

It was hoped that a greater degree of equalization could be achieved, that better facilities could be provided at a lower rate and that the short supply of teachers could be met somewhat more effectively. The units were introduced by acts of the legislatures in Alberta and British Columbia and by acts with provision for local option in Saskatchewan and the Maritime Provinces. Manitoba, following recommendations, introduced legislation making it beneficial to areas that organized larger secondary units. Ontario has organized some country units in the southern part and there is discussion of additional amalgamation. Quebec is in the process of reorganizing Quebec schools under "Operation 55", which should result in the formation of some 55 larger units, which will encompass all of Quebec's Roman Catholic schools, including vocational schools. The Protestant schools are already organized for administrative purposes.

In some of the Western provinces the local boards were replaced by unit boards; in others the local boards were retained with limited duties and unit boards were set up. The local boards generally functioned in an advisory capacity.

This represents one step toward equalization of opportunity financially. Alberta has gone one step further in some regions, by making the school areas coterminous with municipal units. Where such county units are established, a committee from the municipal council administers the schools with the authority and power usually exercised by the unit board. Where unit boards are established, they are responsible for providing the necessary buildings, equipment and staff, and financing the schools.

Early Childhood Education

Day nurseries are established primarily to provide day-care for the pre-school children one and a half to five years of age of working parents. About two-thirds of the day nurseries are conducted by public or private welfare agencies.

Nursery schools are usually for children from three to five years old, who attend for half the day. Most of these are private institutions, which may be operated as co-operative enterprises or for profit. It is estimated that there are more than 200 nursery schools in Canada, and the number is likely to increase. In some provinces their establishment must be approved by the departments of education and health.

Kindergartens are now found at the base of the elementary school in most large urban centres, but there are separate private institutions as well. Most kindergartens accept only five-year-olds, but a few, where facilities permit, also accept four-year-olds.

Programmes are designed to help the child mature through developing skills and good habits. They provide an opportunity for him to live with others and express himself. In addition to schedules for lunch, toilet and rest periods, indoor activities include music, stories and handiwork; outdoor activities are built round free play with large equipment. Toward the end of his stay in the kindergarten, the child is introduced to simple ideas of language and numbers to prepare him for the formal studies to follow.