

search and investigation far beyond the usual practice in professional schools. What is known now in every field is so much in excess of a student's ability to acquire in the time at his disposal that our chief problem is to choose what is most useful. This challenge to the professional acumen of our staff is the legacy I leave to my successor and his colleagues in full confidence that they will carry on in the spirit that has characterized the work of the past thirty years.

### STANDING COMMITTEES OF CITY BOARDS OF EDUCA- TION

THE tendency among city boards of education is to reduce the number of standing committees or to abolish them. Of 41 boards of education in cities of 100,000 or more population reporting to the Bureau of Education in 1917 only 3 had no standing committees; of 55 boards of education in cities of this size reporting in 1927, 21 have no such committees. The average number of standing committees in each of the cities reporting in 1917 was 5.6 and the average number in the cities reporting in 1927 is 3.4.

Of 25 boards of education in cities of 100,000 or more population reporting both in 1917 and 1927, 11 have reduced the number of standing committees, and 9 have abolished them or else have constituted the board as a committee of the whole. Five have increased the number. The average number of standing committees in each of these 25 cities in 1917 was 6.4 and in 1927 the average number is 3.5.

Of 131 boards of education in cities from 30,000 to 100,000 population reporting in 1917, only 12 had no standing committees; of 140 boards of education in cities of this size reporting in 1927, 35 do not have such committees. The average number of stand-

ing committees in each city reporting in 1917 was 5.9, and in 1927 the average number is 4.2.

Of 56 boards of education in cities of 30,000 to 100,000 population reporting both in 1917 and 1927, 24 have reduced the number of standing committees, and 15 have abolished them or constituted the board as a committee of the whole. Seventeen of the 56 cities have increased the number of committees. The average number of standing committees in these 56 cities in 1917 was 6.2 and in 1927 the average number is 4.2.

In all, about 30 different kinds of committees are reported by both classes of cities. Besides the usual committees on finance, buildings and grounds, textbooks and supplies, and teachers, some boards of education have one or more of the following committees: Evening schools, courses of study, medical inspection, truancy, library, athletics, grievances, rules and regulations, manual training, executive, cafeteria, discipline, retirement, legislation, extra curricular activities, special education, auditing, Americanization, elementary schools, and high schools.

How many and what standing committees a board of education should have is a question that every board of education must decide for itself, but the tendency is to reduce the number of standing committees or even to abolish them. Authorities on school administration recommend that standing committees be abolished.

The following extracts from city school survey reports prepared within the past few years indicate the general attitude of authorities on city school administration in regard to standing committees:

"The practice of school boards to appoint standing subcommittees to whom various executive and technical functions may be delegated is now happily passing away throughout the country. There are various reasons for the disappearance of such subcommittees to school boards, but two of



them are so important that they must be mentioned here.

"First, many of the duties assigned to standing subcommittees are technical; as, for example, the duties of a committee on textbooks and supplies, or of a committee on school hygiene, or of a superintending committee, or of a committee on buildings and grounds. \* \* \*

"Second, by assigning technical and executive functions to standing subcommittees, the board deprives itself of the leadership required in the discharge of those functions. \* \* \*

"Incidentally, it should be noted that the abolition of standing subcommittees of the board causes a practical increase in the responsibilities of every member of the board. As a member of a subcommittee he usually feels chiefly responsible for the work of his subcommittee and only a limited responsibility for decisions relative to the work of other subcommittees."—Report on a Survey of Certain Aspects of the Lancaster, Pa., City School District, Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, 1924-25. Paul H. Hanus, Director.

"Inevitably the tendency of permanent committees is to undertake regulation and to retain duties rather than to consider the broader questions of policy which need to be formulated definitely for the guidance of the board of education. When a board of education definitely adopts the policy of making a superintendent the executive head of the school system, including both the education and business system, and abandons the idea of permanent committees, securing through the superintendent the definite series of recommendations and reports for each board meeting, the actual work of the board is carried on, on a far higher plane."—Survey of the Peoria (Ill.) Public Schools, by Charles E. Chadsey, Director, 1924.

"Eliminate standing committees. A city looks to the board of nine members to manage its schools. With standing committees,

the board breaks itself up into several smaller boards, loses some of that unity of understanding on the part of the whole body which is so essential, scatters its energies, and wastes its time."—Volume One, The Racine School Survey, Racine, Wis. A. S. Barr, Department of Education, University of Wisconsin, Director. 1926.

"There is always some question as to the respective functions of committees of boards of education. Some of the best authorities declare that the small board of education can function and meet its responsibilities much better without any standing committees. As the work which falls on the members of the standing committee can often be equally well done by other administrative methods we are inclined to the opinion that boards of education might better so organize their work as to delegate reasonable responsibility to their appointed executive officer. This should be done, of course, under proper restrictions. If so organized, the work of the board can often be done more efficiently and responsibility can be definitely fixed."—A Report of the Survey of the Lockport (N. Y.) School System, by the State Department of Education, 1924.

"It is important that the board of education consider the program and policies proposed by the superintendent of schools as a board and not in separate committees who report to the general body. There may be times when a special committee of the board of education will prove useful in reviewing carefully with the executive officer or his associates some problem requiring careful study from the layman's point of view. In such cases special committees should be appointed and their report should be considered along with the recommendation of the superintendent. The chairman of a standing committee quite commonly comes to believe that he has some peculiar fitness or ability in the field represented by his committee and frequently he will be inclined to assume the function of the executive."—



Report of the Survey of the Schools of Port Arthur, Texas, 1925-26, by the Institute of Educational Research, Division of Field Studies, Teachers College, Columbia University, George D. Strayer, Director. —Prepared by W. S. DEFFENBAUGH, Chief, City Schools Division, U. S. Bureau of Education.

#### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATIONS ACTIVE IN FIVE STATES

For about a quarter of a century school improvement associations or leagues have been important agencies in the improvement of school and community conditions, especially in the South. Such organizations have aided in arousing popular interest in schools and in promoting school legislation, according to a study of State school improvement associations, by Edith A. Lathrop, published by the Interior Department, Bureau of Education, as Rural School Leaflet No. 42.

The associations maintain close relations with State departments of education, and in South Carolina the association works under the immediate direction of the department. The chief activity of the associations is in raising money for school improvement. Such local associations in 1925 raised and expended for this purpose \$93,800 in South Carolina and \$170,000 in Virginia. Local Virginia leagues expended in five years more than a million dollars for educational purposes. Membership in the associations, according to latest available records, was 15,000 in Arkansas, 22,000 in South Carolina, and 70,000 (including juniors) in Virginia. Maine reported 600 local leagues in 1921. The National Congress of Parents and Teachers is doing in many States work formerly carried on by school improvement associations.

The business of schools is through and by the use of a common service to get at the true spiritual nature of the ordinary things we have to deal with.

SANDERSON of *Oundle*

#### REFUTES PROVERB ABOUT MINISTERS' SONS

Ministers' sons in Yale University rank highest in both class rating and mental ability, as shown by recent analysis of returns from a student personnel survey of occupations of parents, conducted in the spring of 1926. Sons of ministers made the average mark of 79.6; lawyers' sons, 77.9; the combined professions of teaching and ministry, 77.8; medicine, 77.3; business, 76.1; engineering and science, 75.8; writing and artistic professions, 74.2; all others, 75.2. The mental test ratings were: Ministry, 63; writing and art, 62; law, 57; teaching, 55; combined professions, 55; medicine, 53; engineering and science, 50; all others, 51. In the number of hours devoted to study, it was found that lawyers' sons put in the longest hours, and sons of writers the shortest.

An estimated saving of about \$5,000 a year in the purchase of supplies for rural schools in San Luis Obispo County, Calif., was brought about by a co-operative arrangement under which bids are received and goods ordered by a county purchasing agent. Prices paid for supplies have been reduced more than half, and the time of teacher and school board is saved by eliminating the visits of sales agents.

Of the 35,043 students who were graduated in 1925-26 from 4-year and senior high schools of Pennsylvania, 38.5 per cent have entered higher institutions, 6.9 per cent are studying in commercial or nurse-training schools, 35.1 per cent are employed in business or industrial establishments, 3.7 per cent are farming, and 14.5 per cent are at home or unaccounted for.

Laughter is the birthright of every child. It should be cultivated in every home.

Outspoken sincerity we must have, for that is where the new education begins.