

Other provincial departments having some responsibility for operating school programmes are: departments of labour, which operate apprenticeship programmes, agriculture departments, which operate agriculture schools, departments of the attorney-general or of welfare, which operate reform schools, departments of lands and forests, which operate forest ranger schools, and departments of mines, which conduct prospectors' courses.

From the beginning each department of education has undertaken among other things: 1. to provide for the training and certification of teachers; 2. to provide courses of study and prescribe school texts; 3. to provide inspection services to help maintain specified standards; 4. to assist in financing the schools through grants and services; and 5. to make rules and regulations for the guidance of trustees and teachers. In return, each department requires regular reports from the schools. When first introduced, government grants to schools were based on such factors as the number of teachers, enrolment, days in session and attendance. Somewhat later, special grants were introduced in most provinces to meet a variety of expenses, such as the construction of the first school, the organizing of special classes, providing transportation for pupils, school lunches, and other contingencies. A number of provinces made provision for equalization grants, and recently three have introduced a combined operation grant.

The work of the departments of education has grown considerably. Many have expanded their services in the fields of health, audio-visual aids, art, music, agriculture, auxiliary education, correspondence courses, and pre-vocational and trade courses. At the same time there has been a move towards the delegation of greater authority to local boards and school staffs. One illustration of this tendency is a reduction in the number of departmental (external) year-end examinations. Few provinces now provide for more than one or two such examinations -- at the end of the final, and in some cases also at the end of the second-last year of the secondary school course. Another illustration is the increasing substitution of fairly extensive lists of approved books in place of lists of prescribed texts. Courses of study are now seldom planned by one or two experts in the department; instead they result from conferences and workshops including active teachers and other interested individuals or bodies. In most provinces "curriculum construction" is considered to be a continuous procedure. In Ontario a number of the larger cities have been given permission to use experimental curricula in certain grades. In Alberta and British Columbia the number of options has been increased and courses may be selected on a point system rather than by years.

Local Units of Administration

In all provinces school laws provide for the establishment and operation of schools by local education authorities, which operate under the public school act and are held responsible to the provincial government and resident ratepayers for the actual operation of the local schools. Through the delegation of authority, education becomes a provincial-local partnership with the degree of decentralization reviewed intermittently. Questions concerning the extent to which curricula development, local supervision, and percentage of the education burden should be local rather than provincial will probably occupy the minds of Canadians for decades to come, as well as problems such as the optimum size of unit, school, class etc.

From the beginning, the provincial departments delegated authority to publicly-elected or appointed boards, which functioned as corporations under the school acts and regulations. These three-man boards were expected to establish and maintain a school, select