

Consolidation a Success in New Brunswick

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A Story of the Kingston Consolidation School, Kingston, N.B., as told by one of its graduates. What the School Has Done for the District and its People.

THE building of the Macdonald Consolidated School at Kingston, New Brunswick, in 1904, was one of the important steps in the educational history of the province. It was the first step in the improvement of rural school conditions by the bringing together of small separate schools under one roof in consolidated districts.

Through the generosity of Sir William Macdonald, of Montreal, a fund for the improvement of rural schools had been put in the hands of Dr. James W. Robertson. It was planned by him to build, equip, and maintain for three years, one of these schools in each of the three Maritime provinces as an object lesson to the people in what could be done toward solving the rural school problem. With this object in view locations were looked for that were thoroughly rural and no bet-

work it had to do. It had four class rooms for a regular graded school, a manual training and domestic science room, chemical laboratory, museum, assembly hall and two play rooms in the basement. When ready for the pupils the building and equipment had cost in the vicinity of \$30,000.

The first principal was Dr. D. W. Hamilton, now professor of Nature Study at Macdonald College, Que., who had taken special courses in agriculture and nature study at Guelph, University of Chicago and Cornell University, to fit him for the work. With him he had four picked teachers of known ability. Under this staff the school courses were made very strong along agricultural lines for both boys and girls. In addition to the manual training and domestic science courses the

nature study course was made very broad and included elementary entomology, zoology, botany, physics, agricultural chemistry and the theory of stock judging.

Under the old system of separate schools and underpaid teachers the total average daily attendance in the seven districts consolidated was only from 55 to 57, and there had not been a pupil taking grammar school studies for 10 years. Under the new system the average daily attendance increased to 170 within a few months and an enthusiastic appreciation of the work was shown by all the pupils. Some of the parents complained that it was hard to keep their children home from the school. During the first

four years the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th grades were crowded with boys and girls between the ages of 16 and 22 who had left the district schools and gone to work, not expecting to take any further courses of study. It is probable that, if the opportunity for study had not been given as it was, many of those boys and girls would have drifted away to the cities and to the United States without further education, as many of their brothers and sisters had already done.

GRADUATES AS FARMERS

It is worthy of note that with only three or four exceptions all the graduates of the Kingston School since it was started can be found in the rural parts of Canada as farmers, homemakers or teachers, and that four-fifths of them can be found in the province of New Brunswick.

At the end of the three years maintenance under the Macdonald Fund, the



One of the Abandoned Schools

districts took over the management of the school, although the expense was a little hard on the ratepayers. In 1909 the school building was burned with all its equipment. To make matters worse a long river bridge had been swept away by floods a short time before, cutting off one district from the consolidated area. The government did not rebuild the bridge so that district had to reopen its district school. Factions in the district made more trouble, and another district withdrew from consolidation and re-opened its school. Financial difficulties added to the trouble and made the loss seem almost irreparable.

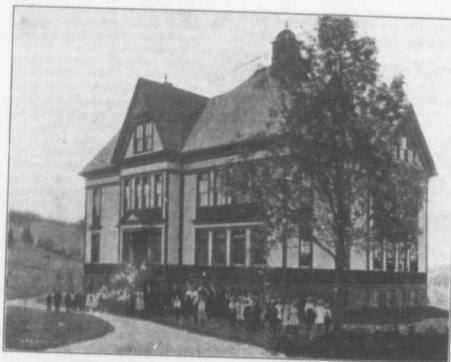
PEOPLE BUILD NEW SCHOOLS

The people, however, would not give up. Funds were raised, a new building planned, the agricultural hall was converted into a school for one year while the new building was being erected. The new school occupied the place of the old one, and was built by the people. The cost amounted to more than \$12,000, a big sum for the districts. Not one thing was neglected, however, in making it just as good as, and better than the old one. Domestic science and manual training equipment were included. A hot water heating system was installed, and a first class plumbing system, including sanitary drinking fountains for the children. To-day the district has one of the best equipped schools in the province, a splendid staff of teachers and an opportunity for primary and high school education right in the home district that is not common in Canada.

In connection with the school is a large school garden and a bearing apple orchard for demonstration purposes. As an example of the interest taken in the school by the pupils it is worthy of note that the children of the district raised money enough by concerts, teas and socials to purchase a piano for the new school.

As the work of this school has been for the benefit of an agricultural community and has tended strongly towards agriculture in all its

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The First Consolidated School Building in New Brunswick

This consolidated school building was erected through the generosity of Sir Wm. Macdonald at Kingston, N.B., at a cost of \$14,000. It was operated for three years at the expense of Sir William, and then the ratepayers of the seven school districts consolidated and took the school over. In 1909 this building was burned with all its equipment.

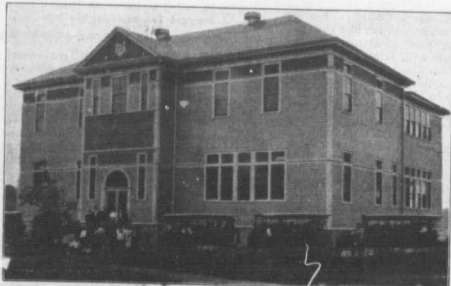
ter than the average throughout the province. The selection of Kingston, in Kings county, was in accordance with these requirements. It was a village of some 30 homes, 22 miles from the nearest city, 10 miles from a railway, and without any telephone communication in any of the seven or eight districts surrounding it.

A POOR DISTRICT

The farms in these districts were rough, hilly and not very productive, and for years the population had been drifting away to the cities and to the United States. The schools maintained were of the one-roomed, ungraded type, employing second and third class teachers when they could get them and often going without any for a term or two. Seven of these districts were persuaded to unite in one consolidated school district, Kingston being the centre.

A building costing in the vicinity of \$14,000 was put up by the Macdonald Fund and was thoroughly equipped with everything needed for an up-to-date school. This was done with the understanding that the Fund would pay all expenses for three years and then turn the building over to the districts. Seven vans were put on to bring the children in from the outlying districts, these having routes varying from four to nine miles in length, and costing from \$1.50 to \$2.70 a day each.

The school was large and well adapted for the



The School Building Erected by the Rate Payers

So pleased were the people of the Kingston District with their consolidated school that when the building erected by Sir Wm. Macdonald was burned the ratepayers replaced it at a cost of \$12,000. Head of the progress of school consolidation in N.B. as told on this page by a graduate of the Kingston school.