

All provinces are now providing trade schools and institutes of technology, which may be found under one roof or in separate buildings. It seems likely that, with more youth staying longer in school, provision will be made for more terminal courses for those students who do not wish to continue to university or who cannot meet entrance requirements. Some provinces have legislation providing for the establishment of junior or community colleges, which may perform at least three functions: to act as selective feeder colleges for the universities; to provide technical and other terminal courses; and to provide a wide variety of courses for the out-of-school population who are interested in being upgraded, following cultural pursuits or taking other courses.

Elementary and Secondary Education

Within the framework of each provincial jurisdiction, public, elementary and secondary education is administered by local education authorities operating under a Schools Act. These school boards or boards of education are responsible for establishing and maintaining schools, employing teachers, providing necessary transportation for pupils, and budgeting for the money required to build and operate the schools. Operating costs are met from local taxation supplemented by provincial grants. Building costs may be financed from current income but more commonly through debentures. School board members may be all elected, all appointed, or some elected and some appointed. The number of members varies from three in most of the small rural districts to five, seven, or even twelve or more for urban centres.

Traditionally, rural municipalities were divided into small school districts or sections of 16 or more square miles. In almost all provinces these have been or are being replaced by larger units of administration in order to provide better school facilities, improved administration and greater equalization of costs.

The public school system normally provides 12 or 13 years or grades depending on the province. Patterns for elementary and secondary levels are 6-2-3, 6-2-5, 6-3-2, 6-4-2 and 7-3-3 but the 6-3-3 pattern is the most commonly followed. The generally accepted entrance age to regular classes is six years, although the number of public and private kindergarten classes is increasing markedly.

In several provinces, Roman Catholic or Protestant minorities may organize separate schools within the public school system and in all provinces religious groups, private organizations and individuals may establish private elementary and secondary schools. Many of these schools, which are small in number except in Quebec, tend to place considerable emphasis on character-building and cultural subjects; nevertheless, in general, they follow the provincial curriculum fairly closely and prepare students for university or for entrance into the business world. Private schools in Quebec, most of which are operated by various orders of the Roman Catholic Church, are more numerous than in the other provinces.

In all provinces, increasing provision is being made for children in need of special programs, particularly in the cities where larger numbers warrant such attention. There are in Canada six schools for the blind and 13 for the deaf and in a number of centres classes for the hard-of-hearing and for those with poor vision. Special classes are also provided in most larger centres for other physically handicapped children, hospitalized and homebound children, educable and trainable retardates, and the emotionally disturbed. In addition, a limited number of classes are conducted for mentally gifted children. In most larger urban centres bright pupils are grouped into separate classes where they may advance more rapidly or be provided with an enriched program of studies; slow learners are also grouped in order that they may be given special attention suitable to their abilities.

As might be expected there is considerable variety in curriculum from province to province and, although there is some interest in the possibility of a uniform program of study across Canada, such changes as are made tend to make the curricula more varied and more applicable to the individual needs of the students.