

40%, and postsecondary enrolment 170%. Enrolment reached its peak in 1970-71.

During the 1960s, education expenditures grew at an average yearly rate of more than 10% (sometimes 20%) to \$7.7 billion in 1970. These expenditures were equivalent to 9% of GNP and absorbed 22% of government spending, more than any other major area. In 1980 and 1981 expenditures on education represented an estimated 7.8% of GNP and social welfare had assumed first place.

The drop in the birth rate and lower levels of immigration have produced an enrolment decline in elementary-secondary schools that is expected to persist through the 1980s. The 1970-71 peak is unlikely to be attained again this century.

4.1.3 Provincial administration

Each province and territory is responsible for its own education system. As a consequence, organization, policies and practices differ. Each province has a department of education headed by a minister who is an elected member of the provincial cabinet or, in the case of the territories, a councillor. Some provinces have established separate departments for postsecondary education. Where two departments exist there may be two ministers, or one may have dual jurisdiction.

While the education minister has general authority, day-to-day operation of the department is carried out by a deputy minister who advises the minister and supervises all functions of the department. These include: supervision and inspection of elementary and secondary schools; provision of curriculum and school organization guidelines; approval of new courses and textbooks; production of curriculum materials; finance; teacher training and certification; prescription of regulations for trustees and teachers; research; and support services such as libraries, health and transportation.

In most provinces, responsibility for teacher training has been transferred from teachers' colleges to faculties or colleges of education in universities. Increasingly, an elementary teacher must have a bachelor's degree. The Nova Scotia Teachers' College is the only remaining institution of its kind.

Other provincial departments have some responsibility for education, operating apprenticeship programs, agricultural schools, reform schools and forest ranger schools.

Levels of education. Despite such variations as the ages of compulsory attendance, course offerings and graduation prerequisites, the education systems that evolved in each province basically consist of three levels: elementary, secondary and postsecondary. The number of years required to complete each level and the dividing lines between them differ from province to province.

4.2 Elementary and secondary schools

At the elementary and secondary levels, public schools, including Protestant and Roman Catholic separate schools, are operated by local education authorities according to public school acts of the provinces. Private schools are operated and administered by individuals or groups. Schools for the handicapped, most under direct provincial government administration, provide special facilities and training. Federal schools are administered directly by the federal government and include schools operated by the defence department for dependents of servicemen, and Indian schools operated by the Indian and northern affairs department.

Local administration. Schools in all provinces are established under a public school act and operated by local authorities answering to the provincial government and resident ratepayers. Provincial authorities delineate school board areas and the responsibilities of boards. With the growth of cities and towns, and of educational facilities and requirements, small local boards have been consolidated into central, regional or county units with jurisdiction over both elementary and secondary schools in a wider area. The boards, composed of elected or appointed trustees or commissioners, are responsible for school management. Their powers, determined and delegated by the legislature or education departments, vary from province to province. Generally, they handle the business aspects of education — establishment and maintenance of schools, appointment of teachers, purchase of supplies and equipment, details of school construction and budget preparation. Boards are authorized to levy taxes or to requisition taxes from municipal governments and manage grants from the department.

Grade structure. School attendance is compulsory for about 10 years in every province — the starting age is 6 or 7, and the minimum leaving age, 15 or 16. However, the elementary-secondary program usually extends over 12 years. Local authorities may also provide an introductory year of education before grade one, or children of pre-elementary age may attend private kindergartens, which operate under varying degrees of provincial supervision.

At one time secondary schools were predominantly academic and prepared students for university. Vocational schools were separate institutions, located only in large cities. Today, in addition to technical and commercial high schools, most secondary institutions are composite or comprehensive. Programs include both purely academic courses as a prelude to university, and vocational courses ranging from one to four years that prepare students either for an occupation or for further postsecondary education at a community college.

The principle of promotion by subject has been implemented to a large extent in secondary schools.