

more justified, as every year hundreds of first offenders benefit by the intervention of these social workers. Further, Montreal is the home of the experiment in legal defence for indigent accused persons, through the Prisoners' Aid, which, according to the nature of the case, either provides counsel, or acts on its own responsibility. In Great Britain there are nearly 1,000 adult probation officers, about half of whom are paid by the county Justice authorities, while others are partially paid by them and partly by a voluntary agency. That is what is needed in Canada: probation should be consolidated and should not be left to any one voluntary agency, except in so far as the agencies are recognized and registered by the State.

To recapitulate:

- (1) Consolidation of Canada's prison system is desirable: the division between penitentiary

and reformatory and jail (often dealing with the same customers in turn) is arbitrary and stultifying to a really effective administration.

- (2) The Dominion penitentiaries have seen great improvements under the present administration and are likely to see more when the Royal Commission has reported. Such ameliorations are both negative and positive, the dropping of certain things and the introduction of new and more constructive policies.
- (3) The jails are the weak spot in the penal institutional system of eastern Canada (Ontario excluded). The substitution of adult reformatories such as Guelph and its sister institutions in Ontario and of Oakalla in British Columbia shows the way out.
- (4) But the ideal way out is for probation to be used so freely that half of the present jail population will disappear and half of the half will go to reformatories, and the remnant of vagrants, drunks, etc. will go to farm correctional establishments.
- (5) The study of all these problems should be undertaken in an annual congress, as was done at the First Canadian Penal Congress held in Montreal in June, 1935.

The Larger Unit of School Administration Application to Nova Scotia

BY G. A. FERGUSON

Research undertaken at Dalhousie University.

During the summer months of this year research work on the reorganization of school units in the Province of Nova Scotia has been carried out under the supervision of the Committee of Research in Public Administration at Dalhousie University.

The objectives of this research were as follows:

1. To study the inequalities and defects of the present section system of school government in Nova Scotia.
2. To study experiments in enlarged units in the United States and Canada, and to evaluate them with a view to applying a similar technique in Nova Scotia.

3. To employ the findings of the above studies in drawing up a suitable plan for reorganized school units for Nova Scotia.
4. To select a suitable area for an initial experiment in the enlarged unit organization.
5. To make a detailed study of that area and to show what educational and financial advantages would arise over a given period on a larger unit basis.

The Present Situation.

In 1936, 1713 rural and village school sections were in operation in Nova Scotia. Each section appointed three trustees and a school secretary, making a total of 6852 local school officials, operating 2058 rural and village schools, and providing for the education of 61,335 children. Each school section calculated its own tax rate, collected its own school taxes, and administered to the educational needs of its own particular area.

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This system of school government has resulted in serious inequalities. These inequalities may be classified as follows:

1. Inequality in educational opportunity.
2. Financial inequality, including inequality between sections in ability to support schools, in the burden of school support, and in the amount spent per pupil on education.

The following table selected from a great many prepared during the course of the survey shows how great are the inequalities in eight School Sections within a restricted area.

TABLE

| Section Number | Per Pupil Expenditure | Amt. Spent per Pupil |
|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | | \$40.00 |
| 2 | | 20.40 |
| 3 | | 17.80 |
| 4 | | 14.60 |
| 5 | | 11.50 |
| 6 | | 9.94 |
| 7 | | 5.70 |
| 8 | | 3.88 |

A study of per pupil expenditure in any county will show variations similar to these.

The only way to overcome the evils and inequalities of the section system is to organize education on the basis of a larger administrative unit.

Reorganization Elsewhere.

In twelve States of the Union the county is the paramount unit of school government. Partially developed county unit systems are found in five States, while five others have optional county unit laws. No province of Canada is completely organized on the county unit plan, although numerous experiments have been attempted. In Ontario, York and East York, are completely organized on this plan. In Manitoba, Minota is organized on this basis. The Alberta Department of Education has entered upon an extensive scheme of larger unit organization. The enlarged unit is termed a "division", and is formed by combining from 70 to 85 small districts into a single unit for administrative purposes. When the plan of reorganization is complete, it is expected that from 50 to 60 "divisions" will be in operation. At

present 11 "divisions" are in operation, the first units being established at Berry Creek and Turner Valley in 1933. Two areas in British Columbia have been organized on the basis of a larger unit, the Peace River Consolidated Area,⁽¹⁾ and the Matsqui-Sumas-Abbotsford Administrative Area.

A study of larger school units in operation elsewhere shows that:

1. Wherever larger unit organization has been tried distinct educational advantages and considerable financial economy have resulted
2. Optional legislation, however, desirable, is generally ineffective.
3. A school administrative system cannot be transplanted from one area to another and expected to flourish. The new system must be adapted to suit local conditions, the culture, ideals, and traditions of a people, and the topography of an area.
4. Wherever possible school units should be made to correspond with already existing units of civil government.
5. Local school trustees are capable of performing a useful function and should be preserved under any larger unit plan.

A Municipal Unit Plan for Nova Scotia.

The principal features of a hypothetical municipal unit plan such as might be applied to Nova Scotia were drawn up rather rapidly in order to find out what might be expected to follow if such a plan were applied for a four year period. The plan is not regarded as anything more than a convenient hypothesis. In the plan:—

1. Nova Scotia could be divided into 24 units of school government corresponding to the 24 units of civil government. Urban sections, the two cities, Halifax and Sydney, and 43 incorporated towns would form separate administrative units.
2. Each unit would be administered by a Municipal Board of Education, consisting of five members, three of whom would be appointed by each Municipal Council, and the remaining two by the Council of Public Instruction.
3. A school rate, uniform throughout the whole municipality, could be set up for the purpose of maintaining all schools. School taxes would be collected along with other municipal taxes.
4. School trustees would still be preserved with certain well defined functions concerning the maintenance, equipment and upkeep of school property.

¹ See article "The Peace River Experiment" by B. A. Fletcher, PUBLIC AFFAIRS, August issue, p. 26.

5. A teachers' salary schedule, uniform for all teachers within the municipality would be set up, with due regard for certificate held, years of experience, and type of school, whether elementary, ungraded, elementary graded, junior high or senior high.

Such an organization would not only provide for a greater degree of efficiency in dealing with educational problems, but also a greater degree of equality in educational opportunity and in the burden of school support. The advantages of a municipal school unit may be outlined as follows:

1. Inequalities in tax rates would be eliminated by spreading the cost of education over an entire area, thus assisting those sections where the cost is oppressive.
2. Economy in operation would be effected by:
 - A. Economy in administration.
 - B. The centralized buying of supplies.
 - C. The centralized allocating of insurance.
 - D. Readjustments in taxation.
3. A Municipal Board of Education, being a centralized authority, could deal more efficiently with:
 - A. Problems relative to the establishment of an adequate system of rural high school education.
 - B. The consolidation of attendance units, thus eliminating the excessive cost per pupil in very small rural schools.
 - C. Night classes and vocational training.
 - D. Adult education.
 - E. Library facilities.
 - F. Health service.
4. Teachers could be placed in a position more suited to their training and ability.
5. Teachers would be free from the feeling of dependence on local authorities.
6. A system of teacher promotion could be arranged. Professional interest and teaching efficiency would thereby be stimulated.
7. In many municipalities an additional source of revenue would be secured by making all property within the boundaries of the school unit subject to taxation.

Financial Aspects of the Unit Scheme.

In the research, the financial features of this plan were worked out for an actual municipal unit. The county in question numbering 32,000 inhabitants has 153 schools and spent for these in 1936 about \$133,000.

By establishing a uniform rate of \$1.92 throughout the unit, a rate that would produce revenue equal in amount to that at present derived by separate small section rates, the following would result:

| | |
|--|---------|
| Number of sections with increased rate..... | 65 |
| Number of sections with decreased rate..... | 76 |
| Maximum increase..... | \$1.32 |
| Maximum decrease..... | \$8.08 |
| Estimated saving under municipal unit organization | \$7,735 |

Improvements over a Four Year Period.

The following plan outlines the educational improvements that might be expected in the reorganized unit over a four year period of municipal unit organization, without increasing the burden of taxation on the present tax payer.

1. The building and maintenance of additional departments at sixteen points.
2. The expenditure of \$20.00 per classroom annually on books, supplies and equipment. Over a four year period all schools in the unit would be reasonably well equipped.
3. The adoption of a uniform salary schedule, incremented with licence held and period of service, and showing an average increase of at least ten per cent to all teachers in the unit.
4. The building of three or four new schools to replace obsolete buildings.
5. General improvements in school property, painting, decorating, reflooring, etc.
6. The establishment of an efficient pupil health service, employing three full time nurses.
7. The building and maintenance of two new rural high schools.

At the end of a four year period of municipal unit organization no school in the unit would be overcrowded, and no school would be badly equipped. The quality of teaching would be improved by the elimination of weak teachers, the careful adjustment of teachers to more suitable positions, and professional interest stimulated by higher salaries and a more progressive outlook towards the future. Each school child would receive capable health inspection and advice. Secondary education for children in rural communities would be in the process of becoming an accomplished fact. The burden of school support would be more evenly distributed upon the shoulders of every citizen in the municipality. Equality in educational opportunity and equality in the burden of school support would no longer be mere shadowy ideals in the mind of the educationalist, but facts capable of realization.