

**REPORT OF CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION
STATISTICS. BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF
THE DOMINION AND PROVINCIAL
GOVERNMENTS, HELD AT THE PARLIAMENT
BUILDINGS, OTTAWA, ON WEDNESDAY AND
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27 AND 28, 1920**

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Report of Conference on education statistics. Between representatives of the dominion and provincial governments, held at the Parliament buildings, Ottawa, on Wednesday and Thursday, October 27 and 28, 1920 by Canada Dominion Bureau of Statistics

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CANADA DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS

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CANADA
DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS
EDUCATION DIVISION.

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ON WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27 AND 28, 1920.



OTTAWA
THOMAS MULVEY
PRINTER TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY
1921

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NOTE.—Opportunity is here taken to state that the Dominion Bureau of Statistics has in preparation its first annual report of a comprehensive character on Education in Canada, based on data collected by the Provinces and also on information collected by the Bureau direct from private schools, business colleges, etc. This report will when published be sent to interested persons on application.

A reference to the organization of the Education Division of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics will be found herein on page 6.

Dominion Bureau of Statistics,
OTTAWA, February 21, 1921.

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REPORT

OF

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BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DOMINION AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS, HELD AT THE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, OTTAWA, ON WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27 and 28, 1920.

The Conference on Education Statistics, which was held at the Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, on October 27 and 28, 1920, and which took place immediately after the National Conference on Technical Education, was the outcome of correspondence between the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, and the Superintendents and Deputy Ministers responsible for the administration of the Education Acts of the nine Provincial Governments. The history of the events leading up to this conference is given below, in a short memorandum which introduces the report of the proceedings of the conference.

Those present at the conference were as follows:—

Representing the Dominion Government.

The Right Honourable Sir George F. Foster, G.C.M.G., M.P., Minister of Trade and Commerce.

Professor S. A. Cudmore, B.A., F.S.S., Chief of Education Statistics, Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

Professor L. W. Gill, Director of Technical Education, Department of Labour.

M. C. Maclean, A.M., Assistant Chief of Education Statistics, Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

Representing the Provincial Governments.

Prince Edward Island.—R. H. Rogers, M.A., B.C.L., Chief Superintendent of Education, Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Nova Scotia.—A. H. MacKay, B.A., B.Sc., LL.D., F.R.S.C., Superintendent of Education, Halifax, N.S.; F. H. Sexton, D.Sc., Director of Technical Education, Halifax, N.S.

New Brunswick.—R. B. Wallace, Chief Clerk, Department of Education, Fredericton, N.B.; F. Peacock, Director of Vocational Education, Fredericton, N.B.; Rev. F. Tessier, Ph.D., LL.D., Member of the Board of Vocational Education, St. Joseph, N.B.

Quebec.—J. N. Miller, Secretary, Catholic Committee of Public Instruction, Quebec, P.Q.; G. W. Parmalee, D.C.L., LL.D., Secretary, Protestant Committee of Public Instruction, Quebec, P.Q.

Ontario.—F. W. Merchant, D. Paed., Director of Industrial and Technical Education, Toronto, Ont.

Manitoba.—Hon. R. S. Thornton, M.D., Minister of Education, Winnipeg, Man.; R. Fletcher, B.A., Deputy Minister of Education, Winnipeg, Man.; R. B. Vaughan, Director of Technical Education, Winnipeg, Man.

Saskatchewan.—R. F. Blacklock, Registrar, Department of Education, Regina, Sask.

Alberta.—Hon. Geo. P. Smith, Minister of Education, Edmonton, Alta.; John Ross, B.A., Deputy Minister of Education, Edmonton, Alta.; D. A. Campbell, Director of Technical Education, Edmonton, Alta.

British Columbia.—John Kyle, Organizer of Technical Education, Victoria, B.C.

MEMORANDUM ON THE CO-ORDINATION OF CANADIAN EDUCATION STATISTICS

As long ago as 1912, the Departmental Commission on the Official Statistics of Canada, reported that "It is highly desirable that for purposes of comparative study and general information, statistics of education should be compiled for the whole Dominion," and laid down in the following sentences the fundamental requirements of any scheme of Dominion-wide educational statistics:—

"Such statistics should comprise the nature and variety of educational institutions, public and private, including their organization, grading and equipment, whether for primary, secondary or higher education. They should also give the number of pupils and students in the various grades, their attendance, age on entering and leaving school, the nature of the education given, whether theoretical, practical or special, and any supplementary educational facilities, including libraries, night schools, art or trade schools, etc. Particulars should be included as to the teaching staffs, their qualifications, sex, age, frequency of changes in the staffs; also the expenditure on education in the various grades, distinguished as permanent and annual expenditure."

At an Interprovincial Convention in 1914 of teachers and educational officials of the three Maritime Provinces, the creation of a Canadian Educational Bureau for the collection and publication of education statistics was unanimously approved, and the suggestion was made that the Dominion Bureau of Statistics (then the Census and Statistics Office) might undertake this statistical work. In response to this and other appeals a section on Education Statistics was added to the Canada Year Book of 1914, and has appeared in revised form in each subsequent edition.

The subject of Dominion-wide educational statistics was later investigated by the present Dominion Statistician. In a memorandum entitled "Statistics of Education—Their Co-ordination and Enlargement," copies of which were sent to the various provincial departments, he described the education statistics collected by the census and by Provincial Departments of Education, and pointed out the general differences in statistical schedules which made it impossible to secure from provincial departments comparable information on many most important points. This memorandum enumerates the following points on which the Provincial Departments of Education might be approached: (1) the adoption of a uniform school year for statistical purposes; (2) uniformity of nomenclature; (3) differentiation between elementary and secondary education; (4) uniform statistics for Normal and Model Schools; (5) expenditure on education, differentiating between provincial grants and local assessments, and between expenditure for elementary and secondary education. A second and more detailed memorandum on the "Co-ordination of the Education Statistics of Canada," was prepared by the present Chief of Education Statistics in the summer of 1918 at the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

In the autumn of 1918 the Dominion Educational Association at its meeting in Ottawa, passed the following resolution:—

"That the Canada Education Association record its appreciation of the action of the Right Hon. Sir George E. Foster, Minister of Trade and Commerce, in collating and publishing statistics and other useful information regarding the condition and progress of education in the several provinces of Canada. This association also approves of the appointment of an educationist to the staff of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics in order that special and expert attention may be given to this important work."

The Alberta Educational Association had passed a similar resolution in the spring of 1918, and the Saskatchewan Educational Association in the same summer.

As foreshadowed in the resolution just quoted, an Education Division of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics was established in 1919, and two educationists—one with teaching experience in elementary, secondary and university work in Ontario, the other with teaching experience in elementary and secondary work in Nova Scotia and in the three Prairie Provinces—were appointed to its staff. Their conclusion, after an exhaustive study of the annual reports published by the Provincial Departments of Education, was that comparable statistics on the all-important questions of age at entering and leaving school, grading, retardation, etc., could not, generally speaking, be secured from those reports as they stood, and that a new set of schedules, on which these points could be collected on a uniform basis, must be prepared, and submitted to the provincial authorities for their criticisms and suggestions. These schedules, as improved by the long experience of the provincial authorities, would then, it was hoped, be accepted by each of the provinces as constituting a minimum of statistics to be collected for general purposes, while each province collected for itself such additional statistics as its educational authorities desired.

These schedules and the accompanying explanatory memoranda have been duly submitted to the Departments of Education in the nine provinces, and from some of these departments very valuable suggestions have been received and incorporated in the revised schedules as now presented, copies of which are submitted for consideration.

From a study of the schedules, it will be evident that the compilers of the schedules have sought to collect information on the more universal sides of public education—sex, age and grading of pupils, school opportunities offered, school attendance, age at entering and leaving school, salaries of different grades of teachers in elementary and secondary education, subjects taught in secondary schools, etc., while statistics relating to the more special and peculiar features of the school system of each province are left to the province to collect and use as it sees fit.

Some of the more general features of Canadian educational systems which affect statistical records were not dealt with in the memorandum submitted to the provincial departments or in these schedules. The chief of these are the questions of the uniform statistical school year, the standardization of grades and the annual estimate of school population. These subjects were considered in the memorandum prepared at the Bureau of Statistics in 1918, and a revised edition of the sections of that memorandum dealing with these subjects is submitted to you at this conference. The subject of the uniform statistical school year has been suggested for discussion at this conference by Dr. Merchant, representing the province of Ontario. The question of equation of grading must be taken into account if we are to have any Dominion-wide statistics of education at all. A knowledge of the number of the school population is also essential to any consideration of the effectiveness of our school systems in reaching our juvenile and adolescent population. Fortunately in the case of this last problem the results of the census of 1921 will before very long be available for comparison with the statistics of young persons in attendance at educational institutions.

PROCEEDINGS OF WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1920

The Right Hon. Sir George E. Foster, Minister of Trade and Commerce, opened the proceedings on the morning of Wednesday, October 27, with an address of welcome to the members of the conference. In this address he mentioned that two years before, at a meeting of the Dominion Educational Association at Ottawa, he had discussed with the society "the necessity for a better system of statistics with regard to the educational standing and situation in Canada, and as to how that could be brought about by a reasonable and proper co-operation between the Dominion and the provinces." As he had been an educationist himself for a good many years, he

had always felt in his earlier career in public life that he "was up against a stone wall to size up the position and to get at the real situation educationally in the Dominion of Canada. In the first place, one would have to go to nine different sources for information, and it was always a hindrance and regret that there was no co-ordinated and common source of information from which we ourselves could get a fairly good idea as to what we were doing and how we stood in the great educational field. People who live outside of our country find that difficulty as well; they have no place to go for authoritative, general and comprehensive information with regard to educational work and standing in Canada. The Education Association, at the meeting already mentioned, was good enough to express its appreciation of some steps the Bureau of Statistics had taken towards remedying the situation, and the present conference was the outcome of the ideas interchanged at that time." After dwelling upon the contributions of the school towards the character, intelligence and industry of the people, Sir George Foster pointed out that the knowledge gained by each province of what the other provinces are doing educationally and "the opportunity of comparing one province with another so as to see whether some systems are better than others or have some points of advantage, or to see if one province is really forging ahead rather than another—all that stimulates to renewed and intelligent effort along the line of education." "As a Dominion statistical body," said Sir George, "we want to co-operate towards the end of putting before our public and the public of the world just about what we are doing, the plans upon which we are acting and the results we are getting from these plans. We know that the provincial authorities have jurisdiction in educational matters in their provinces, that they have systems and are calling for data. We do not want to duplicate any piece of work that is being effectively done, but it is necessary, if you are going to have a comparative view, that this information should be gathered on a uniform basis of questions. It is a small thing to do to widen the questionnaires which each province is sending out for its own purposes, and get the information which is good as an average for all the provinces. That is the main thing—to get a basis upon which to seek our information; the next thing is the distribution of it. A statistical department only does its best work when with the material gathered it illuminates and places before the public the lessons taught by such statistics and makes deductions therefrom for the public guidance. We think that the Dominion Bureau of Statistics can help in this respect, and we believe that working in harmony and good will with one another we may be able to supply what has been a great lack in Canada."

After acknowledging a vote of thanks tendered to him by the members of the conference, Sir George Foster withdrew. The conference, with Hon. Geo. Smith as chairman, Dr. A. H. MacKay as vice-chairman, and Professor S. A. Cudmore as secretary, then proceeded to consider the first item on the agenda paper, having reference to a uniform education statistical year throughout Canada.*

Agenda, Item No. 1—The Statistical Year

Resolution No. 1.—Resolved, that this conference considers it desirable that the educational statistics of the several provinces, or at least those relating to personnel rather than finances, should be collected for school years ending June 30, and requests the provinces not now collecting their educational statistics on this basis to give serious consideration to the desirability of making this change in their statistical year.

Mr. Ross, of Alberta, stated that the school year in his province corresponded with the calendar year, and mentioned certain difficulties in the way of making a change, particularly the fact that their provincial financial year ended on December 31, and that in estimating the cost per pupil it would be desirable to have the financial and statistical years end at the same time. In spite of these difficulties, he was of

* For convenience of reference the resolutions relating to particular items of the agenda are generally placed at the commencement of the discussions.