

CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS

By the REV. GEO. I. STEPHENSON.

The educational life of our young and fair Dominion of Canada has been one of steady development. We owe much to Egerton Ryerson for the present school system of which we cannot speak too highly for its influence in its day. But the time has come for another forward step and the subject for our consideration today, Consolidated Schools, is one which should engage the serious thought of every Canadian citizen because it is a much improved system to our present one, and is now rapidly superseding it.

In both Canada and the United States representatives of the Educational Department are travelling through the country continually delivering lectures on this question, and pamphlets sent out by the Department, encyclopedias and the daily press emphasize its great advantages both to the individual and the community and recommend its adoption at the earliest convenience.

Let us consider first of all why such a change is necessary.

1. Rural depopulation. We all know of instances yearly of parents who have left the country and have gone to the city or town for the sole purpose of giving their children better educational advantages. Mrs. Brodie, who addressed the U.F.O. convention at Toronto, said that she had come to the city recently in order to give her children better educational advantages but she liked the country better than the city, and that just as soon as her children were through school she intended to return. It was surely a worthy motive for leaving the farm and going to the city, but why go to the city when you may have equal educational advantages at your door?

2. Short term of teacher. The average length of time the rural school teacher stays in one school is between one and one and a half years. One teacher gets nicely started and is just learning the nature of her scholars and her community when she leaves and a new teacher comes along. There are many causes for this frequent change of teachers—among them are marriages, low salaries, difficulty in securing boarding place, overcrowded schools or too small schools and classes.

3. Changing conditions. In 1855 it required 40 hours of labor to produce a bushel of corn; under modern conditions it only requires 41 minutes. To-day we have modern conveniences, as telephones, telegraphs, rural mail, express trains, refrigerator cars, fast ocean steamers, wireless telegraphy, aeroplanes, etc., and we find ourselves competing in a world market. With the advent of electricity more delicate machines are used and more thorough education is required. Civic government and national economy demand a larger intelligence and wider skill in our manhood and womanhood. Can one or two teachers in an ungraded school, with the work of all the grades, meet this urgent call?

4. Educational Research and Scientific Discovery. Our ideas have been changed in the past few years as to what purpose the school should fulfil in the life of the child. Educational research teaches us the importance of Agriculture, Domestic Science, Gardening, Manual Training, Art and Music. By the use of apparatus and electricity, pictures may be used to illustrate and teach facts. When we consider that 80 per cent. of what a child learns he takes in through the eye we can readily appreciate this advantage in a Consolidated School. Moreover when a child plants a garden plot under the scientific instruction of a teacher he gets a training he cannot get through study alone. Favorable conditions for teaching these subjects are necessary.

5. Lack of opportunity. The present system shows a lack of equality of opportunity for an education. Statistics prove that it takes one and one-half years longer for a boy or girl in the rural district to get his or her entrance examination than a boy or girl with Consolidated or city advantages. Then they have to leave home—if they do at all—and go to High School in some town or city at a distance, and the result is that many fall out and fail to go at all. The new law which comes into effect next September requiring all children (with certain

exceptions) to attend school till 16 years of age, will help to obviate the difficulty of lost education but it does not solve the problem of sending the child away from home. Statistics appear to show that in the United States only half as many complete the elementary grades under the graded rural schools as under the Consolidated School. Is this fair to our country boys and girls? If we can get a High School at our door for two-thirds of Ontario's boys and girls, what is it worth? What is it worth physically, mentally, economically and industrially to have four times as many get a high school training?

6. Unfair handicap in recitations. Our present system deprives a child of his possible number and length of recitations. A child has approximately 8,800 hours in his elementary school life, in which to acquire habits of study, discipline, methods, and other things that education means. How much personal attention from the teacher does he get? In 1913 the average attendance at elementary schools in Ontario was 65 per cent. This reduces the possible number of hours 8,800 to 5,720. A comparison of the time spent in study and recitation in ungraded schools and Consolidated Schools shows that in the ungraded schools about 16 per cent. of the time is spent in recitation, or 815 hours out of 5,720, and the balance 4,905 hours in study or desk work; whereas, under Consolidation, 50 per cent. of the time is spent in each way, giving 2,860 hours for each. As the average attendance is also increased under Consolidation from 15 to 25 per cent, that means an increase of actual attendance hours to about 6,800, and recitation hours to 3,400. Compare this with 815 hours and ask is this fair to your child.

7. The need of new buildings and equipment. The attendance may have increased until the building has become too small to provide adequate accommodation or, as in many cases, the buildings have deteriorated and are unsafe and unhealthy, and people with ambition want the best type of education and equipment possible. Other defective conditions are poor system of ventilation or no system at all; poor heating system; lighting poor and from both sides; shiny blackboards; color decorations dark (the three last tending to produce eyestrain); floors scrubbed only three or four times a year; the drinking water usually from a common cup which tends to spread disease; seats double and not adjustable, and out-houses unsanitary. Every one of these conditions limit the efficiency of the system and so a large part of the money spent in our present system is lost.

What is the Consolidated School System and to what extent has it made progress?

A several roomed building erected in a central place, preferably a village, by the ratepayers of a number of school sections living close together who decide to unite and have instead of 5 or 6 or 7 or more small schools scattered miles apart, one well equipped building large enough for all the children in all the sections co-operating; with modern equipment for educational training in elementary or more advanced grades or both, supplied with the best trained and experienced teachers, and scholars brought in vans for a radius of 5 or 6 miles around is what may be generally considered a Consolidated School. It is long since past the experimental stage and has surely come to stay and to replace the present system, at least where people are alert enough and wise enough to see its benefits and adopt it. Our Educational Department tells us that the first Consolidated School was established in Montague, Mass., U.S., in the same year as the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph, 1874. Forty-seven years of successful work should convince us of its merits. It was an idea worked out by a group of farmers who had the same difficulties to face as mentioned above. The United States had in 1919, thirteen thousand Consolidated Schools, an increase of three thousand over 1916—an average growth of one thousand each year. Forty-three states of the Union have adopted Consolidation of rural schools as their policy. Three years ago Man-

itoba had about 100 Consolidated Schools. The farmers there are enthusiastic about it. Alberta has 60 Consolidated Schools. Rittenhouse, Hudson and Mallorytown are the only Consolidated Schools I know of in Ontario. Guelph and Neustadt has the principle on a small scale. Guelph school section in Carleton township Bruce County, closed their school and are driving the children to Neustadt. The children are delighted and the school section saves \$580 a year, which is about the cost of the transportation. The school at Hudson was burned about three years ago and the ratepayers decided by an almost unanimous vote to rebuild the Consolidated School.

From actual experience in Consolidated Schools what benefits have been derived by the pupils?

1. Better grading and classification. In the majority of cases not more than two grades need occupy one room. This arrangement allows teachers to specialize more and gives more time for recitations and personal work.

2. A large number in the class stimulates interest, enthusiasm and competition.

3. A closer grading, as compared with a one-roomed school, cuts down the average number of recitations per day for each teacher from 24 to 12 and lengthens the period of recitation from 10 to 18 minutes.

4. Less absence from school, which means more recitations and covering the work more quickly and more satisfactorily.

5. A GAIN OF ONE AND A HALF YEARS IN COMPLETING THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WORK. Consider the results of this on the number who would continue at school and take up High School studies.

6. Because of the availability of Continuation work and more attractive school conditions and the privilege of boarding at home many pupils stay for a longer period at school. A comparison of 3 Consolidated School townships with District School townships showed that twice as many finished their elementary grades under Consolidation and six times as many took Continuation School work.

7. Better and wider training. Fewer teachers are necessary, hence teachers with higher certificates and training can be secured. Where three or more teachers are engaged in a school it is possible to secure specialists in different subjects—where in an ungraded school the teacher cannot specialize in all subjects—or introduce Manual Training, Agriculture, Domestic Science, etc.

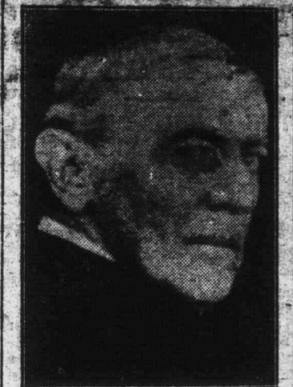
8. High School advantages with less

expense and moral danger. A Continuation School is practically brought to the door of every farmer in the Consolidated School area which will, when properly organized, take the pupil up to the Matriculation or to Normal Entrance. Think of the advantage of this without the expense of boarding in a town or city or the moral dangers of being away from home at the most critical time of the child's life. Is that not well worth while?

9. Co-operation, or team-play. In the assemblage of large numbers of both sexes the play life can be better organized and the co-operative spirit developed. This means much in later life. To learn how to co-operate and to carry through a work successfully with others in spite of injustices, opposition, and disappointments, in a kindly spirit, is a part of education which is well worth while. The Consolidated School fosters this spirit.

10. An increased earning capacity. Cornell Agricultural College some years ago, in investigating the labor income of a thousand farmers, found that the group who had only Public School education made \$318 a year, that with a High School education made \$622 and those with a College education made \$847 a year. Every year of additional education was worth from \$60 to \$75 a year in labor income.

What are the advantages from the standpoint of School Buildings, Administration, and Organization?



Broken in Service of His Country. Woodrow Wilson, who left the office of President of the United States on March 4. Photo shows him as he is to-day, broken and decrepit, after two terms in office.

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Weekly Market Report

Toronto.

Manitoba wheat—No. 1 Northern, \$1.93 1/4; No. 2 Northern, \$1.90 1/4; No. 3 Northern, \$1.86 1/4; No. 4 wheat, \$1.80 1/4.

Manitoba oats—No. 2 CW, 50c; No. 3 CW, 45c; extra No. 1 feed, 45c; No. 1 feed, 43c; No. 2 feed, 40c; Manitoba barley—No. 3 CW, 80c; No. 4 CW, 70c; rejected, 59c.

All above in store Fort William. Ontario wheat—F.o.b. shipping points, according to freights outside. No. 2 spring, \$1.75 to \$1.80; No. 2 winter, \$1.85 to \$1.90; No. 2 goose wheat, \$1.70 to \$1.80.

American corn—Prompt shipment, No. 2 yellow, track, Toronto, 95c, nominal. Ontario oats—No. 3 white, 47 to 49c, according to freights outside. Barley—Maltng, 80 to 90c, according to freights outside.

Ontario flour—Winter, prompt shipment, straight run bulk, seaboard, \$8.50. Peas—No. 2, \$1.50 to \$1.60, outside. Manitoba flour—Track, Toronto: First patents, \$10.70; second patents, \$10.20.

Buckwheat—No. 2, \$1 to \$1.05. Rye—No. 2, nominal; No. 3, \$1.50 to \$1.55. Millfeed—Carlots, delivered, Toronto freights, bags included: Bran, per ton, \$37; shorts, per ton, \$35; white middlings, \$40; feed flour, \$2.40.

Eggs—New laid, cartons, 51 to 53c; new laid, 49 to 50c. Butter—Creamery prints, 55 to 59c; fresh made, 58 to 61c; bakers', 38 to 45c. Oleomargarine—Best grade, 29 to 32c.

Cheese—Large, 32 to 33c; twins, 33 to 34c. Maple syrup—One-gal. tins, \$3.50. Honey, extracted—White clover, in 60 and 30-lb. tins, per lb., 21 to 22c; do, 10-lb. tins, per lb., 22 to 23c; Ontario No. 1 white clover, in 2 1/2-5-lb. tins, per lb., 23 to 24c. Churning Cream—Toronto cream-

ies are quoting for churning cream, 62c per lb. fat, f.o.b. shipping points.

Smoked meats—Rolls, 30 to 33c; hams, med., 36 to 38c; heavy, 31 to 33c; cooked hams, 53 to 57c; backs, 50 to 55c; breakfast bacon, 42 to 45c; special, 48 to 53c; cottage rolls, 33 to 35c.

Green meats—Out of pickle 1c less than smoked. Barreled Meats—Bean pork, \$35; short cut or family back, boneless, \$46 to \$47; pickled rolls, \$52 to \$56; mess pork, \$38 to \$41.

Dry salted meats—Long clears, in tons, 23 to 25c; in cases, 23 1/2 to 25 1/2c; clear bellies, 27 1/2 to 28 1/2c; fat backs, 22 to 24c.

Lard—Tierces, 20 1/4 to 20 3/4c; tubs, 20 1/2c to 21 1/4c; pails, 21 to 21 1/2c; prints, 22 to 22 1/2c; shortening, tierces, 13 to 13 1/2c; prints, 15c per lb.

Good heavy steers, \$9 to \$10; butcher steers, choice, \$8.50 to \$9.50; do, good, \$7.50 to \$8.50; do, med., \$6.50 to \$7.50; butcher heifers, choice, \$8.50 to \$9.50; do, med., \$7 to \$8, do, com., \$6.50; butcher cows, choice, \$8 to \$9; do, med., \$5 to \$7; canners and cutters, \$8.50 to \$4; butcher bulls, good, \$6 to \$8; do, fair, \$5.50 to \$6; do, com., \$4 to \$5; feeders, good, 900 lbs., \$7 to \$8; do, 800 lbs., \$6.50 to \$7; milkers and springers, choice, \$10 to \$15; calves, choice, \$15 to \$16; do, med., \$13 to \$14; do, sheep, choice, \$6.50 to \$8; do, heavy and backs, \$4 to \$5; do, yearlings, \$10 to \$10.50; hogs, fed and watered, \$14; do, off cars, \$14.25; do, f.o.b., \$13; do, to the farmer, \$12.75.

Montreal.

Oats, Can. West., No. 2, 68c; do, No. 3, 64c. Flour, Man. spring wheat patents, firsts, \$10.70. Rolled oats, bag, 90 lbs., \$3.40. Bran, \$38.25. Shorts, \$36.25. Hay, No. 2, per ton, car lots, \$24 to \$25.

Cheese, finest easterns, 29 1/2 to 29 3/4c. Butter, choicest creamery, 53 1/2 to 54c. Eggs, fresh, 50c. Hogs, \$15; veal calves, \$10 to \$13.

1. Better supervision. Under the present District School system the Inspector cannot visit oftener than twice a year, and mistakes which are now neglected would be seen and remedied by the experienced Principal who supervises the work of the other teachers in the Consolidated School.

2. An enlarged enrollment, and increased average attendance. In 16 schools in Amabel township, Bruce county, including 5 Union Schools, the number on the roll for 1920 was 431, and the average attendance was 321. The average attendance was 74.4 per cent. of the enrolment. In the 9 schools in Arran township the enrolment last year was 221 and the average attendance 149. Here the average attendance was 87.7 per cent. This is fair, but under Consolidation both the enrolment and the average attendance would be increased. In a large area investigated the enrolment before Consolidation was 3,185 children. The same territory after Consolidation enrolled 4,814, a gain of 1,629 or 51 per cent. In the same area the average attendance before Consolidation was 2,107 or 66 per cent., whereas, after Consolidation it was 3,617 or 75 per cent.

3. Punctuality. The wagons, vans, cars or sleighs run on schedule time, bringing the children to school warm, and with dry feet, so that the school may open sharp on time with all present, and the lessons may go on without interruptions.

4. Regular attendance. Fluctuation in attendance is also avoided. The large number attending tends to keep the average much the same. Teachers who have had to change their day's programme because of the absence of 2 or 3 pupils and then had to go over the same work with them at some future time know the benefit this would be.

5. Economy. Instead of a teacher's room, library, cloak rooms, toilets, halls and class rooms in every school, these are united in one. Economy is also effected in recitation periods, energy and concentration of the teacher, length of time necessary to reach Entrance Examinations, time of Inspectors travelling from school to school, correspondence, etc.

6. Hygienic conditions. This will be found in the character and decorations of the class rooms, lighting, heating, ventilation, single desks, water, toilets, transportation, play grounds and play equipment, and the necessary number of children making possible vigorous, enthusiastic and health-giving play.

7. Improved Community Life. This is brought about by the equalization of taxation and opportunity, the extension of educational facilities to the whole community, good roads which follow in the wake of Consolidation, the provision of a dignified social centre, special school equipment, a community playground, and developed leadership. Think of the advantage of these things to the Churches, the Farmers' Clubs and the community in general. The children receiving better education will be happier and more useful and they will remain at home longer. Every boy and girl then can receive a High School education without which in this rapidly developing age they will surely be handicapped. Any normal man or woman under ordinary circumstances can make money, but it is more difficult and more important to make a life.

How much more than the present system will the Consolidated School cost? If you are content with the same buildings, teachers, equipment, and curriculum as at present the Consolidated School costs less. Consolidation is not urged to-day as a means to cheapening education but of bettering it. With that view in mind it will cost more—probably from a third to a half more than the present system. But remember all the special benefits derived both in educational and community life. The self-binder costs more than the cradle or the reaper but no one would go back to these. Neither do those, under normal conditions, who have once thoroughly tried the Consolidated School, go back or want to go back.

What financial assistance will the Government give? According to the Ontario Department of Education the grants are as follows:—

1. \$3,000 towards the cost of building if erected and in operation by Dec. 22nd, 1922.

2. 30 per cent. of the cost of the building and site whose value does not exceed 5 per cent. of the total equalized assessment of the area consolidated. 37 1/2 per cent. if between 5

and 10 per cent., but the grant is limited at \$9,000.

3. An annual grant of 30 per cent. of cost of transportation where such cost does not exceed 5 mills; 37 1/2 per cent. if between 5 and 10 mills; and 45 per cent. if above 10 mills.

4. \$100 toward the salary of each teacher in the Consolidated School who is receiving at least a standard salary.

5. A grant for purchasing a piano, which is payable within 3 years.

6. 25 per cent. of the cost of certain other equipment, e.g. Agricultural, Domestic Science, Manual Training, etc. Maximum \$200.

7. All grants for which the present school sections are eligible will be continued. If seven rural schools consolidated the township grants would be paid on the basis of the seven rural schools.

8. If the community decides to build a Community Hall in connection with the School—the Hall is usually built above it—the grant will be 25 per cent. of the additional cost. This is provided according to the Community Hall Act of 1919.

But how about the blocking of the roads in the winter?

This difficulty, which at first appears formidable, has never yet proved a serious difficulty, even in the schools in Northern Ontario and further west. During one year in Manitoba, under average conditions, there were 22 Consolidated Schools with 61 vans which reported only 22 trips missed in one year, an average of only one trip per school in the year. At Hudson, in Northern Ontario, where the winter roads are as bad as anywhere in Ontario, for the winter of 1917-18, not one trip was missed. Their routes are 6 miles long. One stormy day recently 100 per cent. were present, whereas, in a nearby school, only 40 per cent. were present because of the storm.

Other phases of this problem might be presented. If interested send to the Dept. of Education for their latest pamphlet on Consolidated Schools which will give you many of the facts presented here, worked out in greater detail, as well as many other facts of interest.

University Fees.

Should university education be for the rich only or should it be as free as public school education? Should brains or money determine a student's fitness to enter university? This question will be answered in the report of the Royal Commission and in the Province's acceptance or rejection of its findings.

To a Provincial University money comes from only two sources—government support and students' fees. It is true that liberal private benefactions are also received, but they are always for some designated object, scholarships, or fellowships, or professorships, or buildings for some specific purpose. So it is correct to say that if government support is adequate, university education may be practically free. If government support fails, fees must rise and the sons and daughters of the average citizen, as well as the young men and women who are "making their own way" through college, will be debarred from the education to which their intellectual ability entitles them.

The following figures, showing the fees for the first year in the Arts course in several universities, are interesting: University of Toronto, \$40; Yale, \$300; Harvard, \$250; Princeton, \$250; Pennsylvania, \$250; Cornell, \$200; Chicago, \$180; Wisconsin, \$164; Michigan, \$105; McGill, \$100; Minnesota, \$90.

The old-time theory that only the man with children attending school should pay school taxes has long since been exploded, because now everyone realizes that education is the nation's chief business. Just as unreasonable is the theory that those who desire university education should pay the whole cost of it—such a position is the very opposite of democratic.

Population of Winnipeg Reaches 282,818

A despatch from Winnipeg says:—The population of greater Winnipeg is 282,818, according to figures in the 1921 city directory, just issued. This is the greatest gain recorded since 1914, and a jump of 10,350 over the 1920 figures.

REGLAR FELLERS—By Gene Byrnes

