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CLARENCE EDWARD BEEBY

(1902–1992)

W.L. Renwick¹

Clarence Edward Beeby—Beeb as he came to be known to friends and colleagues—was born in June 1902 in Leeds, England, and emigrated with his family to Christchurch, New Zealand, at the age of 4. Beeby became one of the great New Zealanders of the twentieth century but he always remained aware of his Yorkshire heritage. And he attributed some of the personal qualities that marked his career—the capacity for sustained hard work, determination and competitiveness combined with practical mindedness, and self confidence, including a firm belief in the rightness of his opinions and decisions—to this.

Formative influences

Beeby's academic abilities—being small and slightly built, he took little interest in team games—were soon apparent. He was one of the top scholars of Christchurch Boys High School, graduated Master of Arts with first class honours in philosophy from Canterbury University College in 1923, and was awarded one of the very few grants available to New Zealand students for post graduate study overseas. His interests were largely intellectual: debating, drama, and serious discussion about life's purpose, leavened with student pranks as a vehicle for showing off. One sign of his precocity was that he became a Methodist lay preacher at the age of 16 or 17.

Beeby intended to become a lawyer when he began his university studies but, switched to teaching under the influence of Professor James Shelley who, as foundation professor of education, had recently burst upon the Canterbury scene. An Englishman and protégé of J.J. Findlay at Manchester University, Shelley became the local embodiment of Renaissance man, so broadly did he interpret his subject, and so wide were his cultural interests. He presented education as a pervasive human experience that took place in all social and institutional settings, and which provided numerous opportunities for individuals to discover and nurture talents that would enrich their lives. Under the spell of his teaching, his students were imbued with a mission to bring about the fullest personal development of children and teenagers and, as a corollary, the social and cultural progress of New Zealanders. Under his guidance, Beeby and a number of other students pioneered important educational developments in the city and the province—and Beeby later played important roles in converting these provincial initiatives into national policies.

Shelley was charismatic but he was also a man whose time had come. The vision of education he presented in his lectures was also the message of the two texts that were prescribed reading for education students in all four of the constituent colleges of the University of New Zealand: Percy Nunn's *Education: its data and first principles*, and John Dewey's *School and society*. Nunn's elegant book, with its sub-text of what must be done to ensure the survival of the fittest, stressed the primacy of human individuality and the role of education in developing it to the fullest. Dewey gave primacy not to individuality but to the nature of the experience children should be inducted into through formal and informal educational agencies. Individuals and society should not be thought of as being opposed, but interacting. Education in a democratic society should enable each generation to learn about

society by experiencing it and, as a result, both individual and society should change for the better. Virtually all teachers who entered the teaching profession between 1920 and 1950 had read or been introduced to Dewey and Nunn and shared a common understanding of the aims of education in a democracy. When, therefore, first as Director of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research and then as Director of Education for the national system, Beeby began to express his reforming ideas, he could count on strong support from men and women who, like him, were assuming positions of influence in the teaching profession.

The very small number of New Zealand students of Beeby's generation who proceeded to Ph.D. went overseas, usually to British universities, and then became expatriates. Beeby went to Manchester but gravitated to London, where Charles Spearman supervised his research and introduced him to Cyril Burt, J.C. Flugel, and other psychologists working in the field of human intelligence, abilities, and attainments. He also met the German psychologists Köhler and Kaffka, and was influenced by their Gestalt theory.

Applied psychology and educational research

Beeby returned to the philosophy department of Canterbury College to teach experimental psychology and direct its psychological laboratory. He was gregarious, enjoyed the cut and thrust of argument and, though his religious convictions were fading, his missionary impulse was clearly evident in his determination to apply psychological knowledge to practical human concerns. His research interests were in industrial psychology, the reformation of delinquent youths, vocational guidance, and the use of educational tests. He visited the USA and Canada in 1929, where he met Lewis Terman, whose intelligence test he was using, Sheldon Glueck, the criminologist, Grace Fernald, who was pioneering research in remedial reading, and Elton Mayo, whose researches at the Hawthorne plant of Western Electric was adding a new phrase to the vocabulary of the social sciences. The pattern of Beeby's career as an applied psychologist was now clear: he was teaching and researching in a small university college far from the intellectual front-lines of Europe and the United States of America but was forming professional links with leading men and women in the fields of his own research interests.

He had to make his first difficult career choice in 1934 when the chair of philosophy at Canterbury College and the new post of director of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) both became available. Although the new post had assured funding for only five years, he opted for the challenge of creating a new research organisation with increased scope for educational research. As director, he entered into a working relationship with the Carnegie Corporation, the American philanthropic foundation that had put up the money for NZCER and would not only influence his subsequent career but provide him with a model for bringing about educational change.

Through its staff and a network of experts in many fields, the Carnegie Corporation was a clearing-house for ideas and innovation. Its travel grants for study tours enabled educational leaders to make themselves familiar with important developments in their field in other countries. And by making it possible for experts from another country to work with people who had the responsibility for pioneering new developments in their own, it enabled what was later known as counterpart training to take place. Beeby experienced the benefits of these forms of co-operation during his four years as director of NZCER; he used them as a means of inducing change within the New Zealand education system when he became director of education in 1940; and after the war, as UNESCO's Assistant Director General for Education during its early formative years, he introduced Carnegie approaches into that organisation's working methods.

Equalizing educational opportunity

At the end of 1935, New Zealanders elected their first Labour government. Its commitment to educational reform was clearly signalled when the deputy prime minister, Peter Fraser, became minister of education and initiated the most comprehensive reform of the national system for more than half a century. Fraser became prime-minister in 1940 and, under his leadership, New Zealand can claim to be the first country to reconstruct public education with the objective of providing equality of educational opportunity. By the end of the Second World War, when that objective became the educational leitmotif elsewhere in the Western world, the reconstruction of the New Zealand education system was well advanced.

Beeby was appointed assistant director of education in 1938 and director of education in 1940, and was the chief educational adviser to government until retiring in 1960. The combination of Fraser's political vision and Beeby's professional leadership was unique in New Zealand's educational history. Without Fraser's commitment to the removal of educational inequality, there would have been no political backing for the educational reconstruction that Beeby superintended. Without Beeby's singular qualities, it is scarcely likely that Fraser's reforming intentions would have been carried out so thoroughly.

There were many reasons for Beeby's success—his razor-sharp mind, his grasp of issues, belief in what he was doing, oral and written powers of persuasion, determination to succeed, and energy and stamina. He was fortunate that, as director of education, he was also a member of the Senate of the University of New Zealand, which determined policy for university education. To be successful, the government's educational reforms required close co-operation between the senate and the department of education, and Beeby, with his previous experience as a university teacher, was unusually well placed to win it. The characteristics that distinguish him as a great educational administrator were his understanding of what education ought to mean, not only in schools and classrooms, but in the daily lives of boys and girls and men and women; his ability to think of a reformed education system as a gestalt; and the supreme good fortune not only to be the right person in the right place at the right time but to remain there long enough to give practical effect to Fraser's reforming vision.

Comprehensive educational reform is a project for the long haul, and is at risk to changes in political fortunes over which educational administrators can have no control. New Zealand's reform included several changes of minister and a change of government half-way through, and the fact that the reforming agenda of a left-of-centre government was endorsed by its right-of-centre successor testifies to the confidence that ministers of education of both political parties had in Beeby's judgement.

Many of the policies for reform called for the creation of new institutions and educational services, and he was fortunate in being able to develop them without stultifying opposition from existing educational interests. The post-war increases in birth rates meant that many new schools were needed, and it was possible to create a new type of school—the multilateral post primary school—built and staffed to give effect to a new post primary curriculum. Vocational education at the tertiary level was, for the most part, still to be developed, and so was open to innovation without threatening the roles of the university and teachers colleges. The voluntary organizations providing early childhood education and adult education welcomed government initiatives in their fields and were more than ready to co-operate. And the teaching profession, rejuvenated by an influx of new recruits, strongly supported policies that most of its members thought were right for a democracy. There was, of course, opposition, but Beeby was equal to it in his advocacy. The progressive education movement in New Zealand of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s owed much to many men and women but to none more than Beeby.

Education in Third World countries

In 1945, Beeby's responsibility as the government's chief educational adviser extended to the South Pacific, first to Western Samoa, a United Nations' trust territory, and to the Cook Islands, Niue and the Tokelau Islands—territories administered by New Zealand and to be prepared for self-government. He was troubled that, after assessing the state of education in these small islands, he was proposing policies there that he deplored in New Zealand and was seeking to replace. Then, in 1946, he began what was to become an active involvement in the education programmes of UNESCO and, as he increased his knowledge of education in developing countries, he rationalized that knowledge into a theory of stages of educational growth.

Beeby made an immediate impression at the first UNESCO General Conference in 1946. As probably the only leader of a national delegation who was an educationist *and* the chief administrator of a national education system, he could speak from direct personal experience of teaching and learning in schools and in other educational institutions, and about the challenges of reforming a national system. Elected chairman, first of the credentials committee, then of the programme committee, he stood out with his wit, sense of theatre, and skill in guiding people with divergent opinions to agreed conclusions. He played important roles in UNESCO's inner councils until the mid-1960s, and was regularly consulted as one of its elder statesmen until his ninetieth birthday in 1992.

On his retirement in 1960, Beeby was appointed New Zealand ambassador to France, and this allowed him to take a closer interest in UNESCO's work. He was elected to the Executive Board in 1960 and was chairman in 1963. He also played an active role in the early years of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), UNESCO's staff college for educational administrators from developing countries. He edited the first twenty-two titles of the influential IIEP series of publications, *The fundamentals of educational planning*. In the course of his career, he developed a passion for editing, and every author who had a text edited by him found the experience challenging and enriching. His crowning achievement for the IIEP was as director of its symposium on the quality of education and editor of its report.²

By the mid 1960s, Beeby's knowledge of educational development was unparalleled. The concept of educational development in Third World countries was problematic—not in the radical sense that would begin to spur debate later in the decade but because of the size of the gap separating Third World from industrialised countries. Well into the 1960s, modernizing under the influence of Western modes of institutional development remained the leitmotif of most Third World programmes of national development. Most of the expert input to these programmes—and Beeby's was a typical example—came from Western countries and was rooted in its historical experience. Most of the leaders of developing countries had themselves been educated in metropolitan countries, and still took their educational institutions and systems as the models for their own national development.

Their problems were enormous and they were impelled by a great sense of urgency. They hoped, within a decade or so, to complete educational developments that had taken a century or more to achieve in industrialised countries. The American economist W.W. Rostow captured imaginations with a model of economic growth, a key feature of which was the concept of economic 'take-off', and national planning in developing countries became dedicated to creating the conditions that would make this happen. National plans were dominated by forecasts of quantitative expansion for countries whose educational infrastructures were, at best, exiguous. There were enormous gaps between the projected costs of achieving universal primary education and the ability of developing countries to pay for, or sustain, it. There was much earnest discussion of whether it would be possible to avoid the otherwise high costs of employing large numbers of trained teachers by using educational media such as television, radio, and programmed instruction instead.

Beeby was well versed in this mode of development planning, and it perplexed him that, with all the emphasis on quantitative expansion, education was considered as a component of national planning but without any real understanding of its internal dynamics as a sub-culture. Among the reasons for this, the one that he felt most acutely was the lack of a body of writing that planners from other disciplines could use for guidance on the *educational* issues to be confronted in planning and carrying out programmes of national development. Speaking for educationists, who, like himself, had been immersed in the politics of development planning, he said that they had been so busy saving souls that they had ignored their theology.

The quality of education

Beginning with a paper for the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1961, and ending with an exchange of views with Gerard Guthrie in the *International review of education* in 1980, Beeby addressed himself to what he saw as the central conceptual issue of educational developing in Third World countries: how to bring about change that would result in qualitative improvement in an education system. A period of residence at Harvard University enabled him to write *The quality of education in developing countries* (1966), the book by which he is best known internationally.³

The focus of his theory is narrower than is implied by the title of that book which, it needs to be remembered, was written in the mid 1960s. Achieving universal primary education and eradicating illiteracy among adults were, above all others, the burning issues at that time. Everyone involved in trying to achieve these objectives was bombarded with quantitative estimates—of the percentage of illiterates, the percentage of children not receiving any form of primary schooling, the supply of teachers in particular countries and the percentages who were trained and untrained, the demand for teachers and projections of the numbers that would be needed to supply it, etc. Beeby had been an educational administrator long enough to know that this was all necessary information for planners, but he also knew that the quality of the performance of an education system raised altogether different issues for which practical answers must be found. Of these, he singled out the quality of primary school-teachers as the most important factor in achieving the educational objectives of national development plans. He bracketed out all other educational influences that might shape children's development and concentrated on the one educational institution—the primary school—that was at the time the central concern of modernising Third World governments. And he was convinced that there were no shortcuts to improving the quality of national education systems.

Drawing on the historical experience of industrialised nations since the early years of the nineteenth century, he argued that, considered in terms of the educational quality their teachers achieved, they had all progressed through a series of stages. As a psychologist, Beeby was at home with human analogies: he took his metaphor of the development of an education system not from Rostow, whose book he had not then read, but from a psychologist of an earlier generation, G. Stanley Hall, whose writings on the stages of development of children he had read during his student days.

Beeby identified four stages in the growth of a primary school system, each of them associated with teachers who differed in their professional training and whose teaching had characteristic features.

To convert this scheme from a description to a thesis, Beeby proposed two hypotheses:

- A. There is a recognizable progression in the qualitative growth of most primary school systems, and one stage, with its special characteristics, is a necessary prelude to the stage that follows.

B. Passage through the stages is limited by the levels of general education and professional training of the teachers.

As a one-time teacher of logic, he noted that hypothesis A could be true and B false, and that changes under B are a necessary but insufficient cause of change in A.

FIGURE 1. Stages in the growth of a primary school system

(1) Stage	(2) Teachers	(3) Characteristics	(4) Distribution of teachers
I. Dame school	Ill-educated, untrained	Unorganized, relatively meaningless symbols; very narrow subject content—3 R's; very low standards; memorizing all important.	X
II. Formalism	Ill-educated, trained	Highly organized; symbols with limited meaning; rigid methods—'one best way'; one textbook; external examinations; inspection stressed; discipline tight and external; memorizing heavily stressed; emotional life largely ignored.	
III. Transition	Better-educated, trained	Roughly same goals as stage II, but more efficiently achieved; more emphasis on meaning, but it is still rather 'thin' and formal; syllabus and text-books less restrictive, but teachers hesitate to use greater freedom; final leaving examination often restricts experimentation; little in classroom to cater for emotional and creative life of child.	
IV. Meaning	Well-educated, well-trained	Meaning and understanding stressed; somewhat wider curriculum, variety of content and methods; individual differences catered for; activity methods, problem solving and creativity; internal tests; relaxed and positive discipline; emotional and aesthetic life, as well as intellectual; closer relations with community; better buildings and equipment essential.	Y

Source: C.E. Beeby, *The quality of education in developing countries*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MASS., 1966, p. 72

It is clear from Beeby's discussion in *The quality of education in developing countries*, and in later writings, that he offered his thesis of stages as a first approximation to a theory of educational development. He hoped that by placing questions of educational quality in the context of plans and programmes for national development, and by proposing a conceptual framework for the analysis of educational change over time, economic and educational researchers would be stimulated to work together on empirical studies to elucidate the factors associated with improvements in the quality of education in developing countries. However, he was largely disappointed. The absence of dialogue between educationists and economists on theoretical issues of educational development had created the hiatus Beeby wanted to bridge; but such is disciplinary insularity that educationists and economists working on development issues continued to pursue their researches independently of each other. In a caustic review, John Vaizey said that he could not recognize any economist he knew in Beeby's characterisation of the 'economist'. Educationists, on the other hand, found it easy to identify with 'the educationist'.⁴

The 'stages of growth thesis' was a brave attempt to devise an explanatory scheme that would embrace developing as well as developed education systems. But, it could not avoid criticisms associated with attempts to generalize from a mass of particulars drawn from many different countries from different stages in their development. Educationists in several developing countries used the theory of stages as a basis for research projects and, with qualifications, found that it offered a useful research model.⁵ Fifteen years after it was published, Gerald Guthrie subjected the thesis to a careful analysis in *The international review of education*, to which Beeby responded.⁶ It was an urbane exchange of views.

Guthrie argued that the thesis did not offer a sound model for research because it rested on an unspoken set of values and that, conceptually, the four stages were not sufficiently distinct and could not be used as a sound basis for empirical research. Beeby countered by saying, rightly in my view, that all educational development, being directed towards objectives, is inescapably and properly normative. The exchange of views was valuable for the light it shed on the difficulty of writing criteria for the comparative assessment of education systems, and Beeby agreed that some of Guthrie's criticisms of the language describing the four stages were valid, conceded that his characterization of primary schools in stage IV, the stage of meaning, gave a privileged status to his own 'progressive' values, and offered a new formulation to remove it.

It was within the education sector, especially among educational administrators and those involved in the teacher education and the training of educational administrators in developing countries, that *The quality of education* made its main impact. There, it had a tonic effect. It addressed issues of great practical concern to them using a language that they understood, and it did so with sparkling clarity and on the authority of an internationally acclaimed educational administrator. Above all, it gave them arguments to use in advocating higher levels of national commitment to the professional education of primary teachers and supporting services. It was thus more as a teaching aid and as a source of justifying argument, than as a generator of research aimed at testing his theory, that Beeby's *The quality of education* made its mark.

Questions of quality must be tackled at many levels in an education system, and what characterized all Beeby's writings from 1940, when he became the chief professional adviser to a government for a national system of education, was his ability to grasp, articulate—and indeed dramatize—what must be done in the circumstances of the moment to improve the quality of an education system considered as a system. Experience had also made him wise to the many things that could frustrate the best-laid reforming plans, and he often used the image of the parallelogram of forces to illustrate their practical effect. The line of educational advance, he argued, would lie somewhere between the opposing forces of reform and resistance. People outside the teaching profession identified resistance to change with one thing, the conservatism of teachers. Beeby teased out the reasons for resistance: poorly-

articulated reform goals; teachers who neither understand what was expected of them nor believed in it; the fact that teachers were themselves the product of the system in which they worked, many of them having spent virtually their whole lives in it; the isolation of teachers working alone in classrooms; and in the range of their collective professional ability.

The image of the parallelogram of forces finds its place in *The quality of education in developing countries* on the right hand side of the chart (see Figure 1) in which Beeby set out his stages of growth. There, it summarizes the game plan of a reforming administrator intent on improving the quality of education in a system. The vertical line X-Y represents from top to bottom the range from stage I to stage IV. The 'ultimate skill of the administrator-reformer', he wrote,⁷ 'lies in his sensitivity to the factors that determine the maximum acuteness of the angle CBQ, which we might call, a trifle portentously, the angle of reform'.

Looking back from the vantage-point of 1980, it was clear to him that the problems faced by developing countries were already different from those of the early 1960s. By then, secondary education was on the agenda in a way it had not been earlier. Alternative strategies, such as lifelong learning, were raising new questions for educational objectives and priorities. The search for quality could no longer be equated with the quality of a nation's primary teachers. Nor could it any longer be expected that the quality of primary education in developing countries could be assessed using a single-dimensional, cognitive scale: the apparent universality of Western educational values was very much in contention. Values Beeby had acknowledged but bracketed out of his discussion of the institutional role of primary schools—religious, ethnic, cultural, and communal values—were by then at the heart of educational debates in all countries, developed and developing, in ways they had not been in the early 1960s.

Because Beeby offered his thesis as a first contribution to theory-building in the field of educational development, it was to be expected that most of the discussion it generated would focus on its validity as an explanatory model. There has been much less interest in his hypothesis that one stage of growth is a necessary prelude to the stage that follows. Irrespective of whether his construct of stages is useful for assessing the quality of education systems, the question remains whether it is possible for a government to speed up the processes that result in qualitative improvement. That was the issue facing national governments in the early 1960s, when he entered the debate, and it remains the central planning issue for all education systems—developed and developing.

Adopting Karl Popper's principle of falsifiability, Beeby wrote that a single exception of a developing country skipping a stage in bringing its primary teachers to level four, the stage of meaning, would disprove his thesis, or at least cause it to be greatly modified. There is one very good reason why that has not happened, and seems unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future. A defining feature of all public education systems in the sites where formal teaching and learning takes place is their organisation as cottage industries. Teachers with their professional expertise as their most important resource are master-craftspeople who, using the tools available to them, teach so that classes of students may learn. Teaching is labour-intensive, and the salaries of teachers in all systems are far and away the dominant item of expenditure. So long as that continues to be the model, the quest for qualitative improvement in an education system will be measured in small increments, and the prospect of skipping stages or bringing all students up to any predetermined level in short order remains remote.

Beeby's entire career as teacher and administrator took place within this cottage industry model and, because that was the one that developing countries had also perforce adopted, he focused on teachers teaching, rather than on students learning, and on classrooms in formal education systems as the essential educational site. It would have been unrealistic to expect him to propose an entirely new model because, as an experienced educational administrator, he knew that he must deal with the world of education as he found it. But until there is a paradigm shift from teachers teaching to students learning, and until governments

are able and prepared to invest a much larger percentage of national research and development budgets on students' learning, and how to improve and how to facilitate it for all students, Beeby's hypothesis will remain untested.

In one sense, the possibilities now opening up through information and communication technologies are the panaceas of the moment, as radio, television, and programmed instruction were in the 1960s. The essential difference, however, is that by incorporating the teaching into educational software, by being able to individualize learning by making it inter-active, and by being able to adapt it to the circumstances of learners, information technology offers a genuine possibility that education systems could be redesigned around students who are learning, instead of teachers who are teaching. This would require a revolution in the way that public education systems are conceptualized and funded: they would have to be transformed from cottage to capital-intensive industries based on professional knowledge and expertise. Unlike the 1960s, the policy issue would not be how to replace teachers or support them with teaching aids, but how to use their expertise - first to create sophisticated learning materials, and then to manage their students' learning wherever it took place. One of Beeby's maxims is that good education always costs more than bad. Experience in education systems during the thirty years since he wrote *The quality of education in developing countries* strongly suggests that a different paradigm—as well as more expenditure—will be required to bring about planned qualitative change for all learners in an education system.

Reflecting on experience

The singular thing about Beeby's life is the continuing interplay of practical action and reflection. During the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, he was an adviser to governments and international agencies on many educational development projects, and these allowed him to develop further his thoughts on the qualitative improvement of education systems. The most notable of these was during the 1970s as an adviser to the Indonesian government for the planning and implementing of its second five-year education plan. The Indonesian government engaged the Ford Foundation to conduct an external assessment of the implementation, and Beeby played a leading role in conceiving, planning, and carrying it out. This allowed all his professional skills to be brought to bear on a novel project of great practical importance. It was also one that needed to be handled with great delicacy, for it was unusual at the time for a developing country to subject itself to outside scrutiny of its own performance and to agree to a book being published that would record it.

The assessment of Indonesian education: a guide in planning (1979) was the published report. As always, Beeby's concern was with the qualitative outcomes of the plan, and the book is an extended commentary on the interplay of the political context of the plan, the objectives set out in it, and the many factors that shaped the outcome, an intended improvement in the quality of Indonesia's primary education. The importance of the book lies in its particularity. Educational reform is always particular to a society and its education system at a moment in time with all its constraints, and it always proceeds in a very specific political context. The book was written for Indonesian politicians and administrators, but it had a wider importance for development planners as a case study of the issues Beeby had addressed in general terms in *The quality of education in developing countries*.

Beeby returned to New Zealand in 1968 and NZCER provided an office for its first emeritus director to work from. It was a homecoming in an intellectual sense as well. Like many other New Zealand men and women, his career had been made possible by the educational opportunities that the public education system had opened up for him. As director of education, he had been deeply involved in transforming equality of educational opportunity from a phrase to a reforming objective, and he had, in his post-war international

experience, seen it become a dominant ideal of educational planning. He decided to sift the meaning of his experience and write about it.

The book he wrote is aptly entitled *The biography of an idea*. There is a good deal of autobiography in it, but it is tailored to Beeby's theme. It begins with a fascinating account of how it happened that an able, imperious young academic, a successful graduate of a competitive, selective public education system, became responsible for reconstructing that system with the aim of democratizing educational opportunity. He then shows how, against the grain of much of his previous experience, the idea of equality of educational opportunity became a dominant feature in his thinking and in educational policy in New Zealand; how the idea fared in the very different circumstances of various Third World countries he worked in; and how, looking back, he assessed his own understanding of the idea during the years 1940-60 when it was one without precedent or significant experience to draw on.

What shines through, giving the book its unity, is his passion for explanation, and his determination to get to the very root of issues. The qualities that inform his account are the qualities that distinguish him as a great national and international educationist: an alliance of heart and mind in the way he conceived the questions to be answered; a probing intelligence that kept questioning both the evidence and his own interpretations of it; the ability to devise practical policies that gave expression to abstract ideas and convictions; and a gift for communicating his vision of future possibilities to others. Reading his lucid, cleanly crafted prose, one senses why he was such an able fashioner of policies and, - scarcely less important - such a skilful advocate of them.

He was also reflecting on the purposive nature of all educational effort. In criticizing his thesis of stages of growth as teleological, Guthrie had thought he had dealt the theory a mortal blow, but, as Beeby came to see it, educational myths are to educational reformers what paradigms are to scientists. The great myths of education, he argued,

win assent because they are statements of purposes, and there are few important things that can be said about education without a teleological base. Theories of education that go beyond the barest mechanics are never value-free. It is the element of purpose, often reinforced by deep feeling, that gives this type of educational myth its peculiar significance and tenacity. I have come to believe that what the paradigm is to the natural scientist, the dominant myth is to the educator. The myth offers to those who accept it the unity of a common purpose, shared belief in objectives that are not too closely defined, and a temporary and tacitly agreed suspension of disbelief—for, by definition, a myth cannot be in every sense true. In a profession where healthy scepticism is almost as necessary as faith, it is no easy business to establish such a myth. It is possible only if the myth is an expression, in educational terms, of social purposes that are widely accepted in the community; it is not the prerogative of the profession to manufacture completely new myths.⁸

By the time of his ninetieth birthday, Beeby had been justly and variously honoured for his distinguished contribution to educational innovation during nearly seventy years and had become a myth in his own right.⁹ A *festschrift*, an international seminar, numerous other functions and celebrations, and messages of gratitude and praise from men and women from all over the globe drew down the curtain on the public life of a man who was the very epitome of a thinking educational administrator.¹⁰

Notes

1. William Renwick (*New Zealand*)
Director General of Education for New Zealand, 1975-88, author of *Moving targets: six essays on education*, and, since 1988, Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Stout Research Centre for the Study of New Zealand Society History and Culture, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, New Zealand.
2. Phillip Coombs, 'Recalling the origins of UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning', in *The Beeby fascicles*, 1, p. 50-51; Jacques Hallak, 'Educational planning today', *ibid.*, 6, p. 10 and 21-22.
3. C.E. Beeby, *The quality of education in developing countries*, Harvard, Cambridge, 1966.

4. J.E. Vaisey, review of 'The quality of education in developing countries', *Harvard educational review* (Cambridge, MA), vol. 36, no. 4, 1966, p. 533-36.
5. J.M. Barrington, The teacher and the stages of growth of educational development, *British journal of teacher education*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1980, p. 100-14.
6. Gerard Guthrie, Stages of educational development Beeby revisited, *International review of education (Hamburg, UIE)*, vol.26, no.4, 1980, p. 411-38, and 445-59; C.E. Beeby, Reply to Gerard Guthrie, p. 439-44, and The thesis of stages fourteen years later, p. 451-74.
7. C.E. Beeby, *The quality of education in developing countries*, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
8. C.E. Beeby, Introduction to W.L. Renwick, *Moving targets: six essays on education policy*, 1986, p. xliii.
9. Academic awards included an M.A. with first-class honours in philosophy from the University of New Zealand a Ph.D. from Manchester University and honorary doctorates from the universities of Otago, Canterbury and the Victoria University of Wellington. Professional awards included the Mackie Medal for distinguished work in education in Australia and New Zealand, the UNESCO Silk Roads Medal (1992) and the status of Foreign Associate of the United States National Academy of Education. Civil honours included the Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George, and the Order of New Zealand, New Zealand's highest public honour, which is limited to twenty men and women and of which he was a foundation member.
10. Clarence Beeby died in New Zealand on 10 March 1998.

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