

Citizen Control of the Citizen's Business

TORONTO'S CITIZENS CAN CONTROL TORONTO'S AFFAIRS ONLY
THROUGH FREQUENT, PROMPT, ACCURATE AND PERTINENT INFOR-
MATION WITH REGARD TO TORONTO'S BUSINESS.

ISSUED BY THE
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Telephone: Main 3620.

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SCHOOL STORY No. 8.

**Official recommendations,
and
suggestions and statements which
might be the basis
for recommendations.**

FROM THE REMARKABLY
SUGGESTIVE AND VALUABLE
SCHOOL REPORT FOR 1915
JUST ISSUED BY THE TOR-
ONTO BOARD *of* EDUCATION,
AND FROM OTHER SOURCES

In tabloid form
For the Busy People Who Support the Schools.

THE Bureau of Municipal Research proposes to issue a series of short informal "talks" on the city schools for the information of parents and taxpayers. The recently issued report of the Board of Education for 1915, which also includes some facts for 1916, contains an immense amount of valuable information of interest to all who wish to see our schools continue to improve their work of developing a generation of Canadians, spiritually, morally and economically free and capable of performing their full part in a free State.

May we suggest that you keep the numbers of this series on file, so that when the final number appears all may be fastened together for comparison with succeeding years?

FORWARD

must be the watchword of public education, particularly in the years lying immediately before us. The best thought of every Canadian is necessary to produce the best results. Our responsibility for thinking is not removed by the appointment of responsible and capable officials.

How Co-operation between the Public Schools and the Technical School might give tremendous help in the battle of life to 1200 children now liable to drop out of school with inadequate training.

"Potentially the most important event in many years in the history of Toronto Public Schools was the opening of the new Central Technical School last autumn. The full measure of benefit to elementary education is largely a matter for future realization. But the occasion is now at hand for a policy of direct, extensive and explicit relationship between the technical school and all the public schools of the city. Such a relationship with the high schools has existed and has been steadily nurtured, whether voluntarily or by force of circumstances, for forty-five years."

"According to their circumstances and their faculties it would appear to be in the interests of a large number of pupils to pass from the Third Forms of the public schools to the Technical School. There are also other pupils who would probably become more valuable members of the community if they were to gravitate toward the Technical School rather than to the High Schools."

"Unless it can be shown that pupils graduating from the Third Form are still too young to commence a general industrial course, what valid reason is there to deny to the people who provide the schools a free choice of alternative courses for their children? And as this opportunity is new should it not be brought specially and widely to public attention?

"What are the facts as to the ages of pupils in the senior divisions of the Third Forms of the public schools? Just prior to the promotions in June there were 5,272 pupils in the Senior Third forms. Of these 1,662 were 13 years of age, and 1,248 were 14 years or older. A comparison of the ages of pupils of Senior Third and Junior Fourth Forms indicates that of the 1,662 pupils now 13 years of age, about 500 will drop out before the end of another year, and of the 1,248 pupils 14 years or over, nearly 700 will drop out. Here is a body of 1,200 from which, by systematic co-operation, many desirable recruits might be obtained for the Technical School without prejudicially affecting the proportion of pupils passing into the Senior Fourth Forms of the Public Schools. The attendance of pupils under 14 at the industrial courses would be compulsory as in the case of public school courses, and the elements of an English education would also be continued."

—Chief Inspector Cowley.

Measures of School Efficiency.

"During the past decade many cities of the United States have spent considerable effort in the endeavor to arrive at some standardized test of school efficiency. No little incentive to seek such a prop for the responsibility of official opinion may be found in the conditions of municipal strife and party politics with which the selection of American school superintendents is sometimes associated, a condition most fortunately unknown in Canadian administration of schools. The tendency to so measure the merit of the schools is also in some part a reflex action of the present day passion for commercialism and material thrift, and the standards of judgment thereby encouraged. To a good extent also it is based on a desire to find a means of placing clearly and succinctly before the people, from time to time, a fair account of the progress of public education."

"Among the dangers to be recognized in the attempt to measure school efficiency in quantitative terms is over-emphasis of the certitude and the importance of the results apparently indicated, abstraction of the attention of teachers from the spiritual element in their work, and the promiscuous substitution of a more or less artificial and dehumanized standard for the responsible personal judgment of the experienced educator."

"At the same time it should be recognized that there are fields in which school statistics may be usefully employed in representing certain conditions and results. The classification of school receipts and expenditure according to the special object in each case makes it possible to furnish definite information as to the cost of the various school functions. Records of school attendance, ages and progress in various forms, dropping out before completion of the course, markedly slow progress and other statistical data are of interest at least to those directly occupied in the work of the schools. Certainly also some of these conditions are of great importance to the individuals directly concerned and of too unrecognized importance to the public, so much so that every decent means of awakening a more general public interest may render valuable service to education."

—Chief Inspector Cowley.

Desirability of developing a method for
measuring school results by
THE HUMAN PRODUCT OF THE SCHOOLS
within the limits that such measurement
is possible.

"A fourth measure of school efficiency, possibly overlooked because not manifestly applicable to the immediate conditions of any particular case, is that of ultimate results—the kind of men the schools have helped to produce. To estimate a school system in the large the ultimate results must be considered. In the debate on education in the British House of Lords last July this was the measure applied in general defence of English education. Similarly seventy years ago Lord Macaulay extolled the parish schools of Scotland on the basis of ultimate results. The universities and the great public schools of England continue to hold their place in the esteem of the nation on the standard of ultimate results. Largely by this standard in times of crucial test the merits of school systems and all other fabrics of the social order will still be judged. Whatever the measure of worth, it is vital that moral values be placed first. Where the teachers truly sense the moral aspects of their work it cannot be ill with any school. Where this higher vision is wanting it cannot be well with the school. While numerical and quantitative tests of school efficiency and progress are of value to educators, though of little immediate esteem with the general public, the profound interest of teachers should centre on considerations of human nature, personality, character and individual circumstances in a degree equitable toward all pupils."

—Chief Inspector Cowley.

A Systematically Progressive Building Policy Saves Money.

"Within the decade prior to 1907 only 9 new schools were erected in the city, many of the schools then in use had reached the limits of their service and Toronto was about to receive the largest increase of population in the history of the city. Since 1907 the population has almost doubled while the increase in the school attendance has exceeded that of the preceding half century."

"During this period (1907-1915) there has been carried out a vigorous and extensive building programme, which constitutes a remarkable achievement on the part of the school building department. At present there are 85 standard public school buildings in use or on point of completion. These include 34 entirely new schools, 33 others that have been rebuilt or enlarged, and 18 older schools which have been maintained in good condition and some of which will be superseded within the next year by modern buildings now nearing completion."

"While this heavy programme of school construction has involved a very large expenditure, this has been necessitated partly by the unprecedented increase of population and partly because many of the old school buildings had reached the limits of their usefulness."

"As the classroom accommodations are now almost abreast of the demands in nearly all parts of the city it will be possible to provide for the future growth of the school population, with diminished burden on the taxpayer, if there is no abatement in the policy of progressive school construction."

"An excess of ten per cent. in the number of classrooms over the immediate requirements is the smallest margin safe to maintain under ordinary circumstances in Toronto, while to meet the conditions likely to arise after the war larger requirements should be anticipated. Financial and educational economy alike require that the school building policy be systematically progressive, avoiding as far as possible marked lapses or increases during any period of years."

—Chief Inspector Cowley.

The Problem of the Feeble-minded.

"The principals report only 116 of the non-promoted pupils as being feeble-minded. This refers to all the standard public schools of the city, and is exclusive of the classes conducted in the custodial institutions. While expert opinion might add to the feeble-minded group a number of those whom the principals have classed as of low mentality, it is evident that the total number of such pupils is comparatively small. A special report obtained from the principals some two years ago gave a total of 204 feeble-minded pupils and 253 borderline cases. Assuming that fifty per cent. of the latter were actually feeble-minded the total number of this type would be only 330 pupils."

"At present the Acting Chief School Medical Officer is conducting an investigation into all cases of apparent or suspected subnormal mentality with a view to arriving at a more definite estimate of the problem involved."

"In the meantime, if the inconvenience of the presence of feeble-minded pupils is not very great, their removal from the regular classes would be advantageous, and, in some particular instances, a great relief to the classes concerned."

"The problem of the feeble-minded cannot be dealt with comprehensively and effectually apart from permanent custodial provision. This lies beyond the sphere of the public school. But the number of feeble-minded children of school age in Toronto is not so large that suitable day school provision might not be made helpful to certain selected types at no great cost. The power to remove pupils from the regular classes, the power to select pupils, and the power to discontinue the attendance of certain pupils under certain conditions are matters appearing to require more explicit regulation. The permissive legislation provided in the Auxiliary Classes Act affords scope for initial action by school boards. At the same time the Board of Education could better fulfil its part if a comprehensive scheme of provincial action were first determined. Local day school provisions are adequate for only a portion of the school life of the feeble-minded."

—Chief Inspector Cowley.

The Problem of the Feeble-minded—Continued.

"The presence of mentally defective children in the classes with normal children is one of the problems, if not the greatest, still pressing for solution. With several hundred of these children in the schools of Toronto the situation is a grave one. Some classes have as many as three of these afflicted ones. The regular teacher can do but little for them. She has not the time, nor the training, nor the material for the work. It would be well if the Government and Board of Education should get together without delay and establish an institution for these boys and girls in the immediate neighborhood of the city. Some of the children have ability along certain lines. With proper training they would become self-supporting, and thus relieve the Province of future care and expense."

—Inspector Armstrong.
Inspectoral District No. 7.

" . . . According to authorities there are two out of every hundred school children who are more or less mentally defective. Thus we would have about 1,200 mentally defective in our schools. This may seem a very large number, but the percentage has been found to be fairly constant. The majority of these children should not be in the ordinary classroom because not only are they receiving very little benefit themselves, but are a great hindrance to the normal child. The mentally deficient should be placed in special classes where they can receive education suitable to their mental calibre."

—Dr. Alex. MacKay,
Chief Medical Officer, Board of Education.

School Accounting and Financial Reporting.

" . . . Inquiry into the methods followed in past years in calculating the annual cost of maintenance per unit of attendance or registration shows that exact results were not obtained, at least since the extension of the auxiliary activities of the public schools."

"The classification of school receipts and expenditures according to the special object in each case makes (will make) it possible to furnish information as to the cost of the various functions."

—Chief Inspector Cowley.

Waste of human resources through inadequate physical training for those most in need of it.

"I would respectfully suggest that some provision be made for the simple corrective treatment of those children so much in need of it, who cannot, in the regulation time, get sufficient setting up exercise to correct advanced cases of round or drooping shoulders, hollow chests, etc. Also, I should like to suggest that if classes in folk dancing, rhythmical marches, etc., could be arranged for senior girls, while the boys of their classes are at military drill, great improvement might be made in the postures, grace, poise, and self-control of those girls who get practically no exercise outside school hours, and to whom the regulation time is a very scant allowance."

—Miss Bertha F. Srigley,
Supervisor of Physical Culture.

**The vocational and economic side of
Art Instruction.
Intelligent good taste a national asset.**

"The general aims of art instruction are to train observation, to cultivate good taste and creative power, and to develop skill in expression with suitable mediums."

"The work is arranged according to seasons so that available material and the interests of the pupils may be considered. The work of one season either directly or indirectly has its influence on that of the next. Nature drawing in the fall is made the basis of decorative design in the early winter, and, later, the drawing from manufactured objects, where careful observation and accuracy of drawing are the chief aims, has its effect in making more truthful the work from nature which follows in the spring."

"The work during the year has made very satisfactory progress, especially that in decorative design in senior classes. I feel that this department of the work should be emphasized both because of its educational value and because of vocational outlook for the future after the work has been more specialized in our Technical Schools. Professional designers for various manufactures, and artist-artizans in all departments of hand and machine work should be made ready so that not only honesty of workmanship but beauty in form, color and design may mark the character of our products. Intelligent good taste in a people is a national asset, and largely depends on the early work in public schools."

—Miss Jessie P. Semple,
Supervisor of Art.

This is part of the official programme of educational progress which we presume has been acted upon in 1916. During 1917 watch for the 1916 report as to progress made. It is a big programme of great import to all of us.

On January First
you will have the opportunity and duty
of selecting the men and women
who will determine
just how progressive
Toronto's school policy is to be.