

special classes, providing transportation for pupils, school lunches and other contingencies. A number of provinces made provision for equalization grants, and now the majority have a foundation program of one kind or another.

The work of the departments of education has grown considerably. Many have expanded their services in the fields of health, audio-visual aids, art, music, agriculture, special education, correspondence courses and prevocational and trade courses. At the same time there has been an increasing delegation of authority to local boards and school staffs. One illustration of this tendency is a reduction in the number of departmental (external) year-end examinations. Few provinces now provide for more than one or two such examinations—at the end of the final and, in some cases, also at the end of the second last year of the secondary school course. Another illustration is the increasing use of approved lists of textbooks from which local authorities may make their own choice, instead of lists of prescribed texts. Courses of study are now seldom planned only by one or two experts in the department; instead they result from conferences and workshops including active teachers and other interested individuals or bodies. In most provinces "curriculum construction" is considered to be a continuous procedure.

Local Units of Administration

In all provinces, school laws provide for the establishment and operation of schools by local education authorities, which operate under the Public School Act and are held responsible to the provincial government and resident ratepayers for the actual operation of the local schools. Through the delegation of authority, education becomes a provincial-local partnership with the degree of decentralization reviewed intermittently. Questions concerning the allocation of responsibilities between the provincial and local authorities will probably occupy the minds of Canadians for decades to come, as well as problems such as the optimum size of administrative units, schools and classes.

At one time, the provincial departments delegated authority to publicly elected or appointed boards, which functioned as corporations under the School Acts and regulations. These three-man boards were expected to establish and maintain a school, select a qualified teacher and prepare a budget for presentation to the municipal authorities. As towns and cities developed, the original boards remained as units but provision was made in the legislation for urban school boards with more members and generally (although not always) with responsibility for both the elementary and secondary schools.

Rural school districts were typically about four miles square, their size determined largely by the need for the school to be within walking distance of the homes it served. As time went by the realization grew that the manner of living was changing, that farms were becoming much larger and more mechanized, that most farmers had trucks and automobiles, that there were fewer children to the square mile and that it would be more efficient and economical to provide central schools and transportation. There was also considerable discontent among the teachers, as security of tenure was rarely found under the three-man local school boards. Further, the shortage of teachers, differences among the districts in their ability to pay for education, and a demand for secondary school facilities in rural areas all combined to force the establishment of larger administrative units.

Under provincial legislation, larger units are now in effect in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, and their establishment is being encouraged and promoted in Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and Manitoba. (Newfoundland is a somewhat special case in which the denominational school districts, already rather large geographically, are proceeding toward some kind of amalgamation of provision of joint services.) Ontario has abolished the local school sections in favour of township school areas and is now beginning to promote reorganization into county units with responsibility for both elementary and secondary education. In Quebec, the greater part of the Protestant system is organized into larger units and the Catholic system has recently completed a reorganization of its administrative structure (for secondary education) into 55 regions.