and at bedtime. After washing their hands, children marked an “x” on their “Wash-Up Chart.” At the end of a perfect week they received a gold star (Figure 1).¹

Though perhaps more imaginative than most, there was nothing unique about this Lifebuoy advertisement. From the early 1920s until at least the early 1960s, commercial companies provided, through similar advertisements in teachers’ professional magazines and journals, a wide variety of free teaching aids intended not just to enrich classroom resources but to promote their products among teachers, pupils, and parents alike. While the issue of commercialism in schools has become prominent in the past decade, contemporary debates have virtually ignored this historical precedent.² Similarly, despite the growth of youth and consumer culture in

1 “Free: Everything Needed to Conduct the Famous ‘Clean-Hands’ Campaign,” *The School*, secondary edition, vol. XXVII, no. 8 (April 1939), p. v. In the references that follow we will not normally provide multiple citations for the advertisements. This ad, like many others, was often published in several issues or in several of the professional magazines at the same time.

2 For general discussions, see *Commercialism in Canadian Schools: Who’s Calling the Shots?* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2006) [online report], retrieved from http://www.policyalternatives.ca/documents/National_Office_Pubs/2006/Commercialism_in_Canadian_Schools.pdf; Heather-Jane Robertson, *No More Teachers, No More Books: The Commercialization of Canadian Schools* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1998); Alison Taylor, “Education, Business, and the ‘Knowledge Economy,’” in John P. Portelli and R. Patrick Solomon, eds., *The Erosion of Democracy in Education* (Calgary: Detselig, 2001), pp. 169–188; “Fight Brandalism,” *Our Schools/Our Selves* vol. 10, no. 1 (September 2000), pp. 9–11. For the debate in the United States, see Alex Molnar, *Giving Kids the Business: The Commercialization of America’s Schools* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996) and *School Commercialism: From Democratic Ideal to Market Commodity*

APRIL, 1939

THE SCHOOL

v

FREE

This offer made only once a year

Lifebuoy WASH-UP CHART
PROMOTES HYGIENE

Size 8 1/2" x 11" on sturdy card

EVERYTHING NEEDED TO CONDUCT THE FAMOUS Lifebuoy "CLEAN-HANDS" CAMPAIGN

To help you to teach your pupils cleanliness, to help keep them in good health and in regular attendance—the makers of Lifebuoy Soap offer you the Clean-Hands Campaign! There is nothing to buy—no obligation. The makers of Lifebuoy will send you, *without cost*, everything you need to conduct this helpful classroom campaign. Printed rules, score cards, gold stars, merit badges, classroom Honour Roll—cakes of school-size Lifebuoy Soap and Wash-Up Charts for every one of your pupils. Clean-hands soon become a habit, there is an unmistakable improvement in class health and attendance. Try it and see! Start your class on the Clean-Hands Campaign now!

MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY!

LEVER BROTHERS LTD., Dept. SM39, Toronto, Ont.
Please send me free Wash-Up Charts, school-size Lifebuoy, Honour Roll, Prizes and other equipment and instructions for conducting a Clean-Hands Health Campaign.

My Name....., Teacher
Name of School.....
School Address..... Province.....
Exact No. of Pupils..... Grade.....

THIS OFFER GOOD IN CANADA AND U.S. ONLY

When writing advertisers, please mention THE SCHOOL.

Figure 1: *The School*, secondary school edition, vol. XXVII, no. 8 (April 1939), p. v.

the first half of the twentieth century, neither histories of education nor those of advertising or consumerism have examined schools as sites of commercialism.³

(New York: Routledge, 2005); Joel Spring, *Educating the Consumer-Citizen: A History of the Marriage of Schools, Advertising, and Media* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2003), pp. 183–184, 206–207; Elizabeth A. Fones-Wolf, *Selling Free Enterprise: The Business Assault on Labour and Liberalism, 1945–60* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), chap. 7.

3 For the growth of youth culture in Canada, see most recently Cynthia Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth: Adolescence and the Making of Modern Canada, 1920 to 1950* (Waterloo, ON.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006). Interest in the history of advertising has grown in the past decade. Historians have examined the emergence of the advertising industry and the changing history of advertisements and have provided textual analyses of advertising. See, for example, Russell Johnston, *Selling Themselves: The Emergence of Canadian Advertising* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001); Cheryl Krasnick Warsh, "Smoke and Mirrors: Gender Representation in North American Tobacco

We address these issues here. Why, we ask, would advertisers seek access to the classroom in this manner? What kind of teaching materials did they make available, and what were the messages the ads imparted? Why would this commercial material appeal to teachers, and to what extent was it actually used in Canadian classrooms? In tackling these questions, we hope to offer new insight into some larger and more familiar issues: the economic and other circumstances surrounding teaching and learning in Canadian schools during the first half of the twentieth century; the way in which the rhetoric of progressive education could be mobilized by those outside the educational enterprise itself; the way in which advertisers exploited idealized notions of the good teacher; and the relationship between the advertising industry, consumer culture, and schooling.

Our sources are the advertisements placed between the early 1920s and the early 1960s in five professional magazines specifically directed at teachers. Two were either substantially subsidized or controlled outright by provincial departments of education: the *Western School Journal* (and its successor, the *Manitoba School Journal*) and the *Journal of Education for Nova Scotia*. Two, the *ATA [Alberta Teachers' Association] Magazine* and the *Manitoba Teacher*, were produced by teachers' unions. *The School* was the product of the Ontario College of Education at the University of Toronto. Not all the magazines carried advertisements all the time, and the number of ads varied with economic conditions and changing editorial policies. Some of the magazines existed for only a portion of the period, starting late, or folding due to lack of funding or management problems.⁴ Those that were government-sponsored or subsidized reached every school in their respective provinces.⁵ Once

and Alcohol Advertisements Before 1950," *Histoire sociale/ Social History*, vol. 31, no. 62 (November 1998), pp. 183–222; M. Susan Bland, "Henrietta the Homemaker and 'Rosie the Riveter': Images of Women in Advertising in *Maclean's Magazine*, 1939–50," in Laurel Sefton MacDowell and Ian Radforth, eds., *Canadian Working Class History: Selected Readings* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1992), pp. 594–621. For the much larger international literature, see, for example, Jennifer Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies' Home Journal, Gender, and the Promises of Consumer Culture* (Routledge: New York, 1995); Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Vincent Vinikas, *Soft Soap, Hard Sell: American Hygiene in an Age of Advertisement* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1992); Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (New York: Pantheon, 1989); Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920–1940* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985).

⁴ A successful magazine in earlier decades, *The School* ceased publication in 1947 for these reasons; the *Western School Journal*, *Manitoba Teacher*, and *ATA Magazine* all either ceased publication or came close to doing so at some point in the depression.

⁵ See *Western School Journal* [hereafter *WSJ*], vol. XI, no. 1 (January 1916), p. 1, vol. 23, no. 1 (January 1928), Departmental Bulletin; *Manitoba School Journal* [hereafter *MSJ*] vol. 1, no. 1 (September 1938), p. 1.

compulsory union check-off became the rule, every member of the teachers' federations received a copy of the journal, but, as long as membership remained voluntary, the journals reached only those who were federation members.⁶ In its most successful years, the late 1920s, *The School* claimed 10,000 subscribers, but in the 1930s and 1940s its circulation was probably a good deal less.⁷ *The School* and the two union magazines carried a great deal of advertising, but that was less true of the *Manitoba School Journal*, while the *Journal of Education for Nova Scotia* carried very little.

Advertising was an important source of revenue for several of these magazines, but most of it was of a general nature: travel and fashion, school equipment and supplies, or a variety of other sorts of ads designed to encourage readers to buy commercial goods or services. These are not the ads we are concerned with here. We focus solely on one specific type: advertisements by companies offering free, branded materials for use by teachers and pupils in classrooms.⁸ These constituted only a minor portion of the total number of advertisements and began to appear in the 1920s.⁹ Some were placed in the magazines quarterly or for several months at a time; some appeared only once or twice a year and some sporadically. Often enough the same copy might appear for several years and

6 *Manitoba Teacher*, vol. 12, no. 5 (May 1931), claimed a circulation of 3,100 at that date (p. 12). If that figure is to be believed, the journal reached 71% of the province's teachers. For the number of teachers in 1930, see M. C. Urquhart and K. A. H. Buckley, eds., *Historical Statistics of Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1965), p. 594. In 1936 Alberta introduced compulsory membership in its teachers' federation; from that point, the *ATA Magazine* went to all the province's teachers.

7 *The School*, vol. XVII, no. 3 (November 1928), p. 215. *McKim's Canadian Newspaper Directory* provided reliable figures for the circulation of the various journals on a regular basis. Some representative figures are as follows: for 1922, *WSJ* 2,250, *The School* 6,500; for 1942, *ATA Magazine* 7,020, *MSJ* 7,000, *Journal of Education for Nova Scotia* 5,500.

8 *The Book of Knowledge* and *The World Book* were also regular advertisers in the professional magazines and usually offered free teaching aids in the form of extracts from these encyclopedias (for example, "The Story of Wool" or "The Story of Bats") and lesson plans based on these. Their teaching aids were also "branded," and competition between the two companies for access to teachers and school libraries was fierce. We exclude them from consideration in this article, however: they were in the business of selling, directly, an *educational* product, and, in our view at least, their ads were more similar to those of book publishers and school supply companies than to those on which we focus here.

9 We are not sure why this type of advertising began to make a concerted appearance in the 1920s. Examining advertising in Canadian newspapers, Russell Johnston argues that in the period 1900 to 1920 ad agencies increasingly turned to market research when placing their advertisements. Such research allowed these agencies to target consumers according to a particular periodical. Women were one of the first groups to be singled out as consumers. By the 1920s, agencies targeting teachers' magazines may well have focused on teachers, particularly women teachers, and, through them, children and parents, as a new, specialized consumer market. Russell Johnston, "Partisan Politics, Market Research, and Media Buying in Canada," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, vol. 83, no. 4 (Winter 2006), p. 919, and *Selling Themselves*, chap. 6.

in several magazines. Cumulatively, however, there were hundreds. Only in the later 1950s and 1960s did their frequency begin to diminish.

IT IS NOT HARD to see why these professional magazines would accept such advertising: it provided one more, and sometimes a badly needed, source of revenue. But what advantage did these advertisements give the companies that sponsored them? There were, after all, other ways of marketing products to children and their parents.¹⁰ The obvious answer is that a large — potentially very large — captive audience would be exposed to a brand name, in some cases day in, day out, for months or even years at a time. It appeared, in other words, one good way to build a future market of loyal consumers. More specifically, such advertising offered several opportunities. Companies could use teaching materials to identify a generic product with a particular brand: not “tissue,” for example, but “Kleenex”; not “toothpaste” but “Colgate’s Ribbon Dental Cream.” The ads were also used to market a new or unfamiliar product, like the advantages of nylon over older clothing materials or, vice versa, the virtues of traditional materials like wool or cotton in the face of territorial invaders like nylon.¹¹ The ads could help wean parents, through their children, from the use of cheap, home-made concoctions, converting them to commercially prepared and mass-marketed products: branded toothpastes, for example, instead of a mixture of water, salt, and baking soda. Similarly, though it was rarely explicitly stated, the teaching materials from the American Can Company were part of a continuing campaign to sell women — in this case home economics teachers, students, and, through them, mothers — on the advantage of tinned vegetables and fruits over the arduous and time-consuming process of putting up preserves at home, and equally to undermine the market of manufacturers of glass jars, rubber sealers, and the other accoutrements of home canning. In yet other cases, the aim was to create a positive image of a company as a good corporate citizen and a valuable contributor to the social and economic welfare of the community (see Figure 2).

There were also constraints on this form of advertising. The free material had to fit snugly into, and reflect the curricular emphases embedded in, the prescribed programme of studies. It had to be justified as primarily educational in nature and seen by teachers as a useful addition

10 One alternative was radio and, later, television. For the intrusion of advertising into children’s programming in the United States and the debate over the commercial versus educational functions of radio, see Spring, *Educating the Consumer-Citizen*, pp. 114ff; on the uses of magazines, see p. 193.

11 In 1927 the Association of American Soap and Glycerine Products, facing increased competition from an emerging cosmetics industry, created a “Cleanliness Institute” that focused, in the first instance, on schoolchildren, providing “posters, flyers, pamphlets, and teachers’ guides.” See Vinikas, *Soft Soap, Hard Sell*, pp. 85–87.



Napoleon helped Alberta

History students remembering Waterloo and all that may find this hard to believe.

But the fact remains that Napoleon Bonaparte gave the sugar beet its first real start in life. France at the time was surrounded by enemies, and so Napoleon encouraged the building of sugar beet factories.

Today sugar beet raising and sugar refining form a major industry in Alberta, bringing employment, an extra crop and extra revenue to many citizens of the Sunshine Province.

FREE!
"ENERGY FOR BREAKFAST"
 A school-age story telling how sugar is grown and refined in Western Canada. Copies available for the asking; also posters and information for use in Classroom projects. Write . . .
Canadian Sugar Factories Ltd.
 RAYMOND, ALTA.

NO FINER SUGAR HAS EVER
BEEN MADE



"LOOK FOR THE MAPLE LEAF"

Figure 2: *ATA Magazine*, January 1954, p. 1.

to classroom resources. It had, in other words, to be construed as a legitimate part of the educational enterprise, not just another variation of commercial advertising.¹²

This was accomplished by shaping the materials to capitalize on the larger issues of social or educational concern in the period. Teaching aids could be linked to the promotion of Canadian identity, patriotism, or the defence of the nation. They could be marketed as contributions to the school health movement, which included both the medical inspection of schoolchildren and classroom instruction on such topics as healthy eating habits, the proper care of teeth, or personal hygiene. Advertisements promised to ease the daily pressures of lesson preparation and traded on the broader

¹² The magazines also included many advertisements directed at teachers themselves — for personal hygiene products like shampoo, toothpaste, soap, and other cleansers. But in these ads no attempt was made to claim the value was primarily “educational” in nature, and their pitch was comparable to the equally common ads for clothing, shoes, and travel. The same company might well produce both kinds of advertising, but the rationales were sharply distinguished.

enthusiasm for audio-visual aids — radio, phonographs, slides, filmstrips, and movies — that promised to improve and enliven instruction. And they could take advantage of the rhetoric of progressive education: the importance of interest and activity methods as motivational tools and as better ways of learning; the concomitant and near-universal enthusiasm of the educational leadership for the “project method”; the notion that “the whole child goes to school,” a slogan that put new emphasis on the importance of paying attention to the physical health and emotional well-being of the child; the link between the school and “real life,” the social and occupational activities of the larger community; better provision for a variety of learning styles and range of abilities; and, running through all of this, the enthusiasm for expertise and the glamour of “scientific” methods in teaching and learning. Altogether, advertisers incorporated a *mélange* of these ideas, trying to touch as many bases as possible to legitimize their teaching aids in the eyes of the teachers and educational authorities who could give access to their classrooms and ultimately to the children, who could be treated, among other things, as “consumers in training.”

A different form of legitimation was also at work. Women constituted the bulk of the work force in the schools, and, almost without exception, advertising attempted to exploit idealized images of the woman teacher. Invariably, in pictures and sketches, she was well-coiffed, clothed in stylish but appropriately modest dresses or skirts and blouses, and in command of her charges, emanating an aura of competence and experience combined with youthful vigour. She was, moreover, professionally *au courant*, not simply willing to try out, but eager to adopt, the newest and best pedagogical tools. However remote from reality they might be, particularly in the circumstances of teaching in Canada’s one-room rural schools, the ads offered compelling images of what the good teacher represented and what real teachers might, in their most optimistic moments at least, identify with.¹³

PRODUCING THE TEACHING aids cost money, and not surprisingly they were promoted, nearly exclusively, by national or international firms with substantial resources, mostly those with major advertising departments or even distinct educational resource departments.¹⁴ There

13 In this respect, the ads we discuss here meshed nicely with the much larger body of fashion and travel ads in the educational press that portrayed the woman teacher as a sophisticated and adventurous consumer. On self-images that embraced the adventure, sense of independence, and consumer power that teaching could offer young women, see the fine revisionist piece by Rebecca Priegert Coulter, “‘Girls Just Want to Have Fun’: Women Teachers and the Pleasures of the Profession,” in Rebecca Priegert Coulter and Helen Harper, eds., *History is Hers: Women Educators in Twentieth Century Ontario* (Calgary: Detselig, 2005), pp. 211–229.

14 One can get some sense of the value of the materials by comparing them with price lists of similar materials being sold by the large educational supply or publishing companies. In the interwar years, maps ranged from \$4 to \$9. See, for example, *ATA Magazine* (April 1923), facing p. 1; (May 1931),

were exceptions, but these were unusual (again, see Figure 2). Two kinds of organizations were involved: most commonly, individual firms selling particular products, but also trade associations promoting more generally the virtues of an industry. Altogether there were dozens of industries engaged in these activities,¹⁵ but the list of regulars was much smaller. For example, in the 1920s the most frequent advertisers were Colgate and Lifebuoy. In the 1930s recurring ads appeared from Shredded Wheat, Bristol-Myers, and Canadian Industries Limited (CIL).¹⁶ In the 1940s these were joined by Canadian Cellucotton (Kotex and Kleenex), Nonspi (a deodorant), and the American Can Company.¹⁷ In the 1950s and 1960s many of the same companies continued to advertise, while new entrants included the oil, banking, and insurance industries. All of the materials, in any case, had one thing in common: they were clearly branded, either with a company logo or with the product's brand name, and usually both.

All of the ads were published in black and white, as was true of the other advertising material in the magazines. Some were a modest quarter- or half-page in size, though many of the most frequent ads occupied a full page or even a double page. In terms of design, some showed a remarkable frugality of imagination: as one might anticipate, advertisements by the Canadian Life Insurance Officers Association tended toward an entire page of tedious fine print; the banks were not much

inside front cover. Framed pictures suitable for classroom walls ranged from \$4 to \$7; see *ATA Magazine* (December 1924), p. 4. A non-commercial wall chart of Canadian birds was valued at \$3; see *The School*, vol. XI, no. 7 (March 1923), p. 495. Eight-page souvenir booklets for handouts from a teacher to her pupils were on sale for 12 cents each; see *ATA Magazine* (June 1935), inside front cover. In a flyer advertising the free Neilson "chocolate bar" map, Copp Clark noted that an equivalent map it offered for sale was listed at \$7.50; see Glenbow Archives, M2004, Crowsnest Pass School Division No. 63, File #834, Secretary-Treasurer, Blairmore School Board to Copp Clark Co., December 23, 1935, attached Copp Clark flyer.

15 The longest list of available materials we have located includes 65 companies or trade associations (see *ATA Magazine* [October 1941], pp. 61–63), but many of these companies never advertised in the professional magazines. After offering his own list of companies, one teacher advised that "if you are searching for special material for . . . a special project write to the most widely advertised companies who will generally send plenty of illustrative material and sometimes samples if you clearly state your purpose." See *ATA Magazine* (November 1939), p. 18. One geography teacher, advocating the usefulness of such material, claimed he had accumulated 200 booklets, "which are in constant use and have proved invaluable." See *The School*, vol. XXIII, no. 5 (January 1935), p. 430.

16 Canadian Industries Limited was created in the late 1920s, bringing together the Canadian Salt Company and Canadian Explosives Limited, along with chemical and nickel companies. CIL manufactured a variety of products including paints, plastics, textiles, fertilizers, and explosives. See "Canadian Industries Ltd.," *Industrial Canada* (May 1967), retrieved July 18, 2006 from <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/business/cc-c-canadian.htm>.

17 In Canada, Kotex and Kleenex were manufactured and marketed by Canadian Cellucotton, the Canadian division of Kimberly-Clark.

better.¹⁸ Occasionally an ad would teeter on the edge of the other extreme, with copy so unlikely that it risked descent into parody (again, see Figure 2). But, in the main, the major advertisers were on top of their craft. They favoured designs exploiting bold headers, taut prose, and catchy slogans. They used techniques common to advertisements in mass magazines such as the comic-strip, advice columns, or testimonials, though with teachers, school inspectors, or educational experts playing the leading roles.¹⁹ In drawings, and more rarely photographs, advertisers presented images of the material on offer. One favourite picture showed a teacher, teaching aid in hand, working her magic in a classroom full of mesmerized children. Some companies had their own cartoon characters: “Nancy Nylon,” sometimes capped with a mortarboard, trumpeted the virtues of the modern miracle fabric from CIL.²⁰ Some international companies were able to exploit household names: in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Canadian Cellucotton offered free films by Walt Disney Productions to market Kleenex and Kotex, and a favourite children’s comic book character, “Little Lulu,” graced the Kleenex ads.²¹

Obtaining the material was straightforward. The advertisement included a box with the company’s name and address, a check-off list of the materials requested, and a space for the teacher’s name, school address, and number of children in the class. The teacher simply filled in the information and put her request in the mail. The material itself was available free of charge, though occasionally a school board might have to pay postage. It was nearly always a permanent addition to classroom resources; the exceptions were filmstrips and movies, which came free but usually had to be returned to the company or distributor.

WHAT KIND of teaching aids did companies make available to schools? They were, in the first place, targeted at two distinct audiences. A minority were designed specifically for specialist subject instruction in the high school — for home economics, commercial, and science classes.²² The majority were aimed at, roughly, Grades IV to X and mostly intended to contribute to those subject areas in which textbooks were notoriously inadequate and supplementary classroom resources tended to be thinnest — health instruction, social studies, and general science. We found

18 See, for example, *Manitoba Teacher*, vol. 34, no. 2 (September–October 1955), pp. 35, 45.

19 For these techniques in mass magazines, see Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, pp. 14, 21–22, 111; Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*, p. 170; Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, pp. 330–332.

20 See, for example, *ATA Magazine* (October 1955), inside front cover.

21 See *The School*, vol. XXXVI, no. 1 (October 1947), p. 77; *ATA Magazine* (October 1949), p. 52; (October 1950), p. 45; (April 1954), p. 37.

22 For example, in 1961 CIL was offering various booklets “designed to provide . . . information on chemical processes and applications,” safety posters for “school chemical laboratories,” and films “closely related to the chemistry curriculum.” See *MSJ*, vol. 23, no. 1 (September 1961), p. 6.

no advertising primarily directed at the core subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Pamphlets or booklets were most commonly on offer. For example, Salada provided “The Story of the Tea Plant,” the Johns-Manville Company, “The Story of Asbestos,” and INCO (the International Nickel Company of Canada), “The Story of Nickel.” CIL advertised “educational booklets” on its products such as salt, cellophane, and nylon. The American Can Company provided a number of pamphlets such as “The Canned Food Handbook,” “What About the Liquid in the Can,” “What Makes Canned Food Keep,” and “High School Manual on Commercial Canned Foods.” Similarly, in 1949 the Bank of Montreal offered a pamphlet, “My Bank and How Can I Use It.”²³

Another common feature was the wall chart showing the process of manufacturing from raw material to finished product. From the Shredded Wheat company came “The Story of Wheat.” In the 1930s CIL provided a wall chart and samples of its new product, cellophane. There were free maps as well: in addition to its pamphlets, Salada provided a map of India and Ceylon, and Imperial Oil, a map of Newfoundland and Labrador.²⁴

A number of companies combined all of these methods in one comprehensive package. The Lifebuoy campaign is but one example. Canadian Cellucotton provided an instruction manual titled “This is Why,” a “jumbo size Menstrual Physiology chart,” and a booklet for students titled “As One Girl to Another” (Figure 3). CIL had a booklet about cellophane, “together with a wall chart showing how ‘Cellophane’ is made, samples of ‘Cellophane,’ and the Canadian Pulp from which it is made.” Ipana offered a “5-Way Plan” with a teacher’s manual, coloured wall chart, ten-point daily care score sheet, a larger-than-life cardboard tooth

23 “On the Ruins of an Industry Grew Ceylon’s Tea Plantations” [Salada], *The School*, vol. XVI, no. 1 (September 1927), p. ii; “The Story of Asbestos” [Johns-Manville Company], *MSJ*, vol. 3, no. 1 (September 1940), p. 24; “The Exciting Story of Nickel” [INCO], *ATA Magazine* (May 1958), p. 1; “Salt played a part in the Indian Mutiny” [CIL], *The School*, vol. XIX, no. 9 (May 1931), p. iii; “Nylon” [CIL], *ATA Magazine* (November 1949), p. 52; other CIL examples include a coloured educational chart, “Aluminum from Mine to Market,” and pamphlets, “Canada’s Aluminum Co.” and “Aluminum Company of Canada,” *ATA Magazine* (April 1940), p. 19; “Important Facts you should know about Canned Foods” [American Can Company], *The School*, vol. XXXIV, no. 10 (June 1946), p. 829; “Free! Teacher-and-student Booklet for Home Economics, Social Studies Classes!” [American Can Company], *ATA Magazine* (April 1950), inside front material; “Unbiased books on banking” [Bank of Montreal], *Manitoba Teacher*, vol. 25, no. 2 (September–October 1946), p. 2.

24 “The Story of Wheat” [Nabisco], *The School*, vol. XXXIV, no. 3 (November 1937), p. 277; “Modern Achievement” [cellophane, CIL], *ATA Magazine* (September 1934), p. 20; “On the Ruins of an Industry Grew Ceylon’s Tea Plantations” [Salada], *The School*, vol. XVI, no. 1 (September 1927), p. ii; “Information about Oil” [Imperial Oil], *Manitoba Teacher*, vol. 29, no. 2 (September–October 1950), p. 3.

**NOW—
menstrual instruction
is so much easier!**

Kotex offers teachers an Instruction Manual, New Charts and Booklets for students—ideal for classroom use—and they're FREE!

No longer need it be difficult for you to teach the facts about menstruation. Send now for this free, 3-way teaching plan:

1. "This Is Why"—the new instruction manual, a complete, modern, authoritative review of menstrual hygiene.
2. "Menstrual Physiology"—a set of full colour charts illustrates the menstrual process in easy-to-understand diagrams. Size 25" x 22".
3. "As One Girl To Another"—a helpful handbook to distribute among your students, lists do's and don'ts every girl should know, answers intimate questions, gives suggestions on bathing, dancing, swimming, sports.
4. All material absolutely free. Mail coupon today. Just tell us how many books you'll need. Compliments of KOTEX Sanitary Napkins.

FREE!

Mail this coupon to Canadian Cellucotton Products Co. Ltd., 330 University Avenue, Toronto 1, Ontario, Dept. 1P5-1J. Please send me, with the compliments of Kotex:

1 full-colour jumbo size Menstrual Physiology chart for classroom use.

1 copy of the brand-new, 15-page teaching manual "This Is Why".

.....copies of the bright booklet "As One Girl To Another" to distribute to my girls.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... Prob.....

Figure 3: ATA Magazine, March 1945, p. 16.

model for dental care demonstrations, and a dental health certificate for the student (Figure 4).²⁵

From the late 1940s, advertising was also moving from print to film. Canadian Cellucotton provided, through its education department, the Walt Disney productions "The Story of Menstruation" and "How To Catch a Cold." Shell advertised a series of colour films on oil and related subjects, and CIL offered films on various chemical processes. Imperial Oil made available a package of five booklets, three filmstrips, and ten films. The Canadian Life Insurance Officers' Association offered

25 "Now – menstrual instruction is so much easier" [Canadian Cellucotton], *ATA Magazine* (March 1945), p. 16; *The School*, vol. XXII, no. 2 (October 1933), p. 183 [cellophane, CIL]; "How to Brush Teeth Correctly is easily learned through Ipana's 5-way Dental Care Plan!" *The School* vol. XXXIV, no. 3 (November 1945), pp. ii–iii; "Their Future Smiles Need Help Now!" [Ipana], *ATA Magazine* (October 1949), pp. 36–37; "Now it's so easy to teach better dental habits" [Ipana], *Manitoba Teacher*, vol. 24, no. 2 (September 1945), p. 30.

*Their
Future
Smiles
Need Help
Now!*

Help your pupils form better dental health habits through effective classroom programmes!



Encourage your boys and girls now, during these important formative years, to give teeth and gums the regular care they need. Your timely guidance can help them enjoy better dental health not only in childhood but through their adult lives as well.

Ipana's popular 5-Way Plan can contribute greatly to the success of your classroom programme. Use the vivid wall chart to point out why teeth need regular home care. Teach the correct method of brushing teeth and massaging gums by means of the larger-than-life-size cardboard model of a set of teeth. Follow the carefully-plotted programme outlined in the Teacher's Manual.

You can check the children's progress on the individual Daily Care Score Sheet and present the attractive Dental Health Certificates as their dental habits improve.

This valuable material has been specially designed for your benefit. It is absolutely FREE. Send in the coupon on the opposite page.

Thousands of teachers find Ipana's 5-Way Plan an effective aid in teaching elements of modern dental care.



A Product of British-Meyers Made in Canada

FREE

Send today for Ipana's 5-Way Plan for a successful Dental Health Programme, including Grant Certificate Award for class qualifications and Certificate Awards for individual pupils.

1. Teacher's Manual, "Use this 5-Way Plan for Dental Health!"
2. Coloured wall chart entitled "Why do teeth ache?"
3. 10-point Daily Care Score Sheet (holds records for 20 children).
4. Tooth brushing model—larger-than-life-size cardboard model of a set of teeth. For dental care demonstrations.
5. Grant Certificate awarded when entire class qualifies, plus individual Certificates for pupils who qualify under plan requirements.

FILL IN THIS COUPON COMPLETELY—AND MAIL IT NOW!

British-Meyers Company of Canada Limited,
Educational Dept. 889, 1015 St. Antoine Street, Montreal 30, Que.

Please send me Ipana's 5-Way Plan for Dental Health which includes:

- Wall Chart
- Model of Teeth
- Daily Care Score Sheet
- Teacher's Folder
- Dental Certificates

Teacher's Name (Mr., Mrs., Miss) _____
 Name of School _____
 School Address _____
 City _____ Province _____
 Grade Taught _____ Class Enrollment _____

36 The A.T.A. Magazine October 1949 Vol 30 No 2 37

Figure 4: ATA Magazine, October 1949, pp. 36–37.

filmstrips such as “Careers in Canadian Life Insurance Underwriting” and “The Life Insurance Story.”²⁶

WHAT ADVANTAGES would purportedly accrue if teachers made use of these teaching aids? First and foremost, they were assured that the materials would reduce their preparation time and make their classes more interesting, thus holding children’s attention. In 1923 Colgate’s “Classroom Helps” consisted of dental lectures and props that would make the “lesson graphic and interesting with a minimum outlay of time.” In 1942 Shredded Wheat provided a free set of 36 cards on “How Canada Travels” to teach “Colour Expression”; each card had “an outline picture of a single mode of transportation, to be coloured by the children, in flat tones, with crayons or water colours. A real help to you in the classroom.” The American Can Company offered free recipes to

26 “The Story of Menstruation” [Canadian Cellucotton], *The School*, vol. XXXVI, no. 1 (October 1947), p. 77; “Help for Your Fight to Prevent the Spread of Colds” [Canadian Cellucotton], *ATA Magazine* (April 1954), p. 36; “Shell Presents!” *ATA Magazine* (November 1954), p. 2; for CIL, see, for example, *MSJ*, vol. 23, no. 1 (September 1961), p. 6. Similarly, CIL offered a “Hollywood film” titled “This is Nylon”; see “Nylon,” *ATA Magazine* (October 1951): p. 33; *Manitoba Teacher*, vol. 42, no. 3 (November–December 1963), p. 59. For life insurance filmstrips, see *ATA Magazine* (October 1966), inside front cover.

home economics teachers “to help you and your students!” Ipana boasted about its aids, “Now it’s so easy to teach better dental habits.”²⁷

Advertising also indicated that the material would help teach a difficult topic. This line of reasoning was particularly evident in ads for feminine hygiene products. Cellucotton’s ad, for example, advised: “Make sure the girls in *your* classroom know what to do — what not to do — on ‘difficult days’ of the month . . . it’s important to their health and peace-of-mind. . . . The new booklet — ‘As One Girl to Another’ — provides you with an easy way to give them the right answer to this intimate problem. It’s written in their own language. . . .”²⁸

Whenever possible, advertisers capitalized on the work of public health activists who had spent the previous two decades illuminating the poor health conditions in Canadian cities, among the rural poor, and among Canadian schoolchildren. Since the late nineteenth century, public school teachers had increasingly instructed children on basic sanitary measures: washing their hands and faces, combing their hair, using handkerchiefs to blow their noses, and covering their mouths when they coughed. In the years after the Great War, germ theory was grafted onto the previous curriculum so that students were taught about the nature and prevention of communicable disease, the existence of harmful micro-organisms in food and waste products, and the importance of personal and environmental cleanliness.²⁹ Thus advertisements emphasized the role of commercial teaching aids in preventing illness. Opposite the caption “Tooth decay is a physical defect commonly found among children of school age,” a Colgate ad featured a picture of alert, interested children receiving their Colgate “Ribbon” of toothpaste.³⁰ Lifebuoy noted, “Teachers take a personal risk in touching the pupils’ books, home work papers, etc., and even a clean looking paper may come from

27 “Colgate’s,” *The School*, vol. XI, no. 7 (March 1923), p. ix; “New set of 36 cards” [Nabisco], *The School*, vol. XXXI, no. 3 (November 1942), p. 263 (“With one card as a starter, children eagerly begin collecting a complete set, by saving other cards from Nabisco Shredded Wheat packages at home”); “Free! To Home Economics Teachers!” [American Can Company], *MSJ*, vol. 27, no. 2 (September–October 1948), p. 47; “Now it’s so easy to teach better dental habits” [Ipana], *Manitoba Teacher*, vol. 24, no. 2 (September 1945), pp. 30–31.

28 “How’s a girl to manage?” [Canadian Cellucotton], *The School*, secondary edition, vol. XXX, no. 9 (May 1942), p. 827.

29 Mona Gleason, “Between Education and Memory: Health and Childhood in English-Canada, 1900–1950,” *Scientia Canadensis*, vol. 29, no. 1 (2006), pp. 49–72, and “Race, Class, and Health: School Medical Inspection and ‘Healthy’ Children in British Columbia, 1890 to 1930,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2002), p. 100; Christabelle Laura Sethna, “The Facts of Life: The Sex Instruction of Ontario Public School Children, 1900–1950” (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 1995), pp. 178–179.

30 “And a Tube of Colgate’s for each of the Class,” *The School*, vol. XIV, no. 1 (September 1925), pp. 72–73.

a home where there is dangerous illness. Our Lifebuoy Wash-up Chart movement tends to correct this. . .”³¹

Even when such claims were unusually dubious, advertisers often worked hard to emphasize the health benefits of their products. Willard’s Chocolates illustrated its ad with pencil drawings of “Delicious and Nutritious, the Willow Milk Twins.” Teachers could order, in lots of 50, a 20-page booklet on “The Story of Chocolate” that included the “diverting adventures” of the twins, along with a more modest supply of chocolate bars. Positioned beside the twins was a young teacher and the following bit of doggerel:

This is the teacher who teaches her class
To work hard and study in order to pass
She knows how important the rules of health are
So she gives out as prizes a Willow Milk Bar.³²

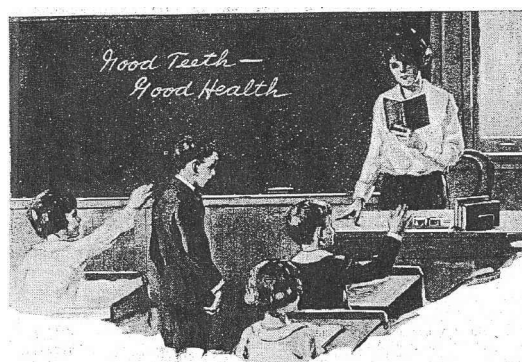
Nor did advertisers miss the opportunity to link their products to the intellectual development of children. For example, one of the most urgent issues facing teachers in the first three or four decades of the century was “grade retardation” — a term describing the large number of children, most commonly boys, who had failed a grade or more and were falling far behind most of their peers. Colgate’s teaching aids, the company claimed, would help address the problem. A 1923 ad in the *Western School Journal* stated that “every protective measure pays, for modern educators and scientists have proved that proper care of children’s teeth builds sturdy bodies and eager active minds.” An asterisk appeared after “minds” and down in the bottom left-hand corner was a small note: “actual tests conducted for five years in 34 public schools with an attendance of over 25,000 children show that proper care of children’s teeth reduced backwardness among pupils by 50 percent.”³³ In the same year the *Western School Journal* ran a different Colgate ad: “To-day’s teacher understands the little laggard. Instead of scolding him, she tries to correct his physical handicaps — neglected teeth and bad health habits. Better teeth and brighter minds result from classroom lessons in dental hygiene” (Figure 5).³⁴

31 “New Feature in the ‘Lifebuoy Wash-Up Chart’ Movement,” *The School*, vol. XIX, no. 2 (October 1930), p. 201.

32 “Willards Chocolates Ltd.,” *The School*, vol. XX, no. 1 (September 1931), p. 101.

33 “Protect Young Teeth from Grit” [Colgate], *WSJ*, vol. XVIII, no. 7 (September 1923), p. 681. The “tests” were almost certainly American. We know of no study like this in Canada, and the sheer size of the sample points in the same direction.

34 “Have You a Laggard Holding Back the Class?” [Colgate], *WSJ*, vol. XVIII, no. 8 (October 1923), p. 721.

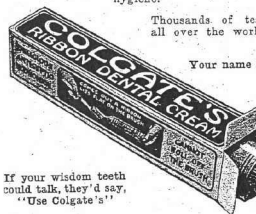


Have You a Laggard Holding Back the Class?

To-day's teacher understands the little laggard. Instead of scolding him, she tries to correct his physical handicaps—neglected teeth and bad health habits. Better teeth and brighter minds result from classroom lessons in dental hygiene.

Thousands of teachers all over the world are

using Colgate's Classroom Helps for teaching dental hygiene. The Helps will be sent free, once a year, to teachers. They offer practical suggestions and individual equipment—reminder cards; dental lectures, booklets, and a tube of Ribbon Dental Cream for each child. And for the teacher—a dainty week-end box.



If your wisdom teeth could talk, they'd say, "Use Colgate's!"



Your name on the coupon brings your supply.

Colgate & Co., Limited

W. G. M. SHEPHERD
Montreal

Sole Agent for
Canada

Colgate & Co., Limited, Dept. 4, 74 St. Ambrose St., Montreal, Que.

I am a teacher in the School District No.

No. of pupils in my direct charge Reference (Name of official)

Your Name Town Population

County Province Please send me, free of charge "Colgate's Classroom Helps."
(Write here, accurate express or mailing address, stating which)

Truth in Advertising Implies Honesty in Manufacture

Figure 5: *Western School Journal*, vol. XVIII, no. 8 (October 1923), p. 721.

Ads in the professional magazines also linked school to home. Indeed, they explicitly informed teachers that their influence would be felt not only by their students but by parents too. Yet another 1923 Colgate ad told teachers, “[E]xtend the scope of your teaching even further. The child takes the dental cream home and, by example, teaches his family how to care for the teeth properly.” Similarly, a 1936 ad for Ipana toothpaste emphasized that “any mothers and fathers today find the modern health programme of the classroom a constant source of knowledge. For, almost invariably, their children are eager to repeat at home the health rules so carefully taught by school teachers.” Advertisers also encouraged teachers to take responsibility for topics mothers were unwilling to teach their children. A Cellucotton ad stated, “Unfortunately, mothers often hesitate to discuss intimate problems with their daughters. That’s why many of *your* girls look to you,

their teacher, for facts on the vitally important subject ... menstrual hygiene.”³⁵

Parents, and especially mothers, were responsible for the health and education of children. Teachers, particularly female ones, could act as second mothers. A 1926 Lifebuoy ad was explicit, proclaiming: “A Message for the Children’s Other Mother.”³⁶ Teachers could not replace the influence of parents, however. Teachers needed parents’ cooperation, but, according to the ads, they were also burdened with an additional weight of responsibility: parents were often unaware of the scientific standards of the day or unwilling to discuss health issues with children. Through the pupils, teachers could help educate parents as well.

EMBEDDED in most of the ads were the language and keywords of progressive pedagogy. These emphasized the products’ ability to make lessons interesting, keep children’s attention, and encourage children’s participation in their own education. The advertisers for Shredded Wheat titled one of their ads “Firing the Spark,” claiming that their colouring books provided teachers with “fresh” material with “child-interest” that could stimulate the “instinctive inventiveness of young pupils”; teachers could also obtain a “supplementary folder” by a “noted illustrator, on the value of colouring and drawing in developing children’s individualities.” In selling Windsor Salt, a CIL advertisement argued that its educational booklet would “encourage habits of enquiry in the dullest pupils.” Cellucotton and Walt Disney advertised the film “How to Catch a Cold” as presenting scientific facts with “fun and imagination.”³⁷

Advertisers not only used the language of progressivism, but also exploited its teaching techniques. The nicest example here is the British American Oil Company’s “Project Kit” (Figure 6). Students could create from cardboard “a brightly coloured assortment of derricks, storage tanks, railway cars, and even an oil tanker,” measuring “60” by 40” when put together in ‘village’ form.” The kit arrived “in four large cardboard sheets which children can cut out and assemble.” The ad noted that “modern educational methods, which stress the visual approach to education, will approve this means of teaching the grade school child. . . .”³⁸

35 “Do you Teach Dental Hygiene by the Colgate Method?” *The School*, vol. XI, no. 6 (February 1923), p. ix; “Children Instructed in Gum Massage Bring Home a Splendid Lesson to Parents. . .” [Ipana], *The School*, vol. XXV, no. 2 (October 1936), p. iii; “How’s a girl to manage?” [Canadian Cellucotton], *The School*, secondary edition, vol. XXX, no. 9 (May 1942), p. 827 [italics in original].

36 “A Clean Hands, Better Health Campaign” [Lifebuoy], *WSJ*, vol. XXI, no. 3 (March 1926), p. 725.

37 “Firing the Spark” [Nabisco], *ATA Magazine* (May 1937), inside back cover; “Salt played a part in the Indian Mutiny” [CIL], *The School*, vol. XIX, no. 9 (May 1931), p. iii; “Help for Your Fight to Prevent the Spread of Colds” [Canadian Cellucotton], *ATA Magazine* (April 1954), p. 36.

38 “The Story of Oil,” *ATA Magazine* (April 1950), p. 43. See also “Drafting for Victory,” *ATA Magazine* (February 1943), p. 26.

The Story of Oil

A Project Kit is being made available FREE to teachers, upon request to the British American Oil Company. This School Project Kit consists of cardboard models showing every phase of oil production, for use in grade school education.

A 14-page booklet, "The Story of Oil," is written in language a grade school child can understand, and takes them, with their teacher as guide, through the refinery, cracking unit, and finally to the gas pumps of the country. This booklet is issued with each Project Kit.

The cardboard models, a brightly coloured assortment of derricks, storage tanks, railway cars, and even an oil tanker, measures 60"x40" when put together in "village" form. It

comes in four large cardboard sheets which children can cut out and assemble.

Modern educational methods, which stress the visual approach to education, will approve this means of teaching the grade school child how one of the world's (and Canada's) most important products is discovered and manufactured. This Project Kit was pre-tested among a number of school teachers and most enthusiastically recommended by them, before being produced in quantity.

It is available free of charge to school teachers interested, by writing to the Advertising Department, The British American Oil Company Ltd., 108 Peter Street, Toronto.

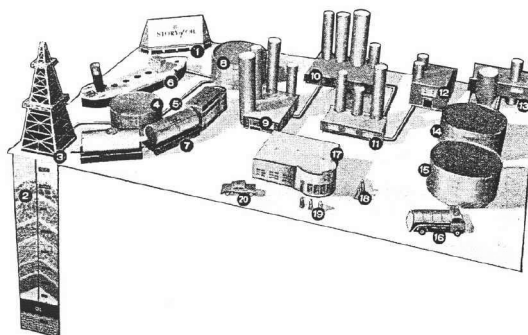


Figure 6: *ATA Magazine*, April 1950, p. 43.

Progressive education also implied being modern and innovative, an emphasis that merged well with the early-twentieth-century emphasis on expertise. Susan Bland notes for the 1940s that "advertisements aimed at mothers show an overwhelming concern for the authority of doctors, dieticians and scientists."³⁹ This was equally true of advertisements aimed at teachers. In 1944 Canadian Cellucotton claimed to offer "up-to-the-minute, helpful material" and an "authentic" instruction manual, "This is Why," which "*uncomplicates* technical facts."⁴⁰ Another ad proclaimed the manual to be "modern and authoritative ... thoroughly

39 Bland, "Henrietta the Homemaker and 'Rosie the Riveter,'" p. 605.

40 "I've wanted teaching help like this - for years!" [Canadian Cellucotton], *The School*, vol. XXXIII, no. 3 (November 1944), p. 186 [italics in original].

checked with practicing educators. It's a pioneer service, invaluable to teachers, none of whom could obtain such material without exhaustive personal research."⁴¹ A 1947 ad for the Walt Disney film "The Story of Menstruation" asserted that the film "portrays beautifully and unemotionally a phase in a normal girl's life. . . . Superstitions are replaced with scientific facts."⁴² In its film "How to Catch a Cold," Walt Disney provided "scientific" facts on cold prevention "with the careful guidance of leading medical and educational authorities."⁴³

Similarly, industries proclaimed they were up-to-date through charts showing modern manufacturing methods or the uses of their product in the modern world.⁴⁴ In doing so they also attempted to ease consumers' concerns about modern methods and products. In providing samples of cellophane, CIL attempted to familiarize potential customers with its new product and overcome consumer doubt. As well, companies sought to re-orient consumers to the new uses of older goods.⁴⁵ The wall chart entitled "The Story of Wheat" began with the raw product and, through text and pictures, illustrated the various steps in manufacturing flour; the end product, in the last panel, was not bread, however, but the company's oval-shaped "Shredded Wheat" breakfast cereal.

Just to cover all the bases, advertisers even claimed that their products could help counter consumers' fears about the negative effects of modernity.⁴⁶ Ipana linked fears of physical and moral softness to the need to use

41 "Two New Teaching Aids on Menstrual Education" [Canadian Cellucotton], *ATA Magazine* (October–November 1944), p. 20.

42 "The Story of Menstruation," *The School*, vol. XXXVI, no. 1 (October 1947), p. 77.

43 "Help for Your Fight to Prevent the Spread of Colds," *ATA Magazine* (April 1954), p. 36.

44 See, for example, CIL ad, *Manitoba Teacher*, vol. 11, no. 8 (October 1930), p. 14; "The Exciting Story of Nickel" [INCO], *Manitoba Teacher*, vol. 37, no. 1 (May–June 1958), p. 53; "The Story of Wheat" [Nabisco], *ATA Magazine* (March 1937), p. 19; "Aluminum" [Aluminum Company of Canada], *The School*, vol. XXVII, no. 4 (December 1938), p. 355. Advertisers commonly linked products to modernity in the 1920s. See Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, passim; Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed*, pp. 109–123.

45 Examining turn-of-the-century grocery store displays, Keith Walden notes that this method of advertising not only illustrates the cultural changes created by industrial capitalism, but at the time was an attempt to ease consumer concerns about new products being "unnatural" by linking the finished product to its natural origins; see Walden, "Speaking Modern: Language, Culture, and Hegemony in Grocery Window Displays, 1887–1920," *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 70, no. 3 (1989), pp. 302–304.

46 For insights into anti-modernism and the fears of modernity in Canada, see Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Anti-modernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); Michael Dawson, *The Mountie: From Dime Novel to Disney* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1998). For the United States, see, for example, T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981).

its toothpaste. A 1936 ad promised that “every day as you drill your pupils in gum massage you advance them farther along the road to a lifetime of firm, healthy gums and sound, white teeth . . . as any dentist will tell you, gums need regular exercise — with daily massage — to counteract the health-robbing effects of today’s modern diet of soft, well-cooked foods. . . . Without work to do, without the exercise the coarse, fibrous foods of yesteryear gave them, gums become lazy, weak, flabby. . . .” With daily drill, “Small wonder Canadian parents owe you, their children’s teachers, such a debt of gratitude!”⁴⁷ (For a second example, this time in March 1939, see Figure 7.)

Yet another emphasis was the appeal to Canadian identity. A 1929 Lifebuoy advertisement sold its “Wash-Up” campaign using a picture of a teacher looking at the hands of a boy, with a map of Canada as a backdrop; the caption read, “A Realizable Ideal: ‘Clean hands and face for every pupil.’”⁴⁸ A CIL cellophane ad suggested that “in your search for subject matter for classroom study, you consider the history of this new industry which has so revolutionized merchandising methods, stimulated Canadian progress and aided in preserving the purity of our foodstuffs and protecting the health of our people.”⁴⁹ The company offered, among its other teaching aids, not just any old sample of pulp, but a sample of genuine *Canadian* pulp. Johns-Manville promised that “The Story of Asbestos” told “the absorbing story of Canada’s leadership in furnishing the world with Asbestos, ‘the Magic Mineral.’”⁵⁰ The Canadian Coal Association offered a 60-page “Facts Booklet” titled “The Story of Canada’s Coal.”⁵¹ The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Imperial Oil, and INCO produced, among other things, picture sets of important moments in Canadian history.⁵² Ads for the American Can Company linked the company to a Canadian audience by offering recipes “Using Canada’s Canned Foods” and providing pamphlets such as “Canada’s Food Rules” and “Help Make Canada Strong.”⁵³

At other times, industries linked Canada to the British Empire, the monarchy, and the achievements of the white man’s burden.⁵⁴ According to a

47 “You’re Developing Healthy Gums” [Ipana], *The School*, vol. XXXV, no. 1 (September 1936), p. iii.

48 “Start your pupils on a lifelong programme of good health” [Lifebuoy], *The School*, vol. XVIII, no. 1 (September 1929), p. iii.

49 “A Fascinating Study Series” [CIL], *The School*, vol. XXI, no. 10 (June 1933), inside front cover.

50 “The Story of Asbestos” [Johns-Manville], *ATA Magazine* (September 1940), p. 7. Similarly see *MSJ*, vol. 3, no. 1 (September 1940), p. 24.

51 *Manitoba Teacher*, vol. 27, no. 2 (September–October 1948), p. 47.

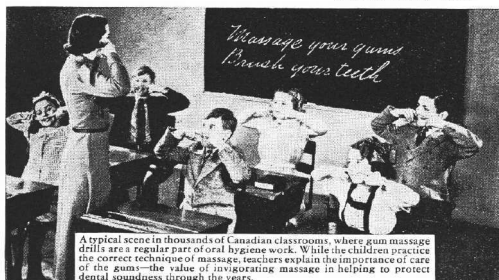
52 See *The School*, vol. XXXIV, no. 6 (February 1946), p. v; *ATA Magazine* (October 1961), p. 59; *Manitoba Teacher*, vol. 42, no. 3 (November–December 1963), p. 58.

53 “Free! To Home Economics Teachers!” [American Can Company], *Manitoba Teacher*, vol. 27, no. 2 (September–October 1948), p. 47.

54 On racist ads and more generally “commodity racism,” see Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

**"Every child in our class knows
the importance of regular gum
massage—to sound, healthy teeth"**

—written on Ontario Teacher



A typical scene in thousands of Canadian classrooms, where gum massage drills are a regular part of oral hygiene work. While the children practice the correct technique of massage, teachers explain the importance of care of the gums—the value of invigorating massage in helping to protect dental soundness through the years.

Classroom drills in gum massage are helping today's youngsters toward a future of better oral health—of brighter smiles.

TO THE schools of the nation, Canada's educators have carried the modern crusade for health. Because of their efforts, the men and women of tomorrow will be better trained in essential health habits—better equipped physically, as well as mentally, for the active years ahead. And to these youngsters, *oral hygiene* means more than the care of the teeth—it means the *care of the gums* as well.

It's easy to see why teachers stress and dentists encourage these classroom drills in *gum massage*. They know how little healthful exercise modern soft foods give the gums, and how prevalent is the tendency toward lazy, soft and sensitive gums. Robbed of the work and

stimulation they need to remain healthy, gums often signal their distress by that warning tinge of "pink" on your tooth brush.

To help invigorate these lazy gums, says modern dental science, give them the regular stimulation of massage. Many modern teachers follow this precept by holding classroom drills, explaining the simple technique of gum massage. The index finger is placed on the *outside* of the jaw to represent the tooth brush and rotated from the base of the gums toward the teeth. The children are told to practice this massage at home to speed up circulation in the gum tissues—to rouse sluggish gums to a new and healthier soundness.



Ipana is a splendid aid in gum massage. A modern dentifrice, approved by so many dentists, Ipana is designed not only to clean teeth but, with massage, to help the health of the gums.

A New Classroom Aid in Teaching Gum Massage

The makers of Ipana have prepared a striking health chart, in full colour, which is helping teachers all over the country in their class drills in gum massage. They will gladly send you one to hang in your classroom. Send today your name and address to Bristol-Myers Company of Canada, Ltd., 1239 Benoit Street, Montreal, P.Q.

Published in the Interest of Better Health by Bristol-Myers Company of Canada, Ltd., Montreal, Que.

Figure 7: *The School*, vol. XXVII, no. 7 (March 1939), p. ii.

1927 Salada ad, no tea had been grown in Ceylon 60 years before, and little in India, while "today millions of pounds of tea are sent out annually from plantations in these two countries to England, Canada, Australia and some forty other countries. . . ." The tea industry in Ceylon, it claimed, grew out of the devastation of the coffee industry. "Then it was that the white owners of these plantations decided to grow tea. . . . The most progressive British capitalists and technical experts have largely guided and directed the destiny of this great modern industry."⁵⁵ In selling Windsor Salt, CIL claimed that "the sepoy were often kept in check by being reminded of their oath. They had sworn . . . 'by their salt' . . . to remain

55 "On the Ruins of an Industry Grew Ceylon's Tea Plantations" [Salada], *The School*, vol. XVI, no. 1 (September 1927), p. ii.

faithful to Queen Victoria.”⁵⁶ The Aluminum Company of Canada not only offered the wall chart “Aluminum from Mine to Market,” but also a booklet, “The Royal Visit, 1939.”⁵⁷

During the Second World War, the rhetoric surrounding physical and mental fitness heightened as both became associated with the defence of the nation. A Bristol-Myers ad, offering teaching aids for “dental health,” “good grooming,” and “personal hygiene,” linked this material to fundamental war aims: “Those on the Home Front have a vital job to do, too. And its successful outcome depends greatly on physical fitness. For bodies as well as minds must be trained to guard Canada’s morale and well-being.” A similar ad by the same company, picturing three girls doing exercises, was captioned, “Make their Health Education a First Line of Defense.” The ad continued,

One of the finest contributions to modern teaching has been the emphasis placed on physical fitness and personal grooming by so many instructors. And in trying times like these, especially, such training is of invaluable aid in keeping self-confidence and morale at a high level. . . . In every part of the country today, effective programmes on health and hygiene in elementary grades and in high school and college curricula are helping to build the first line of defense for the next generation.⁵⁸

WE NOW turn to the other side of the coin: why would teachers want to use these commercial teaching aids, and to what extent were they actually used? There are several answers to the first question. The materials were intended to supplement existing classroom resources, enable teachers to enrich both teaching and learning, and adopt some of the exemplary teaching methods of the era. From at least the early 1920s, teachers were being told, by their Normal School instructors, by senior Department of Education officials in nearly every province, by the provincial inspectorate and urban supervisors, and by editorials and articles in the educational press, that a pedagogy based solely on textbooks, rote memorization, and exercises involving problems abstracted from real life was inadequate and that activity and problem-solving methods, and a rich fund of classroom materials, were essential to exemplary practice. Even without an overlay of progressive rhetoric, good teachers could recognize the value of materials that offered alternatives to the routines of textbook teaching, that put additional resources at their command or

56 “Salt played a part in the Indian Mutiny” [CIL], *The School*, vol. XIX, no. 9 (May 1931), p. iii.

57 “Aluminum Company of Canada, Ltd.,” *MSJ*, vol. 2, no. 8 (April 1940), p. 17.

58 “Developing HEALTH-on-the-HOME-FRONT is a War Job for all of us!” [Bristol-Myers], *The School*, secondary edition, vol. XXXII, no. 7 (March 1944), p. iii. For a variation on this header, see *Manitoba Teacher*, vol. 22, no. 5 (March–April 1944), p. 21; “Make their Health Education a First line of Defense” [Bristol-Myers], *ATA Magazine* (October 1942), p. 12; similarly, see *Journal of Education for Nova Scotia* (October 1943), p. 979.

directly into the hands of pupils, and that might stimulate interest in a way texts could not. Moreover, the branded teaching aids did not exist in a vacuum, and the boundaries between these and other sorts of supplementary material were blurred. Aside from materials available directly from departments of education, free posters, wall charts, maps, pamphlets, sample products, and films were also available from other branches of government, both provincial and federal, and from non-profit agencies like the Red Cross.⁵⁹ During the Second World War, governments and military authorities alike freely provided materials full of blatant propaganda. There was only a thin line — or none at all — between a wall chart from an Ontario or Alberta government agency trumpeting provincial mining or forestry resources and one from INCO or Imperial Oil; between the Woman's Christian Temperance Union's posters and leaflets on "Alcohol Education" and similar material from Lifebuoy on healthy minds and bodies.⁶⁰ It was not difficult, in other words, for teachers to see commercial materials as but one more useful resource, among many others, for the classroom. Nor were the claims of advertisers wildly discordant with ideas circulating among education officials. When in 1923 Colgate declared that proper care of the teeth would reduce "backwardness among children," its assertion was not far removed from the notion of the Winnipeg Board of Education in 1922 that "in connection with the health services there is an important value that is sometimes overlooked in counting cost, viz: that they lessen retardation through the interruption caused by disease, a reduction in the cost of instruction that in part offsets the cost of their maintenance."⁶¹

That, in a sense, is the positive side of the story. No less important, and probably more so, was the pedagogical poverty of Canadian classrooms. Squeezed in the 1920s by the pressures of enrolment growth, hit hard by the depression of the 1930s and then in the first half of the 1940s by the financial exigencies of World War II, even many of Canada's larger urban school boards had limited resources for classroom libraries, maps, or globes, while provincially approved textbooks were often badly outdated or inadequate without supplementary resources.⁶² But large, assessment-rich urban boards were the exception in Canada until well into the post-war era. Averaged over entire provinces, Canadian schools

59 For example, the Dominion Government's Department of the Interior routinely provided Canadian schools with its monthly bulletin, "Natural Resources, Canada." See Public Archives of Alberta [hereafter PAA], 79.334, Box 4, File 29, Correspondence with Dominion Government, 1930–1951, Deputy Minister, Dept. of the Interior, to Deputy Minister of Education, Alberta, October 31, 1930.

60 For the WCTU materials, see *MSJ*, vol. 5, no. 4 (December 1942), p. 20.

61 *Annual Report, Trustees of School District of Winnipeg No. 1 for the year ending 31 December 1922*, p. 7.

62 See, for example, the comment by Mary M. Douglas, "Geography in the Secondary School," *The School*, vol. XXIV, no. 7 (March 1936), p. 590.

were remarkably cash-poor. Consider just one indicator — per capita spending on elementary and secondary education in comparable American states and Canadian provinces in 1930–1931.⁶³ Maine spent \$14.03, New Brunswick \$7.80; Michigan spent \$28.72 and Ontario, Canada's richest province, \$16.73; Montana spent \$25.49, Alberta \$16.56; Washington spent \$21.50, British Columbia \$13.71. Inserted into a list of per capita spending by all American states, Ontario would have ranked 29th and British Columbia 36th; spending in all three Maritime provinces was comparable to that in Alabama, Arkansas, and Georgia, the three states at the bottom of the American list.

These per capita averages included spending by both urban and rural school boards, but the gap between the resources available in urban and rural areas was enormous. Depending on the decade and the province in question, anywhere from 30 to 50 per cent of Canadian children attended Canada's one- and two-room rural schools, operated by school boards with typical budgets in the late 1920s of \$1,000 to \$1,500 annually.⁶⁴ Most of that was eaten up by teachers' salaries, and whatever was left over went mainly to fuel, maintenance, and janitorial services (if any). There was not much left for classroom resources, including even up-to-date textbooks. In 1937 the Alberta school inspector responsible for the Camrose district drafted a composite portrait of the average one-room school in his area, based on the written responses of his teachers to a questionnaire that included a canvass of classroom pedagogical resources. His description went like this:

There are 22 pupils distributed among 8 grades. . . . The blackboard is of Hyloplate, and is in fairly good condition. There are no book shelves along the walls, no magazine racks, and no bulletin boards. . . . The chances are even that there will be no framed pictures. There is a flag, but no waste basket, clock, telephone, or thermometer. There is a pencil sharpener and a handbell, but . . . no set of measures, no blackboard compasses, no blackboard set-square, no music ruler. There is a yard stick. There is a dictionary and perhaps an encyclopedia. There will be a globe, usually old. There is no health chart, no physiology chart, no bird chart, no primary reading charts. Plasticine and scissors are provided. There are no building blocks. . . . There are maps of Alberta, Canada, the World, and North

63 This is total spending divided by total population, not per-pupil expenditure. The figures for the United States are for 1930 and, for Canada, 1931. The source is British Columbia, *School Finance in British Columbia*, by H. B. King (Victoria, BC, 1935), p. 70.

64 For some typical budget figures, see University of Alberta Archives, John C. Charyk Fonds, 90–43–83, Box 10, Mrs. Dorothy M. Willner, Records of Kipp School District No. 1589, Saskatchewan; J. Donald Wilson and Paul Stortz, "'May the Lord Have Mercy on You': The Rural School Problem in British Columbia in the 1920s," in Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J. Donald Wilson, eds., *Children, Teachers, and Schools in the History of British Columbia* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1995), p. 211.

America, and two of the following: Europe, South America, Asia, British Isles, Africa, Australia. There are 135 books in the library — 27 suitable for Division I, 43 suitable for Division II, 38 suitable for Division III, and 27 unsuitable for the pupils.⁶⁵

Across the country, there were individual rural schools better off than these, and many much worse off, but nothing was especially atypical about those in the Camrose inspectorate.

The teacher's job was made more difficult by the limited technologies at her disposal. In the rural school, a teacher was confronted with children in several different grades, and she had to provide masses of seat-work to keep the majority busy while she taught one grade or another. Exercises in textbooks were rarely enough. Because rural school buildings usually had a row of windows on either side, blackboard space was limited, and she needed room both for ongoing work at the board and for seat-work directions and exercises. Though duplicating machines were coming onto the market from the 1930s onwards, they were beyond the means of rural school boards and were slow to take hold even in urban schools. The near-universal substitute was the "hctograph," a slow, inefficient, and very messy way to produce multiple copies.⁶⁶

Given all these circumstances, it is not difficult to see why teachers might welcome free teaching aids of any sort, from any source. At the very least, colouring books, pamphlets, and wall charts provided additional resources for seat-work. A "project kit" could keep older children, or two or three bright and advanced ones, busy while the teacher taught the rest.⁶⁷ One

65 Cited in Report, Chief Inspector of Schools, in Alberta, Department of Education, *Annual Report 1937*, p. 69.

66 The hectograph was a concoction of chemicals that, poured into a baking tin or something similar and allowed to set, formed a gelatinous pad. Using a special hectograph pen, the teacher made a master sheet (or she could buy or acquire ready-made masters). She would then place the master face down on the pad and allow the ink to soak in. Next, she placed a succession of blank sheets on the pad and transferred the images to them. Only limited numbers of copies could be made in this way, and each successive copy was fainter and more blurry. The technique was not much use for reproducing small print or fine detail, but worked well enough for simple line drawings for primary children to colour or for exercises to connect words and pictures. For older children, it could be used to produce sets of homework or seat-work assignments. For two hectograph recipes, see *ATA Magazine* (November 1937), p. 14; *WSJ*, vol. XXIII, no. 2 (February 1928), p. 58. For the process and difficulties, see, for example, Elizabeth McLachlan, *With Unshakeable Persistence: Rural Teachers of the Depression Era* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1999), p. 28. Duplicating machines that became known as "Gestetters" were on the market in the interwar years but were expensive. The "Ditto" machine was cheaper, but in 1939 was being advertised for \$125, and that did not include the cost of ditto masters or duplicating fluid. A complete, commercially produced hectograph kit could be purchased for less than \$10. Compare the ads in *The School*, vol. XXVII, no. 7 (March 1939), p. iii; *ATA Magazine* (January 1939), inside front cover. A homemade kit cost even less.

simply could not introduce anything remotely resembling activity methods without resources beyond the text and the blackboard.

EXPLAINING WHY teachers *might* want to use the commercial teaching aids is one thing; the question remains, were they in fact used in Canadian classrooms? It is notoriously difficult to discover what actually occurred in classrooms, as direct evidence is very limited. A handful of classroom pictures reveal commercial wall charts on display.⁶⁸ There is some evidence that the film “The Story of Menstruation” was being shown to classes in the late 1940s.⁶⁹ There were also posters available that borrowed images from films: St. Sylvester School in Calgary displayed educational posters depicting scenes from the 1951 Walt Disney/Kleenex film “How to Catch a Cold.”⁷⁰ Occasional articles by teachers illustrating their teaching methods appeared in the educational press. In *The School* for March 1936, for example, Mary Douglas, a teacher in a high school in Kitchener, Ontario, described her use of the project method for geography classes. Every year her students undertook a project of their own choosing. They had to write to a company for samples, pictures, and booklets or, if the company was located nearby, the student would visit the company, becoming acquainted with that part of the business world.⁷¹ An article on school display cases made a similar point. The author noted that schools had limited resources for creating displays for classes such as geography or chemistry and suggested that “collections of minerals, industrial products, models and charts, or pictures, can be accumulated so as to give these subjects more meaning.” Samples, the article continued, could be obtained from companies such as Canadian Industries Limited, the Canadian Salt Company in Sandwich, and the Gypsum Lime and Alabastine Company in Paris, Ontario.⁷²

67 For a nice example, see Rudy Wiebe, *Of This Earth: A Mennonite Boyhood in the Boreal Forest* (Toronto: Knopf, 2006), pp. 311–313.

68 For two examples, see George Peabody, *School Days: The One-Room Schools of Maritime Canada* (Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 1992), p. 43 (“The Story of Wheat”); Douglas, “Geography in the Secondary School,” pp. 590, 592.

69 Sethna, “The Facts of Life,” p. 259, documents the use of the film by one teacher, in an eastern district of the Toronto school system, for Grade 9 to 12 girls and Grade 12 boys. Research in the United States indicates that Kimberly-Clark was very effective in reaching young girls through schools, youth groups such as Girl Scouts, and individual mothers. Oral histories of immigrant families in Pittsburgh revealed that by the 1940s most daughters of Slovak, Italian, and Jewish families received Kotex pamphlets in school or from their mothers. The film “The Story of Menstruation” was also advertised in the Girl Scout leaders’ magazine *The Leader* in the 1950s. See Kennard, “The Corporation in the Classroom,” cited in Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls* (New York: Random House, 1997), pp. 47, 227 n. 29.

70 “New Donation,” *The Bailliewick*, accessed July 18, 2006, from www.museumofhealthcare.ca/files/newsletterjul2004.pdf.

71 Douglas, “Geography in the Secondary School,” pp. 591–593.

72 “Business in the Schools,” *The School*, vol. XXIII, no. 5 (January 1935), pp. 430–431.

Beyond that, our evidence is circumstantial in nature. Perhaps the best example consists of two maps, one of Canada and one of the world, from the Neilson Company (Figure 8). To the best of our knowledge, Neilson's never once advertised their availability in the educational press. Rather, the maps were distributed by the publishing company Copp Clark and advertised through flyers sent to school boards. In each corner of both maps, one of the company's four chocolate bars was prominently displayed, and banners at the top and bottom read, in large letters, "Neilson's, the Best Chocolate Bars in Canada" and "Neilson's Jersey Milk Chocolate — The Best Milk Chocolate Made." The maps were offered to schools free of charge on condition that they be "used as received." The publisher noted that the chocolate bars appeared in "corners where they do not interfere in any way with the usefulness of the Map," which would only be made available "if you will agree not to obliterate the advertising."⁷³ By the early 1950s, Neilson's had distributed some 55,000 of *each* of these maps, a remarkably thorough coverage of Canadian classrooms.⁷⁴ Neilson's foray into the classroom may have been by far the most successful of any commercial enterprise, but it is plausible that, if teachers and boards were willing to make use of the chocolate bar maps, they were also willing to use the teaching aids offered by other companies.

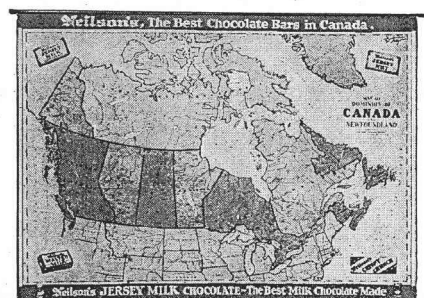
A second piece of circumstantial evidence comes from Alberta. In 1936–1937, the province introduced its "enterprise"-based curriculum — a variant on the project method. In succeeding months the Department of Education received puzzled queries (and, in one case, a sharp rebuke) from federal agencies being deluged with requests from teachers and pupils for promotional and informational materials. Wrote one Ottawa official,

For the past two or three years we have been receiving a large and increasing number of letters from schoolchildren and schoolteachers in Alberta asking for information and literature on a wide range of subjects, and, most frequently, asking for lists of Canadian manufacturers of various products together with booklets and samples illustrating manufacturing processes.

⁷³ See John C. Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails: Memories of the One-Room School House* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1983), pp. 43–44. For an example of the flyer and a description of the maps, see Glenbow Archives, M2004, Crowsnest Pass School Division No. 63, File #834, Secretary-Treasurer, Blairmore School Board to Copp Clark Co., December 23, 1935, attached Copp Clark flyer. There is a picture of the map of Canada hanging in a classroom in D. A. Lawr and R. D. Gidney, eds., *Educating Canadians: A Documentary History of Public Education*, 2nd updated ed. (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1978), p. 123.

⁷⁴ Charyk, *Syrup Pails*, pp. 43–44. The information came from the company's "Director, Sales Administration" in a 1980 letter to Charyk.

A FREE WALL MAP OF THE DOMINION



A LITTLE less than ten years ago, William Neilson Limited distributed their famous classroom wall map of the world to schools across Canada. THE SCHOOL has just learned that the Copp Clark Company has again been instructed by William Neilson Limited, to make a similar offer to Canadian schools—this time, however, of an up-to-the-minute map of the Dominion of Canada. The new map measures 58 inches by 40 inches, is beautifully lithographed in ten colors, and is mounted on wooden rollers. An uncolored illustration of the map appears on this page. It is distributed absolutely free, express prepaid, although the publishers list a similar wall map at \$7.50. If your classroom has not yet received its copy, a request for an application form should be sent to the Copp Clark Co. Limited, 495-517 Wellington St. West, Toronto. Applications will be filled promptly as long as the supply lasts.

Figure 8: *The School*, vol. XXXIV, no. 6 (February 1946), p. 478.

We are at a loss to know why this Service received so many letters of this nature. . . .⁷⁵

The response from Alberta was that

in our new “Programme of Enterprises or Activities” for the elementary and intermediate grades, teachers are recommended to obtain copies of pamphlets or booklets describing industrial processes and products, and also to obtain where possible any displays of such products. The purpose of these

75 PAA, 79.334, Box 4, File 32, Correspondence with Dominion Government, Acting Director, Commercial Intelligence Service, Dept. of Trade and Commerce, Canada, to Deputy Minister, Alberta Dept. of Education, October 19, 1938. See also Acting Director to Deputy Minister, October 31, 1938 and attachment; File 31, G. M. Stewart, District Inspector, Seed Branch, Dominion Dept. of Agriculture, Calgary, to Chief Inspector of Schools, Alberta, October 30, 1936; Dominion Forester to Supervisor of Schools, Dept. of Education, Edmonton, April 24, 1937 and September 1, 1939; C. E. Payne, Secretary to Dept. of Trade and Commerce, Canada, to Deputy Minister, Alberta Dept. of Education, September 7, 1937.

activities is . . . to bring these young boys and girls into contact with what is going on in Canada today.⁷⁶

Moreover, in some instances at least, the Alberta Department of Education was explicitly directing teachers to adopt such practices. Alberta's guidelines for Grade VII social studies told teachers that the topic of "British Africa" could not be adequately covered in the text. "In pursuit of these problems and studies, teachers and class are intended to forage abroad among the conventional textbooks, geographical magazines, industrial advertising booklets and adventure stories . . . in order to fill in the main facts about the interplay of human and natural forces in the Dark Continent."⁷⁷

What we know, then, is that teachers were actively soliciting materials or seeking further information from federal government agencies, and thus there is no reason to think they would not be writing directly to those companies that offered free teaching aids in the professional magazines. We also know that the Alberta Department of Education was encouraging, indeed, sometimes directing, teachers to do so. Since activity methods were being introduced with more or less enthusiasm across the country in the late 1930s and 1940s, there is equally no reason to think that teachers in other provinces were not doing the same thing.

Occasionally additional evidence comes to light. In 1939 the Winnipeg Board of Education reported that "the use of visual education in the schools is growing." Fourteen of its schools already had their own motion picture projectors, and the schools cooperated on a rental circuit. "In addition, films are borrowed on loan from government departments *and from industrial and commercial firms.*"⁷⁸ In 1950 the Ontario Department of Education recommended "The Story of Menstruation" as part of the Grade IX curriculum for physical education.⁷⁹ Two years earlier, Alberta's Chief Superintendent of Schools had asked members of the High School Curriculum Committee to evaluate the educational material offered by CIL. The committee recommended "that the Department take fullest advantage of the offer. The general feeling was that all the advertising material that the CIL puts out is invariably educational and would be of the greatest value in the classroom, especially for chemistry." The committee also suggested that CIL should "prepare

76 PAA, 79.334, Box 4, File 32, Correspondence with Dominion Government, Supervisor of Schools to C. E. Payne, Dept. of Trade and Commerce, Ottawa, September 24, 1937.

77 Cited in Amy J. von Heyking, *Creating Citizens: History and Identity in Alberta's Schools* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2006), p. 74.

78 Winnipeg Board of Education, *Annual Report 1939*, p. 15 [italics added].

79 Sethna, "The Facts of Life," p. 300.

a catalogue of available materials and send it out to schools.”⁸⁰ In the early 1950s Shell’s films were made available “through the Audio-Visual Aids Branch of the [Alberta] Department of Education,” as indeed were films from Canadian Cellucotton, Johns-Manville (asbestos), General Motors, Imperial Oil, Swift Canadian, and other companies.⁸¹ The Manitoba Department of Education endorsed the use of films and other material offered by the Canadian Bankers’ Association and CIL.⁸² In 1953 the Canadian Teachers’ Federation published a “Bibliography of Free Teaching Aids Available in Canada” that included, among other non-profit and commercial services, a 32-page pamphlet of “Program Aids from Business and Industry” produced by the Canadian Manufacturers’ Association.⁸³

Finally, a number of articles appeared in the educational press, listing, and encouraging teachers to write away for, a remarkable variety of materials on offer from government agencies, non-profit organizations, and commercial firms.⁸⁴ We doubt authors would be bothered to compile such lists if teachers were not making use of them. More to the point, we doubt that commercial firms would invest the time and money in either the advertising or the materials on offer if they did not believe (or at least hope) there was some substantial pay-off in doing so.⁸⁵

ONE QUESTION remains: why did the volume of ads begin to decline after mid-century? We suggest two broad explanations. First, though the evidence is scanty, there may have always been some unease about the intrusion of commercial advertising in the classroom. In 1925, for example, New Brunswick’s superintendent of education included in his annual report this injunction: “As the schools are a good advertising medium, they are sought to be exploited from every side. Teachers and

80 PAA, 79.334, Box 11–12, Chief Superintendent of Schools to Canadian Education Association, May 26, 1948. See also the cautious endorsement of oil company materials in Box 10, CEA Files, 1946, Deputy Minister [Alberta] to Dr. C. E. Phillips.

81 See the ad “Shell Presents! Free for Classroom use. . .,” *ATA Magazine* (November 1954), p. 3, and the film list in Alberta, Department of Education, *Annual Report for 1950*, Report, Curriculum Branch, p. 52.

82 *MSJ*, vol. 12, no. 3 (November 1950), p. 1; vol. 23, no. 1 (September 1961), p. 6.

83 Canadian Teachers’ Federation, *Information Bulletin 53–1*, June 1953.

84 See, for example, *The School*, vol. XXV, no. 1 (September 1936), pp. 57–60; *ATA Magazine* (October 1936), p. 23; (October 1938), p. 23; (November 1939), p. 18; and (October 1941), pp. 61–63. See also *ATA Magazine* (May 1940), p. 20 (a brief review and recommendation of “The Story of Asbestos”).

85 If the ad is to be believed, the Kotex pamphlet “As One Girl to Another” had been distributed to over 5 million North American girls. See “5,300,000 Girls Learned about Menstruation from this Booklet!” *The School*, elementary edition, vol. XXXV, no. 2 (November 1946), p. iv. Brumberg notes in *The Body Project* that in the United States “93 million American women” saw the film “The Story of Menstruation,” “either at school or in some single-sex setting” (p. 47). The pamphlet “As One Girl to Another” is reproduced at <http://www.mum.org/asone1.htm>.

trustees should in all such cases observe the regulation. The schools should not be an open forum, and their use, for such purposes, should be refused.”⁸⁶ In 1929 John Popkin, Chairman of the Brandon School Board, condemned the variety of schemes that advertisers were directing at the schools:

This is an age of advertising, and vast sums of money are spent yearly by commercial firms for this purpose. The public schools offer a very attractive field for the advertiser, particularly when that advertising takes the form of some free gift or the opportunity to secure something for nothing. Here again, while advertising is a perfectly legitimate method of securing business, school authorities cannot permit the schools to be used for that purpose. . . . A whole day’s work in the school may be absolutely lost by the intrusion into the routine of an exciting advertising proposal. The safe plan is to hold to fixed prohibitory rules on school-house exploitation.⁸⁷

On at least one occasion the Ontario Department of Education refused to authorize the use in the schools of a new nature study magazine “issued by private individuals.”⁸⁸ Although encouraging the use of commercial teaching aids, an Alberta inspector acknowledged the perils of commercialism when he suggested that the material could be of use to the “discriminating and alert teacher.”⁸⁹ Though the department would change its stance several years later, in 1945 Alberta’s Deputy Minister of Education responded to a circular from the Canadian Education Association about the use of “printed matter and films to be prepared by industrial corporations etc.” as follows:

We have considered the question raised in the circular in this Report and are of the opinion that we are not prepared at this time when there is so much strife in industrial centres to introduce any material of the sort mentioned into the schools nor take any part in encouraging the preparation of such material. In a later and better world we might be inclined to reconsider this decision.⁹⁰

86 New Brunswick, *Annual Report 1924–25*, p. liii.

87 John Popkin, “The Exploitation of Schemes in School,” *WSJ*, vol. XXIV, no. 6 (June 1929), p. 232.

88 Public Archives of Ontario, RG2–43, Container 251, File 3, document 14, J. F. Coastle to DM, Education, October 20, 1943. Our thanks to Charles Levi for the reference. The problem with these three citations is that the target of this opposition is not exactly clear. The comments may have referred to all advertising or may have been more specifically directed at particular items or book agents trying to sell teachers commercial products like encyclopedias.

89 H. E. Balfour, “Send for Free Literature,” *ATA Magazine* (October 1936), p. 23.

90 PAA, 79.334, Box 10, CNEA files, 1945, Deputy Minister to Dr. C. E. Phillips, Edmonton, November 27, 1945.

Neilson's injunction against tampering with the advertising on its maps was, presumably, there for a reason. As well, there may have even been objections about the quality of the commercial products: one Alberta inspector noted that "the maps supplied by chocolate companies are clumsy to get up and down and as a consequence are less used than maps should be."⁹¹ Aside from these objections about commercialism in the classroom, teachers and school boards must have heard, or at least feared, complaints about unfair advantage from competitors who did not or could not get similar access.

Set against any unease about commercialism, however, is the evidence we have cited for such materials being used without apparent objection and even with the endorsement of teachers' federations and provincial departments of education. A better explanation for the declining volume of advertising after mid-century is the change in the economic climate. As teachers' salaries rose, federation fees could be raised, and as compulsory check-off ensured more secure sources of income to federations across the country, editorial policies may have been adopted eliminating this particular form of advertising. Equally likely was the process of school board consolidation: the creation of larger administrative units increased the assessment base for local education throughout rural Canada. A massive increase in provincial government grants and the introduction of equalization formulas also ensured that schools were better financed than ever before and, in the process, enabled boards to provide adequate libraries and classroom materials without recourse to those including commercial advertising. Lacking the pertinent evidence, this is speculation on our part, but it strikes us as eminently plausible: it is surely no accident that the renewed intrusion of commerce into the schools in the 1990s coincided with sharp declines in school board revenues and the need to supplement classroom resources from sources other than the public purse.

ALTHOUGH the advertising of free commercial teaching aids declined in the early 1960s, it is clear that for four decades those aids had found their way into the classroom. Companies provided pamphlets, wall charts, films, samples, instruction manuals, and other resources at a time when teachers had little access to such materials. For their part, at least some teachers integrated these materials into their own classroom practices and encouraged others to use them. In part, this study highlights the poverty of Canadian schools in the first half of the twentieth century. It also shows, at least to a limited extent, the way in which teachers and school

91 Glenbow Archives, M2004, Crowsnest Pass School Division #63 Papers, Box 106, #877, Inspectors' Reports, Blairmore School, Report by James A. McKay, December 19, 1950.

administrators drew on the resources at hand and how such resources shaped school projects and the visual presentation of the classroom.

To entice teachers, advertisers drew on contemporary ideas about educational pedagogy and discourse surrounding “the good teacher.” They offered this material using the rhetoric of the “new education” with its child-centred focus and emphasis on hands-on learning through the activity or project method. They linked Canada to the larger world and emphasized the modern, scientific, and up-to-date. They did so, not surprisingly, without reference to the workers central to the manufacturing process, the colonized people exploited in the cultivation process, or the realities of many schoolrooms unable to meet modern standards of cleanliness. Historians of advertising note that ads rarely reflected social realities; instead, advertisements aimed to project social aspirations.⁹² In teachers’ magazines, advertisers portrayed those aspirations as the desire to be up-to-date, to inspire students, and to keep them interested in the topic at hand. It is, of course, difficult to know how teachers used commercial teaching aids or what messages students assimilated. But, in drawing on the language and ideals of progressive educators to sell their products, advertisers presented messages that they hoped would resonate with teachers, be it the method of teaching or the values a product could impart. In any case, whatever the benefits to the classroom — and clearly these did exist — the motive behind the advertising was commercial advantage, not some more dispassionate commitment to the improvement of instruction.

This study also tells us something about the history of advertising and the rise of consumer culture in Canadian schools. The use of branded advertising in the classroom helps illustrate the way in which advertising and consumer culture began to permeate society in the early twentieth century. By the 1920s schools, or schoolchildren, were an available market. American historians have noted that companies had already in the late nineteenth century begun to turn their eyes to children, especially those of the middle class, as consumers. Children themselves became consumers in a variety of ways.⁹³ Finally, as we have seen, teachers needed resources. For a number of reasons, then, advertisers began to exploit the school and its captive audience as a new market site. By allowing advertising into the classroom, schools became part of the process by which consumer culture developed in the early twentieth century.

Consumer culture, one might add, with a particular slant. Not all of the advertisers were “international” firms, but some of the most frequent and

92 Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, p. xvii; Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings*, pp. 227–230.

93 Jane H. Hunter, *How Young Ladies Became Girls: The Victorian Origins of American Girlhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 30. For the post-1920 period in Canada, see Comacchio, *The Dominion of Youth*, chap. 6.

attractive ads were contributed by Canadian branch plants of American corporations. Moreover, the in-school advertising from Lifebuoy, Colgate, or Kleenex inevitably reinforced the more insistent messages children and parents received as a flood of American magazines and radio spilled over the border from the 1920s onwards. We are witnessing here one additional aspect of the Americanization of consumer taste in Canada, as well as the invasion, on yet another front, of the branch plant economy. We also suspect that the Canadian campaigns were simple extensions of much larger American campaigns, probably with only the most minor changes to adapt to the Canadian market — and some of the ads, beyond the postal address for the material, needed no tailoring at all.

Be that as it may, in-school advertising also needs to be recognized as playing a part in the process of social and cultural formation occurring in the school. Historians have documented the role played by educational and health experts in the socialization of children.⁹⁴ Advertisers, too, participated in the process of shaping schoolchildren. This is particularly true in relation to health products. As we saw earlier, advertisers enticed teachers to use their teaching aids with the suggestion that they could re-shape the family itself. Advertisements for toothpaste, for example, regularly focused not just on children but on parents too. They also periodically informed teachers that by using a particular corporate teaching aid they could extend their influence into the home.⁹⁵ Families, in other words, had to be “taught” the benefits of dental hygiene. In the early twentieth century there was nothing “natural” about using health products such as toothpaste or washing one’s hands five times daily. These practices were part of the early-twentieth-century revolution of both personal habit and belief in public health.⁹⁶ Children and their parents — middle-class, working-class, and farm families alike — needed training in the methods of modern health.

The school today is a significantly different institution from that of the early twentieth century. Yet the issue of commercialism remains current. Most high schools have corporate-sponsored vending machines. Some have welcomed fast-food chains into their cafeterias. Others have adopted corporate billboards in their gymnasiums and sponsorship for everything from athletics to after-school tutoring.⁹⁷ Although often attributed to changing political, economic, and cultural emphases of the late twentieth century, commercialism in the schools is not a recent

94 Gleason, “Between Education and Memory,” pp. 49–72; Cynthia Comacchio, “‘The Rising Generation’: Laying Claim to the Health of Adolescents in English Canada, 1920–70,” *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2002), pp. 95–112.

95 See note 35.

96 Vinikas, *Soft Soap, Hard Sell*, p. vii. See also Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed*, pp. 95–97.

97 Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, *Commercialism in Canadian Schools* [online report], retrieved from http://www.policyalternatives.ca/documents/National_Office_Pubs/2006/Commercialism_in_Canadian_Schools.pdf.

phenomenon, but rather has a history related to the rise of consumer culture in society more generally. The roots of the contemporary debate can be traced to the rise of advertising and consumer culture in the early decades of the twentieth century. In the past, commercial teaching aids offered overburdened teachers and under-financed school boards a means of providing teachers with seat-work and other resources for students while maintaining students' interest. Though the type of commercialism in schools today is different from that of the past, some of the reasons for its presence continue to be the same. Indeed, the allure of commercial products and the power of advertisers in schools remain directly tied to fiscal constraint and limited school resources.