

The Municipal School Board

It is easy for anyone today to espouse the cause of consolidation, for it has grown to be somewhat popular. The time was in this province when a man was laughed at for advocating the principle. So today there are many who are exceedingly cautious in their advocacy of the larger unit for school administration, because there is so much opposition from the smaller boards, but the time is coming, and that shortly, when this and the other western provinces will accept the sane policy, and then everybody will be rushing to the front with the cry, "We did it!"

This Journal is not going to wait until public opinion is ready for a change. There are times when public opinion is wrong, and the present is an instance. The opposition to this most needed change in school administration is due to local jealousy or ambition and to the fear that in the adjustment of things the "other fellow" might get a few dollars ahead. These are the simple facts in the case. If that is not right, the columns of the Journal are open for correction.

It may be submitted that arguments in favor of a cause should be presented before a rejoinder is demanded. The main arguments might be summed up in this way:

1. In all other matters the smallest unit of administration is the municipality. Is there any reason for the restricted area when it comes to the education of children?

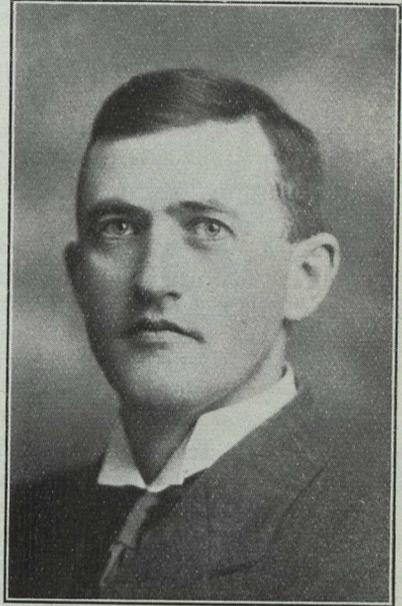
2. Wherever the system is in force, as in towns, cities and in some rural communities, there is greater school efficiency.

3. The trustees would be better men—there being choice from a wider area.

4. Special officers could be chosen for the whole municipality, though the individual schools are unable to engage the services of anybody. For instance, one man might be engaged as principal of all the schools, or as supply agent, director of manual training, or of school

gardening, or as supervisor of buildings and grounds. Or a lady might introduce into all the schools domestic science and household economy in all its branches. The individual teacher cannot be expected to know or do much more than is the case at present. New activities demand the services of spe-

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cialists. The one-roomed rural schools will likely never be much better than they are until they combine their forces.

5. Consolidation on a large scale would be possible. There is danger of carrying consolidation much farther on present lines, for every new district formed renders it impossible for some neighboring schools to consolidate. The only reasonable method of consolidation is one that will ensure that every district has at least an opportunity to join in the scheme. In other words, consolidation should not proceed on local initiative. If it is a good thing it should be made as general as possible. If it is not a good thing it should not be encouraged at all.