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EDITORIAL: THE SYMONS REPORT

More than a year has passed since the publication of T.H.B. Symons' report on Canadian studies, To Know Ourselves, a thoroughgoing indictment of the conventional approach to education. For those who have not yet seen the report, you will be pleased to know that the greater part of two chapters are devoted to Canadian content in science courses, and in teaching of the history of science and technology of Canada. Until this year, the report elicited little response, but recent events have brought the issues to the fore. A meeting was held in Ottawa in April (see "News") to assess the problem; an article on the problems of teaching the history of science and technology in Canada by one of the editors appeared in Science Forum and brought forth some response from people within both the Science Council and the Ministry of State for Science and Technology. Later this month, historians of Canadian science and technology will meet in Fredericton to discuss problems of organization.

The Symons Report suggests what amounts to fine-tuning in the educational system. Mr. Phillipson, in his report to the Ottawa meeting, suggests that we need an "infrastructure." Everyone agrees we need more government money. But since our area of study is so young, would much more organization be of any value? Many historians are in the civil service and their choice of research is somewhat delimited. How many historians in the academic community spend much time on Canadian studies? It seems to us that any organization ought to be minimal, for our job now is to show that the history of Canadian science and technology is a respectable subject. This requires us to spread--dare we say--propaganda.