
VII.

BUT THE example of Denmark is difficult to follow in our great wide spaces with their uncondensed rural population. A higher kind of rural education than we now possess is hardly possible in the small, single-room school houses to which a century of custom has wedded us. The "little red school-house" served its day and generation, often with much credit, but social evolution now demands a larger institution. If modern knowledge is to really influence Canadian agriculture through the rural school, it must be by means of the principle of consolidation.

Here, once more, we have to follow in the footsteps of our neighbours. Consolidation began in Massachusetts nearly half a century ago. The Civil War had greatly depleted the rural population of that State. Many of the young men, also, had followed Horace Greeley's advice, and had gone west. Schools which had had as many as sixty pupils before the war were reduced to ten or a dozen after its close. There was but one remedy, and the State Superintendent suggested it. Three or four schools at a time were closed, and the pupils were conveyed by team to and from a central one. All sorts of objections were raised by ratepayers and parents at the outset, but wherever the system was tried it was permanently adopted. It has now spread over thirty-two States of the Union, and there is every