

Local School Organization.—Within the framework of each provincial jurisdiction and regulation, public education is administered by local education authorities operating under a school Act. These school boards or boards of education are responsible for establishing and maintaining schools, employing qualified teachers, providing pupil transportation where needed, and budgeting for the money required to operate the schools, which will be raised through local taxation. Local boards may be elected, appointed, or partly elected and partly appointed. They differ in number of members from three in the case of most small rural units to five, seven, or even twelve or more for urban units. Where larger units in rural areas have been established, there are central boards for the units representing the component districts, although there may be local boards retaining some custodial and advisory duties.

The larger unit, replacing rural districts which were usually about four miles in extent, has been introduced by legislation in several provinces and made optional in others in an effort to provide better school facilities and greater equalization of costs and to mitigate the problems caused by a chronic shortage of teachers. Larger units have been established by legislation in Alberta and British Columbia and by Acts with provision for local option in Saskatchewan and the Maritime Provinces. Southern Ontario has been gradually organizing its rural areas into township and county units; Manitoba has recently introduced legislation leading to the formation of larger units of administration for secondary schools; and Protestant Quebec has been essentially organized into larger units. In Roman Catholic Quebec, one board of commissioners administers all Roman Catholic schools in a school municipality, whether rural or urban, while secondary education is being consolidated more and more into larger central secondary schools. In that province there have always been more private residential schools established by religious groups than elsewhere.

Administration of Elementary and Secondary Education.—Each department of education, among its duties, undertakes to provide for the selection, training and certification of teacher candidates; to establish courses of study and prescribe school texts; to provide inspection services and liaison between the local boards and the department; to assist in financing the school through grants and services; and to make rules and regulations for the guidance of trustees and teachers. In return, regular reports are required from the teachers and the districts.

The first government grants were based on such factors as number of teachers, enrolment, days in session and attendance. Later, special grants were introduced in most provinces to meet a variety of expenses such as the erection of the first school and other construction, the organization of special classes, transportation for pupils, and school lunches. More recently, most provinces have made some provision for equalization grants and several have introduced a basic grant for operation, supplemented by a limited number of special grants.

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 toward 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; the establishment of many private nursery schools and kindergartens has eased the situation to some extent. The amount of supervision for these pre-school establishments varies widely from province to province but is usually minimal.

In several provinces Roman Catholic or Protestant minorities are permitted by law or by 'gentleman's agreement' to organize separate schools under public auspices; and in all provinces religious groups, private organizations and individuals have established private schools at the elementary and secondary levels. Except in Quebec, private schools are small in number and account for only about 5 p.c. of the total elementary and secondary enrolment. Many of these schools are residential and tend to place greater emphasis on