

That is farm prices were to be so related to non-farm prices that farmers would have the same buying power at all times as they had during 1909-14. This base period was selected because it was felt that the general economic situation of farmers was pretty satisfactory during this five year period. Farmers were not sure that they were getting exactly the right treatment but felt that, if things could be arranged so that they would never get any worse treatment, they would be satisfied. Instead of using this parity formula as a yard stick they might have decided that farmers should get prices sufficient to cover costs of production. In fact they came fairly close to choosing this measuring rod. It is this cost criterion that, generally, speaking, has been applied in recent years in the United Kingdom. Still another method might be to decide that prices should be such as to give farmers a certain specified share of the national income. Or again, prices might be so arranged as to give farm people a material living standard cor-

responding with that of certain urban groups.

To mention these methods is simply to suggest that there are various possible alternative measures, that no one is entirely satisfactory, and that the general problem involved is tremendously important and involved. The main point to remember about all of these arbitrary criteria is that their use is apt to result in farm prices that are out of line with those that would result from the unhindered interaction of supply and demand forces. They are apt to result in prices that are satisfactory *in spite of* the lack of an effective demand. The great objection to all such criteria is that they are apt to result in the mere achievement of a certain price being regarded as the final objective. In the last analysis it must never be forgotten that a price is but the means to an end and not an end in itself. Prices are something for producers and consumers to react to, not something to aim at.

The Junior High School in Canada

By ALEX. S. MOWAT

The Traditional System

THE traditional system of school organization in North America is the 8-4 grade plan, that is, the single educational ladder consisting of eight grades of elementary or common school followed by four grades of high school. Tradition dies hard, they say. It certainly dies hard in this case, for, although the need for some improved form of organization has long been recognized, the old 8-4 system still operates in many parts of the United States. In Canada it still forms the basis of educational organization in two provinces and traces of its influence remain in all the others. In Nova Scotia, for example, while the present Course

of Study calls for a 6-3-3 division, that is, six grades elementary school, followed by three grades of Junior High School and a subsequent three years of Senior High School, yet the provision of free text books ceases with Grade VIII and schools are still to be found organized on the old 8-4 method.

There does not seem to have been any sound reason, either educational or psychological for the 8-4 division. Indeed in some southern states of the U. S. A. the elementary school period was one of only seven years. The 8-4 system, like Topsy, just "grew" up in most of New England, and since New England influence was the most potent in the development of Canadian schools, it was transplanted across the border and became part of Canadian educational tradi-

tion. The purpose of the eight year elementary school was quite distinct from the purpose of the four year high school. The elementary school was intended to give elementary instruction to all children and in the nineteenth century this meant little more than the 3 R's with a smattering of geography and history. The purpose of the high school was to prepare students to enter the liberal arts colleges which were considered to be the crown and jewel of the whole educational process. Eight grades seems an excessively long time to spend in mastering the elements of education, but perhaps in earlier days of irregular attendance, inferior methods of teaching, and untrained teachers, it may have been thought necessary. Certainly to-day, we must expect a child to master the elementary skills of reading, writing, and computation by the end of Grade VI, if he is to master them at all. On the other hand, the four year period of preparation for college may well be considered too short. One of the first persons to voice opinions of this nature was President Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, who in 1892 pointed out the need for improved methods in the elementary school program. As was natural in a University President, he was more interested in the products of the high schools than in elementary school pupils and had discovered that graduates of European high schools were considerably in advance of graduates of a similar age from American high schools. Dr. W. S. Learned found a similar state of affairs in 1927 (see his Report to the Carnegie Foundation "On the Quality of the Educational Process in America and in Europe"). There is no reason to suppose that things are different to-day in Canadian high schools. The lag is particularly great in foreign languages. I can testify from personal knowledge that the average Grade XI high school student in Scotland knows as much Latin as the average second-year student at Dalhousie University. The reason is not only that teachers of Latin are more highly quali-

fied in Scottish schools, but simply also that Scottish high school pupils spend much more time on Latin during the first years of its study in school. To this point we shall return again. Meanwhile, enough has been said to show that under the 8-4 system high school students lack full opportunity to show what they can do.

The Challenge to the Traditional System

The 8-4 system has not gone unchallenged, and indeed in the U. S. A. has widely given place to the 6-3-3 system, that is to a system where six years of elementary school are followed by three years Junior High School, followed in turn by three years of Senior High School. In this system the central and strategic position is occupied by the Junior High School.

Now there is little doubt about the main function of the elementary school; it is, as one authority says, "to furnish the common training necessary for all children regardless of sex, social status or future vocation." And in the meantime we can take it that the main function of the three year Senior High School is preparation for further education in some institution of higher learning. What then is the function of the Junior High School? Is it a hybrid, neither fish nor flesh nor good red herring? Or a many-headed monster like the hydra with manifold and voracious countenances, but no means of locomotion and no purpose towards which it moves? Or has it a function and purpose peculiar to itself? I believe it has.

There are three main reasons why we should have Junior High Schools. The first is that about half of Canadian children leave school at or before the end of Grade IX. Taking the figures for enrolment for 1942 from the *Canada Year Book* (the latest available) we find that the age-groups from age 8 to 12 years number each about 140,000 pupils. By age 15 the number of children at school has shrunk to approximately 96,-

000 (68%) and by age 16 to 70,000 (50%). In Nova Scotia (as shown by the figures in the Annual Reports of the Superintendent) there has never been a year in which the Grade X pupils numbered more than half the pupils in Grade IV. In most years the number is considerably less than half. It is perfectly plain that we must provide more for those school leavers than the mere elementary school curriculum of the old eight year elementary school. We must prepare them for life and for democratic citizenship. It has been shown that this can be done successfully by transfer of pupils at the end of Grade VI to the more mature atmosphere and the more varied curriculum of the Junior High School.

In the second place, most pupils in Grades VII to IX are between the ages of 12 and 16 years, and this is the age of adolescence, when the maturing of the sex characteristics is accompanied by a new independence of mind, a new interest in the world of adult men and women, and frequently a desire to get out into that world and to play a real part in it. You cannot treat young adolescents as you would younger children. Perhaps it would be truer to say you *should* not, for a great deal of harm has been done in the past by this very thing. The adolescent needs *guidance* rather than *direction*. The Junior High School is the best way of introducing the boy or girl to a new intellectual and social atmosphere in school, and transfer to it from the elementary school marks his transition from childhood to pre-adult life, and prepares him for that life more directly.

Individual Differences in Ability

In the third place, by the time that pupils reach the end of Grade VI individual differences in ability are so obvious that the educator can no longer disregard them. This matter of individual differences is so often misunderstood that it is worthy of a little explanation. Individuals differ in inborn ability in two ways, namely, in the *type* of ability

in which they excel, and in *general level* of ability. To illustrate *type* of ability, imagine three children, otherwise alike, one of whom excels in music, another in mathematics, a third in literature. To illustrate differences in *general level* of ability imagine three children, none excelling in any special field over other fields, but the first excellent in all fields (music, mathematics, literature and all the rest); the second fair in all fields and the third poor in all. Most children differ one from another in both ways, but it must be emphasized that the second kind of difference is much the more important and its existence better established. To put it briefly, some men are born clever, some not so clever, and some plain stupid. It is this general level of ability that the so-called tests of intelligence attempt to measure. No one supposes that those tests measure intelligence in the way that a foot rule measures length or a voltmeter the voltage of an electric current, but careful and critical use of such tests over many years has demonstrated beyond doubt the truth of certain propositions. We now have a great mass of evidence to demonstrate the following:—that general intelligence in the individual is inborn and does not (unless in exceptional cases) increase or decrease much throughout life (relative to others of similar age); that most people are about average in intelligence, but that differences in intelligence are nevertheless very great; and further that such differences increase with age up to about the age of 16, after which they remain constant. To illustrate let us take the ten year old age-group of children. Approximately 15% of ten year old children are as clever as or cleverer than the average child of 11½ years, and approximately 5% are as clever as or cleverer than the average child of 12½ years. Similarly 15% and 5% are respectively at or below the level of the average child of 8½ or 7½ years. In practice no school neglects such differences. For in the nature of things all children of the same year group cannot master the same curriculum in

the same period of years. If the curriculum remains the same for all, they don't. Some skip a grade, or do two grades in one year; others repeat the same grade a second or third time. This method of dealing with individual differences by advancement and retardation is crude and inadequate if carried beyond Grade VI. Indeed in some cases at least it is not defensible below Grade VI. Hence our Auxiliary Classes for mentally defective or retarded children. But certainly beyond Grade VI only some differentiation of curricula will meet the case. Such differentiation will be made in accordance with differences among the children in *type* of ability and more especially in accordance with differences in *general level* of ability. This can be done satisfactorily only in a Junior High School having at least six teachers.

For these reasons the case for the Junior High School is, I think, unanswerable.

Lions in the Path

It is sometimes thought that a Junior High School implies a separate building for Grades VII, VIII and IX alone. I do not believe this is so. What is necessary is that the school authorities recognize Grades VII, VIII and IX as an educational unit, marking a definite stage in education, and differing in purposes and methods both from the elementary grades and the Senior High School. If it is convenient, there is no reason why the Junior High School should not have a separate school building. If it is inconvenient, no harm will be done by having the Junior High School in the same building as the elementary grades, or the Senior High School (or all three together)—provided always that the peculiar needs of the Junior High School stage are recognized.

Why then do we not have more Junior High Schools? Why are pupils at the Junior High School stage the true "forgotten men" in Canadian education? Let me suggest a few reasons. First ignorance—ignorance on the part of the public that more than half of all Canadian

children leave school before completing Grade IX. In my experience most people are incredulous of this simple fact. When you convince them, they say, "then we must make attendance at school compulsory till 18". Even if this were done, the need for Junior High Schools would still exist. However, it appears to me highly unlikely that the school age will be so raised in the next few years; and further I do not believe it to be in the best interests of the pupils to make attendance at a full time day school compulsory for all up to 18. For reasons which are too lengthy to be stated here, I think that a system of *part-time* attendance would fill the bill much better. Meanwhile, the fact remains that the majority of our children leave before the end of Grade IX. Our educational system should take cognisance of this fact.

Secondly, I think it is true to say that both pupils and teachers, and the public are preoccupied with the Senior High School grades. The important examinations are the Grade XI, XII or XIII examinations and the important certificates are the Provincially issued Grade XI, XII or XIII Certificates, which have a practical value and a prestige value far beyond any other certificates. Because of this value, teachers often consider Grades XI and XII or XIII the most important in the school (sometimes the work of a whole rural school suffers because of the presence of a Grade XI pupil on whom the teacher concentrates most of her attention), and for the same reason pupils and parents alike consider that the most important work of the school is done in those grades. The introduction of Provincial Junior Certificates to be won after successful completion of Grade IX would undoubtedly foster interest in the Junior High School, and would have the further advantages of marking appropriately the completion of a definite stage in education and reducing the undue emphasis at present given to the Senior High School.

We must not forget that the admin-

istration of education in Canada by the provinces and not by the Federal Government has left one important gap in the Canadian educational picture which the Canada and Newfoundland Education Association is only now beginning to fill. I refer to the lack of a Canada-wide consideration of educational problems. England has had her Royal Commissions with their Reports, one of the most important of which has been the Report on the Education of the Adolescent (sometimes known as the Hadow Report) issued in 1928. The U. S. A. has had the Year Books and Proceedings of the National Education Association which, beginning in 1899, have from time to time directed attention to the needs of young people at the Junior High School stage. Out of sight, out of mind, says the proverb, and the Canadian public, not having been told, has failed signally to realize the importance of the Junior High grades. It is to be hoped that the Canada and Newfoundland Education Association, having embarked with its Survey Report on the task of enlightening the Canadian public, will remedy this omission soon.

The Need for Diversity of Courses

Another reason for the neglect of the Junior High School lies in the persistence of the historic North American tradition of the single educational ladder and the consequent disinclination to classify children into groups suited for different types of courses. A Junior High School which does not provide different types of courses for different grades of pupils is not worthy of the name. The most necessary classification, as I have pointed out, is that by general level of ability. But neither Canadian educators nor the Canadian public like this idea very much as yet. The first line of defence is generally that all men are equal and all pupils alike (which reminds one of the gibe that in America all men are equal except niggers). But this line has been breached and stormed so completely and decisively that the defenders of the present state

of affairs have had to fall back upon the assertion that our means of classification are inadequate. This is obviously a weaker line, since its collapse is assured if satisfactory means of selection and classification are found. No one pretends that our present means are perfect, though they have steadily improved, but one may admit that mistakes in classification will be made and yet affirm that classification for different types of courses is preferable to the present state of things.

As an example of what may happen under the influence of the North American tradition of the single educational ladder, let us take the present Nova Scotian Course of Study for Grades VII, VIII and IX, which, while making some little concession to the needs of differing *types* of ability, provides no diversity of courses whatever to meet the needs of pupils of different *levels* of ability. About this course I hear two kinds of complaint. Some teachers tell me there is too much work to cover in the time; some parents object that their children don't get enough work and learn too little. I think both complaints are justified. The course is probably about right for the average child, but is too difficult for the below average pupil with whom a great deal of most teachers' time is spent; and certainly it presents no challenge to the bright child. In foreign languages particularly the content is only a fraction of what a bright child could manage with ease. So you can have your choice of two evils. Either, as at present, you have a single course which the duller pupils struggle, manfully perhaps, but unsuccessfully to master, while their brighter companions have to sit idle waiting for them to catch up. Or you provide different courses to suit different types of pupils with the admitted danger of placing some pupils in the wrong course. But with modern means of selection such errors would probably be few and those could be corrected by later transfers from one course to another. I prefer the second

alternative and point to the Junior High School as the efficient method for carrying it out.

The reasons so far given for the neglect of the Junior High School in Canada have been theoretical or social. Perhaps, however, the biggest obstacle has been a practical one, namely the necessity for consolidation for successful Junior High School work. It is most unfortunate that the adoption of the Junior High School idea on paper has in some cases actually made things worse by retaining prospective high school pupils a year longer in their local communities. Formerly, they entered high school with Grade IX, now with Grade X. It is axiomatic that for successful working a Junior High School should be a reasonable size (I have suggested six teachers as a minimum). In many, probably most, Canadian communities, this means that several elementary schools must feed a single central Junior High School. In rural areas the widespread adoption of the Larger School Unit will make it easier. (Incidentally, it is of the utmost importance that any consolidated rural high schools begin with Grade VII,

not Grade X). In urban areas disinclination of elementary schools to lose their older pupils should not be allowed to stand in the way of the establishment of Junior High Schools.

It seems that further educational reform is likely in these post-war days to follow the reforms already undertaken during the war. During this period the needs of pupils at the Junior High School stage must not be forgotten. Indeed it is not too much to say that some of our most pressing problems can only be solved by the adoption in some form of the Junior High School idea. In particular the problem of retardation or "repeaters," that is, children who remain two years or more in the same grade can only be met satisfactorily by the provision of diverse courses at the Junior High School stage. In this connection I might advise Nova Scotians (and others) to read the Educational Section of the Report of the Nova Scotia Royal Commission on Provincial Development and Rehabilitation (The Dawson Report) which deals very fully and clearly with the needs of pupils at the Junior High School level.

Health Reform in Saskatchewan

By MINDEL C. SHEPS

I.

SASKATCHEWAN'S health services have suffered, in common with other rural areas, from a shortage of personnel and hospitals, and especially of the diagnostic and therapeutic facilities on which modern scientific medicine is based.

Local preventive health services have been quite insufficient particularly in rural areas. In addition, observers were struck by the inadequacy of the mental hygiene program as regards both institutions and any program designed to prevent mental illness. Last but not least, in

Saskatchewan as throughout this continent, there is an increasing need for a means of spreading the cost of all health services over the entire population, so that it shall not fall on the sick person when he needs care.

This situation has been aggravated by the lack of any centre with a population larger than 60,000, the lack of a medical school, and the marked insecurity of an economy largely dependent on the wheat crop.

Certain admirable and fairly successful attempts had been made to solve some of these problems in Saskatchewan through the development of municipal medical and hospitalization schemes, union hospitals (i.e. hospitals owned by

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Mindel Sheps was, prior to her resignation in January, 1945, Secretary of the Health Services Planning Commission for the Province of Saskatchewan. She has taken an active part in the preparation of measures described in the article.