

State Normal School of Colorado



Bulletin Concerning Rural Schools and Their Consolidation.

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BULLETIN

Concerning Rural Schools
and Their Consolidation

Colorado State Normal School
Greeley, Colorado

August, 1909

By D. D. HUGH,
Dean of Training Department.

OUR RURAL SCHOOLS.

It is beyond controversy that our rural schools have not during the past generation kept pace with the educational progress of our city school systems. This is true alike of the material equipment in the way of bildings, apparatus and playgrounds, in the enrichment of courses of study, and in the provision made for securing both adequate supervision and a professionally traind corps of teachers. The reasons for this retardation of the rural school are not hard to find. The isolation of country life in the past has contributed in many ways to this result. In any country district there are necessarily few people who are vitally interested in the welfare of the schools and few opportunities exist for the meeting of either teachers or parents for the discussion of educational problems. There is lacking, therefore, the natural stimulus that comes from keen realization of the issues at stake and spirited debate in regard to the best means of attaining the desired ends. The meager salaries, morover, of rural teachers are not a great incentiv to spend much time and money upon professional training, and those who do not make such preparation usually succumb sooner or later to the superior pecuniary attractions and social allurements of city life. Hence the rural school has remaind largely unaffected by the march of modern educational progress.

This assertion of the inadequacy of the rural school is

not invalidated by the fact that many persons of eminence have obtained the rudiments of their education within its walls. Their success in life is not in any large measure to be attributed to the educational efficiency of this institution. On the contrary a favorable environment for physical development, the helthful moral and intellectual influences of Nature, the establishment of habits of industry and self-reliance, and the opportunities for quiet meditation upon the problems of life, may all with more reason than any fancied superiority of the instruction be regarded as the causes of this success. It is important, therefore, that the district school should be aroused from its lethargy and be made alive to its splendid educational opportunities.

And there are abundant evidences that its renaissance is at hand. This is another indication of the recent revival of interest in country life. The isolation of the country that has so long retarded its social and educational activities is rapidly being broken down. The telephone and the rural mail delivery, the trolley cars, and even the automobile—that modern annihilator of distances—are all contributing to this result. The development of higher educational institutions, such as our agricultural colleges and normal schools, directly concerned with the social and intellectual welfare of the rural population, is also an important element in the situation. Everywhere there are evidences of new life and activity. With this rejuvenation of country life must come also, sooner or later, a reorganization of the rural school that will make it a potent factor in the social and intellectual life of the rural districts.

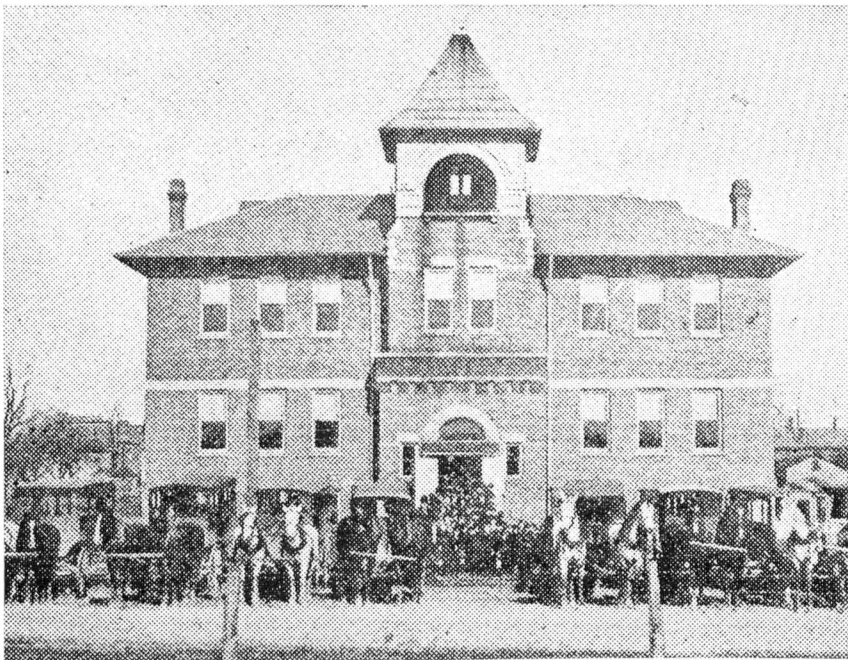
The term "reorganization" best represents the changes that must inevitably come to enable the rural school to do efficient work. As at present constituted it cannot furnish an adequate type of education. Its defects are those that are inherent in an ungraded school system: namely, imperfect classification; classes too numerous to permit the teacher to do other than the most perfunctory kind of routine work; no provision for the newer subjects that are vitalizing the work of our better schools; and, finally, lack of social spirit due to the small number of children in the classes. These defects can not be overcome by the well-intended efforts of the county superintendent or school directors or the self-sacrificing services of the teacher. We must have a new kind of school for the country districts—a school that will represent the new country life, a school that will employ well-trained teachers and that will provide a generous course of study designed as far as possible to satisfy the various intellectual and vocational needs of country boys and girls.

This higher type of rural school will be practicable, then, only where children can be brought together in sufficient numbers to make possible both a properly graded system and the employment of special teachers for some of the newer subjects. These results can be most readily attained by the establishment of consolidated schools. As President Butterfield of Massachusetts says: "The centralization of district schools and the transportation of pupils will probably prove to be more nearly a solution of all these difficulties (i. e., of the district schools) than will any other one

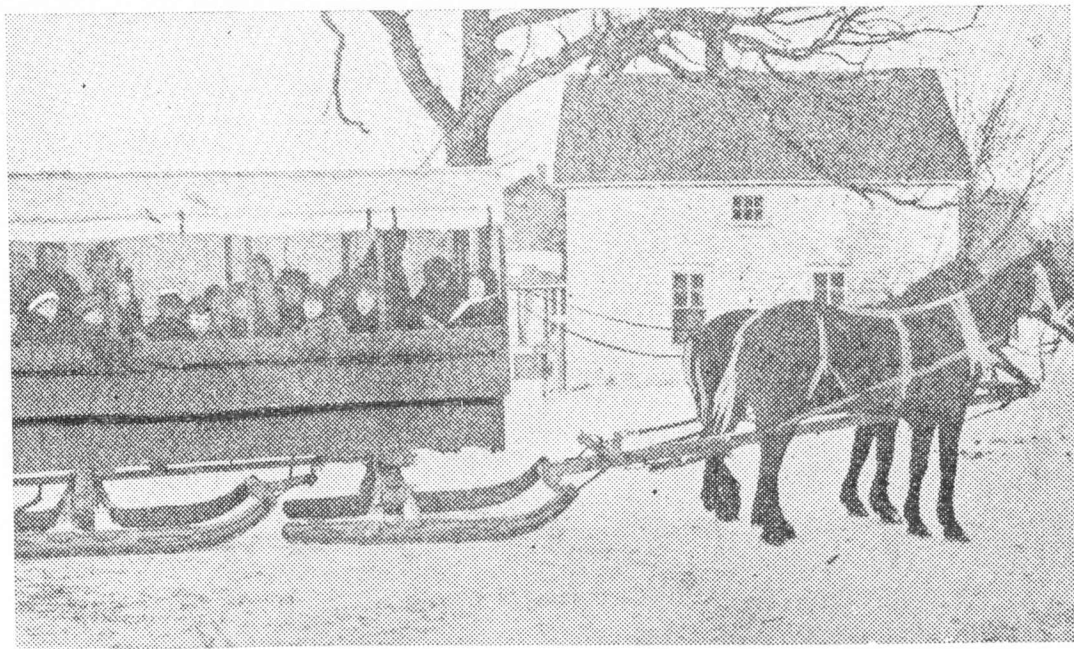
scheme. The plan permits the payment of higher wages for teachers and ought to secure better instruction; it permits the employment of special teachers, as for nature-study or agriculture; it increases the efficiency of superintendence; it costs but little if any more than the district system; it leaves the school amid rural surroundings, while introducing into the school-room itself a larger volume, so to speak, of world atmosphere; it contains possibilities for community service; it can easily be expanded into a high school of reputable grade."

These words uttered by the President of an agricultural college and of the Roosevelt commission on rural life, a citizen of a commonwealth that has always been in the van of educational progress and has had a longer experience with consolidated schools than any other state in the Union, are worthy of careful consideration on the part of every one interested in the rural school. They sum up in concise language the benefits that such an institution is capable of conferring upon country districts; they open up a broad vision of the possibilities of a more adequate type of education for country boys and girls.

Attention is particularly invited to the social and vocational aspects of the scheme here outlined. The rural school should be the center of the social activities of the community,—an object of pride and a source of inspiration to all concerned with it. It should be a place where the people of a community meet occasionally for the discussion of problems of general interest, for farmers' institutes, for entertainments and public lectures, for the cultivation of all



A Consolidated School—Wagons Redy to Take the Children Home.
(*Courtesy Woman's National Daily, St. Louis.*)



Cold Wether Does Not Hinder the Consolidated School Plan.

(Curtesy Woman's National Daily, St. Louis.)

the higher interests of life—intellectual, social, and esthetic. But most of all, it should afford opportunities for a broader intellectual and vocational education of the young people of the surrounding district. The courses of study in our city schools have been greatly enriched during recent years, and there are indications that the adjustment of the curriculum is only in its infancy yet. Vocational education is now one of the live issues among educators, and is bound to become a more important factor in school work in the near future. Our country schools should not try to imitate the city schools, but should work out a course of study especially suited to the needs of country children. They should afford a wide range of instruction in such subjects as nature-study, elementary agriculture, manual training, domestic science, and applied art—subjects of immediate interest and importance to every country child, and should provide, moreover, an education of high school grade for the older boys and girls. All these things are possible in a well-equipped school with an efficient teaching force and under adequate supervision, but can never be consummated in the ungraded country school.

The improved surroundings of this type of school should also be kept in mind. How inartistic and uninviting is the appearance of the average country school! And should not the surroundings of the child during these early impressionable years be made as beautiful as possible? At least the rural school should compare favorably in the general appearance of its buildings and of its well-kept grounds, supplied with trees and shrubbery and flowers, with the best type of country homes.

In any plan for the reorganization of the rural school it must be borne in mind that the primary object of the scheme is to secure better rather than cheaper schools. The consolidated school is desirable mainly because it makes possible a better grade of instruction. But it is incumbent upon those entrusted with its organization and management to see that these benefits are actually attained. Otherwise the instruction given in such a school may be as narrow and perfunctory as in any other rural school. And this higher type of instruction, as experience has shown, costs but little if any more than the meager routine of studies in our present schools. No taxpayer, therefore, can have any objection to making the education to be given in the new school as efficient as possible. And even if some slight additional taxation should be necessary, it surely will be cheerfully borne by anyone who has the welfare of country boys and girls at heart, and who realizes to even a small extent what this higher education would mean to them.

A more detailed discussion of some of the problems involved in this subject as well as some illustrations of consolidated schools will be found in the articles that follow. Particular attention is directed to the fact that we have recently had a well-equipped consolidated school established in Pueblo county. This, to the writer's knowledge, is the first up-to-date rural school organized in this State. It ought to be an object of interest to all concerned with country schools; and the obligations resting upon the patrons and directors of this district, not only for working out something of value to their own community but also of affording an



A Country School Garden.

(Curtesy Woman's National Daily, St. Louis.)

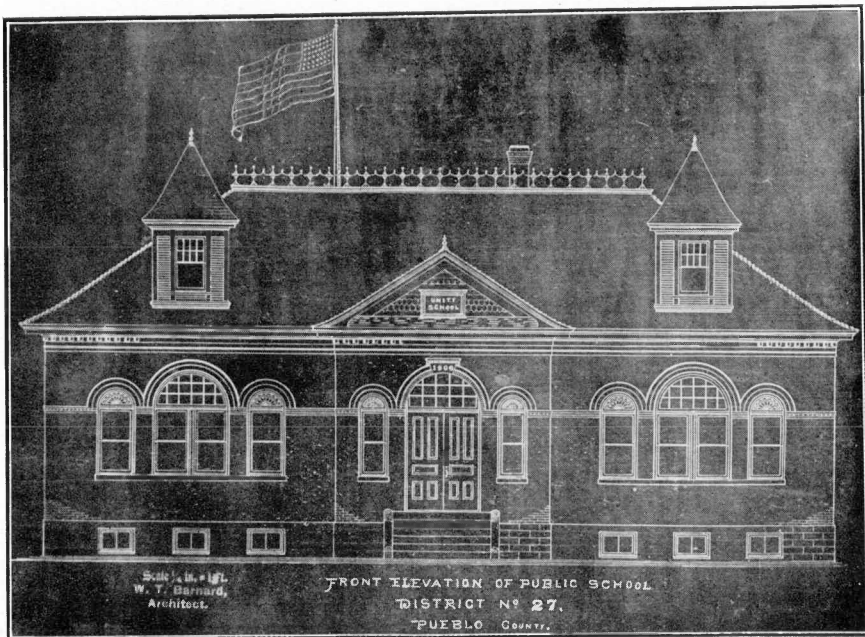
object lesson for all the citizens of Colorado, ought to stimulate them to put forth their best efforts for the realization of an ideal school. May we soon have many more such schools established!

A NEW TYPE OF SCHOOL FOR COLORADO

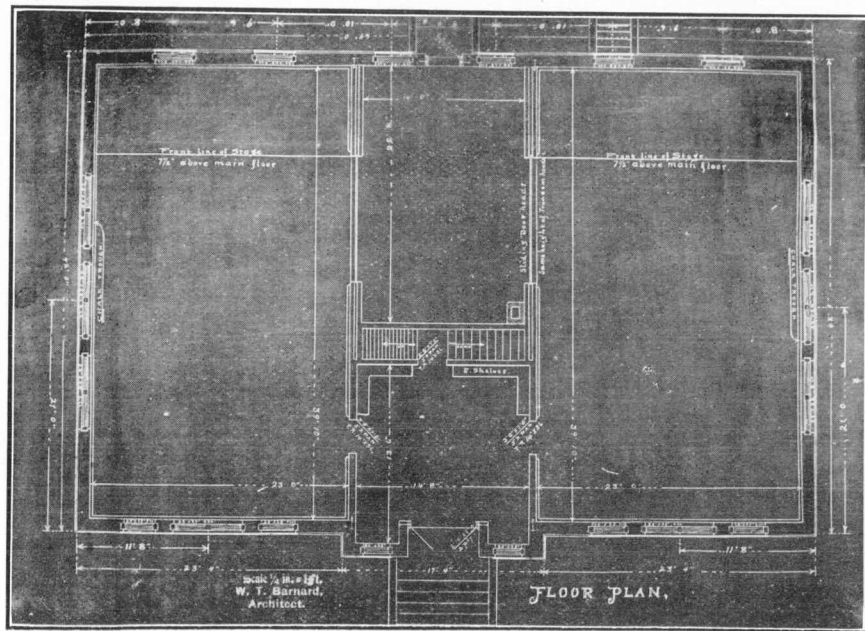
It is a great pleasure to the writer to be able at this time to call attention to the consolidated school recently established in this State. This school is situated in the extreme eastern portion of Pueblo County near the town of Fowler. The district consolidated is populated with a good, substantial class of farmers, chiefly of Scandinavian descent—a people who are not apt to be visionaries or to be carried away with a passing fad, but who are deeply interested in securing for their children a practical education. For this purpose they are developing at this place a type of school that is full of promise for rural districts.

This consolidated district formerly supported two schools. The old buildings have been condemned, and an attractive brick building has recently been erected on one of the sites. The new building possesses good architectural features, is comfortably heated by a furnace, and is equipped with a thoroughly efficient ventilating system. How few of our city school buildings are yet, alas! furnished with this most essential feature of a well equipped schoolhouse. How slowly do we emerge from the age of barbarism!

Another feature of this new school plant especially worthy of notice is the provision being made for ample school grounds. It is the intention of the directors of the district, it is understood, to purchase sufficient adjoining land to enclose ten acres within the school premises. This will afford space for suitable lawns and places of recreation



Front Elevation, Unity School Building, near Fowler, Colo.



Floor Plan, Unity School Bldg, near Fowler, Colo.

and also for plots for school gardens and work in elementary agriculture. The patrons of the school voted almost unanimously to include the latter subject in the curriculum. It has been wisely decided, however, that for the present the outdoor work shall take the form of improving and beautifying the school grounds. The energy and enthusiasm with which this work is being planned is prophetic of the development in a few years of a beautiful campus for this school. And why should not every other country school "go and do likewise?"

The basement of the building is being fitted up for a work shop where the boys can carry on some form of manual work. This will at first take the form of supplying material needed for the equipment of the new institution, such as the making of boxes for the irrigating ditches on the grounds. It is to be hoped that the district in time will see its way clear to establish a domestic science course for the girls. Ample space for such work could be easily supplied in a well-equipped basement. With a primary teacher skilled in domestic science and a principal qualified to teach manual training and elementary agriculture, such a school possesses magnificent opportunities for the education of country boys and girls even without the employment of a special teacher, tho in a larger school this would be desirable.

Another important asset of the school, not to be overlooked, is the library room conveniently located on the first floor between the two main rooms. The school library is proving itself to be one of the most important factors in the education of school children, and surely there is no place

where it is more important than in country districts where other libraries are not always accessible. The combination of a country environment with the possibility of outdoor life and occupation and the opportunity for the study of the world's best literature constitutes ideal conditions for the education of children.

The new school was opened with appropriate exercises on February 13 of this year. This was practically a holiday in the district, as the whole population turned out *en masse* to spend the day at the school building. An all day's program of addresses on educational topics was provided, dealing especially with problems of rural education, the development of the schools in this portion of the state, and the possibilities opened up by the introduction of the consolidated school. Among the speakers were the principal of the school, representatives of the building committee, persons prominent in the educational work and business interests of the surrounding country, including the county superintendent of schools, and Professor W. B. Mooney, School Visitor for the State Normal School. An enjoyable social feature of the occasion was the dinner furnished by the good ladies of the district in the school building. If the interest and enthusiasm manifest on this occasion is any indication of the success of the school, it has a bright future before it.

Much credit is due to the teachers and patrons of the school and to Miss Nellie Corkish, the county superintendent, for daring to place themselves in the vanguard of educational progress. The experiment will doubtless be watched with interest by other portions of the State.



Good Things to Eat at the Dedication Exercises of the Unity School Bilding.

A NEW EDUCATIONAL MOVEMENT IN CANADA.*

A knowledge of contemporary educational systems and practises is, of course, of value to us in so far as it affords us guidance and inspiration in our work. With this object in view it seemd to me that an account of the Macdonald School Movement in Canada, which I had the good fortune to have an opportunity to study at first hand during the past summer, might be of interest to the readers of the COLORADO SCHOOL JOURNAL.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE MOVE- MENT.

The name itself for some possibly requires a word of explanation. The Macdonald School Movement is not an attempt to organize a system of private schools, as the term may seem to suggest, but it is rather an effort to enrich and amplify the work of the public schools, and especially the rural schools, by a better system of organization and by the introduction into their curricula of such subjects as nature-study, school gardening, manual training, and domestic science. The peculiar feature of the movement, from which it derives its name, consists in the fact that this attempt to

*Reprinted by permission from the *Colorado School Journal*, September, 1907.

improve the rural schools of Canada sprang from the initiative of a private citizen. Sir William Macdonald, a wealthy merchant of Montreal, had it in his heart to do something for the advancement of the country schools. Born amid rural surroundings down by the sea in Prince Edward Island, the baby province of the Dominion, Sir William was well acquainted with the limitations of the rural schools, and was anxious to spend in their improvement a portion of the wealth which he had had the good fortune to amass.

With this object in view he called to his aid a man eminently qualified both by genius and experience to organize and carry into execution the work he wished to accomplish. This man was Professor James W. Robertson, at that time the Canadian Commissioner of Agriculture and Dairying. Preaching the gospel of scientific farming, Professor Robertson was devoting himself with untiring energy to the betterment of agriculture, and was meeting with signal success, as is shown by the fact that in one province the export of dairy products actually increased nearly seventy-fold in ten years. But he was not satisfied with the material progress of his agricultural friends. He saw that the chief asset of the Canadian farmer was not his green meadows nor his dairy herds but the boy on the farm, and was unceasing in his efforts to stimulate a greater interest in rural education. The munificence of Sir William Macdonald, however, for the first time enabled him to give to the people a tangible illustration of what could be done for the education of the farmer's boys and girls. The outgrowth of this endeavor is what is known as The Macdonald School Movement.

EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN.

INTRODUCTION OF MANUAL TRAINING.

As manual training had been introduced into very few of the public schools of Canada, either urban or rural, at the time of the inception of the Macdonald School Movement in 1899, it seemed best in the first place to begin with the cities, so that the sentiment aroused in favor of this subject might finally lead to its adoption in the country schools. Accordingly Sir William offered to equip the rooms and provide the teachers for manual training in a number of cities in the different provinces of the Dominion for a period usually of three years. As the work progressed, as many as forty-five teachers were at one time employed, and in this way manual training was established in over twenty Canadian towns and cities, which have as a rule continued to carry on the work after the expiration of the three years. While the general introduction of manual training into the country schools has as yet been far from realized, nevertheless a great stimulus has been given the teaching of this subject throughout the Dominion.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS.

But the introduction of manual training was only an initial effort, carried on indirectly, to benefit the rural schools. A much more important, or at least a more direct, means was the establishment of consolidated country schools in the different provinces of the Dominion. In the establishment of these schools the leaders of the Macdonald

School Movement were a good deal influenced by the organization of consolidated schools in this country. Professor Robertson had visited and studied carefully these schools in several states, especially in Ohio, and had become convinced that the consolidated school offered a solution of the problem of the improvement of the rural schools of Canada. But he saw, too, that consolidation was not an end in itself, as it did not necessarily improve the mechanical routine of school work. To quote his own words before a Parliamentary Committee, "We in Canada want something better than mere consolidation. We want not simply consolidation, but consolidation as a means towards an improved time-table and a course of study and methods of study sufficient for present day needs."

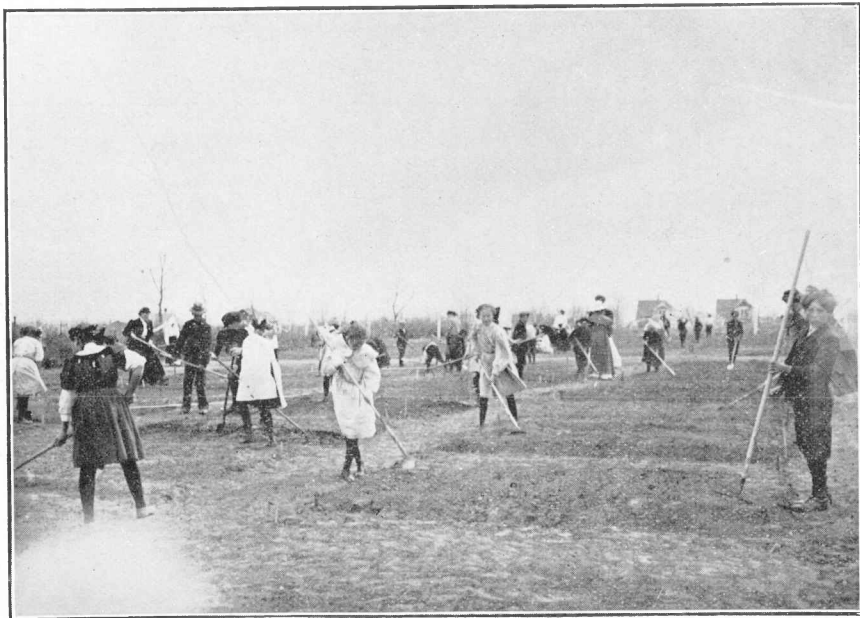
With this purpose in view a consolidated school was established as an object lesson in most of the provinces. The usual plan, as in the case of the manual training, was to supply buildings, equipment and teachers for a period of three years without additional cost to the school patrons. Besides the ordinary subjects of the curriculum, a prominent place was given to manual training, nature-study, school gardening and household science. The teachers of these subjects were given a year's special instruction free of cost in the best educational institutions in the United States and Canada. As in most city schools, these branches are taught by specially trained teachers. Each building has at least four rooms, containing the children from six or more school districts. Vans are employed to carry the children to and from their homes.



A Glimpse of the Flower Plots—Colorado State Normal Training School.



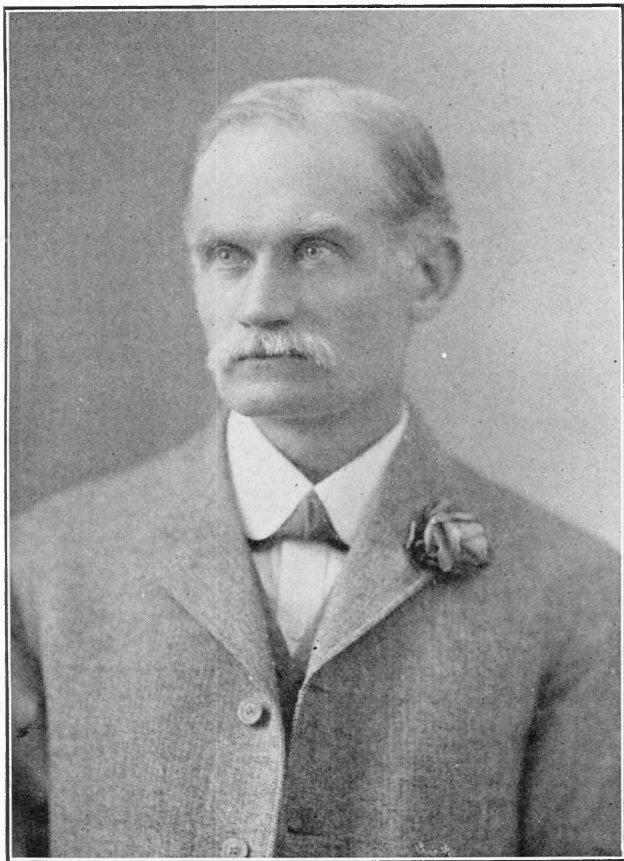
A Corner of the Vegetable Garden—Colorado State Normal Training School.



School Gardening at Colorado State Normal Training School.



Front Elevation of New Training School Building—Colorado State Normal School.



PRESIDENT JAMES W. ROBERTSON,
Macdonald College, Canada.



One of the Macdonald Consolidated Schools.

As the three-year period during which schools were to be supported by The Macdonald School Fund is now just about to expire, it is too early yet to speak with certainty of the success of the experiments as regards its permanent influence upon the public schools of Canada. But that this has proved to be an interesting and suggestiv experiment in school organization and that the instruction has been of a much higher order than that of the ungraded school, is doubtless true. Of course, as in any other experiment, many difficulties have to be met and overcome. The conservatism of popular opinion on educational matters and the increast expenditure for organization and for higher salaries for better qualified teachers, have to be taken into account, though the latter item of expense may in some cases be offset by the smaller number of teachers required. Local prejudices and dissensions, too, incidental to the introduction of so new an undertaking, have sometimes proved to be disturbing factors in the work. But an examination of these schools cannot but inspire one with new faith in the possibilities of rural education, nor can one dout that the time is coming when popular sentiment will be sufficiently educated to demand and pay for this higher type of school.

As to the immediate fate of these consolidated schools, the general expectation at the time of my visit last summer seemd to be that The Macdonald School Fund would contribute to the support of these schools for another period of three years, the tax-payers, however, becoming responsible for a larger share of the expense than before. In one or two of the provinces considerable work has been accomplisht in consolidation by the provincial authorities, so that this

plan bids fair to be utilized, at least in the more sparsely populated districts, for the improvement of rural education.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GARDENS FOR UNGRADED SCHOOLS.

Not satisfied with the effort to demonstrate the feasibility of the consolidated school with its enriched curriculum, the promoters of the Macdonald School Movement undertook also to establish school gardens in connection with a group of five ordinary rural schools, in each of the provinces of the Dominion, in order to illustrate what could be done to meet the special needs of the country boys and girls where consolidation might not be considered practicable. The schools selected for this purpose were situated a very short distance from each other, so that a trained inspector might superintend the work of each group. In these gardens some simple experiments are conducted in seed selection, use of fertilizers, effects of moisture, and other phases of elementary agriculture. The school garden material and activities are also utilized as a concrete basis of work in arithmetic, physics, language, writing, drawing, etc., besides affording the child a broader vision of the significance of home industries. In the organization of these gardens the esthetic development of the child is kept in mind, as well as his more purely intellectual and utilitarian interests, as is shown by the following description:

“The general plan of laying out each garden involves (1) a belt of native trees and shrubs surrounding the grounds except at intervals where a desirable view is available; (2) a half acre play-field for the boys; (3) a lawn

bordered with shade trees for the girls; (4) a shaded walk each for boys and girls, about a hundred yards long; (5) an attractive approach to the school consisting chiefly of a piece of open lawn with shrubs and flowers on either side; (6) a suitable reservation for individual and class plots; (7) an orchard plot or border; (8) a forest plot in which the chief native trees are grown from seed.”*

In fact one of the most important aims was to make these schools serve as object lessons for the beautifying of the country homes, and as centers for social gatherings of the community. As an illustration of nature-study work, these gardens have been of very great value in influencing educational opinion on this subject, and have received the highest approbation of such experts as Dr. C. F. Hodge of Clark University.

PROVISIONS FOR THE BETTER TRAINING OF TEACHERS.

Perhaps, however, the most striking and suggestive accomplishment of the Macdonald School Movement consists in the generous provision made for the training of teachers. One who has had any experience with nature-study knows that the great difficulty at present in attaining success in this work consists in the lack of knowledge of the subject on the part of the teacher. While our educational machinery is at present prepared to turn out teachers qualified to teach acceptably the traditional subjects of the curriculum, the preparation for the teaching of nature-study, in the modern sense of that term, is lamentably insufficient. As in other

*Report of Inspector of Schools of Carleton County, Ontario.

subjects, teachers have been brought up in nature-study largely upon a book diet, with possibly a little technical work in botany and zoology interspersed—work which has itself little value in helping the teacher to bring her children into intelligent and sympathetic contact with nature. As a result we have the feeble attempts that are now being made in most schools in the teaching of this subject.

Those instrumental in shaping the Macdonald School Movement were clear-sighted enough to see that the essential condition of ultimate success in their work was better provision for the training of teachers in nature-study, domestic science and manual training. Impressed by this thought, Professor Robertson turned for help to the agricultural colleges, which had stood in such close relation to his past activities, and which from their very nature should be organically related to work in these subjects. Since the agricultural college, however, as it is at present organized, does not possess all the equipment necessary for the training of teachers, it was decided to use the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph, Ontario, as a starting point for this work, and to enlarge its plant by the addition of buildings specially equipped for the training of teachers. Accordingly two new buildings were erected on the college campus for this purpose. In addition to the training given in this new department, the regular work of the college, which is a well equipped institution, comparable to our best state agricultural colleges, naturally provides a great incentive to the study of these subjects. Arrangements were made that students from all the provinces of Canada might have the opportu-

ity of taking instruction in this institution at a nominal cost.

While, however, the work at Guelph has been a valuable stimulus to the better preparation of teachers, the Macdonald School Movement has reached its climax in this respect by the erection and equipment of a magnificent new institution, to be known as the Macdonald College, at Ste. Anne de Bellevue, a little Canadian town a few miles from the city of Montreal. Beautifully situated on the left bank of the Ottawa river, housed in a splendid group of commodious college buildings just constructed at a cost of nearly a million and a half dollars and in accordance with the most approved scientific principles as regards durability, ventilation, light and heat, provided with ample grounds—five hundred and sixty acres in all—for campus, recreation fields, experimental plots, orchards, general farming and stock-raising, this new member of the collegiate institutions of America bids fair to be one of the most unique and, from the standpoint of educational progress, one of the most interesting, on the continent. It will consist of three main departments: (1) An agricultural college; (2) A college of household science; (3) A teachers' college. The work of all departments will be focust upon the one great idea of Professor Robertson—the enrichment of rural life. The college is to begin operations this month. While the teachers' department is designed to prepare teachers especially for the province of Quebec, it will no doubt be a great inspiration to the educational workers of the whole Dominion. Professor Robertson, who has given up his government position to devote himself solely to educational work, is the pres-

ident of the new institution. His splendid enthusiasm and his clear insight into the problems of rural education constitute the best guarantee of the success of this undertaking.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF RURAL SCHOOLS.*

The account of the Macdonald School Movement in Canada, which appeared last month in this department, was intended to stimulate an interest in the improvement of our rural schools. Our Canadian friends are making a praiseworthy effort in this direction. Among the things they are aiming at are (1) better facilities for the training of rural teachers; (2) the enrichment of the curriculum by the introduction of such studies as nature-study, including school gardening and elementary agriculture, domestic science and manual training; and (3) the organization of the consolidated school as a more effective instrument for educational work. These are all important reforms in rural education.

In this country, too, the need of improving our rural schools is coming to be more fully recognized. "The most important educational problem before America to-day is the rural school problem," declared Superintendent J. W. Olsen of Minnesota, before a section of the N. E. A. in 1902. While this is undoubtedly a strong statement, many facts may be found to support the assertion. A careful analysis of the situation shows that the district school of to-day makes very inadequate provision for the education of country boys and girls. Among the chief reasons of its educational limitations are the following:

*Reprinted by permission from the *Colorado School Journal*, October, 1907.

1. The drift of population in recent years from rural to urban communities has left many parts of the country with a smaller school population than before. The school attendance in such communities has consequently declined. This is most marked in the case of the older children, who now move to the city at an earlier age than formerly. The stimulus of larger numbers and of more mature students is thus lacking.

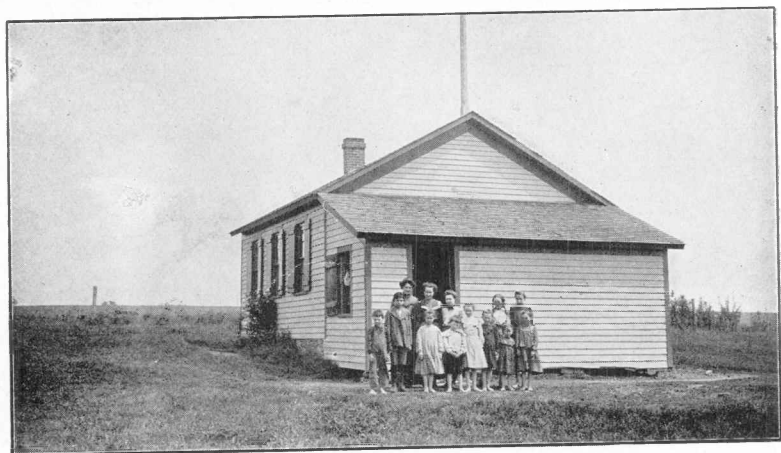
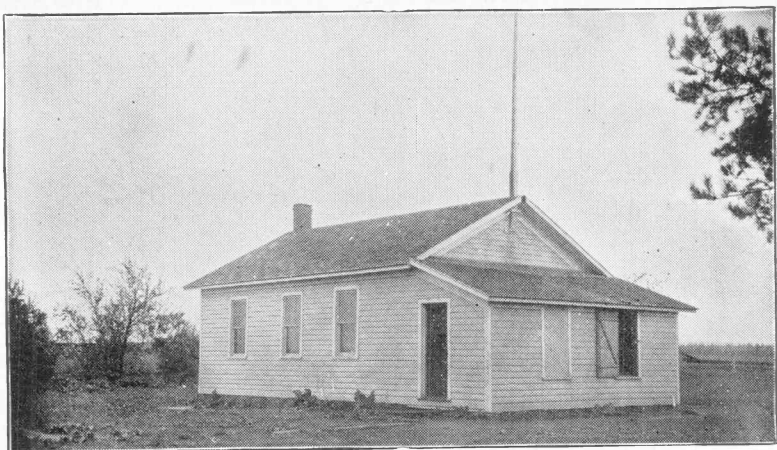
2. The change in the personnel of the district school teachers during the past generation has not always been for the better. Not many years ago it was customary for college students to spend a part of their time in teaching district schools. Some of the higher educational institutions even arranged their sessions to facilitate this arrangement. Tho, doubtless, it is not wise to have any class of people to adopt teaching as a makeshift, yet this plan did have the merit of securing for rural districts teachers with a reasonable degree of maturity of mind and academic training— young men in many cases with college culture and aspirations, whose presence in the school was a stimulus to the older children. But, owing to our changed economic conditions, few of this class are now found in the country schools, and their places have frequently been taken by immature young women with little academic and professional training.

3. The greater opportunities for educational service in the city schools tend not only to withdraw the best qualified teachers from the country districts, but also to focus the best educational thought of the times upon the improvement of the city, that is, of the graded schools. The programs of



The First Consolidated School Bilding in Illinois, for Which the Bildings Shown
on the Next Page Were Abandond.

(Curtesy of Supt. O. J. Kern.)



our larger educational gatherings bear abundant evidence of this fact.

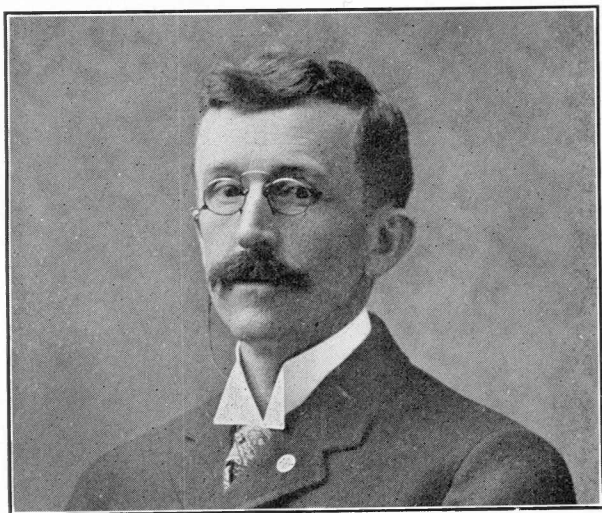
4. The movement towards the enrichment of the elementary school curriculum has affected the country schools to a much less degree than those of the city. The reasons for this are obvious. Even where the country teachers are ever so well qualified and enthusiastic about the newer educational movements the conditions under which they teach render almost impossible anything but the most formal kind of routine work. If the attendance is at all large, the number of classes a day practically limits the instruction to the teaching of the three R's. In fact the exigencies of the program are such that even this teaching must in most cases be of a perfunctory character. Little time is available for the discussion of the subject under consideration, for the communion of souls engaged in the same pursuit, which alone makes class-room instruction educational in the best sense of the term.

5. The district school lacks dignity and social prestige. The graduates of our colleges and large city high schools take pride in their *alma mater*, but apart from a weak sentimentality for the "little red schoolhouse" no one feels a similar satisfaction in thinking of his relation to the district school. The effect of this upon the adult is not such a serious matter, but it is a very serious consideration that country children at a very early age outgrow their respect for the district school and no longer wish to attend it. We need a school in the country districts that will appeal to the imagination of the country boys and girls and arouse their enthusiasm for greater intellectual attainments.

6. The district school tends to perpetuate the isolation of country life. One of the most marked manifestations of our times is the movement of the people towards larger centers of population, thus facilitating social intercourse in numerous ways. Of such beneficial influences country people have been largely deprived. Attempts are now being made to break down these social barriers by means of rural free delivery of mails, telephone service, electric railways, etc., but the district school tends to foster this spirit of isolation, as it offers very few opportunities for social gatherings.

7. The short tenure of office of the country school teacher, together with the small amount of supervision possible, makes difficult any permanent educational policy for rural communities. Any departure from the regular school routine, introduced by some enthusiastic teacher, is apt to be of short duration, as her successor may have no such interests.

Recognizing, then, the weakness of the district school system, how are we to remedy its defects? No one remedy is adequate. Improvements must be made in various directions, as is illustrated by the Macdonald Movement. But the one thing that promises to secure the greatest number of advantages is the organization of the consolidated school. By a consolidated school is meant a graded country school, usually of four or more rooms, formed by the unification of a number of ungraded country schools. The children from the outlying districts are commonly transported in vans to the centrally located school.



SUPT. O. J. KERN, Rockford, Ill.
An Enthusiastic Promoter of Better Country Schools.

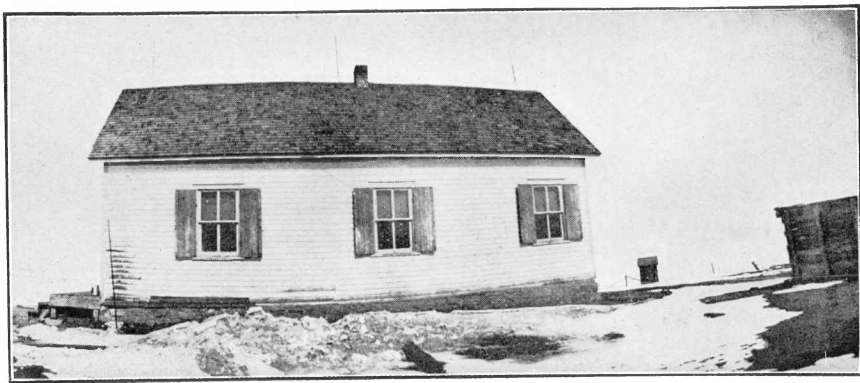
The pioneer State in the establishment of consolidated schools was Massachusetts. In the year 1869 the State legislature authorized any township to transport pupils to school at public expense. Tho the country districts did not take advantage of this opportunity at once to any great extent, the growth of the movement in the State is indicated by the fact that between the years 1888-9 and 1900-1 the amount of money expended in the transportation of school children increast approximately from \$20,000 to \$150,000. From Massachusetts the movement spred to adjoining states, until to-day the consolidated school is in operation, or at least has been authorized in over half of the states in the Union.

The results obtaind have as a rule been satisfactory to those concernd. As in the case of the inauguration and execution of any other educational policy there has, of course, been some room for diversity of views, but the consensus of opinion of those directly concernd with the work—parents, school directors and teachers—has been markedly favorable. The following are the most important advantages claimd for the plan:

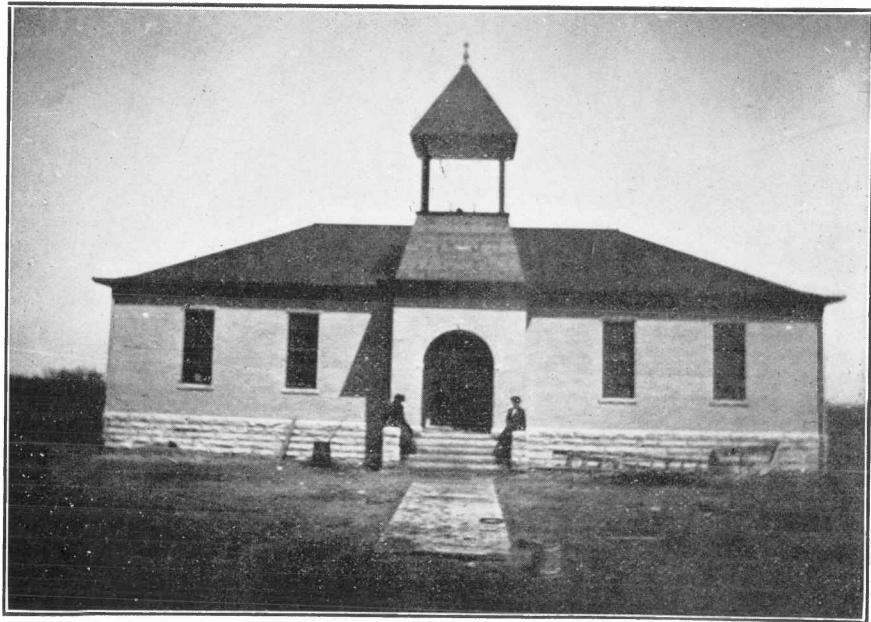
1. It raises the professional standard of district school teachers. This strikes at the root of the weakness of the country schools. The strongest argument adduced to-day in favor of a low standard of qualifications for teachers is the claim that many small country districts cannot afford to pay high salaries, and that consequently teachers cannot be expected to spend upon their education an amount of time and money incommensurate with the pecuniary returns to be secured from their work. Hence the standard of

professional training demanded of the rural teachers is pre-
vailingly low. I do not mean by this that many well-
trained and capable teachers are not to be found in the rural
schools—teachers who may in many cases prefer the free-
dom to be found in such a situation to the rigid supervision
of the city schools. But such teachers are exposed to the
competition of those with less training. This constitutes
the greatest menace to the teachers' profession. No body
of people can hope to have their vocation placed upon a pro-
fessional basis so long as their places can be supplied by the
relatively untrained. In the consolidated school, however,
higher salaries can be paid, as it usually employs fewer
teachers than the districts of which it was composed. Hence
better trained teachers will be demanded, and the larger ob-
ligations devolving upon the directors tend to make them
more careful about the qualifications of the teachers they
employ.

2. The consolidated school affords opportunity for
the enrichment of the curriculum. The rural school has
not secured its full share of advantages in this respect. This
is all the more to be regretted as the environment of the
country child is in many ways fuller of educational possi-
bilities than that of his city cousin. Along the lines of na-
ture-study, elementary agriculture, manual training and do-
mestic science the opportunities are unsurpassed. But these
subjects cannot be taught to advantage in the average dis-
trict school both on account of the program and the teacher's
training. A young city-bred girl in her teens is not com-
petent to give instruction in elementary agriculture to farm-



An Old Type of Weld County, Colorado, Country School Bilding.



A Newer Type of Weld County, Colorado, Country School Bilding.

ers' boys, who have ten times as much practical knowledge of the subject as herself. For this purpose we must have teachers with sufficient breadth of knowledge and maturity of judgment to command the respect of the older children. This can be accomplished in the consolidated school, as a special teacher may be secured in this or other branches at little greater expense *per capita* than is required for the ungraded school.

3. The consolidated school can make provision for the higher education of country children. If a high school is not available in the neighborhood, a year or more of advanced instruction can be furnished, at least during the winter months, for the older children.

4. This type of school combines many of the advantages of city and country life. The children are members of a larger social world and benefit from the association with others. At the same time they live amid healthful country surroundings. What is true of the children is also, to a certain extent, true of the parents. Being a larger center of interest, the consolidated schoolhouse may be utilized for various social gatherings, lectures, entertainments, etc. The consolidated school thus becomes a means of breaking down, rather than of perpetuating, the isolation of country life.

5. The tendency of this school, moreover, is to educate for the farm and rural occupations rather than for the city, which, notwithstanding its social advantages, surrounds young people with vitiating influences to which they too often yield. Students of social problems deprecate the

present congestion of population in the large cities. While this movement of the masses towards the cities is in part inevitable, owing to our changed economic conditions, yet in many cases the country could support in comparative comfort a larger population than it now possesses. The glamor of city life and the monotonous character of agricultural occupations have induced too many of our young people to throw in their lot with the city. Some counter attraction is, therefore, needed to make the inducements greater for the boys and girls to remain on the farm. This, in part at least, the consolidated school is able to supply. By its richer curriculum, giving insight into the scientific aspects of farm and household work, it creates a new interest in these activities, and helps the farmers' boys and girls to see new possibilities in their home environment.

6. A longer tenure of office is secured for the country teacher, especially for the principal. This tends to give greater steadiness and permanence to educational effort. The ideal no doubt would be to have for the principal a married man who would become a permanent resident of the community, as in some European countries. In this way the school could become a center for the social and educational activity of the whole community.

7. A better system of grading is made possible. The larger number of children and teachers makes a more rational classification practicable.

8. The health of the children is not endangered, as they are less exposed to bad weather on their way to and from school.

9. The attendance is considerably increased. Tardiness is done away with, at least for the children conveyed in vans.

10. Better schoolhouses are secured, constructed on more scientific principles as regards light, heat, and ventilation.

11. The school year is lengthened.

12. The cost of instruction has in most cases been reduced by the organization of the consolidated school. This is not one of the most important results, tho it may appeal most strongly to the taxpayer, as the money saved by the employment of fewer teachers for the regular subjects had doubtless best be spent in paying higher salaries to better prepared teachers or for teachers of special subjects.

In conclusion a word may be said in regard to the relation of this subject to our own local conditions. In many parts of Colorado the consolidated school is not feasible. But there are many other places in which it can be organized as easily as in any other State. The larger agricultural regions offer splendid opportunities for this type of school. Why should not Colorado make a special study of this problem now? It is at least well worthy of study. Colorado in this as in other matters should be a leader in educational progress.

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