

and under too many conditions to be open to debate. From the standpoint of administration, finance, general education, and agricultural training, the enlarged school shows the way out of many of the present difficulties. It makes possible the construction of artistic modern buildings, properly heated, ventilated, lighted, equipped, adequately provided with sanitary arrangements, pure drinking water, &c.; in fact, just the necessities of the modern school which the one-room district school does not have, and never has had. More important than these obvious advantages, the consolidated school provides for overcoming the inherent difficulty of the rural school, namely, the attempt to instruct by one teacher six- to sixteen-year-old pupils."

Additional advantages to be looked for from the consolidation of schools are,—

- (a.) The *per capita* cost is lessened;
- (b.) The average daily attendance is increased;
- (c.) The pupils remain at school for a much longer time;
- (d.) The teaching-time is increased and the time devoted to home-work is diminished;
- (e.) Better salaries are paid and hence more highly qualified teachers are employed;
- (f.) The schools are better supervised; and
- (g.) Better material equipment is provided as regards buildings, libraries, heating, and sanitation.

Many of the Education Boards have supplied the Commission with maps of their districts and names of the country schools which in their opinion might be consolidated. It is evident that the experiment might be tried with every prospect of success in a considerable number of cases throughout the Dominion, and it is strongly recommended that an attempt at consolidation should be made forthwith.

In addition to the consolidation of primary schools in country districts, it is further recommended that district high schools be combined wherever possible. With reasonable co-operation on the part of the railway authorities something might be done in this direction.

FACILITIES FOR ATTENDING SCHOOLS.

The Commission regrets that there appears to be little tendency on the part of the Railway Department to provide special facilities for the conveyance of pupils to primary, secondary, and technical schools. Considering the importance of education to the community this attitude is, to say the least, somewhat strange. In many cases a slight rearrangement of the time-table or the addition of a carriage to a goods-train would result in great benefit to those pupils who cannot get the required instruction in the locality in which they live. Cases could be mentioned where there would be no extra cost to the Railway Department or inconvenience to the travelling public by adopting such a course, but existing departmental systems would appear to be a serious obstacle to a good understanding on these points.

FREE SCHOOL-BOOKS.

Witnesses were unanimous in their disapproval of the system of supplying free school-books. It was stated that in some cases between eighty and ninety per cent. of the pupils purchased their own book, and that teachers found difficulty in providing storage space for the books provided by the State but unused by the children. It is recommended that the grant under this head be discontinued, and that a portion of the money be spent on supplementary readers and books for school libraries. The amount spent by the Department last year was about £10,000.

REWARDS FOR ZEAL.

The Boards of Education should be encouraged to nominate periodically one Inspector, or one primary-school teacher, or one secondary-school teacher, or one technical-school teacher, who, in recognition of zeal shown in his or her work, shall, if the Council see fit, be given one year's leave on full pay, for the purpose of studying the schemes of national education in force in other parts of the world.