Rural School Improvement
In Colorado

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FOREWORD

The improvement of our rural schools has been for years, and still continues to be, the most important educational undertaking confronting our people. That our rural children do not have as good educational opportunities as our city children has become increasingly evident. How to even up this inequality of educational opportunity and training for citizenship has as yet not been clearly worked out.

Every effort at a solution has at once demonstrated the fact that the rural school as now organized cannot do the work; that more funds are necessary; better trained teachers essential; that there be a broader recognition of the importance of education by the community, the state and the nation; and that state and national financial support as well as cooperation in administration is a positive need.

The State Board of Agriculture was long since convinced that the efforts put forth by the State Agricultural College for developing the civic, economic and industrial resources of the state would prove wholly inadequate unless the rural communities had better schools. The institution has been untiring in its efforts and has used its funds generously in co-operating with the people of the rural districts in their efforts to improve their schools. The task at times has been very difficult, and much of the work was done in periods of financial stress, but it has been done gladly and is looked upon as a privilege.

This report of the progress made by our state in consolidation and centralization of its rural and village schools shows what can be accomplished by local effort. When the difficulties that must be overcome are considered, this work is a splendid testimony to the interest of the people in their schools, and to their willingness to pay more for better educational facilities.

This work of the local communities is a challenge also to the state for providing adequate legislation for enlarging the unit of administration and of taxation in the county so that the resources of all the county may bear their just share of the cost of educating its children; and that adequate and trained supervision and the help of special teachers may be provided.

It emphasizes the need of broader powers for our State Board of Education and for greater financial support from the state for rural schools.

It is a challenge also to the national government, to establish a national department of education and to provide funds for cooperating with the states in this fundamental problem.

To those interested in the welfare of our country children, this progress report should bring much satisfaction. It should prove a stimulus also for increased effort. What has been done shows what can be done when all work together for a common purpose. Definite planning, co-ordination of effort, co-operation of many interests, result.

The educational, social and civic needs of our country children challenge the best efforts of every citizen of Colorado. They must be met if our state and nation are to measure up to twentieth century requirements.

CHAS. A. LORY, President.
AN EDUCATIONAL SCRAP HEAP.

Fifty of the 171 old buildings that have been abandoned as a result of consolidation and centralization.
The Sargent Consolidated School and Community church, and five of the seven auto busses used in transportation. Rio Grande County.
RURAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
IN COLORADO

By C. G. SARGENT
Professor of Rural Education and State Director of Vocational Education

The Colorado Agricultural College established a Department of Rural and Industrial Education in 1912, and ever since that time has taken an active part in rural school improvement throughout the entire State. At the time this work was started there was no organized movement in Colorado whose aim and object was rural school improvement on a state-wide basis. In fact, the rural school seemed to be a neglected field in education so far as this State was concerned. No person or organization had ever made a careful investigation of our rural schools with a view to ascertaining actual conditions in these schools or to plan for their improvement. Some people claimed that our rural schools were as good as could be found anywhere and that they were the very bulwark of our civilization, while others asserted that they were inefficient and greatly in need of reorganization and improvement. But nobody knew, except to a very limited extent.

The first work attempted by the College in its campaign for rural school improvement was to make a thorough study and investigation of the rural schools of the entire State, first to determine their condition, and second, to find a better plan for their improvement. Hundreds of schools were visited and thousands of miles were traveled. Many schools were inspected, their condition noted and their past history studied from official records. Many surveys were thus made of rural schools in many counties and in widely separated sections of the State, and the facts disclosed were made known and discussed at public meetings called to consider school improvement in the districts concerned. This work was continued until an entire county was covered and all of its rural schools had been surveyed. School district records were examined for the eight years preceding, the full elementary course. The facts thus disclosed by extensive school visitation and inspection and by a statistical study of their official records, in many cases, revealed alarming conditions that called loudly for correction and improvement, and seemed to be so necessary to any intelligent scheme of improvement that the work was continued until an eight-year statistical survey had been made of each school district in Colorado. The most important facts of this survey were published in a bulletin entitled "Colorado Rural and Village Schools" which was given
wide distribution. A year later another bulletin was published on "Colorado School Revenues," with particular reference to rural schools.

After two years' study of our own schools the work was extended to other states, several of which were visited and much valuable information secured concerning their rural schools, much of which was very similar to what we had already discovered in our own State.

The College has promoted this work now for six years, during which the campaign for rural school improvement has become state-wide and is well organized, many institutions and organizations giving valuable assistance, and much good work has been done. The Agricultural College receives many requests for bulletins and pamphlets that give information on the best means and methods of rural school improvement. This bulletin is issued to meet this demand, and it is hoped that this record of achievement, though but briefly and imperfectly narrated, may inspire many communities to systematically undertake the reorganization of their rural schools.

OLD DISTRICT SYSTEM OBSOLETE

When Colorado became a state nearly 50 years ago, the district system of school administration was adopted. Colorado was then but sparsely settled and almost wholly undeveloped. Most of its area was at that time regarded as a "barren waste", fit only for grazing purposes, and but little was known of the latent possibilities of its soil, the wealth of its mines, the drawing power of its wonderful scenery, and the invigorating and health-giving qualities of its delightful climate. The last half cen-
Rural School Improvement in Colorado

tury has witnessed wonderful development in Colorado. Great mining centers have been opened up, adding millions in wealth to both State and Nation. Thriving cities dot the landscape, millions of acres of the finest irrigated agricultural lands have been brought to a high state of production, while other millions in the Great Plains section are being successfully cultivated until agriculture easily ranks first among our industries. Railroads traverse the plains, the valleys, and even penetrate the most remote and seemingly inaccessible mountain regions. Today we have a prosperous and progressive population numbering more than 1,000,000 people enjoying twentieth century civilization and surrounded by those comforts and conveniences made possible by education, science, and invention that are common to most American citizens. The farmers and stock growers of Colorado are living amidst the blessings of twentieth century progress while their children attend rural schools still operated under a system adopted by the pioneers 50 years ago and that persists today with but little change. So our study of rural schools had not progressed far until it was perfectly evident that the chief defect was the small, weak, and inefficient system of district school organization under which we were operating. Many immature, untrained, and inexperienced teachers, ungraded schools, inadequate buildings, poor equipment, meagre funds, lack of interest in our schools and unsatisfactory results in general, could for the most part, be traced to the district system. This conclusion having been reached after careful and thorough study, the next question that arose was, how to remedy the defects that were known to exist, and how to do it in the shortest possible time. Reorganization was the first essential, and this could be most quickly and easily accomplished by a union, or combination of several districts, thus supplying in the larger and stronger unit many of the elements needed to make a good school that were lacking or impossible in the single district. So the consolidation of districts and the centralization of schools was adopted as the best means of rural school improvement that would give almost immediate results while we were working out a more complete and comprehensive plan of reorganization.

Consolidation

The Consolidation Campaign

From the very beginning of this work we have made the consolidation of districts and the centralization of schools our chief project in rural school improvement, and this has been stressed at all times; but at the same time we have not failed to give any assistance possible to improve schools whenever and wherever the opportunity arose. Progress was extremely slow at first, and it was difficult to get the movement started. The plan was new and there were no consolidated schools in Colorado to which we could point as examples of the success of the consolidation plan. The splendid success of the consolidated schools of Indiana, Ohio and other states was pictured in glowing terms, but it was not easy to convince Colorado farmers that such schools would succeed equally well in this State. Still, after much effort and several failures, a few consolidated schools
were established and the movement began to gain a little momentum, until now, July 1, 1918, after six years of effort, Colorado can boast of 66 consolidated and centralized schools. This is a small number, to be sure, when compared to Indiana with nearly 800, North Dakota 450, Tennessee 400, and many other states that have from 100 to 300 each. Yet, notwithstanding the fact that the number is comparatively small, that nearly half of these have been in operation less than three years, and that several others have not yet had time to complete their organization, the plain story of the real and positive achievements of these schools up to the present time makes the brightest chapter in rural school improvement within the history of the State.

CONSOLIDATION DEFINED

That there may be no misunderstanding, it may be well to define the terms "consolidation" and "centralization" as commonly used in Colorado. According to Colorado School Law, a consolidated school is one that is formed by the consolidation and complete union of two or more separate and independent school districts. By this process the old districts lose their identity and a new district is formed. After consolidation the old schools within the new district are centralized at, or near the center.

CENTRALIZATION DEFINED

According to common practice in Colorado, a centralized school is one that is formed by the consolidation of two or more separate schools already in the same district. A centralization may be complete and include all of the schools within a given district, or it may be only a partial centralization, uniting certain schools and leaving others in remote parts of the district unaffected. Or, it may be partial in the sense that only some of the upper grades of the outlying schools attend the central school.

A detailed comparison of consolidated and centralized schools would reveal the fact that the consolidation law is a rather complete act in itself and that it provides for some things not specifically provided for in cases where single districts unite their schools. Still, consolidation and centralization are effected for exactly the same purpose, namely, to establish a larger, stronger, and better school. And after all, the chief difference is a legal, or technical one, and no distinction need be made between the two as they are treated in this bulletin. However, to avoid any misunderstanding on that point, all consolidated schools are listed separately in Table No. I on page 40, while all centralized schools are listed in Table No. II, page 41.

SOME OF OUR BEST CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS

A brief but somewhat detailed record will be given of a number of our oldest and strongest consolidated schools. New and old buildings will be shown, and pictures of high school classes, play activities, transportation busses and other school scenes, to better enable the reader to draw his own conclusions from the data thus presented. These schools constitute "Exhibit A" in this bulletin. They are the chief arguments and evidence that we submit to prove that consolidation has been a success in Colorado the same as it has been in all other states where it has been tried. These are some of our splendid rural schools, and all who are
interested in rural school improvement are urged to visit as many of them as possible and verify the statements made herein concerning their success. We take genuine pride in showing these schools and in briefly describing some of the good work done in them. They point the way to better things for the country children in many other communities that will now find it much easier to reorganize their schools since these have demonstrated the possibilities of the plan.

**The Appleton School**

This was the first consolidation effected under the law of 1909. It was a pioneer in this respect and has been a conspicuous success ever since its organization. It is an open-country school, located seven miles northwest of Grand Junction. Three old schools were abandoned after consolidation. One of these had one teacher, one had two and the other three. The district is not large, and few children live beyond reasonable walking distance from the central school. An interurban line traverses the district and passes the new school. Those who live farthest away may ride to and from school on this electric line at the usual street car fare.

The building was designed by a competent architect and erected under the direction of a construction engineer. It is made of cement stucco. It is a beautiful, durable, and substantial building and cost $18,000. There are ten class rooms, including four half basement rooms. There are a principal's office and library room, wide hallways, and a fine school and community assembly room equipped with 312 assembly chairs. It has a good stage and is lighted with electricity.

The site comprises three acres of good land with water right, for which $1,000 was paid. This affords ample room for playgrounds for the large number of children who attend, and for lawn, shade trees and shrubbery.

Six teachers were employed in the three abandoned schools none of which could afford a high school, while seven trained and experienced teachers have charge of the 184 children in the new school, and a four-year high school course is given. Before consolidation a few children each year went away from home to high school, but most of those who were eligible did not and their education stopped at the eighth grade; many did not even go as far as that. Since consolidation, practically all eighth-grade graduates enroll in the splendid country high school. For the last four years the high school enrollment has not dropped below 35. The total enrollment for the school year 1917-1918 was 184 and 48, or 26 percent of the enrollment, were in the high school. This is a good demonstration of the fact that country people will send their children to high school when they can return to the protection of the parental roof each night, and that country boys and girls will take advantage of the opportunity to get an education, if given a good school to attend.

The graduates from this country high school go on to college and make good. Four of them were found at one time attending one of the State schools, and one of the graduates of this rural school later graduated from the State Normal School and is now teaching the primary
Appleton Consolidated School and the three abandoned buildings. Cost $18,000. Mesa County.
Agriculture and manual training are taught and this school has won honors in boys' and girls' clubs. For the past two years one of the girls in this school has been the State champion in canning clubs, while county honors have been won in the pig club. This splendid country school so far outclasses the three old ones that comparison is difficult. It is a modern educational institution and has played an important part in the up-building of the community.

Our consolidated schools are already rendering service to both the State and Nation. Private Ira A. Lindsay, U. S. A., and his wife, are both graduates of the Appleton High School. Mr. Lindsay is now in the service of his country and is preparing to help win the great war. At the beginning of school next September, Mrs. Lindsay, who is also a graduate of the Colorado State Normal School, will begin her second year as primary teacher in the school in which she and her husband received their high school training.
The Fruitvale School

This is another open-country consolidated school also in Mesa county, and just two miles east of Grand Junction. The site comprises five acres of good land and water right. In addition to a large playground, there is a small apple orchard in bearing and an alfalfa plat. The reorganization was effected and a high school established in 1911. The enlarged district was not formed by the regular consolidation procedure, but by the transfer of two large portions of two adjoining districts. The original site was maintained and since there were no school houses on the territory transferred, of course no old buildings were abandoned in this case.

The cottage plan has been followed in building. Three rather plain and inexpensive buildings are now in use and a fourth one, to be used as a school and community auditorium, with large gymnasium in the basement, is now being erected.

The school is organized on the "six-six" plan, the first six grades being called the elementary, and the upper six the high school. This form of organization has proved very satisfactory, and is becoming very popular in many parts of Colorado, as it is also in other states. It is especially commended to other schools under similar circumstances.

Since its organization seven years ago, this school has taken high rank among the rural schools of the State. Indeed, it compares favorably with town and city schools for the high standards it maintains and for the efficiency of its work. Although but three high-school classes have yet graduated, still the high school is accredited and its graduates are freely admitted to the colleges and universities of the State.

Community co-operation for the success of the school has been the watchword from the beginning. The school board has given an unusual amount of time and thought to the school and its work. They have employed only trained and experienced teachers, and have spared neither time nor money to get the best that could be secured. In this effort they have been very successful. A trained teacher and community leader of unusual ability was employed as the first superintendent and continued as a permanent resident of the district for six years. The other teachers have been encouraged to remain from year to year and the school board is now planning to require all teachers to live in the district during the school year, and to make this both possible and satisfactory, the housing problem is being considered.

Nine thoroughly trained and experienced teachers are now employed, and the children pass from grade to grade, from the first to the twelfth as regularly and as successfully as they do in our best city schools.

The school census for the past two years was 205, while the total enrollment in the school was 280 each year. All children have the benefit of a carefully graded school, with healthy and wholesome surroundings and with an almost ideal environment. Forty-six students are enrolled in the four upper grades. This is nearly one-fourth of the total enrollment, and it is more than five times as many as ever went outside the dis-
RuRAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN COLORADO

Fruitvale Consolidated School. Built on the cottage plan. A fourth building to contain large assembly room and gymnasium is now being erected. The district service flag contains twenty-four stars. Mesa County.
district to high school in any one year before this high school was established.

A strong department of home economics has been in successful operation for the past three years. Cooking and sewing classes give practical instruction to the girls in the arts of housekeeping and homemaking. They study first aid, home nursing, sanitation and personal hygiene and do Red Cross work. Because of the high degree of efficiency of the home economics work, the Fruitvale school has been approved for federal aid under the Smith-Hughes law, and one-half the salary of the teacher of these classes is paid from government funds by the State Board for Vocational Education.

This rural community has definitely dedicated itself to the task of educating and training its children for life's duties and responsibilities. It has provided a good school, with good equipment, capable teachers, large playgrounds and suitable play apparatus, with its athletic activities under intelligent direction, and now for several years it has been reaping the benefits that come from intelligent co-operation in educating its children.

Patriotism, loyalty to our country, our flag, and our American ideals are not lacking here. Within one year after our country entered the great world war, 24 of the favorite sons of this remarkable country district had entered some branch of the army or navy, most of them enlisting voluntarily, and the Fruitvale school is justly proud of the 24 stars on its service flag. If any other country school district in Colorado can equal or surpass this record, it should make the facts known.

The Cache La Poudre School

This school is located six miles northwest of Fort Collins in a rather thickly settled community in the beautiful Cache La Poudre Valley and the district extends up into the first range of foothills. Consolidation was effected in 1913, and while the campaign was in progress a survey of the community revealed the fact that 500 children of school age could be included within a circle with a four-mile radius, the center of the circle being the site of the new school. Five whole districts and two large portions of territory from two adjoining districts make up the new district, and 300 school children are included in the consolidation.

The site consists of five acres of good land with water right. Besides large and well-equipped playgrounds, partially covered with large shade trees, there is a small apple orchard in bearing.

Six old buildings were abandoned and were replaced by a beautiful and substantial structure of brick and stone, costing $30,000. The basement story, all above ground, is made of Colorado red sandstone, quarried from the red cliffs within the district, while the other two stories are of red pressed brick. There are about fifteen rooms in the building. It is modern as to heating, lighting and ventilation, has indoor toilets, and its drinking fountains are supplied with pure and cold mountain water taken from the Fort Collins pipe line which passes the school. Nine rooms are used for classroom work. The large school and community auditorium will seat 350 and the manual training teacher and his family live in five
The Cache La Poudre Consolidated School and the six abandoned buildings. Cost of new building, $30,000. Larimer County.
rooms on the ground floor. A comfortable and convenient teacherage supplied with running water has been provided by the district as a home for the superintendent and his family, while the principal of the junior high school and his family live in a five-room house located on an acre and a half of land which is leased by the school board. So this remarkable rural school has three married men on its faculty and provides homes for all of them.

The course of study includes agriculture, home economics and manual training, all of which are taught from the practical as well as from the theoretical point of view.

Agriculture is studied in the classroom and laboratory, where seed testing and milk testing are studied, while the stock judging is done out on the school yard where the superintendent has two registered Jersey cows, or the class may visit a nearby farm to inspect stock, growing crops, make farm surveys and study farm problems where they actually occur.

Class in agriculture judging a registered Jersey. (Cache La Poudre School.)

The manual training classes make farm and yard gates, hay racks, hog troughs, chicken coops and many articles of furniture for the farm home. The present year the boys made and installed $200 worth of equipment for the domestic science laboratory.

The home economics course is practically the same as that offered in the Fruitvale school. The teacher holds the degree of bachelor of science in home economics from the Agricultural College, and this school is also approved for federal aid for home economics classes under the Smith-Hughes Vocational Act.

Seven teachers are employed, and here, as in most of our consolidated schools, they are both trained and experienced. At the first commencement held in June, 1914, 24 boys and girls were graduated from the eighth grade, this being the largest class to graduate from a Colorado
country school. The same evening twelve young men and women were graduated from this rural high school, thus breaking another state record.

This school is also organized on the "six-six" plan, the high school is accredited and out of a total enrollment of 258 pupils this year, 42 were found in the four upper grades. This was more than five times as many as ever went to high school in any one year before consolidation took place and a high school was organized. This is one of our best arguments for consolidating country schools.

Seven horse-drawn vans transport 160 children each school day. The transportation has been a complete success for six years, notwithstanding the fact that there are only ordinary dirt roads, and the further fact that a part of the district extends up into the foothills. The monthly cost per wagon ranges from $48.00 to $59.00. There are no tardy marks for the children who ride, while the regularity of attendance of those who ride from the extremities of the district is far better than for those who live in sight of the school house and walk.

The patrons of the entire district, at frequent intervals, gather at this fine school to enjoy school entertainments, musicales, play festivals, and to attend lecture course numbers on the regular course maintained by the school. A course of seven numbers, including some of the best speakers and most prominent educators in the State, was offered last year. Family
tickets, admitting the entire family, were sold for $1.00 each for the full course, and 120 family tickets were sold.

A model of this rural school and a description of its work were prepared by the College and sent to the Panama-Pacific Exposition at the request of the National Bureau of Education, and while there, was in competition with similar exhibits from many other states. A certificate and a silver medal were awarded this exhibit. Such schools as this and others here described are possible in the country only by the consolidation of districts and the transportation of pupils.

The La Jara School

The La Jara Consolidated School is situated in Conejos county in the great San Luis Valley. "La Jara", "Conejos", and "San Luis" sound quite Spanish, but this splendid school is really in the United States. The average elevation of the district is 7,600 feet above sea level, and on this account the winters are rather long and somewhat severe. Climatic conditions are not so favorable for the transportation of children as they are in many other sections of the State. Until this consolidation was effected and its organization completed, the nearest high school was fifteen miles distant. The drawing power of a town high school for country boys and girls fifteen miles away is not very strong, and here as elsewhere, but few of the children of the district got a high school education, and those who did were forced to go away from home to get it.

Three districts formed the consolidation and two one-teacher schools and one with three were abandoned. The new building is a magnificent structure for a rural school and cost $35,000. It contains about fifteen rooms and is well equipped throughout; has its own water
La Jara Consolidated School and three old buildings. Cost of new building, $35,000. Conejos County.
system, electric lighting system, a fine domestic science laboratory, and a large school and community auditorium.

The school grounds consist of a ten-acre tract of good level land. Large playgrounds surround the building, while a little farther away is a large athletic field on which the people have erected a grandstand from which to witness ball games and other athletic events. It is also used for livestock shows and community fairs. To still further promote athletics and community activities, the largest of the three old school houses was made into a gymnasium and exhibit hall.

A completely graded elementary school and a four-year high school have been maintained and nine efficient teachers are employed. The past year 300 children were enrolled, 44 of whom were in the high school. Agriculture, manual training, and domestic science all find a place in the course of study and all the patrons of the district are very proud of their new school. They now have a complete school plant of their own and their children may attend a good school for twelve years and live at home until after they have graduated from high school.

Two large Studebaker busses bring in the children from the remote parts of the district and some children ride as far as twelve miles each way. One horse-drawn van is also used to bring in 25 children who live a mile or two from the school. In spite of long winters, considerable snow, and much mud, transportation has been a complete success after five years' trial. This was the first district in Colorado to attempt auto transportation on a large scale. Because of the unqualified success of the La Jara school, five other consolidations have been organized in the Valley and several more communities are now actively engaged in consolidation campaigns.

The Englewood School

This is another type of consolidated school. Englewood is a suburban district adjoining the city of Denver. An imaginary line, called a school district boundary, cut the community into two parts, making two school systems, with two school boards and two superintendents. While both were districts of the second class, and both were doing a little high school work, still neither had a high school worthy of the name, and some patrons sent their children to the Denver high schools. Consolidation united the two and made one strong district of the first class under one school board and one superintendent, and also made possible a good four-year high school that has increased the high school enrollment 41 percent.

The efficiency of the school has greatly increased since the reorganization. The work is unified, the children can be more carefully graded, the high school is conducted in one building instead of in two and offers all the benefits that come from increased numbers. Manual training has been introduced and special teachers and supervisors are now employed.

This consolidation was effected under an old law, which permits the union of districts but does not require complete centralization of the schools therein. Consequently no new buildings were necessary and no old ones were abandoned. Each of the old districts had a good eight-room
building, while one of them had also a smaller one. The buildings stood in plain sight of each other and scarcely a half mile apart. The new district is small and transportation is not necessary. This is just another instance in which common sense has been applied to the solution of an educational problem and, as is usually the case, with very gratifying results.

The New Raymer School

This is a centralized school, that is, all the abandoned schools were already in the same district. It is situated in the northeastern part of Weld County about 60 miles from Greeley, in the semi-arid, or dry-farming, section of Eastern Colorado. The district is sparsely settled and farm houses are far apart. It is nine miles wide and eighteen miles long and comprises 162 square miles, or four and one-half congressional townships. This is the largest district of which we know in the United States that has completely centralized all of its schools at one point.

Before consolidation there were eleven typical one-room schools scattered all over this large district. These were all abandoned and have been replaced by a fine $30,000 brick building with its own electric light and water systems. The new building has ten or twelve classrooms and a large auditorium that is frequently used for school and community meetings.

Eleven autos, two of which are large Kissel-Kar busses, and the other nine regular autos, are used to transport 160 children to and from school each day.

The enrollment is 205, 20 of whom are enrolled in the new high school.

It requires a vigorous and active imagination to contrast conditions as they formerly existed in the eleven old one-room schools with those that now obtain in the new. In order to get something of a comparison one needs to visualize eleven one-room schools, the regulation type of rectangular buildings, with meager equipment, without playgrounds or a thing of beauty within or without, just like a thousand others scattered all over the State of Colorado. He must imagine from ten to fifteen children enrolled in each of these schools, and but half of these in average daily attendance; then picture a young girl just out of high school, or perhaps with even less education, without professional training and entirely lacking in teaching experience, taking charge of these helpless children under almost hopeless conditions, with little or no equipment, without supervision or any other kind of help, with all eight grades represented, with recitation periods of from three to eight minutes in length, and with from 30 to 35 different classes to hear each day, being required to jump from penmanship to reading, then to arithmetic, geography, grammar, history, spelling, physiology, and civil government, all in rapid succession—then think of the utter lack of opportunity for good work in any subject, the lack of that stimulation which comes from emulation, competition and
New Raymer Consolidated School. Cost, $30,000. Weld County.
The eleven abandoned buildings. New Raymer Consolidated School.
Map of the New Raymer School district. The district is nine miles wide and eighteen miles long, comprising four and one-half congressional townships. All of the eleven abandoned schools have been centralized at one point.
inspiration, and we have before our eyes some of the many difficulties encountered in these eleven old schools.

In contrast with this, let us picture a beautiful, substantial and serviceable building with good furniture, clean floors, tinted walls adorned with attractive pictures, located on a slightly, elevated place from which one can see to the point where earth and sky seem to meet. Think of 205 children enrolled in one school, with from ten to twenty pupils in each class or grade, and over 90 percent of these children in average daily attendance; think of seven teachers, mature in years, with both professional training and satisfactory teaching experience, teaching under trained supervision, in a school that is fully graded, with a four-year high school, each teacher having but a few subjects to teach, few classes to hear and full periods in which to hear them. Think of the pleasant surroundings, modern conveniences, such as steam-heated rooms, bubbling fountains, wash basins, indoor and sanitary toilets, and electric lights. Then think of a large playground with the play activities organized and under intelligent supervision and with many children to participate in them, and of the many opportunities for competition, emulation and inspiration in this new school, where all of the children can look forward to a high school whose course of study includes agriculture, domestic science, manual training and music. Yes, think of these and other differences, and one is convinced that the day of miracles is not yet passed.

It has long been thought extremely difficult, if not quite impossible, to consolidate or centralize schools in this part of Colorado, yet this school has already been a wonderful success, proving that most of the one-room schools in Eastern Colorado may be successfully centralized with the aid of modern means of transportation and the application of business methods and common sense to the solution of educational problems such as we have long used in the solution of many other questions. There are scores of communities in Eastern Colorado where all conditions are just as favorable for school improvement as they are in the New Raymer district.

Although a few of the children who first enter the cars in the morning as they go over the district to gather up their loads, ride eighteen miles each way, still auto transportation has been successful, and the farmers of this large district, the patrons of this good school, have pointed the way to better schools for the boys and girls, not only in Eastern Colorado, but also in adjoining states.

The Dailey School

The Dailey school is in eastern Logan County 26 miles from Sterling. It is also in the dry-farming belt and even still farther east than the New Raymer school. Four districts were consolidated and four old schools were abandoned. The district is six by six and one-half miles, or a little more than a congressional township in area. At the time of consolidation the nearest high school was 26 miles away.

The new building was erected on a five-acre site and cost $13,000. It has four nice large classrooms on the main floor, another classroom and an auditorium in the basement, besides toilets, furnace, and coal rooms.
The Dailey Consolidated School and the four abandoned buildings. Cost of new building, $13,000. Logan County.

Map of Dailey consolidated district. Area, 6x6½ miles.
- Indicates location of farm house.
- Arrows indicate auto routes.
It is heated by steam, has running water and such other conveniences as all schools of this kind should have.

The Farmers' Union took a conspicuous part in bringing about the consolidation, and the principal is the secretary of the local union, which holds its regular meetings in the school auditorium. Three Ford busses carrying twelve children each, and making two trips both morning and evening, transport the children to the new school. By making two trips with each car, no child remains in the van more than half an hour. This is just another instance where country people have purposed in their hearts to give their children the best opportunities within their power and have been successful in their efforts.


The Burlington School

The Burlington Consolidated School was organized in 1916 and adds another to the list of such schools in the Great Plains section of Eastern Colorado. The town, though small, is the county seat of Kit Carson County, and is near the Colorado-Kansas line. A building costing $36,000 provides a good graded school, including a high school. Seven teachers are employed, three autos are used in transportation, and neither long distances nor ordinary dirt roads prevent these people from having a good school.
The Sargent School

One day in the summer of 1916 more than 100 people from two communities in Rio Grande County who were interested in consolidation, visited the La Jara Consolidated School. The trip was made in autos and some of the people came more than 50 miles. They took lunch baskets and spent the day inspecting this remarkable school. At noon they were served hot coffee and cocoa by the domestic science class. After a pleasant and profitable day they returned home. One of the communities is located eight miles north of Monte Vista. All were convinced of the merits of consolidation. An election was immediately called in five districts and carried by an overwhelming majority. By this time it was too late in the summer to think of getting a new building ready for the approaching school year, so school was opened in the old buildings while the school board was completing its plans. In February, 1917, a bond issue for $35,000 carried without opposition, a competent architect was employed, plans were drawn, a ten-acre site was donated, the contract was let, and building operations were begun. In the summer following a superintendent was employed who had already made a reputation for starting one famous consolidated school, and from this time on, everything moved like clock-work. People living in adjoining districts saw this fine school nearing completion and were anxious to share its benefits. In a short time four large transfers of territory from contiguous districts were added by petition making the equivalent of nine districts in the enlarged consolidation. Never in the history of rural school improvement in Colorado have such united efforts been put forth to complete a school building, or has such enthusiasm been displayed or more complete and hearty co-operation been shown in any community than there was in this case.

It takes time to complete such a building as this, and it was not until January, 1918, that the new building was occupied, being then unfinished. It was dedicated and christened April 23d, at which time fifty autos were parked on the campus and more than 300 enthusiastic country people were packed into the large school and community auditorium to witness the event to which they had looked forward with so much pleasure.

This fine modern $35,000 school building was scarcely finished when another bond issue for $18,000 was voted. From this, an eight-room building is being erected to serve as a home for the superintendent. The contract is also let for a ten-room teacherage for the other eight teachers, and the plans are drawn and approved for a garage 40x70 feet with a gymnasium in the basement.

In this the most modern and up-to-date rural school plant, so far as our information goes, in the whole United States, $53,000 has already been expended or contracted for. These people have not only provided for the present, but have anticipated their future needs for years to come.

The building itself is complete in every detail. It is a beautiful structure, well designed for all the lines of work that should be carried on in a modern rural school. It has standard classrooms sufficient to accommodate 500 children. It has a large school and community auditor-
The Sargent Consolidated School and community church. Cost of new building, $35,000. An eight-room teacherage, a ten-room building for the other eight teachers, and a garage and gymnasium are now being erected on the ten-acre campus. The total investment in buildings will be $53,000. Rio Grande County.
ium for both school and neighborhood meetings. It has well equipped agricultural and domestic science laboratories and a manual training shop, these three lines of work being introduced the first year. Thirty boys, each of whom owns a registered gilt, have organized a pig club. Already pig pens and chicken coops dot the rear of the ten-acre school site. A gasoline engine furnishes water under pressure for drinking fountains, lavatories and toilets, and generates electricity for lighting the building as well as for charging the storage batteries of the auto busses used in transportation. It is still further utilized as laboratory equipment in the study of electricity and auto repair.

Two hundred and eight children enrolled the first year, 30 of these being in the new high school.

Three hundred and twenty school children now live in the district, and it is estimated that 300 of these will be in school next year with 50 in the high school.

Last year 180 children were transported to and from school in five large Studebaker busses, a few riding 14 miles each way. Two more busses of the same kind have been purchased, and next year at least 240 children will be transported.

All of the nine teachers, each of whom has had either college or normal training, are nicely and comfortably provided for in the two large new teacherages now being erected by the district. No more itinerant teachers, coming into the district Monday morning and returning to some town early Friday afternoon, for this district. They will be expected to live in the district and to identify themselves with the community life therein. Moreover, each teacher will be employed because of special preparation and fitness for work in a rural school and rural community. The superintendent is a young man with a vision and already has earned a reputation as a community builder.

This school has also been approved for federal aid in home economics under the Smith-Hughes Act.

The people of this remarkable district have not been content in just improving their school, even though that improvement far surpasses any other district of which we know, but they have already actually gone clear "over the top" in community co-operation. As soon as the new building was occupied, they organized a union Sunday school, which grew in attendance rapidly until on Easter Sunday the enrollment was 299, the average Sunday attendance being in the neighborhood of 225, with a men's Bible class of 40, a women's Bible class of the same number, and a cradle roll of 30, which seems to guarantee future attendance.

The next step was the organization of a union community church. A pastor who gives his full time to this field was called and his salary of $1,500 was raised by voluntary subscriptions. He reached the field in April, 1918, and began work at once. The church organization was perfected in May and on June 9th, 70 members, representing some ten or a dozen different denominations, were received into membership, 11 of these being upon confession of faith. On July 7th, 20 more were received into membership in the new church, making a total of 90 members. Twenty-
four of these are adult males and 38 adult females. There is also a Christian Endeavor society with an attendance of 50.

This magnificent rural school building is used five days in the week during the school term for the regular school work and on Sunday for Sunday school and church services. The large assembly room is used for preaching services and the classrooms for the Sunday school classes. It is admirably adapted to serve this double purpose, thereby effecting a great saving to the people of the community who do not need to expend additional money for a separate building which could only be used a few hours each week. Besides, the fact that the church services were to be held in the school house, a neutral building, open to and belonging to everybody in the district, made it easier for the people to forget their denominational differences and unite in one organization, to worship at one altar and to bring up their children in the "fear and admonition of the Lord", instead of trying to maintain some half dozen competing organizations none of which could ever hope to be strong enough to be self-supporting, for if any one of these ever should have tried to erect a building of its own it must have solicited the support of the entire community and then have had a building similar to some of the old school houses which they have already abandoned. One year ago this community had only one-room schools, a struggling little Sunday school with but few in attendance, and no church organization. There was no central community meeting place and no community solidarity. Today these people have a modern school plant and an efficient school organization, a community church and Sunday school that all can take pride in helping to support, and the entire community is learning to co-operate in the solution of its problems. The people seem to be a unit in the support of both the school and church, and no objection has yet been raised to bond issues or tax levies. The people seem to have real inspiration, the kind that is contagious, for other communities nearby, seeing the good work already accomplished by this district, are planning to do likewise, and one large consolidation north, and two south, of it are now developing. This is perhaps the most conspicuous example of complete community co-operation that can be found in Colorado. They have made more real substantial progress in two years since the movement first started than many rural communities make in a quarter of a century.

The Hygiene School

This fine new school is located in a rich, irrigated, farming community six miles west of Longmont, Boulder County. It is a beautiful building, well equipped, has a nice auditorium, is lighted with electricity, has modern sanitary toilets, drinking fountains supplied with pure mountain water, and is built on a fine five-acre tract with water-right. The building, equipment and grounds cost $15,000. It is such an educational plant as hundreds of Colorado communities might have without heavy expense to any taxpayer. These schools are real community builders, and no doubt this school, like all the others here described, has already added more real value to the property within the district than the entire plant cost.
The Hygiene Consolidated School. Cost, $13,000. Boulder County.

The Excelsior Consolidated School. Cost, $13,000. Pueblo County.
The Elkhead School

While there are more consolidated schools in the Plains section and in the irrigated valleys, than are found in the high altitudes in the mountains, still these more favored regions do not have a monopoly on rural school improvement. The Elkhead School in Routt County affords a most striking example of what a group of country people can accomplish in school improvement once they make up their minds to that end and all co-operate in their efforts.

In 1915 this district maintained two one-room schools and a third one was asked for. At the annual school election in May of that year, the school question was thoroughly discussed and the patrons decided to consolidate their schools instead of still further weakening the two they already had by further division and decentralization. A $5,000 bond issue was voted and a substantial stone building was erected. The floor plan is 30x50 feet and the main floor is divided into two rooms by a folding partition, which, when open, makes one large community auditorium. The entrance hallway is partitioned off, thus providing for a telephone booth and cloak room. The basement is divided off into a domestic science room, with kitchen range, sink, benches and other necessary equipment, also a manual training room, shoe cobbler room, supply closet, and furnace room.

The site comprises forty acres. Besides the school house there is a substantial stone teacherage, a two-story structure costing $1,500. This was made possible by a group of the patrons who formed themselves into an association, each one guaranteeing an equal part of the cost. In addition to these two buildings, two patrons have built cabins on the school grounds in which they live and send their children to this good school during the long mountain winters when the weather is most severe. At the present time a man with a family rents the teacherage, boards the teachers, operates the community telephone exchange and conducts a small store and postoffice.

Three good teachers are employed. The girls are taught domestic science along with the regular school subjects. The boys have manual training and there is a class in shoe cobblering, this work being in charge of a patron in the district who is a successful cobbler and who is enough interested in the boys in his district to give them a regular course in this work.

After completing this splendid piece of community work, the district prepared a bulletin giving a map and a complete history of the district, the facts concerning the reorganization, the course of study and the community activities which center at the school house. This was printed, illustrated with pictures of the school, the children, the camp fire girls, cobblering class, etc.

This school is in a mountainous country, at an average elevation of 6,500 feet, where winters are long and severe, where either auto or wagon transportation is extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible. Still all these and many other seemingly insurmountable difficulties have been
The Elkhead Consolidated School, the pupils, cobbling class, and Camp Fire Girls and their skills on which they sometimes go to school.
overcome and the people of the district have a good school. As noted above, some families move to the school in winter, and several of the children go to school on skis.

The aim of the school, as stated by the people themselves in the closing paragraph of the bulletin above referred to, is as follows: "The aim of the Elkhead School is to provide a place and means for the education of the children of the district equal in facilities to any school and with methods and courses adapted to the needs of the community it serves. It is also serving as a natural community center, and being supported and run by people of the district it is the center for religious and social affairs, as well as being the political and economic heart of the community." This is an ambitious aim, and these people are to be congratulated for the high degree of success they have already made towards its full realization.

The Frederick Consolidated School. Cost, $30,000. Weld County.

The Mead School

Weld County surpasses all other counties in Colorado in the number of consolidated schools, having twelve. The Mead school is located in the western part of the county and is surrounded by some of the finest and most productive irrigated farms to be found anywhere in the West. All conditions are very favorable for consolidation in this locality, and if all the districts surrounding this consolidated school could be united into one district, with one central school, it would make one of the largest and strongest schools of its kind in the State. As it is, only three districts combined, with only about half the valuation and children in the community which centers at Mead. The consolidation campaign was carried on
The Mead Consolidated School and two old buildings. Cost, $30,000. Weld County.

for nearly three years and the proposition was defeated in one election, but the friends of better schools were finally successful.

The new building is a fine substantial structure, with all modern conveniences. It cost $30,000. It was dedicated in February, 1918, when a large and enthusiastic audience packed the fine auditorium. The site includes five acres of good, irrigated land and affords a beautiful location for this splendid school.

A high school was established in which eighteen pupils enrolled the first year. Manual training and domestic science are taught, the principal being a skilled workman and manual training teacher. Agriculture will be added in the near future.

Other Consolidated Schools

Of course it is impossible to describe each one of our consolidated schools in this bulletin. A number with $25,000 buildings, full high schools, and successful records, have been only listed in Tables I and II. Pictures and data could not be secured from some that have just been completed, in time to be included, but a goodly number of samples have been given to show what is being done in our splendid consolidated and centralized schools, and the facts disclosed show that such schools are suc-
successful whether in the fruitful and fertile valleys, in the wide expanses of the Great Plains, or in the high altitudes of our matchless mountains.

All of these schools have been made possible because of hearty and complete community co-operation. The same agency, whenever properly applied, will make hundreds of other successful consolidated schools in other parts of Colorado.
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<th>County</th>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Date of Organization</th>
<th>No. Districts Consolidated</th>
<th>No. Old School Abandoned</th>
<th>In Grades</th>
<th>In High School</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
<th>Cost of New Building</th>
<th>Area of Site in Acres</th>
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*Old buildings moved to central location.
*Recently organized.
SUMMARY OF TABLES NOS. I AND II

By referring to the date column in the foregoing tables, it will be seen that all of our consolidated and centralized schools have been organized since 1910 except one which was organized under an old law. The number of these schools increased very slowly at first. Only thirteen had been formed up to the year 1915. Ten were organized in 1915, fourteen in 1916, and twenty in 1917, while there are many communities where consolidation campaigns are now in progress.

School districts numbering 99 have been consolidated and have been replaced by 35 larger, stronger, and much more efficient school units. This does not include what has been accomplished by centralization.

Old and out-of-date school houses to the number of 171 have been abandoned. These have already been replaced by 46 new and modern buildings, and this does not include several consolidations that have been formed so recently that there has not yet been time to erect new buildings.

Last year, 9,992 country children were enrolled in consolidated schools, most of whom formerly attended one-room ungraded schools before consolidation took place.

During the year just closed 1,091 pupils were enrolled in country high schools.

In these new schools last year 349 teachers, who in education, professional training and teaching experience compare favorably with city teachers, were employed.

In the erection of new buildings, $810,300 has been expended, and, with but few exceptions, the expenditure for sites, buildings, and equipment was more than $15,000 per school, several costing $30,000; one cost $50,000. These buildings are in a class by themselves when compared with our other rural schools.
TRANSPORTATION OF PUPILS

This subject needs a little further elaboration, first, as to its cost, and second, as to its success. Wagon transportation is in successful operation in thirteen districts. It is best for the district to own the vans and employ a driver with a team.

The wagons now in use cost, when bought, from $200 to $300 each, according to the style of wagon used and its capacity. During the past five years the cost for team and driver has varied from $25, the lowest, to $75, the highest, per school month of twenty days. The average would be between $40 and $50 per month for the five-year period. Of course the cost varies according to the length of routes, the number transported, the condition of roads, the cost of feed, etc. A typical case may be taken where a part of the district is comparatively level, and part is hilly, extending up into the foothills. This district has successfully operated seven vans for the past five years, transporting from 165 to 185 children each year. The cost per wagon for the past school year was $48.00, $49.50, $49.80, $50.00, $52.50, $55.00, $59.00. The average for the seven was $52.00 per school month. The shortest route is a little less than four miles from where the first child enters the wagon; the longest is seven and one-half miles. The wagons carry from 20 to 28 children each. The average for these seven is 26 pupils. Two of our most successful consolidated schools have used wagon transportation for the past five or six years and have experienced no serious difficulties on this account. Wagon transportation has been fully as successful in Colorado as it has in other states.

Auto transportation has been conspicuously successful from the very first and is fast growing in favor. While we do not know of any district that has actually disposed of its wagons and adopted autos, still, very few wagons are being purchased, autos being used instead. Two styles of autos are used, the auto bus and the regular touring car. Perhaps in all cases where busses are used they are owned by the district; this seems to be a good practice. Two styles of busses are used, a small one accommodating from twelve to fifteen children, and costing about $500 when purchased in 1915; and a large one carrying from 30 to 40 children and costing from $1,500 to $1,800 each. In some cases a high-school student is employed to drive the bus, sometimes a high-school teacher, while in other cases some other man in the district is employed. The cost per driver under such conditions varies from $25 to $30 per school month. The cost of up-keep on the busses is met by the district and no figures are available.

There are many cases where patrons of the districts are employed to use their own cars and bring in ten or a dozen children who live in their part of the district. This takes but two or three hours a day and does not seriously cut into the day's work on the farm; besides, the farmer owns his car and uses it for his own purposes. Here again, as with wagon transportation, the cost varies according to the length of route, number transported, condition of the roads, and a few other things. The cost is
Primitive means of transportation.

about the same as with wagon transportation, but a much larger area can be covered and much time is saved. There are many cases where one auto makes two trips both morning and evening, and it seems to work very well. A smaller car can be used and the children are not kept in the cars so long at a time. Both means of transportation have been entirely successful. But whichever one is used, the driver should be selected with much care, then placed under a contract that defines his duties. He should be required to give bond for faithful fulfillment of his contract. This guarantees care against accident by reckless and careless driving and insures satisfactory service. Drivers should be employed by competitive bids. Until war conditions affected our country, the cost of transportation was being slightly reduced from year to year under the practice of competitive bidding and there never has been any difficulty in getting or keeping drivers.

Auto transportation greatly increases the field for consolidation, making it possible to have much larger districts, with higher valuations, more children, and everything it takes to make good schools. Children are being successfully transported a distance of from fifteen to eighteen miles from their homes to school. One large district described in a preceding section is nine miles wide, eighteen miles long and comprises four and one-half townships. This is twice as large as most consolidated districts need to be. In the irrigated sections of Colorado where the farm unit is small and homes are close together, in many cases from three to six hundred children of school age may be found within an area of less than two townships. Scores of consolidated schools may be formed in the Great
Modern means of transportation. The automobile annihilates distance and makes consolidation possible in many parts of Colorado.
Plains section of Eastern Colorado with districts much smaller than the one at New Raymer.

Consolidation is possible only with transportation of pupils, and this has been entirely successful in Colorado as, indeed, it has been in all other states where it has been tried. Transportation eliminates tardiness and greatly increases the regularity of school attendance. The driver keeps order in the wagon or auto and moral conditions are greatly improved. Only one accident has been reported and that was not fatal. No sickness has occurred as a result of transportation, but it is quite likely that much has been prevented thereby. The children reach the school with dry feet and dry clothes instead of trudging to school through the mud and storm or remaining at home with the resultant loss to themselves and the rest of the school. Transportation gives the child at the end of the route, whether the distance is five miles or fifteen miles, exactly the same educational opportunities as the child who lives in sight of the school and the entire district pays for the transportation.

**THE CONSOLIDATED HIGH SCHOOL**

Few intelligent people doubt the value of, and the necessity for, graded elementary schools, but country people have been slow to realize the desirability of, and the necessity for, high schools for country children. Few country children attend town and city high schools, and most of those who do are effectively educated away from the country. But this is not the worst part of it. Most country children get no high-school education. This will doubtless continue to be true until country people provide high schools for their children the same as city people have long done.

In most cases there is a two-fold motive back of each consolidation: First, to establish a graded elementary school; and, second, to establish a high school. It might be more correct to say that the real motive is to establish one school system consisting of twelve grades. The high school is one of the strongest arguments in favor of consolidation. Out of 66 consolidations 56, or all except ten, have already established high schools, or plan to do so. Twenty-three of these are already four-year schools. An enrollment in these new schools of 1,100 high-school students bears eloquent testimony to the fact that country boys and girls will attend high school, if given the opportunity. This is further attested by the fact that these rural high schools regularly enroll almost every pupil in the district that is eligible. They have been so successful in this respect that the percent of the total enrollment that is found in the high-school grades is far above the normal average. Two of our first consolidated schools were established in 1911. The total enrollment and high-school enrollment have increased from year to year, until last year, seven years after their organization, one school, out of a total enrollment of 200 pupils had 46 in its high school. This was almost 22 percent of the total, while the other, out of an enrollment of 185, had 48, or 26 percent of its total enrollment, in its high school.

Not only has the enrollment and attendance been good in these high schools, but the grade of work done has been very gratifying. They are new institutions that have not yet had a chance to show their best results, but
already their graduates are finding their way to the colleges and universities of the State where they have demonstrated their ability to hold their own with the graduates of other schools both in their studies and in athletics. The college that won the state track meet in Denver in May, 1918, did so because of the long legs, the good lungs, the strong and steady muscles of a young man who graduated from one of these country high schools.

These schools are destined to have a vital and lasting influence on country life and its development. They have not only sprung up out of the soil, but they are firmly anchored to it. The five- or ten-acre sites that many already have, are prophetic of a new type of rural school, while
the study of agriculture, with stock judging, seed testing, milk testing, and the study of farm accounts, the making of farm surveys and the study of farm problems out on the farms where they occur, is prophetic of a new type of farmer who is to be when these boys inherit the "promised land" and succeed their fathers in the production of the world's first and greatest necessity, food products. Already these boys are beginning to have a different attitude toward agriculture and country life, since they are beginning to learn its mysteries and appreciate its beauties, as these are revealed and unfolded to them from day to day by trained teachers who interpret education in the terms of an environment with which the children are familiar, and with which the teachers themselves are in sympathy. Most of them are being educated for the country instead of away from it.

Nor is this all, for some of these schools are real community centers and are rendering a service to adult farmers as well as to their children. Farmers' institutes, short courses, and displays of agricultural products are frequently held in consolidated schools, where the people of the whole community attend and get acquainted with one another, study one another's problems and co-operate in their solution. The consolidated school as an educational enterprise affords the best experiment in community
co-operation that Colorado farmers have ever had a chance to try. It is the A, B, C in community co-operation—the first lesson—for if they can't or won't co-operate in the education of their children, they can't and won't unite on anything. These schools also frequently afford opportunities for the whole community to gather together for social intercourse, mental and physical relaxation and entertainment, human activities for which country people are literally starving, and for the lack of which so many country boys and girls desert the country and turn to the cheap entertainments offered by nearby towns.

THE COST OF CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS

"What will it cost?" is the first and most frequent question asked in a consolidation campaign. While it is a perfectly proper question to ask, still it is often exaggerated out of all due proportion, which only serves to emphasize the statement that the "pocket nerves" are the most sensitive organ in the human anatomy. Without doubt the question of cost has defeated more consolidations than all other objections combined. Those opposed to school improvement always try to compare the probable cost of the new school with that of the old ones which it is proposed to abandon. It may be true that in some states the new consolidated school can be operated for about the same amount of money that was formerly spent to maintain the old ones, but that is not true in Colorado. If our consolidated schools did not cost more than the old ones they have replaced, they would not find a place in this bulletin, nor would they merit recognition on any roll of honor. This is not saying that these new schools cost too much, but in most cases the old ones were operated for only a fraction of what it really takes to have good schools, even under the old system. Therefore, when the change is made from the old district system to the consolidated school, which usually costs about the price necessary to maintain an efficient school anywhere, the increase in cost seems excessive until the situation is carefully analyzed.

It is our belief that a high school education is just as desirable and necessary for country children as for city children; that it is just as valuable to the children themselves and to the State and Nation. But we need to be neither surprised nor disappointed to find that the cost is just about the same whether the school is located in the country or in a city. Certain things are indispensable to a good school no matter where it is located. Among them are the following: Enough children to permit of a completely graded school consisting of twelve grades; a good school plant, including a good building suitably furnished and equipped, with a good location and ample grounds; trained teachers; skilled supervision; and intelligent business management. For the most part these are standard commodities that have a market value regardless of where the school is located.

There are certain items of cost that are in favor of the rural school. The school buildings need not be, and as a rule are not, so pretentious and expensive in the country as in the city, where there is a tendency to make them harmonize with their more elaborate surroundings. School sites
are not so expensive in the country as in the city. Five acres of good land may often be purchased for less than it would take to buy a city lot with a 100-foot frontage. Salaries of superintendents of consolidated schools are not nearly so high as those of city superintendents. But the saving from these sources would probably be needed to provide transportation which is usually not necessary in cities, so that these items just about balance each other.

City school systems have been in operation for many years and it is fair to assume that city patrons and taxpayers are operating their schools at about the lowest cost that is consistent with the standards they wish maintained. If country people wish to maintain the same standard of excellence in their schools, they must expect to pay about the same price.

In considering the cost of consolidated schools it seems entirely fair to compare the tax levies of some of these schools with nearby town and city schools of the same county or nearby counties where conditions are comparable. For this purpose five of our oldest and largest consolidated schools have been selected. Then five first- and five second-class districts have been chosen. The tax levies of each district are given for the last fiscal year and each group is averaged.

**Comparative Cost of Consolidated Schools Having Four-Year High Schools**

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<td>Fort Collins, District No. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greeley, District No. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Longmont, District No. 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loveland, District No. 2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECOND CLASS DISTRICTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917 Tax Levy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palisade, District No. 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berthoud, District No. 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eaton, District No. 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alamosa, District No. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monte Vista, District No. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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From the table given above it may be seen that the average tax levy for the five consolidated schools is slightly less than in the case of the
RURAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN COLORADO

first- and second-class districts. This is not a bad showing when we remember that these consolidated schools have been organized only a few years and are still paying interest on the full amount of their bond issues for new buildings, while the town and city schools have been in operation for a much longer period and have paid off much of their original indebtedness.

There seems to be no doubt but that country people can give their children a good high-school education in one of these country high schools at less expense than they can give them the same amount of schooling in any other way. This belief is supported by the fact that, so far as known, not a single family has found it necessary to move out of one of these districts to give the children a high-school education in town or city schools.

But the actual cost of operation in dollars and cents is not the only cost to consider, if indeed it is the most important one. Many families are ambitious to give their children a good education, and in order to do this most of those so inclined send their sons and daughters to city schools. In most cases where this is done the parents first pay in tuition the average per capita cost of maintaining the city schools, which is just and right under the district system. Second, they must furnish, at their own expense, means of transportation for their children, or if they live too far from town for them to return home each day, the parents must pay board and room in the city and send the children away from home at a time in their lives when the home influence counts for much, and the lack of which often results disastrously for the child. Many fathers and mothers are unwilling to assume this risk to their children and to avoid breaking up their homes prematurely, they rent or sell the farm and the whole family moves to town while the children are in school. The losses to country communities from these sources have not been carefully considered by country people. If the children alone are sent to town schools for their high-school education, by the time they have spent four years in a town school under town conditions, a majority of them have been lost to the country, for history proves that most of them take up town occupations. The country is losing many of its brightest and most promising young people, its potential leaders, in this way. Or, if the family moves to town, the effect is just about the same, only that the whole family is lost to the country, since by the end of the four years the mother and children have become adjusted to the superior educational, social and religious advantages of city life which they are loath to give up. Under this pressure the head of the family either changes his occupation or decides to operate his farm at long range, and this is the cause of much absentee landlordism, with its resultant loss to the country. The profits of the farm out in the country are now used to support the family in town and country communities are not only losing money that should be kept in the district to increase its wealth and aid in its upbuilding, but in addition they are losing many of their leading families whose inspiration and leadership are sorely
needed in the educational, social, and religious activities of such communities.

These are war times and it comes handy to use military illustrations. If a garrison in the war zone keeps losing its strongest and most capable men either in action or by transfer, those who remain would soon look with alarm at the approaching time when their strength would be reduced to a point where they would not be able to effectively and successfully maintain their position. The country is losing many of its best families due to the lack of good schools, and it is continually being made poorer and weaker thereby. Country communities need to organize for their own protection and preservation, not in an antagonistic sense, but in order to get the most out of life in the country. Many country communities in Colorado have consolidated their schools, and in this way they have organized for the education of their children with the consolidated school as a center. A more satisfactory and satisfying social life is beginning to develop in these communities, and the tendency to drift to town seems, at least, to be arrested. At the same time some of these communities are at least beginning to co-operate for a more satisfying and fuller religious life. These schools are community builders. In reality they have added more wealth to these communities than they cost, for land values increase in districts that have good schools. On the other hand it may be asserted that many rural communities are losing more money because they do not have good schools than it would take to build and maintain them. So the cost of these consolidated schools is justified on the grounds: First, that they furnish a kind of education that is suited to country children, and that is comparable in quality with that obtained in city high schools; and second, that in no case has the cost been exorbitant or excessive, for country people can educate their children in consolidated schools at less expense than they can give them an equivalent amount of schooling in any other way; and third, that country communities affording satisfactory and satisfying educational, social and religious opportunities retain many of their best families who would otherwise be compelled to move to town to get these superior advantages.

THE CONSOLIDATION LAW

At the time the Agricultural College began the campaign for school consolidation, it was the general belief of the people of the State, and especially the country people, that this form of rural school improvement could never be successfully applied to a sparsely populated state like this, no matter what had been its success in other states. This was sufficient argument for two or three years to defeat many a promising consolidation. But this was before it was generally known that nearly one-half of the country children of the State live in communities of sufficiently dense population to make consolidation feasible even with wagon transportation. It is now known that there are many country communities in Colorado where from 300 to 500 children of school age may be included within a circle with a four-mile radius from a convenient central point. With auto transportation a complete success, and some children riding as far as from fif-
teen to eighteen miles from their homes to school and making the trip in about the same time as the child who walks a mile or a mile and a half to the old district school, it seems entirely practicable to extend the benefits of the consolidated school to fully 60 percent of the country children in the State.

In the improvement already accomplished, it has been demonstrated that Colorado has several distinct advantages for consolidation over even those states which have made the most rapid progress in schools of this kind.

A certain procedure is necessary in bringing about a consolidation. The first step is to carry on an educational campaign to give information to those who want it and to meet the objections that are always raised when consolidation is proposed. In all cases it is desirable to hold one or more meetings in each school house in the proposed consolidation. It has always been the policy of the college to work in close co-operation with county superintendents, school boards and teachers in all school improvement work. When our assistance is desired, a representative of the college visits the districts and in company with the county superintendent and local people makes a complete investigation and survey of the schools and districts involved. Public meetings are called to discuss consolidation in all of the schools included, and at these meetings the facts previously ascertained are made known and general discussion is invited. A stereopticon is used to show pictures of consolidated schools, school vans and auto busses, high-school classes in agriculture, manual training, home economics, and play activities. Probable costs are explained in the light of what is being done in many other localities, and an attempt is made to give both information and inspiration in providing better schools for our country boys and girls. This educational campaign must be thorough and complete, for sometimes it takes from one to three years to win a majority for consolidation.

The second step is the consolidation election. This is held after it has been decided that sentiment in the districts is sufficiently favorable to warrant it. It requires twenty days to call this special election, the time required for any special school district meeting. Printed election notices are furnished free by the college, if desired, as well as forms for ballot and information as to all legal procedure. On election day the qualified electors meet in their respective districts and vote "for" or "against" consolidation according to their preferences. When the votes are counted, and it is found that a majority of those voting in each district have voted for consolidation, the proposition has carried. But, should one out of any number of districts in a proposed consolidation record a majority against it, the question is lost in all.

The third step is the election of a new board consisting of three members.

The fourth step is the bond election, if one is necessary, as in most cases it is.

The fifth is the selection of a central location, the purchase of a site,
the employment of an architect to draw the plans and a contractor to erect the new building.

The sixth step is the employment of a principal or superintendent, other teachers, and the complete organization of the new school.

It requires but little space to thus briefly describe the regular procedure in bringing about a consolidation, but the time within which a given consolidation can be effected is not so brief, for it usually takes a full year from the time the consolidation campaign begins, to complete the organization of the new district and to start the new school. It often takes two, and sometimes three years. When this work was first started, opposition often became quite bitter. The legality of one of the first consolidations was contested, carried into the courts, and three suits were filed in the district court. The same case was argued twice before the State Supreme Court and an appeal was taken to the State Board of Education before it was finally settled. But the consolidation was finally effected and the new school ever since its organization has been a conspicuous success. As the consolidation movement grows, the opposition becomes less and less effective in its efforts to block improvement, since it is easier to meet objections by referring to the complete success of some well-known consolidated school in some nearby county. But still, even yet, few consolidations are ever put through without the communities experiencing some real growing pains.

Reference has already been made to the fact that all conditions are favorable for consolidation in Colorado. This may cause some to wonder why, if this is true, there are not more such schools. The answer to this is easy. The difficulties in the way of improving the district system are well nigh insuperable, but add to these the rigid requirements of our consolidation law and the wonder is that we have as many as we do. The law requires that a majority of those voting in each district shall favor consolidation before it becomes effective. This makes it extremely difficult to carry an election to consolidate. If five districts are voting, and four of them should give overwhelming majorities in favor of the proposition but the fifth one should defeat it by a majority of one vote, there is no consolidation, even though four-fifths of the people in the proposed consolidation should favor the plan. It may be noted in passing that no state which still operates its schools under the district system has ever made rapid progress in the consolidation of its rural schools unless it be under the stimulus given by generous state aid. Colorado is now a prohibition state, but if the temperance people had been required to banish the saloon by city wards and country precincts, as we are required to consolidate schools, district by district, this state might have been the center of the booze business long after the other 47 states had ratified the federal prohibitory amendment. A dry Colorado was made possible because the temperance people ignored local units and voted by cities, entire counties,
and finally the electorate of the entire state expressed itself, and a majority of the larger unit decided the question.

Our consolidation law is short, and for the benefit of those who may be interested in it, it is here given in full.

CONSOLIDATED DISTRICTS

"Consolidation Defined—For the purpose of this act the word "consolidation" is hereby defined as providing for the abolishment of certain adjoining school districts and their organization into one special school district, and for the conveyance of pupils to one consolidated school.

"School Boards May Submit Question—The school boards of two or more adjoining school districts may submit the question of consolidation, and on the petition of not less than one-fourth of the qualified electors of each of such school districts, must within thirty days after the filing of such petition submit such question to a vote of the qualified electors of such districts. For the purpose of determining the question in districts other than districts of the first class, the secretary of the school board in each district affected shall call a special meeting of the electors of said districts, to be held at the usual place of holding school district elections, by posting a notice in three conspicuous and public places in said district, stating the object and designating the day, hour, and place of meeting. The legally qualified electors, when assembled in accordance with the notice above specified, shall vote by ballot for or against such consolidation. Those in favor will vote "For consolidation—yes", those opposed, "For consolidation—no". If at said meeting more votes are cast against the proposition than for it, the question shall not be again submitted to the electors of said adjoining districts for a period of one year. Provided, for the purpose of determining the question in districts of the first class, the board of directors of each district must cause said question to be submitted to the qualified electors of their respective districts at the next general school election occurring after the petition is filed with the secretary of the respective boards, provided said petition is filed more than thirty days prior to the date of said election. At said election, those in favor will vote "For consolidation" and those opposed, "Against consolidation". If at said election there are more votes cast against consolidation in each district than for the consolidation, the question shall not be again submitted to the electors of said adjoining districts for a period of two years.

"Consolidation—organization meeting—procedure—officers—proviso—election—If in districts other than districts of the first class a majority of the electors vote in favor of consolidation, it shall then be the duty of the school board in the district affected which has the largest school enumeration to call a union meeting by giving at least twenty days' public notice in each district affected, at which meeting the organization of the consolidated district shall be perfected by the election of officers and other necessary procedure. After the organization of the union meeting is completed by the election of a chairman and secretary it shall proceed to elect, by ballot, a board of directors for such consolidated district, consisting of a president, a secretary, and a treasurer, who shall be held to constitute the board of directors of such consolidated district until the next annual school election, at which election one president shall be elected for a term of three years, one secretary for two years, and one treasurer for one year, and annually thereafter a person to fill the vacancy occurring. Provided, That when a district of the first class is joined with a district or districts of a lower class the board of directors of said first class district shall be held to be the board of directors of the consolidated district and shall serve out the term for which they were elected. Provided, That when a majority of the electors voting in each of two first class districts
vote in favor of consolidation the directors of the two school boards of said district shall constitute the school board of the new district until their respective terms have expired; Provided, That there shall be elected at each general school election after the consolidation of said district the number of directors as is now or may hereafter be provided by law.

"Purchase site—erect building—transport children—As soon as the organization of a special school district as herein contemplated shall have been perfected and its officers elected, it shall be the duty of the school board of such consolidated school district, if necessary, to purchase a site and erect a suitable building thereon, and said school board is hereby required to maintain and support a graded course of instruction, and may include a high school course of not less than two years, and may, at its discretion, furnish transportation to and from school to all pupils living one mile or more from the consolidated school or building, said distance to be measured from the enclosure immediately surrounding their residence to the school house property along the public high way, provided, that the person or persons employed for the purpose of transporting the pupils to and from school shall be required to give a reasonable bond for the faithful performance of duties as prescribed by the school board."

**INDIRECT RESULTS OF THE CONSOLIDATION CAMPAIGN**

While we have 66 consolidated schools as a direct result of the consolidation campaign, still, in addition to this, there are many districts that have improved their schools in different ways without consolidation. So far as the part taken by the Agricultural College in rural school improvement is concerned, these may be considered by-products of our efforts to consolidate districts and centralize schools.

*New School Houses, Better Equipment, and Larger School Sites*

Since consolidation almost always results in the erection of new and modern buildings, many rural districts, seeing these fine rural schools have erected new school houses or have made extensive improvements in old ones. While it is not possible to indicate the number and cost of such new school houses that have been built within the past six years, and at least many of which have grown out of the consolidation movement, still it is certain that they would make a creditable showing, and, when added to the cost of new consolidated schools, would bring the total investment in new buildings well nigh up to the million dollar mark. New buildings invariably call for new and more complete equipment, and this is a good investment since it makes better schools possible.

Again, new buildings almost always call either for new sites or for additional grounds, properly laid out for shade trees, shrubbery and lawn, and larger playgrounds equipped with suitable play apparatus.

The college has given much assistance to many such districts by furnishing suggestive plans for school houses, lists of suitable equipment: has long advocated larger school grounds, made beautiful by trees, shrubbery and lawns, and equipped with suitable play apparatus, since all along we have encouraged organized and supervised play activities for country children.
Revised Courses of Study

When the consolidation campaign was first started very little had been done to vitalize the courses of study for rural schools, and for the most part courses of study made by nearby town or city schools, were being used. Agriculture, domestic science, manual training, music, athletic and social activities, have proved successful and even popular in most consolidated schools. As a result of their success in these schools, many other schools have introduced some of them and have thereby improved their curricula. Many boys' agricultural clubs, such as pig and poultry clubs, calf clubs, corn, bean, and potato clubs, and cooking, sewing, and canning clubs for girls, have been organized in connection with rural schools, many times with the teachers as local leaders. These have been
Sewing class. The home economics classes in this rural school receive federal aid under the Smith-Hughes law. (Fruitvale Consolidated School.)

vital forces in changing sentiment in favor of slightly modified courses of study for rural schools. Some of our best and most constructive work in rural redirection has been along these lines. This work has already progressed far enough so that there is coming to be a demand for rural-minded teachers, teachers who are in sympathy with life in the country, who draw their illustrative materials largely from the country, and who teach from the rural rather than from the urban point of view.

Rural Teachers

This work inevitably calls for a new type of rural teacher. The teacher who is willing to teach a rural school one or two years in order to serve her apprenticeship and thereby secure a position in some town school, no longer meets the need in many wide-awake rural districts that have grown tired of training teachers for city schools, paying for inexperience with the certainty of losing their teacher in case she proves satisfactory. Some districts, at least, are beginning to look for teachers with training and special preparation for work in rural schools. In many cases in which a teacher has earned a reputation as being a good rural teacher, she can secure a position in the country at a salary equal to what she would receive for doing the same grade of work in city schools.

There is a special demand for principals of rural schools, both men and women who have had training for rural work, men and women with a vision, who can become organizers and community leaders. Rural school improvement demands such as these.

In response to such demands as these, the Agricultural College is attempting to train rural teachers and community leaders. Besides this,
assistance is given districts to find teachers with special qualifications for rural schools. Wherever such teachers are found they are encouraged to seek employment in good rural schools. While the number of such teachers is still very small, it is increasing from year to year and the good work they are doing helps to increase the demand for more like them.

The Teacherage

Satisfactory living conditions for rural teachers present some problems that have not yet been solved. The average farm home, even though it may be quite satisfactory for the different members of the family, does not afford suitable living accommodations for a teacher. After a hard day in the school room, working with many children, the teacher should have a cozy, home-like, and quiet room where she may relax from the strain and worry of the day, and to which she may go whenever the opportunity presents itself, for a quiet hour in which to rest, to keep up with her reading, or to prepare work for the next day.

Where a teacher boards with a family in the district, even under the most favorable circumstances, she is compelled to become one of the family, and must, of necessity, conform to the daily regulations as to rising in the morning, retiring at night, and meal hours. At the table and at other times family affairs are discussed in which she has no interest, problems of home discipline are attended to, and the daily occurrences at school are hashed over at each meal in her presence and often to her embarrassment. Neighborhood affairs are sometimes discussed, and the usual family gossip indulged in, from which even the best of homes are not entirely free. There is the opportunity and always the temptation for her to express

A modern, convenient teacherage provides a suitable home for the superintendent and his family. The manual training teacher and his family live in five comfortable rooms in the school house. The principal of the junior high school and his family live in a five-room house on an acre and one-half of ground leased by the school board. This remarkable district furnishes homes for three of the teachers and their families. (Cache La Poudre Consolidated School.)
herself on these delicate personal matters, even if she is not rather expected to take sides with the family with whom she lives or stays.

Where a teacher is not so fortunate as to be able to get accommodations in one of the best homes in the district where they are somewhat prepared to offer her some of the necessities required, she often has to share her room with some of the children and always has to do her reading or prepare her school work in the living room with the members of the family, often with insufficient light and under other conditions so unfavorable that little or no work is done. It is almost unbelievable that a great commonwealth like the State of Colorado would, in the twentieth century, have a school system that takes no account of the living conditions of 3,000 rural teachers in 1,700 rural school districts in which there are almost 100,000 school children. But such is the case, and it is no longer a secret why rural teachers do not, and will not, remain year after year in rural schools after they have served their apprenticeship and demonstrated their ability to qualify for a position in a graded town or city school.

Rural schools are the training schools for town teachers. Country people pay for the failures and inexperience of beginning teachers with the positive assurance that as soon as their teachers make good they will lose them. Country teachers will continue to forsake rural for graded schools, until our system is reorganized, the schools improved, supervision provided, and until living conditions for teachers in the country are greatly improved.

The teacherage offers the best solution of the housing problem for rural teachers. Six years ago, so far as our information goes, there was only one real teacherage in Colorado in a rural district, and the principal of this rural school had been living continuously in that teacherage for the preceding eleven years. This teacher's home has recently been remod-

The Valmont School and teacherage. This teacher's home contains a nice living room, dining room, kitchen and three bed rooms. Boulder County.
e!!ed and enlarged until now it contains nine rooms; the school has been consolidated and this efficient principal and teacher has served this district for seventeen years.

We have been glad to give all the help we could to find a solution for this question and we have advocated the teacherage at every opportunity. Many other agencies have also been working to the same end, until at last country people are fast coming to realize its value. Many of our consolidated schools own teacherages. The Cache La Poudre School provides homes for three men and their families. The Sargent School built an 8-room house for its superintendent and a ten room teacherage for the other eight teachers. Another is now planning to build or rent a house to serve as a home for six or eight of its women teachers. Weld County now has fifteen teacherages, all of which have been built within the past few years, and the movement to provide the best possible living conditions for rural teachers is growing all over the State. The teacherage is commended to the people of the State as one of the vital agencies necessary to a solution of our rural school problems.

THE LEGISLATIVE CAMPAIGN

It is not our intention to give the impression that we were the only agency in the State that has been working for rural school improvement. The splendid achievements described in this bulletin could never have been realized without the hearty co-operation of many people, institutions and organizations. We most gladly give credit to other State institutions, private institutions, teachers' associations, other organizations, and many individuals for their most hearty and generous co-operation, without which little or nothing could have been accomplished.

Consolidation offered the best means by which immediate results could be attained in rural school improvement. Consolidation is all that has been claimed for it. It is good as far as it goes, but a larger movement and a more complete reorganization is necessary, one that will reach and improve all rural schools. This larger movement has been under way, and has steadily gained in momentum for the past five years, and from its very inception it has been under the general direction of the State Teachers' Association, now the Colorado Education Association. All of the State institutions of higher learning, our private colleges and universities, the State Department of Education, the State Federation of Women's Clubs, the Denver Civic and Commercial Association, the Colorado Mothers' Congress and Parent-Teachers' Association, the State Federation of Labor, the State Grange, the Farmers' Union, and many other organizations have co-operated in a state-wide movement for the reorganization of our school system, especially our rural schools. In this larger movement the Agricultural College has been only one of a large number of co-operating agencies. While we have stressed the consolidation movement, and shall continue to do so, still when it is compared to this larger movement it may be called a "first aid" campaign.

Under the direction of the Colorado Education Association the State-wide movement for a comprehensive reorganization of our rural schools has been carefully organized. After the most careful and extensive in-
vestigation, with the complete co-operation of the Federal Bureau of Education and some of the most prominent rural educators in the United States, it was decided to adopt the county unit plan of school administration as the means best suited to improve our rural schools in Colorado. This decision having been reached, committees were appointed; the work was divided up, and after five years of continuous effort, amendments have been drawn to make the necessary changes in our State constitution, and an entirely new school code has been drafted. A special county unit bill has also been prepared, and all of these now await legislative action or the expression of the entire electorate, as the case may be. A vast amount of work has been done, without thought of remuneration or financial gain or benefit on the part of those who did it. All of it has been extra work, for which much time, energy, and money have been spent for the good of the cause and for the advancement and improvement of the schools of our State, that the children of this and succeeding generations might profit thereby. It has been unselfish work and merits the recognition of the people of the State in whose interests it has been done, and it richly deserves favorable consideration at the hands of the General Assembly of Colorado, whose co-operation is necessary to its adoption and inauguration.

The Colorado Education Association and its co-operating agencies will continue their efforts to secure needed legislation to improve our schools until such legislation has been secured and until the children of the State enjoy the best educational opportunities that it is possible to provide.