

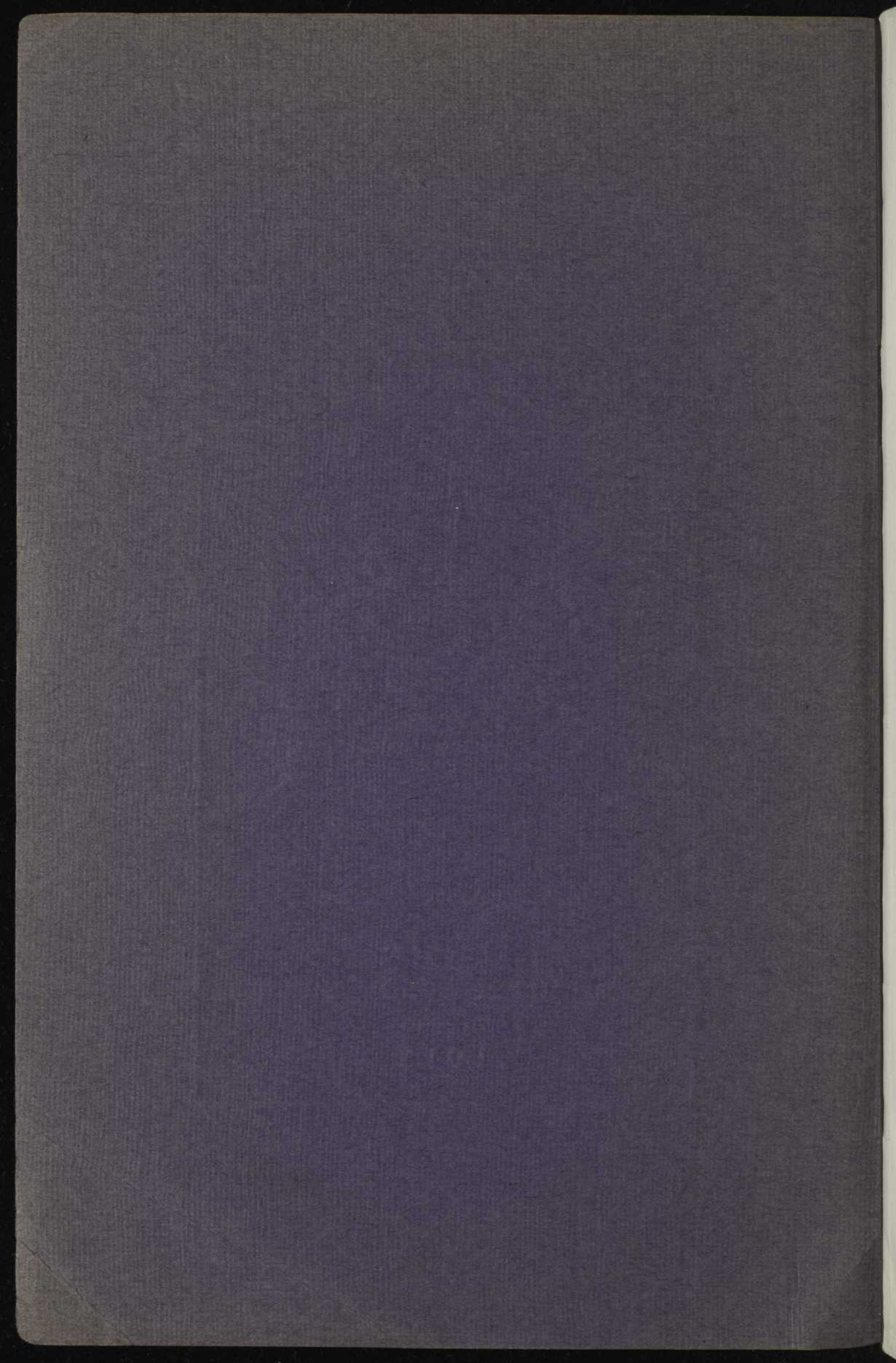
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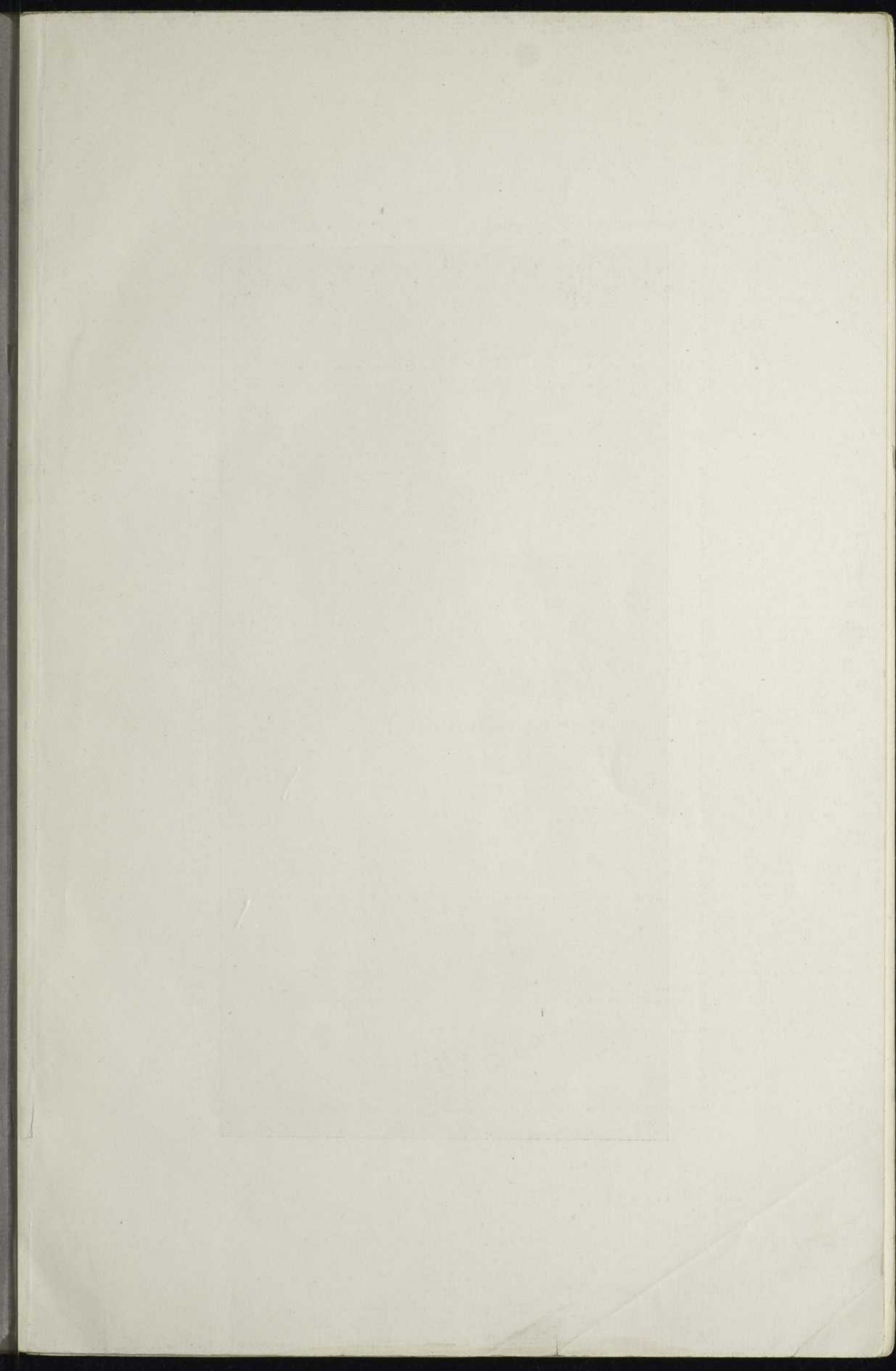
Protestant Schools in the Eastern Townships

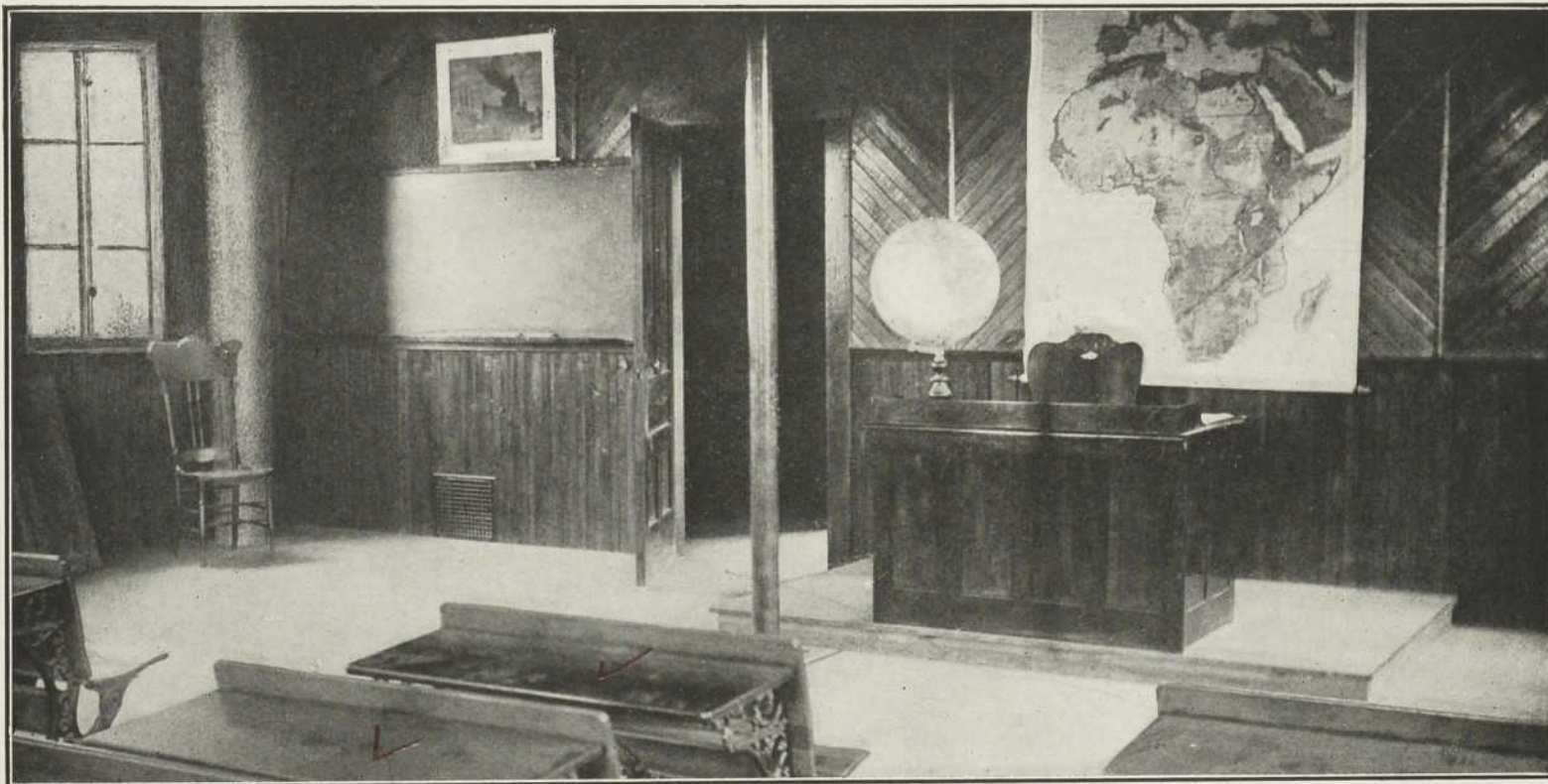
THE CENTRAL PROBLEM OF CANADIAN RURAL EDUCATION IS THE PROVISION OF SUCH SCHOOLS EVERYWHERE AS WILL ENSURE THE KNOWLEDGE, THE MENTAL TRAINING, AND THE GENERAL OUTLOOK NEEDED FOR THE TRANSITION INTO MODERN, SCIENTIFIC, ORGANIZED AGRICULTURE.

Quebec:
Department of Public Instruction

1913







AN INTERIOR VIEW OF BULWER CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL.

Protestant Schools

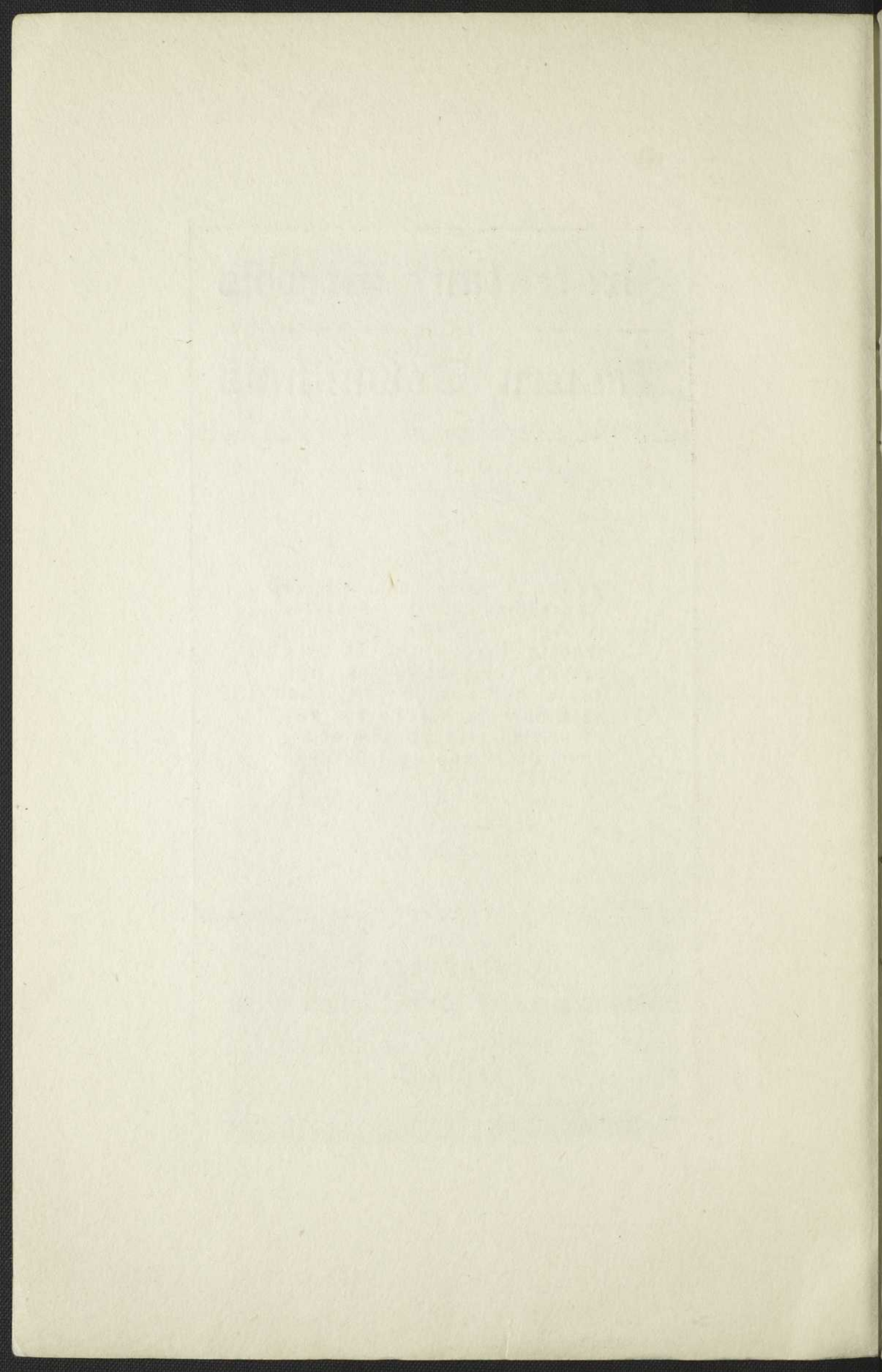
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PROTESTANT SCHOOLS *of* THE EASTERN TOWNSHIPS



In 1912, a pamphlet dealing with the interests of the Protestant Rural Schools of the Province was issued by the Department of Public Instruction, and many copies were distributed at the Educational Exhibit at the Sherbrooke Exhibition. Other copies also were given out by mail from the Department and through the Inspectors. That pamphlet dealt with the following topics: 1. The Value of Education; 2. The Relation of Education to Agriculture; 3. The Rural School; 4. Consolidation of Schools; 5. The Salaries of Teachers; 6. The Local Management of Schools.

It proved useful in many ways. So also did the Educational Exhibit. For instance, both in the pamphlet and in the other printed matter used at the Exhibit, emphasis was laid upon the question of better salaries for the rural teachers. As a consequence, the advertisements which appeared in the newspapers this year (1913) have shown a great improvement in this respect. A number of municipalities in the Eastern Townships which had been paying previously only some \$20.00 or \$22.00 a month to their teachers, were now offering \$30.00 a month. This was a most gratifying result, but the actual effect it has had in securing

4 Protestant Schools of the Eastern Townships

qualified teachers in place of unqualified ones can only be known when the reports and the bulletins of the Inspectors for the school year 1913-14 have been received next spring. On the principle that one swallow does not make a summer, no prophecy will be offered here as to the actual result, but the hope may be expressed that this advance of the salaries has directly benefited the municipalities concerned. By another year it will be possible to say definitely whether it has done so or not. Then, too, in last year's pamphlet, at the Educational Exhibit, and in the Educational Campaign, great stress was laid upon the need and wisdom of Consolidation. At the meetings in the Campaign very general approval of the system was expressed by members of school boards and ratepayers, and it was also expressed by many who visited the Educational Exhibit.

But it ended chiefly in approval.. Hardly anything has been done by the school boards to put it into actual practice, except by closing a very small school, here and there, and allowing the children to walk to another several miles away. This is not true consolidation, even when the school boards make an allowance to the parents of so much a day to pay for "conveyance." Wherever consolidation means anything in the way of genuine reform it is the closing of four or five small schools, and the actual conveyance of the children, by teams hired by the commissioners or trustees, to a central school which should be much better equipped than

the small schools which are closed. The true object of consolidation is to provide better and brighter schools which the pupils will be glad to attend every school day in the year, and to which they will remain attached until they have received the rounded education that such a school can give. Parents are frequently guilty of taking their children from school too early, but the children are often only too ready to give up school when it is a poor one. Young as they are they know the difference.

Now the chief purpose of the present pamphlet is to bring forward some more facts as to the need and value of consolidation in the Eastern Townships. The facts themselves are derived principally from the reports and bulletins of the Inspectors. Before coming to the details, however, it may be well to say something about the work of

INSPECTION

Very few people, except those who are directly connected with the work of education, have a clear idea of the importance and extent of the duties of a School Inspector. It is not realized that without his aid the machinery of any school system would soon get into bad order. The work of the Inspector has four relationships: 1. To the teacher; 2. To the pupils; 3. To the school board; 4. To the department. This four-fold relationship is put very briefly when it is stated that the Inspector

visits a school to observe the methods and discipline of the teacher, the progress of the pupils, the state of repair in which the school is kept by the board, and to report these facts to the department. In such a meagre outline the work would seem to be very simple, but it is only an outline. As a matter of fact, he has a large amount of statistics to gather and tabulate for every school in his district of inspection, and is required, among other things, "to examine the registers of the school commissioners or trustees and the attendance roll of the schools of each school municipality under his control; to examine the accounts of the secretary-treasurers of school municipalities under his control, and to ascertain whether the procedure prescribed by articles 2826 and following has been observed; to ascertain whether the provisions of the school law and regulations are carried out and obeyed." Then he visits every school twice a year, once in the autumn, when he sends a report upon each municipality, and once in the spring, when a much more extended bulletin of information and statistics is sent to the department. He also holds a number of conferences with the teachers during the year—an institution of great usefulness.

Five Inspectors visit the schools of the Eastern Townships. The model schools and academies are visited by Inspector John Parker, B.A., whose supervision extends over the superior schools of the whole Province. The Rev. E. M. Taylor, M.A., visits the elementary schools of Brome, the greater



THE POOREST KIND OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.



A VERY PLAIN MODEL SCHOOL.

part of Missisquoi, and part of Shefford counties. His district of inspection also extends outside of the Eastern Townships into the counties of Iversville and Rouville. Mr. O. F. McCutcheon visits the schools of Megantic and Wolfe, and part of Compton counties. His district of inspection also extends outside of the Eastern Townships into the counties of Quebec, Portneuf, Lévis, Dorchester, Lotbinière and Beauce. The Rev. W. O. Rothney, B.A., B.D., visits the schools of Richmond, Drummond, Sherbrooke, and part of Shefford counties. His district of inspection also extends to the county of Bagot, outside of the Eastern Townships. The Rev. J. H. Hunter, M.A., Ph.D., visits the schools of Stanstead and the greater part of Compton counties.

SOME RESULTS

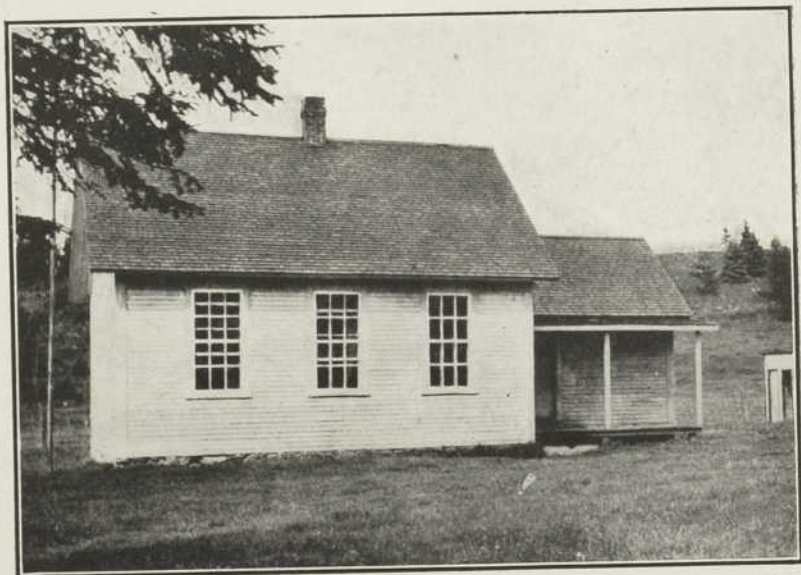
Now, knowing who the Inspectors are, and something of the kind of information they gather, let us consider some of the facts which their reports bring out when they are duly analyzed and tabulated. For the purpose of this pamphlet we shall only select two sets of facts. There are many others which would be interesting and instructive, but the following have especial reference to the points we desire to make clear.

Inspectors Taylor, Rothney, Hunter and McCutcheon visited 320 rural elementary schools in the Eastern Townships in the autumn of 1912.

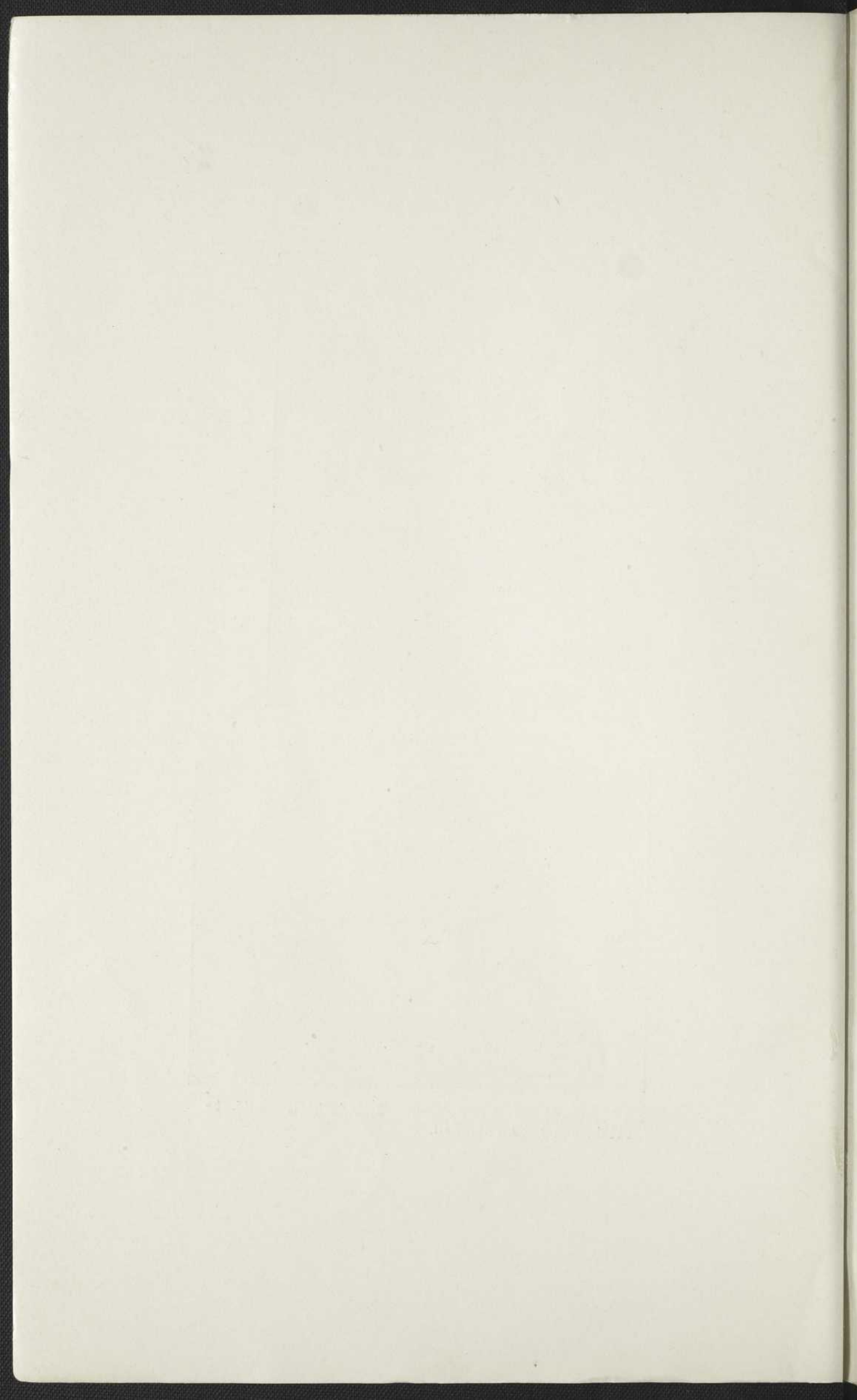
Some of them, of course, visited schools in towns as well, and schools outside of the Eastern Townships. But when they were making their rounds, there were 320 rural elementary schools open. The first fact we have to notice is that in these 320 schools there were, on the days of inspection, a total of 3,644 pupils or an average of a little over 11 pupils per school.* A few schools had a very good attendance, and this fact helped up the average, poor as it was. But when we examine the figures, school by school, what do we find? There were 22 schools with 10 pupils, 34 schools with 9 pupils, 22 schools with 8 pupils, 22 schools with 7 pupils, 15 schools with 6 pupils, 16 schools with 5 pupils, and 9 schools with 3 pupils. Are not these figures worth studying? Nearly one-half of the schools had ten pupils or less. What inducement is there for a competent and qualified teacher to undertake a school in which there can only be one or two pupils in each grade above the first? What opportunity has she of showing her capabilities? What chance has she of advancement? None. It is simply a case of what the Rev. Dr. Rexford called, in the Educational Campaign, "playing at school."

And the qualified teachers are not found for these small schools. The proof of this is to be

*These figures, of course, do not give the total number of rural elementary schools of the Eastern Townships, or the total number of pupils. On the occasion of their first visit, many of the "summer schools" had closed, and some of the winter schools had not opened.



THE AVERAGE TYPE.—Much better schools could be obtained by consolidation.



found in the other set of facts we have gathered from the reports of the Inspectors. Out of these 320 rural elementary schools which were open in the autumn of 1912, 144 had unqualified teachers, and 36 had teachers with the Grade II. Academy permit. That is to say, 45 per cent of the teachers had no legal qualification, and 56 per cent were without Normal School training. Only 140 of the whole number of teachers, or a little over 43 per cent, held diplomas.

The one remedy for these conditions is consolidation. That is to say, it is the one remedy if it is recognized that the great majority of these small schools are of necessity inefficient, and if it is realized that a better education than they can afford is really worth while. But a good many people do not seem to be clear in their minds on either of these points, to judge by the poor apologies of schools that they are willing to put up with year after year.

It may be imagined by some that many of the small schools are in out-of-the-way places, and that, therefore, the consolidation system could not be applied to them. But this is not so. They are to be found in some of our best townships. In the following sets of figures the attendance at the schools of individual municipalities of the Eastern Townships is given. The municipalities are not indicated by name, but by number :

Municipality No. 1 had **13** schools, at which

there were **14—5—9—11—9—9—13—9—9—7—17—9—14** pupils in each respectively.

Municipality No. **2** had **14** schools, at which there were **19—10—12—8—11—4—10—8—9—12—11—9—6—34** pupils in each respectively.

Municipality No. **3** had **18** schools, at which there were **15—15—6—9—13—6—17—6—15—9—8—8—12—7—21—18—8—10** pupils in each respectively.

Municipality No. **4** had **26** schools, at which there were **9—8—8—11—9—15—7—5—11—4—26—26—12—8—11—22—10—9—20—3—23—8—7—10—6—27.**

These four cases are not picked out as exceptional. Nearly every other municipality, large and small, has about the same proportion of poorly attended schools.

WHAT CONSOLIDATION PROPOSES

Now, what consolidation proposes—and what it is actually doing in thirty-two States of the American Union—is to make one large and well-equipped school take the place of four, five or six of the small badly equipped schools.

Take Municipality No. 1, for instance. It has 13 schools for 132 pupils, or an average of slightly over ten pupils per school. The argument is that the municipality would be much better served if there were only four schools instead of thirteen. Each school would then have an average of thirty-

Consolidation is needed in Eastern Townships 11

three pupils. In Municipality No. 2 there are 14 schools with a total of 163 pupils. It could be served by four large schools, giving an average of over forty pupils. In Municipality No. 3, the 18 schools could be replaced by five, with an average of over 40 pupils per school. Municipality No. 4 might have six good schools for its 292 pupils, with an average of 48 in each.

In every case, too, it may be noticed that there are centers of good attendance to make the basis of consolidation for surrounding districts, although it has to be remembered, of course, that the attendance is often apt to vary between district and district from year to year.

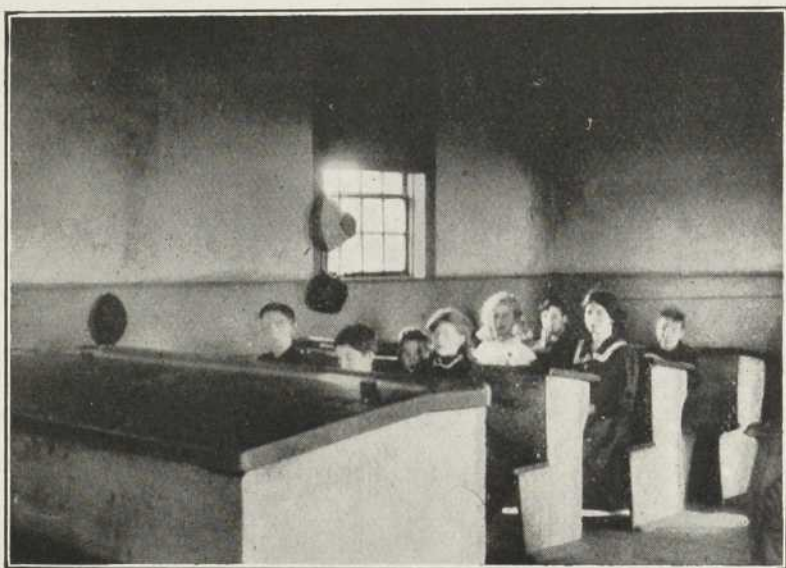
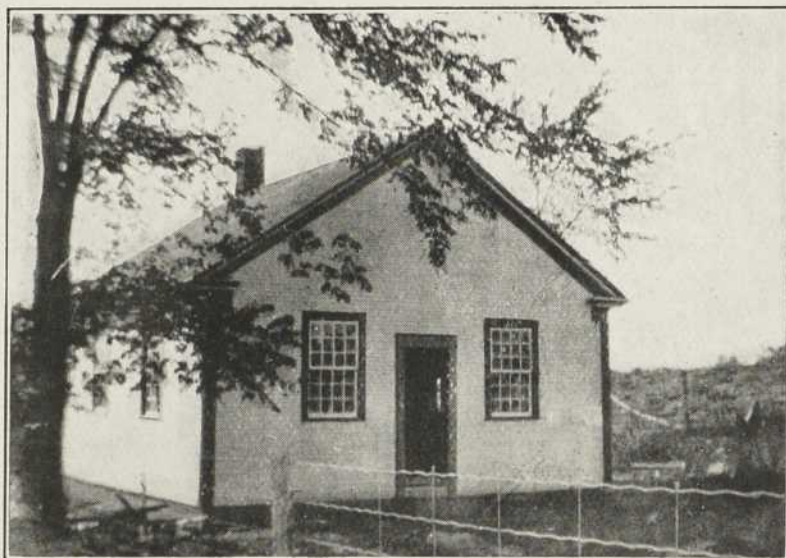
CONSOLIDATION IS NEEDED IN EASTERN TOWNSHIPS

The foregoing figures should make it plain that consolidation is needed in the Eastern Townships for the Protestant schools, if it is needed anywhere in Canada. The four municipalities cited are fair and just samples of the others. Only two or three have a slightly better average, and **there is not a single case where benefit would not be obtained by consolidation.**

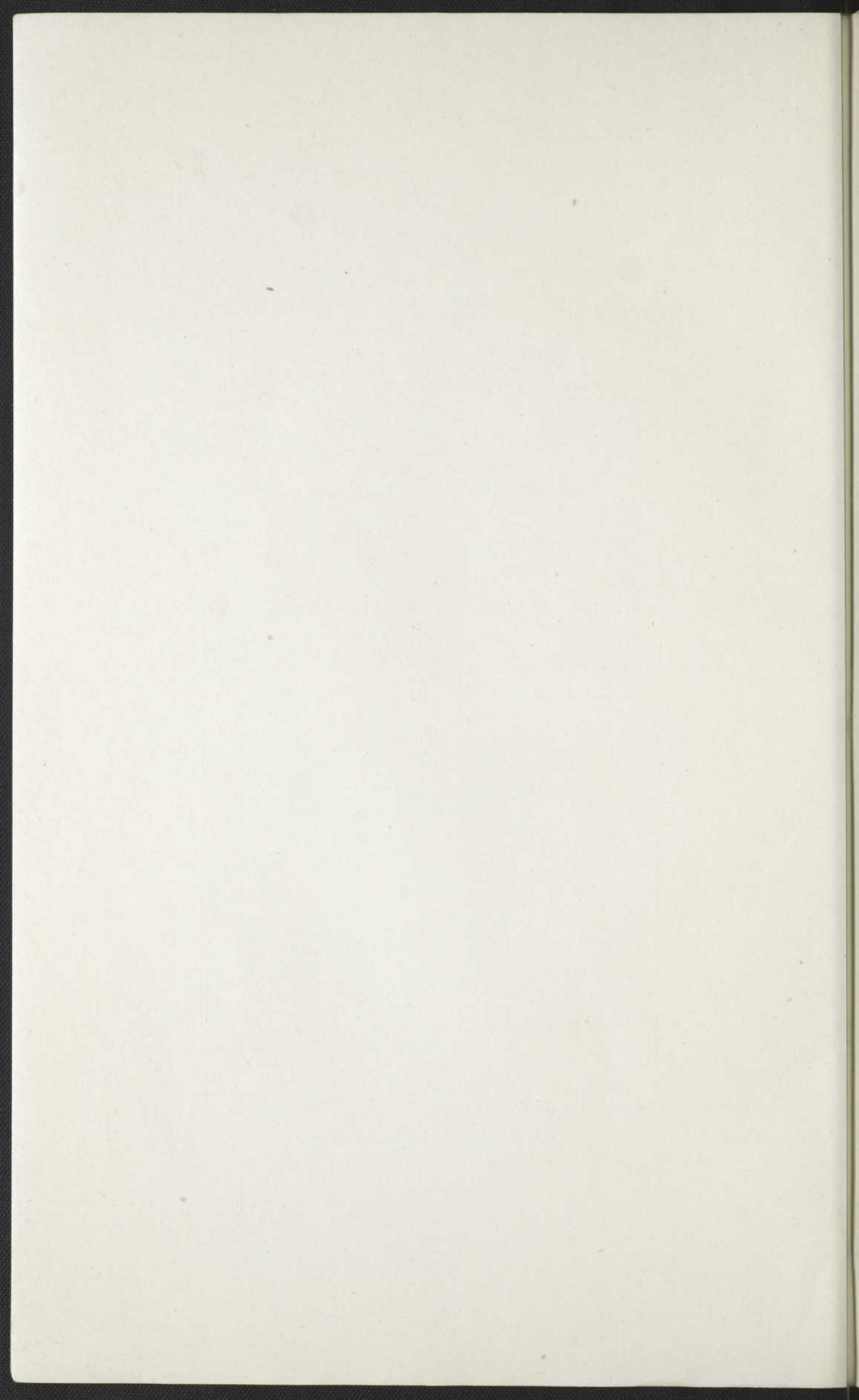
To bring it about in any particular case, there is needed, of course, in the community, **a larger conception of the importance of education, and a better idea of what it can do for the community.**

12 *Consolidation is needed in Eastern Townships*

Better rural schools, such as we might have under a general adoption of the principle of consolidation, would do a great deal for the Eastern Townships. Much effort is being expended in the endeavor to secure farmers from the Mother Country to settle in the Eastern Townships. The attractions of the soil in this portion of the Province are undoubtedly great. With the rich grass pastures, the abundance of pure spring water, and the nearness to large and growing markets, the opportunities of the farmer are unquestionably good. Then the glorious diversification of scenery—hill, mountain, valley, plain, brook, river and lake—makes the Eastern Townships one of the most attractive portions of Canada. But the farmers and the farm laborers who come from England to-day are, as a rule, much better educated than many who came fifty or seventy-five years ago. Individual exceptions to the rule might be cited, of course, for both periods, that is, for the earlier and the present, but there is no question of the fact that the average education in England has greatly improved in the last half century or less, thanks to the Forster Education Act of 1870. Consider just one fact. In 1843, over 42 per cent of the men, and 47 per cent of the women who married in England that year had to sign the parish registers with a mark. In 1907, less than two per cent of the men and women who married had to do so. Moreover, the English farmer and farm laborer are now accustomed to greatly improved rural schools, in which modern agriculture is taught, and they



EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR of a type of school which should disappear.



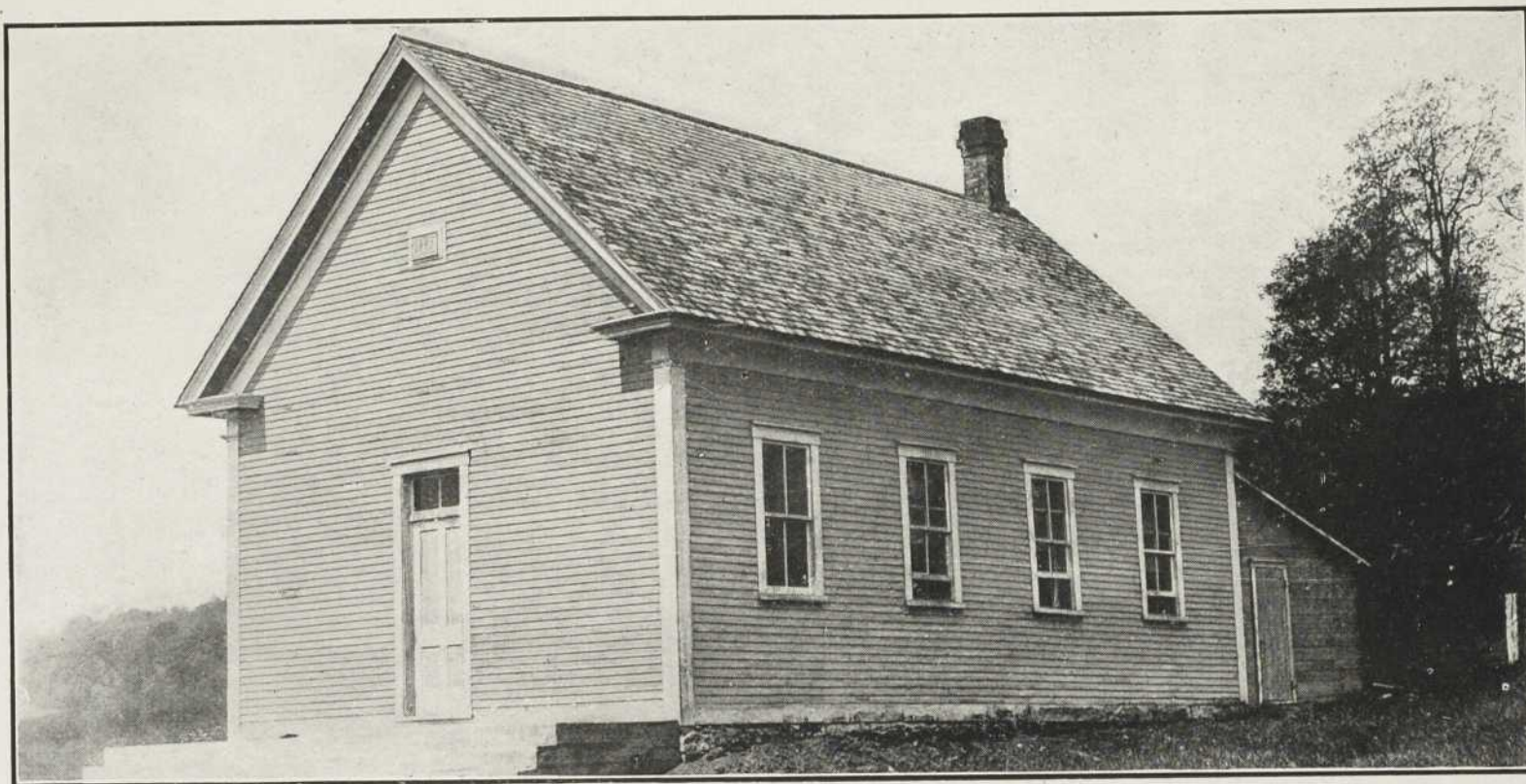
will expect such schools for their children in this country.

This brings us, indeed, to one of the grandest reasons why we should have consolidated schools. Whether we have immigration from the Mother Country or not, we should have good modern schools for our own children, in which something really interesting, something really instructive, and something really valuable may be learned about agriculture, and it is only in the larger schools that consolidation affords that this kind of education can be given. Everybody knows now that a teacher and a text book are not the only essentials for teaching agriculture. Many of the young women teachers have but little knowledge of practical or scientific farming, and it would be unfair to expect that many of them should have this knowledge. Even when they have had a training in nature study, it does not follow that they are competent to give instruction in agriculture beyond a few elementary principles. But the Protestant Committee has now authorized diplomas, valid for the rural model schools, open to young men who have taken the four years course in agriculture at Macdonald College, and who have had some training in the School for Teachers. The Committee has also authorized diplomas, valid for the rural elementary schools, open to young men who have taken a one years' course in agriculture, and who have had some training in the School for Teachers. Similar

14 *Consolidation is needed in Eastern Townships*

diplomas are also granted to women teachers who have taken Household Science.

This step opens the way for the introduction of a sound system of agricultural education in our rural schools. The scientific thoroughness of the four years' course, particularly, at Macdonald College, is beyond all question, and the instructors who have had this training would undoubtedly be able to impart a new life and vigor to agricultural teaching in our schools. If but few of these trained experts would be willing to undertake the charge of a model school, it is probable that they would be willing to assume the supervision of the agricultural teaching of a group of model and consolidated schools, passing from one to the other during the course of the school year. This is the system which has worked with great success in New Zealand, and which, by its undoubted results upon agriculture practice in many centres, has gained the co-operation of the farmers' clubs and associations of that country. This, of course, is offered merely as a suggestion of one of the possibilities which might be brought about under consolidation. In any case, the chance of better instruction in agriculture, or in any other subject, is greater in the consolidated school than in the small one-room school of a few pupils.



PLAIN, BUT SOMEWHAT IMPROVED TYPE.

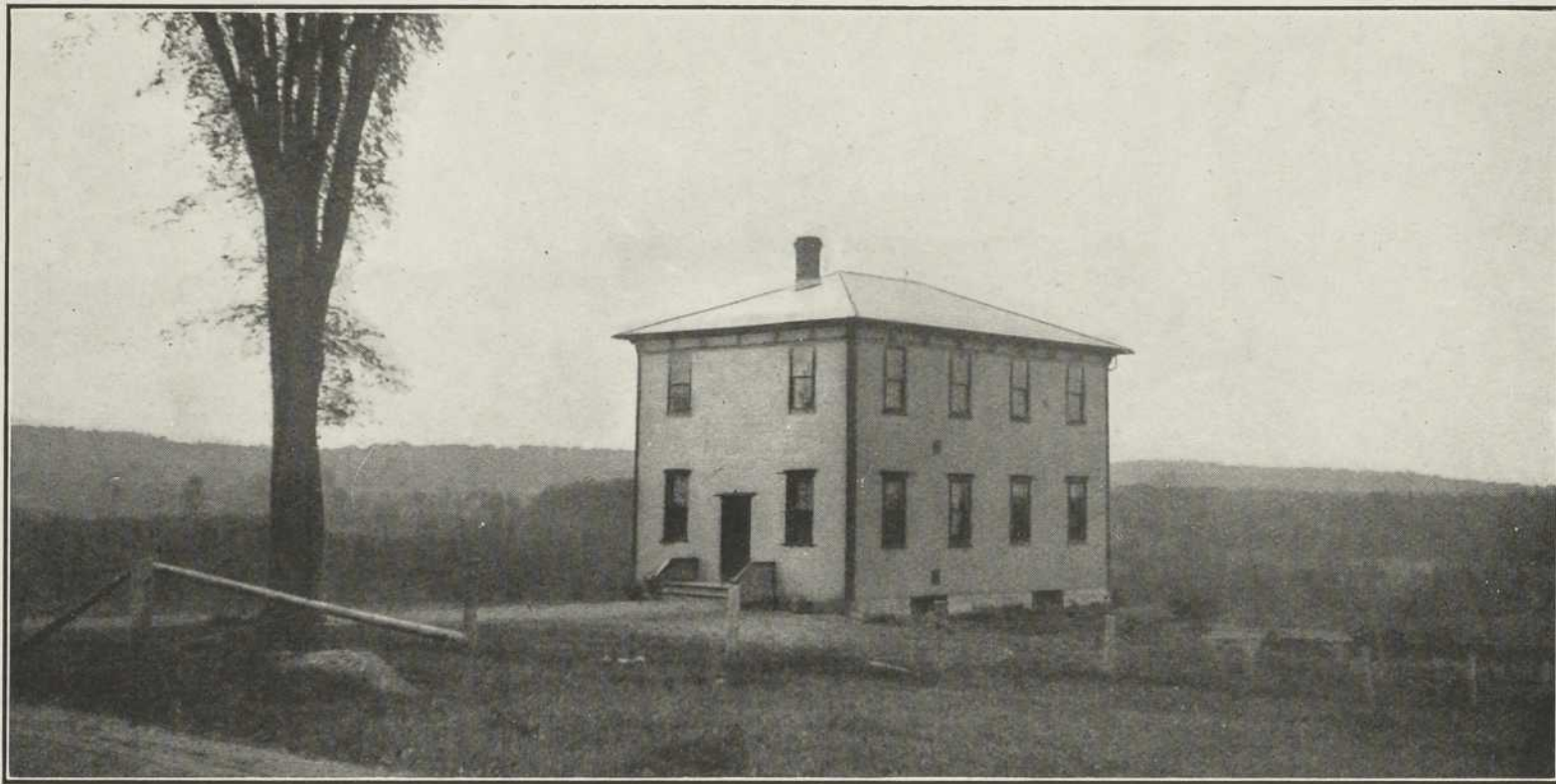
THE WAY TO CONSOLIDATE

If four or five districts are united into one for the purpose of consolidation, it is not always practicable to choose the geographical centre of the united district for the new school. The roads of the Eastern Townships are often as circuitous as the streets of Boston. But a man from Chicago who arrived in Boston for the first time, asked a citizen the way to Boston Common. The reply was, "Take any street in either direction, and you will arrive at the Common." By good management and forethought, convenient centres for our consolidated schools can be found, and all of the roads, after all, will lead to them. The chief prejudice to be overcome is the idea that a drive of five miles or so is too much. In Manitoba, the pupils are frequently conveyed eight, nine, ten and even eleven miles. If proper rigs are provided, the youngest children can go to school a distance of five miles in rough weather, which would prevent them from walking half a mile. Everywhere, indeed, that consolidation is in operation, it is found that the average attendance for the united district is far greater than it was for the small schools of the separate districts.

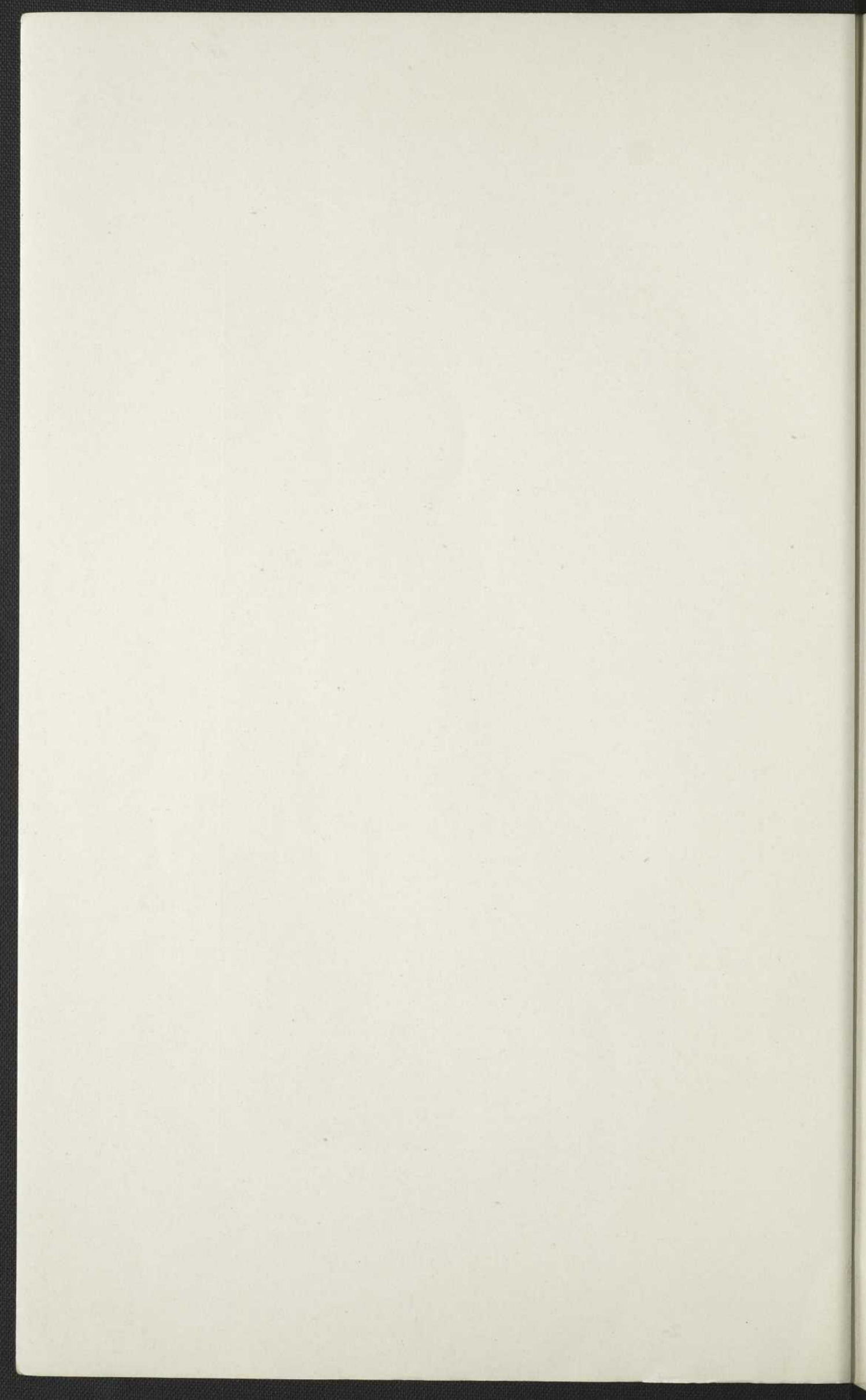
Next, true consolidation implies actual conveyance at the expense of the rural boards. In most cases this means no extra expense, as the saving effected in salaries is sufficient to pay for the team hire. To merely pay a small amount to the par-

ents, in lieu of conveyance, is not a right application of the principle. The true idea is to have a much better school, and to take the necessary steps to have all of the pupils of the united district regularly conveyed to the school; that is to say, all who are beyond walking distance. Here, too, common sense and judgment must be exercised. A hard-and-fast line cannot be laid down for this distance in every case. In bad weather, particularly, the younger children should be picked up by the team even if the distance is only half a mile or less. **Get all the possible pupils at school, and at a good school.**

Next, the consolidated school means that, with very little extra expense, you may have a model school in the place of four or five elementary ones; and, after all, the **model school course represents the minimum amount of education that every child of the farm should receive.** The idea that only those who are going to be teachers, or doctors, or pastors, need more schooling than is afforded by the elementary classes, must pass away. And it is passing away. If the general indications on this continent mean anything, they mean that farming is becoming more and more regarded as a business and a profession which calls for a large and broad education, and that the farmers and farmers' wives who, by means of good and advanced rural schools, are brought in touch with modern knowledge and the principles of scientific method, have the best chances for success and happiness in their work.



CONSOLIDATED MODEL SCHOOL AT BULWER.



SOME ADVANTAGES

We have already shown that consolidation helps to solve the teacher problem. The qualified teachers can seldom be found for the small schools, but always for the larger ones, because these are **worth while**. We here repeat some other reasons which were printed on a large card at the Educational Exhibit of last year.

CONSOLIDATION

Permits a better grading and classification of the pupils ;

Ensures more weeks of schooling ;

Makes for a larger average attendance ;

Adds the stimulating influence of larger classes ;

Leads to better school buildings, better equipment, a larger supply of books, charts, maps, and apparatus ;

Quickens public interest in the school ;

Gives the opportunity for more practical instruction ;

Affords a community center for the people ;

Means very little extra expense ;

Brings the pupils to school in rough winter weather a distance of four or five miles,

when it might be impossible for them to walk a mile ;

Is better for the health of the pupils ;

Gains the approval of the people wherever and whenever it is given a fair trial ;

Suits our rural conditions.

To the foregoing, the following general considerations may be added :

Consolidation is the only policy that will make for efficiency in our rural schools. The large and graded classes are absolutely essential to effective work.

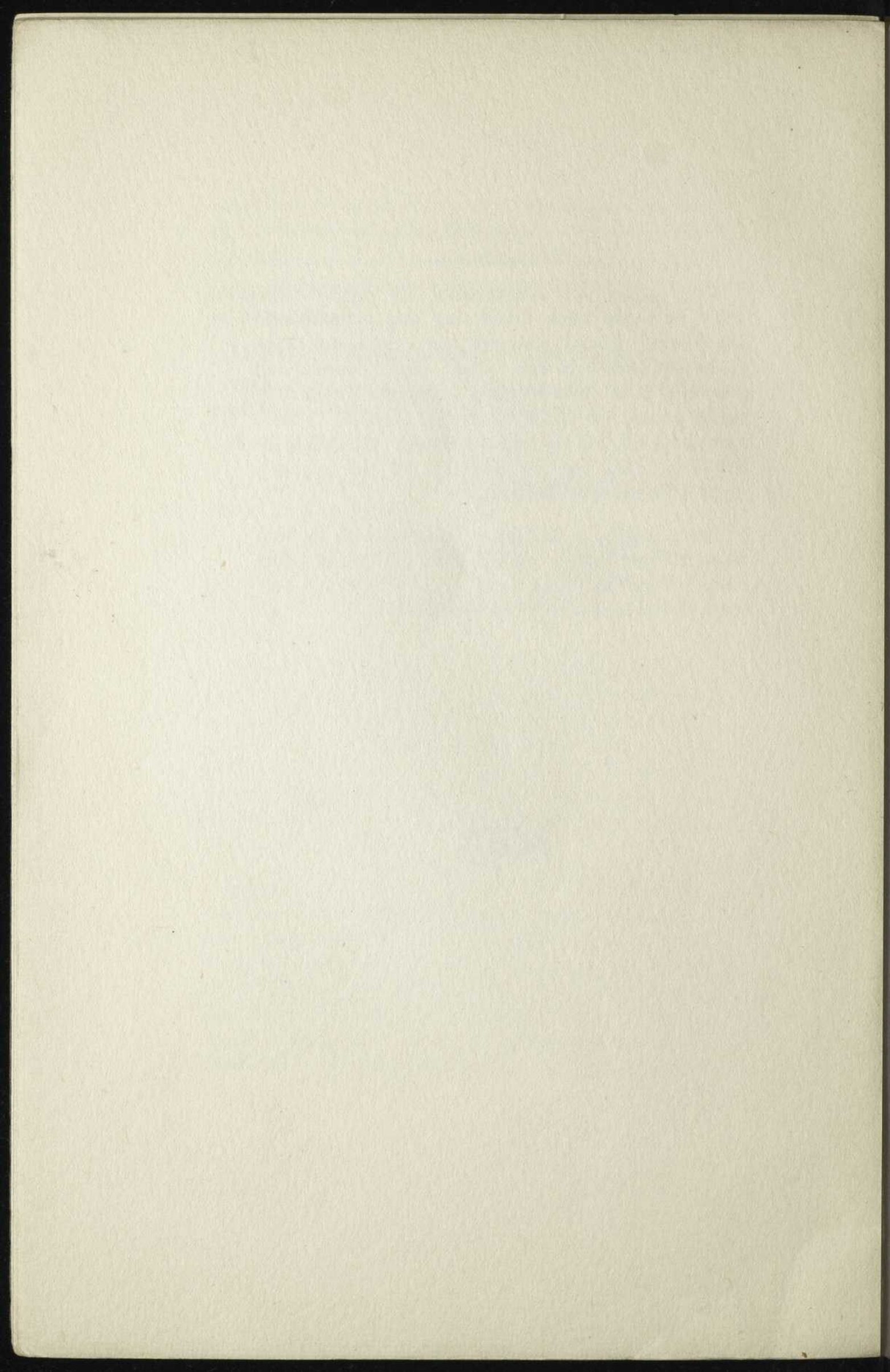
It is also a good policy for the ratepayers now that the public school and minimum salary grants are distributed solely on the basis of school attendance. It is to the interest of school boards and ratepayers to have every possible pupil at school, as every pupil counts for the grants, and the best way to do this is to have schools that the pupils will be glad to attend.

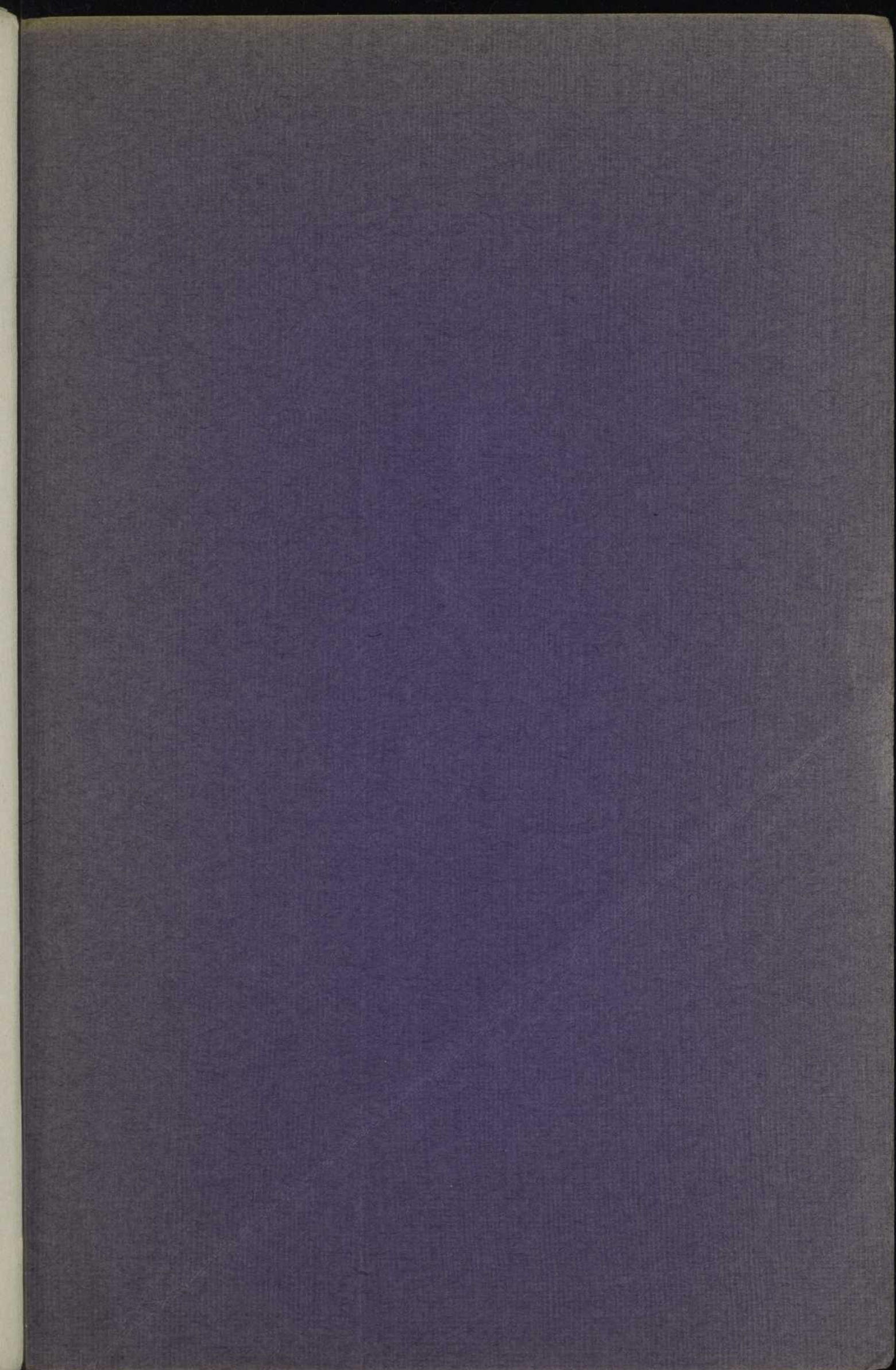
Then as community centres, the consolidated schools are valuable. The last Dominion census shows how large has been the exodus from the farm to the towns and cities during the ten years from 1900 to 1910. Of the older provinces, Quebec has the best showing in this respect, but there is much to be done in our own province to arrest this tendency. Life in the country, for one thing,

must be made more interesting and attractive to the young. Social interests and enjoyments have to be considered to this end. The consolidated school, if it is made brightly attractive, becomes a useful centre for social meetings, reading clubs, and above all, for the Local Library. It should be available, also, for the meetings of the farmers' clubs and womens' institutes.

The principle is, in fact, in keeping with modern progress, and there is no other proposition of equal value before the public for the immediate and permanent improvement of rural education.







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