

Town Schools for Country Scholars

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Where there are twenty of more pupils in a class, a spirit of rivalry is created and pupils strive harder. Petty jealousies and sectional strife, which are the bane of many rural districts are eliminated. The district is too big for this. Further than this, better teachers can be secured and better salaries can be paid. The younger and inexperienced teachers are supervised by an experienced principal and better order and discipline is maintained.

Both from a moral and physical standpoint consolidation is advantageous. Pupils are in charge of a competent person from the time they leave home in the morning until they return in the evening. Van drivers have the same authority as teachers, they must keep order and are responsible for the conduct of the children while in the van. This does away with all quarrelling, fighting or bad language. Pupils enjoy the ride in the vans. They have company, they are warm in the wintertime and dry in the summertime and do not arrive at the school tired out. A walk of two or three miles is a big day's work for a child, and in stormy weather it is unsafe for them to go to school. When they are driven in vans they can go every day and the parents never need to worry. The large school becomes the social centre of the community. It is an institution of some character and dignity. It makes the farm the ideal place to bring up children. The poor man's child has the same chance as the rich man's. Children living at a distance have the same advantages as those living near the school. The country boys and girls have the same chance to obtain an education as their city cousins. They are entitled to this, and under the old system they certainly did not have it. There is no need for the children to leave the farm in order to obtain an education. This being the case, a great saving of money to parents results and it broadens the work of the school and makes possible special courses of study or work which otherwise would be impossible—agriculture, manual training, sewing, domestic science, etc., and finally, with consolidation, teachers may become specialists, thus enabling the pupils to receive the benefits of better teaching.

Agriculture and Manual Training

In connection with the broadened sphere of work which consolidation makes possible, the following outline of the extra work we are able to give instruction in will be interesting. We have had an agricultural teacher for nearly two years. During the winter months he has been teaching a class of young men between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one with fair success, altho these young men were hampered by lack of a proper foundation to build on. The course of study is one prescribed by the Department of Education and somewhat similar to the first year's course of the students at the Agricultural College. Many experiments in alfalfa growing, milk testing, etc., have been performed by the students at the home farms during the summertime. A great many samples of seed grain have also been tested at the school. School gardens have been planted by all the pupils at the school. The results so far have been rather disappointing, because no rain came on the gardens. However, we will try again. In future agriculture will be taught in the school to all the grades. We realize that this is pioneer work and have many difficulties to overcome. Boys' and girls' clubs have also been organized and a great deal of interest has been taken by the school children in this work. All the boys in the school from grades 5 to 11 take manual training work. Each pupil has an hour and half per week at the work. A room in the basement was fitted up as a workshop and a complete set of carpenters' tools installed, with ten manual training benches. This arrangement allows a class of ten to work at once. The carpenter tools cost \$140, and the ten benches \$90, in all \$230, of which the Department of Education paid one half. No work in the school attracts the boys like this. It teaches them to be accurate and orderly in their work, it shows them the dignity of labor, teaches them how to plan and lay out work, gives them a knowledge of tools, their use and care, and also a knowledge of material with which they are working. They acquire a knowledge and skill that will be useful in many ways. It serves

as a connecting link between the school and industrial life. It helps them in their other studies, especially mathematics. When they come to apply their knowledge of this science to the wood-work, they see the use of it and it assumes another form. It serves as a guide to the natural bent of the boy. Some boys who are dull in a class-room are very clever when working with tools. Nine-tenths of the pupils in our public schools will be required to earn their living with their hands; then why not teach them to use their hands? Our principal, Mr. Everall, takes charge of this work.

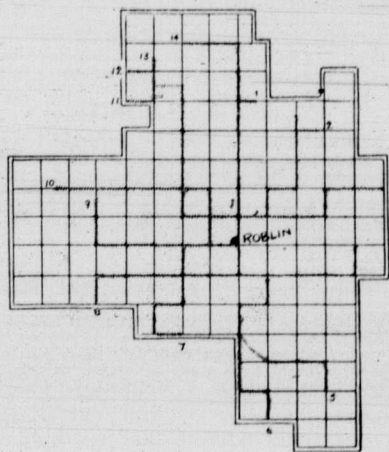
A blacksmith shop has also been erected and the larger boys work in this. They learn many principles that will serve them on the farm.

The girls are taught sewing and prove very clever. The same benefits are derived by them from this work as the boys receive from the manual training and blacksmithing.

Here is where one of the great possibilities and benefits of consolidated schools come in and their true value would be realized. Several consolidated schools that are situated not too far apart can engage one agricultural teacher, who could spend part of his time at each school. With all the schools sharing in the cost, it would not be very much, and the same course could be adopted with a teacher of domestic science.

The parents visit the school frequently and are delighted with the progress of the children in their studies. One day recently, when we had an educational rally, more than a hundred visitors signed the visitors' book.

Our school consists of a four-room, brick veneer building, heated by steam. We have all the latest maps and charts



The Roblin Consolidated School District. The hatched lines and numbers indicate the fourteen van routes. Each square represents a section one mile square.

and a fully equipped chemical laboratory, as good as any found in large town and some city schools. In the meantime we are also using two old rural schools, one of which we moved half a mile and the other four miles, and we have a hall rented for the agricultural class in the winter months. In the near future four additional rooms will be added to the school.

Our teaching staff consists of seven, the principal, H. J. Everall, salary \$1,500; Mr. Merrell, salary \$1,200; Mr. Thompson, agricultural teacher, salary \$1,500, and four lady teachers: Miss Anderson, Miss Coppinger, Miss Umphrey and Miss Brooks, with salaries of \$650, which is rather small considering the efficient work they are doing. The pupils take the regular school course from Grade 1 to Grade XI. Sewing, raffia work, manual training, blacksmith work, farm book-keeping, etc., are also taught.

Keeping the Children at Home

It was stated above that the consolidated school helps to keep the boys and girls on the farm. The reasons qualifying this assertion are outlined briefly as follows:

Our consolidated school gives them the same educational advantages as they would get in a city, with the additional benefit of the privilege of living in the country. It gives them a good education and a special education in agriculture. Then they are fitted to meet men and women on an equal footing. They have learned that farming is a business and a science and a most intricate one. The education opens their eyes to the possibilities and opportunities at home. It teaches them to be more efficient workers and splendid citizens instead of educating them away from the farms and the rural



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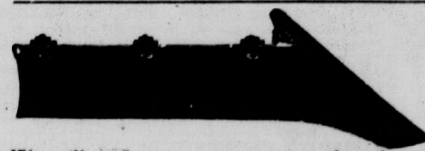
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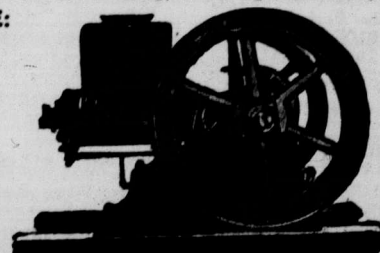
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