

PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS.

These associations are much in evidence throughout Canada and the United States. They are doing a very fine work in linking together the home and the school. Owing to the interest taken in the schools by these associations, many extras are provided that the schools would otherwise be without, and the "home projects," such as the growing of crops and the rearing of animals, are carried on as successfully as they are mainly through the hearty co-operation of the parent-teacher association with the County Superintendent (or Inspector) and the school.

The success of these parent-teacher associations is, in my opinion, mainly due to two factors: (1) The local system of taxation for education, which naturally induces a close personal interest on the part of the people in their school: and (2) the auditorium, or assembly-hall, with which all the larger schools are provided. This provides a meeting-room for parents, and the meetings lead to much community-work.

THE "STUDY-WORK-PLAY" PLAN.

Several of the schools that I visited in the United States were working on what is known as the study-work-play plan. The establishment of a school auditorium, a gymnasium, and "shops" involves a considerable expenditure of capital, and the plan mentioned above is a development designed to get the fullest return out of this extensive school "plant." It is an attempt to make it practicable, both administratively and financially, for school administrators to provide not only class-room accommodation, but also such modern educational facilities as gymnasiums, auditoriums, shops, and laboratories, where children may be kept wholesomely occupied in study, work, and play. The school-day is lengthened by an hour, but no teacher works more than five hours.

Under this plan the "load" is balanced so that half the children are in class-rooms while the other half are at work and at play. For example, a school is divided into halves, all the classes being represented in each half. The school opens at, say, 9 o'clock, when the "A" half goes to the class-rooms for academic work. While this half is in the class-rooms it obviously cannot use any of the special facilities, therefore the second or "B" half goes to them—one-third to the auditorium—one-third to the playground, and the remaining third is divided among the shops, drawing and music rooms. At the end of one or two periods—that is, when the first group of children has remained, according to the judgment of the school authorities, in school-seats as long as is good for them at one time—the "A" school goes to the auditorium, playground, &c., while the "B" school goes to the class-rooms. This alternation goes on again in the afternoon.

The following is one type of programme that I saw in use (Division 1, the upper classes; division 2, the intermediate classes; division 3, the junior classes):—

Time.	Regular Activities.		Special Activities.	
	Academic Instruction.	Auditorium.	Play and Physical Training.	Shops, &c.
<i>The "A" School.</i>				
9 to 10.40	Divisions 1, 2, and 3	..	..	..
10.40 to 11.30	..	Division 1	Division 3	Division 2
11.30 to 12.30	Entire "A" school at lunch.	..	..	..
12.30 to 2.20	Divisions 1, 2, and 3	..	..	..
2.20 to 3.10	..	Division 3	Division 2	Division 1.
3.10 to 4	..	Division 2	Division 3	Division 1.
<i>The "B" School.</i>				
9 to 9.50	..	Division 2	Division 3	Division 1.
9.50 to 10.40	..	Division 3	Division 2	Division 1.
10.40 to 12.30	Divisions 1, 2, and 3	..	..	..
12.30 to 1.30	Entire "B" school at lunch.	..	..	..
1.30 to 2.20	..	Division 1	Division 3	Division 2.
2.20 to 4	Divisions 1, 2, and 3	..	..	..

The following were the chief arguments given to me in support of the scheme: All children have to be in school from 9 to 12 and from 1 to 3. All are usually turned out to play at the same time. The result is that there are never enough seats for all the children to study in, nor enough playgrounds for them to play in. Much money is invested in auditoriums, playgrounds, and school-shops, yet each of these facilities is usually occupied for only a small part of each day. Provided that the children receive during the day the required amount of academic work, there is no good reason from an educational standpoint why children should all have to do the same thing at the same time. If they are in use constantly by alternating groups, accommodation may be provided in all facilities, at less cost, than regular class-rooms can be provided on the basis of a reserved seat for each child. For example, in a school of two thousand pupils under the traditional plan, fifty class-rooms, each seated for forty pupils, must be provided, in addition to all other facilities. Under the study-work-play plan only twenty-five class-rooms are needed, so the cost of half the rooms is eliminated.