

The public school system normally provides 12 or 13 years or grades, depending on the province. Common patterns for elementary and secondary levels are 8-4 or 8-5, 6-3-3 or 6-3-4, or 7-5. The trend is towards six elementary years with six or seven years of secondary schooling, following the practice of doing away with the one-room rural units through consolidation and the consolidation of small high schools. The generally accepted age of entrance to regular classes is now six years, although there has been an increased demand for kindergarten and nursery schools that has not been satisfied in many areas because of pressure for accommodation at the higher levels. Many private nursery schools and kindergartens have been established which have helped to ease the situation. The amount of supervision for these pre-school organizations varies widely from province to province but is usually minimal.

Parent-teacher and home and school organizations are numerous and active across Canada, giving community leadership in many areas connected with child instruction and welfare and working towards better schooling.

School Construction.—The development of larger school units and the consequent decrease in the number of one-room rural schools has tended to counterbalance the increase in the number of new schools erected to accommodate increased enrolment. Thus the total number of elementary and secondary schools has remained reasonably constant for some years although pupil accommodation has greatly increased year by year. At the higher education level, increased enrolment has resulted in an unprecedented expansion of facilities as well as in an upgrading of colleges into universities and in the establishment of new institutions. Planners and designers of new school buildings have paid greater attention to functional architecture, to the use of modern light-weight materials and to equipment possibilities. Gone are basements, towers, expensive trim and waste space, but more expensive heating, plumbing and ventilation systems have been incorporated. Flexibility has been introduced through non-bearing interior walls, easily movable desks and other equipment, and well-organized, smartly tailored rooms are common, featuring acoustic and glazed tile, terrazzo flooring, metal partitions, suspended ceilings and fluorescent fixtures. Warm colours are used for north rooms, cool colours for sunny rooms and special rooms are designed for such courses as home economics, mechanics, music and chemistry.

Most of the universities have conducted financial campaigns for expansion at some time during the past ten years and indications are that many more such campaigns must be undertaken in the near future. Despite expansion and modernization, there are still some old and crowded buildings in use which contrast sharply with the new well-planned, roomy, permanent structures on spacious campuses. All Canadian universities are expanding, whether they are located in the cramped heart of a city, have begun again in suburban areas, or were fortunate enough to have ample room on their first campus sites.

Special Education.—Each year increased provision is made for children who need special programs, particularly for those in the cities where numbers warrant such attention. There are in Canada six schools for the blind and nine schools for the deaf and in a number of centres classes are held for hard-of-hearing pupils and for those with poor vision. Other physically handicapped children for whom instruction is provided include cerebral-palsied, orthopaedic, and hospitalized and home-bound tubercular and delicate children as well as the mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed. In addition to the special assistance given to the handicapped, a limited number of classes are conducted for mentally gifted children. Special educational services are also provided for the Indian and Eskimo nomads of Northern Canada and for isolated children such as those serviced by railway-car classrooms in northern Ontario and by bus classrooms in British Columbia.