

SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATIONAL MONOGRAPHS

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# THE SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION

## A STUDY IN THE SOCIAL CONTROL OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

By

GEORGE S. COUNTS



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EDUCATION  
A STUDY IN THE SOCIAL CONTROL OF  
PUBLIC EDUCATION



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The fundamental character of public education in the United States is, in the last analysis, determined by the board that controls the school. To be sure, back of the board stands the state, but to the board the state has delegated the practical control of public education. Within the wide limits created by legislative enactment, the broad outlines of policy are shaped by the members of this body. According to the old adage, as is the teacher, so is the school. The teacher is the creature of the board of education, however, and, in his behavior both within and without the school, he must conform to standards agreeable to the board. To a degree and in a fashion seldom grasped, the content, spirit, and purpose of public education must reflect the bias, the limitations, and the experience of the membership of this board. The possibilities which the school possesses as a creative and leavening social agency are set by the good will, the courage, and the intelligence of that membership. The qualitative advance of public education must depend as much on the decisions of the board of education as on the development of the science and philosophy of education.

Who are the men and women composing the boards that control public education in the United States? From what social classes do they come? What training do they bring to the task of determining the educational policies to be adopted by the schools? What particular prejudices or special points of view may they be expected to exhibit? In a word, what is their intellectual and moral equipment for bearing the heavy responsibilities which society has placed upon them? How much time do they devote to those duties which devolve upon them as members of boards of education? What is the probability that they will support a type of education which seeks to make the coming generation genuinely intelligent about the present complex civilization and its numerous problems? Are the means which society has evolved for the control of education commensurate with the burden to be borne? These and many other questions of a similar character ought to receive the earnest consideration of students of education.

A survey of the educational literature shows that these questions have not been subjected to sufficiently careful study and investigation. Atten-

tion has been directed too exclusively to the educative process and the routine of administration. Either the fundamental rôle played by the board of education has been disregarded or it has not been comprehended. This is not to deny that many studies of boards of education have been made. The contrary is the case, but, for the most part, these studies have dealt with the less fundamental phases of the problem. They have been concerned with such questions as the organization of the board, the number of members, the term of office, and the method of selection. More basic studies have been few, and, when undertaken, they have usually attracted but little attention from school men. As a matter of fact, such studies have been conducted as often by educational laymen as by persons engaged in the professional study of education.

The foundations of such judgments as students of school administration have passed on the character of school-board membership have been weak in both their scientific and their philosophical aspects. In the first place, they are merely opinions derived from more or less extended contacts with school boards. They are not products of the systematic study of the problem, and the contacts on which they are based have ordinarily been colored by an immediate interest in the success or failure of some personal project. In the second place, the judgments formed commonly reflect a social philosophy which has not been favored with a careful and critical examination. They suggest that students of school administration have not been greatly concerned about the fundamental problem of the forces that control the school and shape the more far-reaching educational policies.

The interest of the school administrator has lain, apparently, in another direction. In so far as he has passed judgment on school-board membership, he has done so in terms of the contribution of that membership to the more practical administration of the schools. This, perhaps, is but natural. He has the task of keeping the school in operation. The more immediate and pressing phases of the situation consequently absorb his attention. He is almost forced to organize his own program on the assumption that the existing social arrangement is not subject to modification and that he must therefore come to terms with it. Any other course appears theoretical, visionary, and impractical. As a public servant, he no doubt feels that his responsibility ends where that of the board begins. The most for which he hopes is a school board that will recognize its own province and remain within it. His interest is in a board that will facilitate the processes of administration rather than in a board that is equipped for shaping a balanced educational policy. A board of the latter type may

consume much time in controversy and may therefore appear to the administrator to delay unnecessarily the prosecution of the school program. His measure of a school board is the practical one of the efficient transaction of business. This is certainly one measure. That it is the only, or even the most important, measure of the board of education, few would maintain.

An altogether different view regarding the function of legislative and policy-shaping bodies may be easily defended. While an efficient transaction of business is always to be desired, the more important question relates to the nature of that business and the ends toward which it is directed. The most significant decisions of a board of education have to do with the basic purposes of education and the relation of the school to the social order. In a dynamic, changing world, in a world of the type in which we live, decisions of this character cannot be evaded. That the social composition of the board and the educational equipment of its members are factors which have important bearings on these more fundamental considerations would seem to be open to little question.

However, as suggested in an earlier paragraph, a few studies of the personal qualifications of school-board members have been made. The scope and nature of each of these studies will be described briefly. In December, 1916, Nearing gathered facts from 104 cities which, according to the census of 1910, had populations of more than forty thousand. In summarizing his findings, Nearing writes as follows:

The tabulation shows a concentration of occupations of board members in a relatively small number of pursuits. Thus 144 of the business men were merchants, 78 were manufacturers, and 104 were bankers, brokers, real estate and insurance men. The concentration is still greater in the case of the professions. Of the 333 professional men, 118, or more than one-third, were doctors and dentists; 144, or about two-fifths, were lawyers. The total number of teachers was 18. These were for the most part college professors. . . .

Five occupational groups include the bulk of board members—merchants, manufacturers, bankers, brokers and real estate men, doctors and lawyers—588 out of a total of 967 board members.<sup>1</sup>

A somewhat less ambitious investigation of this same problem was conducted in 1919 by the Teachers Union of New York City.<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of securing occupational data for members of boards of education,

<sup>1</sup> Scott Nearing, "Who's Who on Our Boards of Education," *School and Society*, V (January 20, 1917), 90.

<sup>2</sup> "Few Cities Have Labor on Board of Education," *Headgear Worker*, IV (November 21, 1919), 3.

this organization addressed questionnaires to the superintendents of schools in some 204 cities with populations of more than forty thousand. Replies were received from 67 cities. Since the primary interest of this investigation was in the representation of labor, a detailed analysis of the findings was not reported. The statement was merely made that in only seventeen of the cities were there representatives of labor on the boards.

The most comprehensive study thus far attempted is the study made by Struble<sup>1</sup> in 1922. He gathered data regarding age, sex, occupation, and term of office of school-board members from 169 cities. In size, these cities ranged from less than 2,500 to more than 250,000 inhabitants. Of the 761 male members for whom occupational data were secured, only 54 could be classed as manual laborers. There were 208 merchants, 70 bankers, 67 lawyers, 57 physicians, and 53 business executives. Thus, approximately 60 per cent of the members of the 169 boards were drawn from five occupations. For the most part, these facts are in harmony with the findings of Nearing and the Teachers Union of New York City.

The question which is raised by such studies is one of great educational and social significance. On the basis of the findings of these investigations, the claim is often made by labor leaders and sympathizers that the public schools are controlled by the employing classes, that labor is without representation on boards of education, and that, as a consequence, the interests of the laboring classes are not adequately recognized in the shaping of educational policies. They even maintain that there are many cases of direct discrimination against the interests of these classes and that the school programs reveal a bias in favor of the more fortunately situated economic groups.

The primary object of this investigation is to gather data which will throw some light on this problem. The foregoing indictment, of course, rests on the assumption that there are genuine conflicts of interests among the various groups in society and that the members of one class can scarcely be expected to protect the interests of another. The soundness of this assumption will not be questioned in this report. The present study merely seeks to discover whether there is a factual basis for the assertions made by the representatives of labor. The investigations from which they have drawn their conclusions are, to say the least, incomplete and fragmentary. From the cities data should be gathered much more systematically, but the study should not be confined to city boards. The various types of

<sup>1</sup> George G. Struble, "A Study of School Board Personnel," *American School Board Journal*, LXV (October, 1922), 48-49, 137-38.

boards that control public education in the United States should be included in the investigation. A question of such importance merits careful study.

The writer, however, has no illusions regarding the completeness of the present investigation. This is but one of a series of researches which ought to be undertaken in this field. The school board and its members should be subjected to the most critical study from many different angles. The assumption made here regarding the unfitness of the members of one group to represent the interests of another should be made the subject of objective study. Facts brought to light in this investigation suggest the need of organizing an extensive inquiry into the prejudices and social philosophies of those classes in the population to which society today delegates chief authority for the control of public education.

The report of the investigation is divided into four divisions. The first will describe in some detail the scope of the investigation and the methods employed in gathering the data. The second will present data regarding the general organization of the various types of boards; since numerous studies in the past have dealt with these matters, this division of the report will be made as brief as possible. The third division will concern itself with the central interest of the investigation, namely, the social composition of boards of education. The various aspects of this question on which data were secured will be examined in detail. The fourth division of the report will be devoted to a critical interpretation of the situation revealed by the study. Here the bearing of the findings of the study on the fundamental question of the social control of education will be considered.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD AND SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION

The present investigation is confined to a study of the boards that control public education in the United States. Much could be said in favor of including the boards that shape the policies of our private institutions. The latter still constitute, particularly at the higher levels, a very important division of our educational system. Since the problem of control presents somewhat different aspects in the two types of institutions and since the inclusion of both public and private school boards in a single study would greatly complicate the method of procedure and the interpretation of results, it was thought best to confine the investigation to the public agencies. Moreover, the boards controlling the private schools are of sufficient importance to merit separate study.

Practically all the more important types of boards which control public education are included in this study. In different degrees of completeness, data were secured from district boards, county boards, boards in cities of all sizes, state boards, and boards that control the state colleges and universities. The point should be made, however, that the city board occupies a central position in this investigation. In fact, at the outset the inquiry was confined altogether to boards of this type, and the original intention was to keep the study within the limits of the city. Because of its complex and dynamic character, the urban community seemed to present a problem in the control of education which was of unusual interest and difficulty, but, as the investigation progressed, the desirability of increasing its scope to include boards of other types became evident.

The sources from which data were secured in this investigation were the public-school officers who stood in the closest relation to the boards studied. For various reasons this approach seemed to promise better success than a direct approach to the members of the boards. Facts for the district board were secured from the county superintendent, for the county board also from the county superintendent, for the city board from the city superintendent, for the state board from the state superintendent, and for the college or university board from the president of the institution.

The data were gathered by means of a double postal card, which was mailed to the appropriate public-school officer. On the two sides of the

one postal card were typewritten and printed, respectively, the name and address of the school officer and the instructions to be followed. The nature of these instructions is revealed by the following letter, which appeared on the card sent to the county superintendent. Similar instructions were given to those reporting the facts regarding the membership of the other types of boards.

To County (District, Parish, Town, Union) Superintendent:

I am making a study of county and other local boards of education in the United States. Will you, therefore, kindly have someone in your office fill out and mail the attached postal card? Facts should be given for your board of education, whether it is called a county, district, parish, town, or union board.

In addition to the general facts asked for at the top of the card, five items of information are desired for each member of the board: sex, age, occupation, education, and number of years the member has served on the board. If the member has retired from active life, indicate the fact and also give his occupation before retirement. In giving facts concerning age and education, approximate statements will suffice. In the case of education merely estimate, as nearly as you can, the grade or year in elementary school, high school, or college completed, e.g., 7th grade, 2d yr. H.S., 1st yr. Col. Facts for the president of the board should be reported on the first line of the table.

Thanking you for your co-operation, I am

Sincerely yours,

GEORGE S. COUNTS

*Professor of Education, Yale University*

On the two sides of the other postal card were printed the name and address of the investigator and a blank calling for the desired information regarding the board members. The information blank employed in the study of the county board is shown on page 8. Similar blanks were sent to those reporting facts for the other types of boards.

The information requested varied in detail somewhat from board to board. The information blank sent to the city superintendent was almost the same as that sent to the county superintendent. Data secured regarding the membership of the college or university boards were almost as complete. As the present report will show in subsequent chapters, certain facts secured from the three preceding types of boards were not gathered from the members of the state board of education. In the case of the district board the study was greatly reduced in scope; in fact, the only items of information obtained from the county superintendent regarding the membership of this board were the items of occupation and sex.

A word should be said regarding the probable accuracy of the returns. Most of the items of information called for undoubtedly lay within the

knowledge of the person to whom the postal card was addressed. To this statement, however, several exceptions should be noted. The data regarding the age and the education of the members of the board were certainly

INFORMATION ABOUT MEMBERS OF COUNTY BOARD  
OF EDUCATION

Name of county \_\_\_\_\_ Population of county \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of state \_\_\_\_\_ Over what part of this county does the board have  
 jurisdiction? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of members \_\_\_\_\_ Compensation \_\_\_\_\_ How are members selected?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate number of hours a member devotes to board duties annually \_\_\_\_  
 Term of office \_\_\_\_\_ Number chosen each year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number having children in public school now \_\_\_\_\_

Sex	Age	Occupation	Education	Number of Years Served
President				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				

not at hand in most cases. We may assume that the school officer supplying the information seldom possessed precise knowledge concerning the age and the education of his board members and that he probably had access to no source of information except the members themselves. That

he often did not take advantage of this source, the returns seem to indicate. As a consequence, in many instances the reports on these items are probably at best only good guesses. The same may be said with regard to the information furnished on the number of hours a member devotes to board duties. Under the most favorable circumstances, completely trustworthy responses to a question of this character would be difficult to secure. In interpreting the results of this division of the investigation, therefore, one must assume a certain inaccuracy of the data.

The number of boards included in the investigation was 1,654. The representation of the different types of boards, however, was very unequal. More than one-half (974) of these boards were district boards serving rural communities. Complete returns were secured for this type of board from fifteen counties representing twelve states. The facts for county boards were secured from sixty-five counties. These counties were distributed geographically over twenty-eight states, from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Lakes to the Gulf. The number of city boards included in the investigation was 532. In the study of state boards of education thirty-nine states were represented. This number includes almost all the states having genuine boards of education. Data were obtained from forty-four boards which control our state colleges and universities. The number and distribution of these boards also insure a fairly comprehensive and thorough study of the situation.

Since the city board is the center of interest in this investigation, the size and the location of the 532 cities included in the study merit attention. Facts of population and geography regarding these cities are given in Table I. The reader will observe that in both size and location the cities are widely distributed. Although the representation from the South Atlantic states is somewhat meager, all the great geographical divisions are represented. Likewise, although there are but twenty-five cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants, cities of all sizes from 2,500 inhabitants up are included in the study. These facts indicate that the investigation is based on a wide sampling of American cities.

The present study was initiated in the spring of 1920. At that time the interest was confined entirely to the relation of the board of education to the various elements of the population in the industrial city. As a consequence, the study was then limited to cities and to cities of more than 5,000 inhabitants. The other phases of the investigation were prosecuted during the spring of 1926. That a period of six years elapsed between the gathering of the data for boards of education in cities with populations of more than 5,000 and the study of the other types of boards

would seem not to impair the general validity of the data. We may assume that with respect to most of the questions under investigation the conditions in these cities in 1926 were much the same as those discovered in 1920. The general organization and social composition of the boards could certainly change but little during this six-year period.

At one point, however, it was thought that conditions might have changed considerably in the interval. That the position of women in

TABLE I  
LOCATION AND SIZE OF CITIES INCLUDED IN THE INVESTIGATION

GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISION*	POPULATION OF CITIES						TOTAL
	2,500 to 5,000	5,000 to 10,000	10,000 to 25,000	25,000 to 50,000	50,000 to 100,000	100,000 or More	
New England.....	7	25	31	17	9	5	94
Middle Atlantic.....	17	31	40	14	8	5	115
South Atlantic.....	3	2	12	6	2	2	27
East North Central.....	21	38	49	19	6	4	137
West North Central.....	17	16	17	3	5	5	63
South Central.....	9	6	16	6	7	2	46
Western.....	9	13	17	5	4	2	50
Total.....	83	131	182	70	41	25	532

\* For the purposes of this investigation, the forty-eight states and the District of Columbia were classified in seven divisions as follows: New England—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont; Middle Atlantic—New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania; South Atlantic—Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia; East North Central—Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin; West North Central—Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota; South Central—Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas; Western—Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Throughout the report this classification of states will be followed.

American politics has been changing rapidly in recent years is well known. Thinking, therefore, that the representation of women on city boards of education had changed somewhat since 1920, the writer canvassed the same cities again in 1926. At this time data were again gathered with reference to the representation of the sexes and on certain other points bearing on the general organization of the board of education. In accordance with the anticipation, certain important changes were found to have taken place during the six years. The character of these changes will be described in the proper division of this report.

## CHAPTER III

### GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION

The object of the present chapter is to describe very briefly the general organization of the various types of boards of education included in the study. The treatment will be brief because most of the phases of board organization reported here have been adequately covered in other investigations. Although the major emphasis and interest of the study lie elsewhere, practices with regard to organization cannot be ignored altogether. A brief survey of such practices is thought necessary to provide a background for the examination and interpretation of the more intimate personal data to be considered subsequently. The inclusion of data on organization also makes possible certain significant comparisons between features of organization and social composition.

Under general organization the six following topics will be considered in order: the number of members, the method of selection, the term of office, the tenure of office, the time devoted to board duties, and the compensation of members. Although certain of these topics may appear to be closely related to organization rather than definite phases of organization, the logical place for their treatment would seem to be in this chapter.

#### NUMBER OF MEMBERS

Facts regarding the number of members found on the boards of education included in the investigation are given in Table II. An examination of this table shows, as have previous studies, that practice is far from uniform. Boards range in size from three members to one hundred members. Somewhere may be found a board of almost any size desired. Only in the case of the county board may there be found any tendency toward a standard. Here not far from one-half of the boards have five members each. Among the other boards, the most frequent practice is the five-member board in the cities. Of the four types of boards included in this table, the county board is, on the average, the smallest. The median number of members on this type of board is 5.5. The corresponding figure for city boards is 6.4; for state boards, 7.2; and for college and university boards, 9.8. Why one type of board should be larger than another is a question which is difficult to answer. The present situation apparently reflects diverse educational and political traditions rather than an effort

to determine the size of the board in terms of the functions to be performed.

Facts regarding the size of the district boards were not included in Table II because almost complete uniformity of practice was discovered. In approximately 80 per cent of the cases studied the district board was found to be composed of three members. In some instances the board was

TABLE II

NUMBER OF MEMBERS ON BOARDS OF EDUCATION (FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Number of Members	County Boards	City Boards	State Boards	College and University Boards
3	29	15	16	
4	2	1	11	
5	43	26	11	19
6	7	19	11	7
7	12	21	16	7
8	2	3	13	5
9	3	9	8	19
10		1	5	9
11		1	2	5
12		2	5	
13	2	*	2	11
14		1		2
15		*		2
16		1		
17				2
18				2
21		*		
22				2
32				2
33		*		
36				2
60				2
100				2
Total	100	100	100	100
Median	5.5	6.4	7.2	9.8
Number of boards	65	529	38	44

\* At least one board of this size was reported, but the representation is too small to show in this table.

somewhat larger, including five members, and in others the functions of the board were discharged by a single trustee; but the almost universal practice is to delegate the control of education in the district to a board of three members.

Since the study of city boards was somewhat more extensive than that of the other types of boards, the data from this source will be made the subject of further analysis. An examination of practices in different parts of the country will be of interest. On the whole, such an examination

shows little relation between geography and size of board. Yet some differences among the great divisions of the country are discernible. In the East North Central states and in the Western states there is a tendency to organize smaller boards. In these areas the three-member board and the five-member board are very common. In the West North Central states the six-member board, which is a rather unusual type, is the most frequent form of organization. In the Middle Atlantic states the predominant type is a seven-member board. These comments, however, should not obscure the fact that in every geographical division there is wide range in practice. Nowhere is there a pronounced tendency toward uniformity.

Between the size of the board and the size of the city there appears to be a positive relation. For example, the median number of members on the school board rises from 5.7 in cities of from 2,500 to 5,000 inhabitants to 6.3 in cities of from 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants, to 6.5 in cities of from 10,000 to 25,000 inhabitants, to 7.1 in cities of from 25,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, to 7.7 in cities of from 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants, and to 9.1 in cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants. That the larger cities require larger boards than do the smaller cities in order to transact their more extensive educational business is a thesis which it would be difficult to defend. However, evidence to be presented in a later section of this report suggests that the larger cities do have more business to transact. At least, the members of the boards of education in these cities, according to the data secured, seem to devote an unusually large number of hours to board duties. Yet some of our largest cities appear to manage their schools quite successfully with boards of from three to five members. Moreover, whether an increase in the size of the board will reduce the burden placed on the individual member would seem to depend on the methods which the board employs in doing its work. If the board functions as a whole, an increase in membership might be expected to hamper the rapid transaction of business. On the other hand, if the board functions for the most part through committees, the addition of members might have an opposite effect. As a matter of fact, there seems to be little, if any, relation between the size of the board and the amount of time which its members devote to board duties.

Perhaps a defense for the larger board in the great cities might be developed in another direction. Certainly the large city exhibits a complexity and a variety of interests which are lacking in the small urban community. The ordinary American city of more than 100,000 inhabitants has numerous industrial and commercial interests, competing eco-

nomie organizations, divergent ethnic and racial groups, rival religious sects and denominations, and every variety of cultural and social interest imaginable. The representation of these various points of view on the board of education would seem to be desirable. Even with a large board this is extremely difficult; with a small board it is impossible.

From 386 cities data regarding the size of the board of education were gathered at two different dates—first in 1920 and later in 1926. Since the same cities reported the facts for both years, an unusually accurate measure of the trend during the six-year period may be obtained. Certain tendencies seem to stand out with some degree of clearness. In these cities the number of three-member, four-member, six-member, and eight-member boards decreased appreciably between the years 1920 and 1926, while the number of five-member, seven-member, nine-member, and ten-member boards increased in like proportion. These facts suggest that cities are tending to abandon the very small boards and the boards with even numbers of members. The observation should also be made that the very large boards are likewise being reduced in size. The reasons for these changes are fairly obvious and are in accord with the generally accepted theory regarding the size of the school board, but that any clear-cut trends should reveal themselves in so short a time speaks most forcefully of the instability of current arrangements.

This brief survey and analysis of the present situation with regard to the size of school boards suggests certain significant conclusions. The great diversity of practice probably reflects our educational history and the local origin of our school procedures. Few indeed would maintain that these differences are a reasoned product arising from the diverse needs of schools and communities. There is good cause for believing that the present fluid condition of the board with respect to this one feature, at least in the cities, represents a widespread attitude of experimentation. In the city the movement is in the direction of a board of moderate size composed of an odd number of members. While such a trend can hardly be said to rest on scientific grounds, it does seem to have the support of the results of more or less careful observation.

#### METHOD OF SELECTION

The methods employed in the selection of members of boards of education tell much the same story as do the practices regarding the size of these boards. The present situation can scarcely be understood except in terms of the way in which American systems of education have developed. The most casual examination of these methods of selection sug-

gests that they were devised as various local and state communities sought to organize boards for the control of education. They are the products of a condition of community initiative and local autonomy. They likewise reflect a condition of community isolation and of undeveloped systems of transportation and communication.

In Table III are presented the facts for fifty-eight county boards of education. Although slightly more than one-half of these boards secure their membership by popular vote, there are ten other methods employed in one or more instances. The first observation which an examination of this table evokes is that the invention of some method which has not al-

TABLE III  
METHODS OF SELECTING MEMBERS OF COUNTY BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Method of Selection	Number	Per Cent
Election by popular vote . . . . .	30	51.7
Election at town meeting . . . . .	6	10.4
Selection by grand jury . . . . .	5	8.6
Election at convention of school-board presidents . . . . .	4	6.9
Selection by county court . . . . .	3	5.2
Selection by election board composed of county superintendent, commonwealth attorney, citizen appointed by judge . . . . .	3	5.2
Appointment by county superintendent . . . . .	3	5.2
Appointment by governor of state . . . . .	1	1.7
Appointment by state board on recommendation of county superintendent . . . . .	1	1.7
Appointment by county board of supervisors . . . . .	1	1.7
Appointment by county board of commissioners . . . . .	1	1.7
Total . . . . .	58	100.0

ready been put into practice would require no small measure of ingenuity. While the natural expectation is that the county superintendent is selected by the board, there are certain instances where the reverse is true, namely, instances where the board of education is selected by the county superintendent. Present practice shows little consistency regarding the relation which the board should sustain either toward the people of the community or toward the profession of teaching.

Among the cities many different methods of selecting board members are likewise found, but there is a much stronger tendency toward agreement than among the counties. An examination of Table IV shows eleven different methods employed in the 507 cities included in the study. Only four of these methods, however, are represented with a sufficient degree of frequency to make them important. Under these four methods may

be grouped more than 95 per cent of the cities. In almost three-fourths of the cities the members are elected at large. If to these cities are added those cities where the method is that of election by wards, more than 83 per cent of the total are accounted for. This means that the cities have practically decided in favor of election by the people as the proper method of selecting board members.

There is one method of selection of board members which is so unusual, so striking in character, and so contrary to democratic traditions that it merits special attention. In one of the cities reported in the table the board selects its own members. In Selma, Alabama, the body which shapes the policies of the public schools and collects taxes for their sup-

TABLE IV  
METHODS OF SELECTING MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Method of Selection	Number	Per Cent
Election at large.....	367	72.4
Election by wards.....	55	10.8
Appointment by mayor.....	39	7.7
Appointment by city council.....	31	6.1
Election at town meeting.....	8	1.6
Appointment by city commissioners.....	2	0.4
Appointment by governor.....	1	0.2
Appointment by city manager.....	1	0.2
Selection by judges of supreme court.....	1	0.2
Selection by board of education.....	1	0.2
Selection by special board of mayor and aldermen.....	1	0.2
Total.....	507	100.0

port is self-perpetuating. In the city of Macon and in Bibb County, Georgia, a similar condition prevails. Correspondence with the superintendents of schools in these two cities revealed the fact that the self-perpetuating board is a product of the period of reconstruction. The board at Macon was organized in 1872 under a special act of the legislature of the state of Georgia. The object of the enactment was to remove the public school, which was then being organized, from political influence. This meant, of course, the removal of education from the control of the negro vote and the carpetbaggers from the North. In this county the negroes were in the majority. Consequently, the white element in the population chose to have the board named in an act of the legislature with the power of self-perpetuation.

According to the testimony of those who have been associated with the boards in these cities, the membership has been of a uniformly high

type and, while perhaps somewhat conservative in outlook, has apparently rendered the schools excellent service. As the conditions which created these self-perpetuating boards disappear, the boards themselves may be expected to pass. This change has actually been taking place in some communities. In the immediate past these boards were apparently somewhat more numerous than they are today. Thus, Savannah had a self-perpetuating board until August, 1923. According to the superintendent of schools in this city, as the ancient Hebrews clamored for a king, the people of Savannah clamored for a board democratically constituted.

A study of the methods of selecting board members employed in cities of different sizes shows some significant differences. Election at town meetings is naturally confined almost exclusively to the smaller communities. In cities of more than 10,000 inhabitants there is an observable tendency to resort to the method of election by wards and to the method of appointment by mayor. Since election at large implies acquaintance with all the candidates on the part of the entire electorate, it is not surprising that this method is employed less frequently in the larger communities than in the smaller communities. These differences, however, should not obscure the fact that in cities of all sizes the common practice is to elect at large. Even in cities having more than 100,000 inhabitants this method is followed in 58 per cent of the cases.

In the several geographical areas certain distinctive tendencies may likewise be observed. In the West North Central and Western states the overwhelming practice is election at large. In the Southern states, on the other hand, both along the Atlantic coast and in the central area, this method shows the least strength. In less than one-half the cities studied from these states are board members elected at large. In the New England states, the East North Central states, and the South Central states, election by wards or districts is unusually common. In the Middle Atlantic states appointment by mayor is frequently found. In fact, twenty-two of the thirty-nine cases of this method of selection are from these states. In the East North Central states appointment by city council is a fairly common method. Nineteen of the thirty-one cases reported come from this area. In the South Atlantic states this method is also fairly common. The fact should not be lost sight of, however, that in every geographical division the method of election at large is the prevailing or most common practice.

The methods employed in thirty-five states in the selection of the members of the state board of education are reported in Table V. According to this table, the variety of practice is somewhat less wide here

than in the city and county boards. There are but six different methods employed, and the usual method is appointment by governor. The only other method that is reported more than twice is that of composing the board of members *ex officio*. The latter practice is seldom followed in the selection of the members of those boards which are more local in their jurisdiction. Moreover, the service of *ex-officio* members is somewhat more common than the table would imply because on boards where the majority of members are selected by some other method one or more members will be found serving *ex officio*.

The greatest diversity in methods of selecting members is found in the boards which control the state colleges and universities. An examination of Table VI shows this to be the case. In the selection of members

TABLE V  
METHODS OF SELECTING MEMBERS OF STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Method of Selection	Number	Per Cent
Appointment by governor.....	22	62.8
All members <i>ex officio</i> .....	8	22.8
Election by people.....	2	5.7
Election by legislature.....	1	2.9
Appointment by state superintendent of schools.....	1	2.9
Election by senate, people, and board.....	1	2.9
Total.....	35	100.0

of the forty-three boards involved in this study, thirteen different methods or combinations of methods are found. As in the case of the selection of the members of the state boards of education, appointment by the governor of the state is the most common method employed. In fact, it seems to be about the only method on which there is any agreement. Members of these boards are appointed by the governor, elected by the people, appointed by the board itself, selected by the alumni, chosen by the state legislature, and elected by various special bodies that are already in existence or are created for the purpose. Apparently, effort has been made to give various groups and interests in the state a voice in the determination of the policies pursued by the state colleges and universities. Possibly the complexity of the situation is due partly to the heritage bequeathed to the public institution by the older private college.

In concluding this discussion of the methods employed in the selection of members of boards of education, the statement which was made at the outset should be repeated. The most striking characteristic of the existing

situation is the diversity of practice. While certain tendencies possessing considerable strength may be observed, almost any conceivable method of selecting board members may be found employed somewhere. At present, students of school administration are inclined to favor an appointive board for administering education in the larger areas and an elective board for administering education in the smaller areas. Excellent arguments have been advanced in favor of this disposition of the matter, but it must be admitted that at present detailed objective knowledge for the support of such recommendations is lacking. In the present state of educational and social science we can scarcely pass judgment in complete

TABLE VI  
METHODS OF SELECTING MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF CONTROL OF STATE  
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Method of Selection	Number	Per Cent
Appointment by governor . . . . .	18	42.0
Appointment by governor and ex officio . . . . .	9	21.0
Election by people . . . . .	4	9.3
Selection by state legislature . . . . .	3	7.0
Appointment by governor and board of control . . . . .	1	2.3
Appointment by state board and alumni . . . . .	1	2.3
Appointment by governor, council, alumni, state superintendent, ex officio . . . . .	1	2.3
Selection by state legislature and board of control . . . . .	1	2.3
Selection by state legislature, board of control, and alumni . . . . .	1	2.3
Selection by board of control, senate, ex officio . . . . .	1	2.3
Selection by governor, ex officio, state board of agriculture . . . . .	1	2.3
Selection by governor and alumni . . . . .	1	2.3
Election by people and appointment by governor . . . . .	1	2.3
Total . . . . .	43	100.0

confidence on the different types of boards of education. Quite possibly there are several or even many different methods of selecting board members which are equally good. It is conceivable that this problem is one of little importance. Judgment, however, must be withheld until evidence of an objective character has been marshaled.

TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office of members of boards of education would seem to be an important matter. Theoretically, this term should be of sufficient length to give the individual member time enough to become thoroughly familiar with the task which society assigns to him. It should also be long enough to insure to him a measure of security against the mob propensi-

ties of the electorate. Only under such conditions, so the argument runs, may his decisions be expected to reflect a dispassionate study of the problems of the school. On the other hand, at least in a democracy, the term of office should not be so long as to tempt the member to lose touch with the electorate and thus to give support to policies which are out of harmony with the ideals and purposes of the community served. Perhaps the confession should be made at once that we hardly know today just how long a term of office should be in order to meet these requirements.

The facts regarding present practice as revealed by the investigation are presented in Table VII. An examination of the last column of this

TABLE VII  
TERM OF OFFICE OF MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION  
(FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Term of Office in Years	City Boards	County Boards	State Boards	College and University Boards	Average
1.....	*				*
2.....	10	19	13	2	11
3.....	49	24	3	7	21
4.....	16	32	39	22	27
5.....	8	7	9	7	8
6.....	16	13	30	31	22
7.....	1	5		9	4
8.....			3	11	3
9.....	*				*
10.....	*			2	1
12.....			3	2	1
Life.....	*			7	2
Total.....	100	100	100	100	100
Number of boards...	485	59	33	44	621
Median.....	3.8	4.3	4.9	6.4	4.7

\* At least one board with this term of office was reported, but the representation is too small to show in this table.

table shows that the central tendency for the four types of boards combined is between four and five years. It also shows a considerable variety of practice. The length of the term of office ranges from one year to life. The modal term is four years; yet two-year, three-year, and six-year terms are not uncommon. In fact, three-year and six-year terms occur almost as frequently as four-year terms. The apparent avoidance of the five-year term is difficult to explain. Five would seem to be as good a number as any.

A comparison of the different kinds of boards suggests that the larger the geographical area involved, the longer the term of office. A certain

degree of remoteness from the people seems to favor a lengthening of the term. Likewise, where the board fashions policies which touch the general public only indirectly or not at all, as in the case of the state or university board, the members are removed somewhat from the control of the electorate. Also the practice of appointing members seems to be associated with the longer term. Thus, for the city boards the median term of office is 3.8 years; for the county boards, 4.3 years; for the state boards, 4.9 years; and for the college and university boards, 6.4 years. Apparently, where the board is more remote from the people and where the board is appointive, the term of office is increased.

An examination of the more frequent practices in the different kinds of boards reveals the same tendency. Thus, among the city boards the three-year term is most frequent; while the three-year term is important among the county boards, the four-year term is the mode; among the state boards the four-year term likewise occupies first place, but the six-year term rather than the three-year term is found in second place; among the college and university boards the six-year term is the most frequent. For the boards which control the higher institutions, even eight-year terms are not uncommon, and in 7 per cent of the cases members hold office for life.

Between the length of the term of office and the size of the city, there seems to be little relation. However, a slight tendency for the larger cities to favor longer terms of office may be observed. Thus, while in the cities having between 2,500 and 5,000 inhabitants the median term is 3.7 years, in cities having populations of more than 100,000 the median term is 4.3 years. Moreover, in every one of the six classes of cities recognized in this investigation except the class containing the largest cities, the three-year term is the most common practice. In these cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants the six-year term is the most frequent term. These facts are in harmony with the conclusions drawn in the preceding paragraph.

In the several parts of the country certain differences may be noted. The shorter terms on the average are found in New England, the East North Central states, the West North Central states, and the Western states. The medians in these four sections range from 3.5 to 3.9 years. In the South Central, the South Atlantic, and the Middle Atlantic states, on the other hand, the terms are somewhat longer, the medians for these three sections being 4.1, 4.7, and 6.1, respectively. In the first four geographical divisions mentioned the most frequent term in each case is three years. In each of the other three divisions the most frequent term is some-

what longer. Thus, in the South Central states four years is the most common length of term, and in both the Middle Atlantic and the South Atlantic states the six-year term is the mode. These facts would seem to suggest that the longer terms are found in the more conservative educational areas.

The social and educational significance of these facts regarding term of office remains to be determined. Just what effect long or short terms of office have on the quality of board members and the formulation of educational policy has never been made the subject of careful investigation. Possibly this also is a matter that is of no great consequence. Conceivably, good boards and bad boards, competent boards and incompetent boards, progressive boards and conservative boards are to be found to accompany with equal frequency both short and long terms of office, but, until this question is brought within the range of scientific study, it will remain a subject for speculation.

#### TENURE OF OFFICE

More important, perhaps, than the term of office provided by law is the tenure of office. How many years of service does the ordinary member render the board? This would seem to be a matter of considerable importance from the standpoint of the responsibilities which the board is qualified to discharge. Apparently, one of the criteria for determining the optimum term of office is to be found in some supposed relation between term and tenure. There are other considerations, to be sure, which might make a fairly long term of office desirable, but the relation to tenure is undoubtedly a factor which has been very generally recognized.

The results of the present investigation into the tenure of office of board members are summarized in Table VIII. Here are reported the facts for county, city, state, and college and university boards. The median tenure of office of the members of all four boards combined is 4.1 years. Of more interest, perhaps, is the great range in tenure. There is one case reported of a member who has given sixty years of service to his city. At the other extreme of the distribution are 728 members out of a total of 3,920 who are serving their first year. This number is considerably larger than the number found in any other category. There seems to be very great mortality between the first and second years.

A word should be said with regard to the accuracy of the data presented in Table VIII. The reader perhaps has observed that the number reported as having served six years is somewhat greater than the number reported as having served five years. Moreover, rather consistently from

the four-year category on, the number reported as having served an even number of years is greater than the number reported as having served the

TABLE VIII  
TENURE OF OFFICE OF MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Number of Years Served	County Boards	City Boards	State Boards	College and University Boards	Total
0.0-1.5	51	589	37	51	728
1.5-2.5	60	423	30	29	542
2.5-3.5	21	360	23	32	436
3.5-4.5	30	306	28	38	402
4.5-5.5	24	186	26	30	266
5.5-6.5	30	260	14	18	322
6.5-7.5	7	103	13	12	135
7.5-8.5	10	163	10	11	194
8.5-9.5	6	88	9	10	113
9.5-10.5	12	146	3	10	171
10.5-11.5	4	31	4	9	48
11.5-12.5	15	114	12	10	151
12.5-13.5		20	2	6	28
13.5-14.5	1	28	1	4	34
14.5-15.5	8	69	2	7	86
15.5-16.5		27	4	5	36
16.5-17.5	1	12	1	5	19
17.5-18.5	1	36	2	2	41
18.5-19.5		5		3	8
19.5-20.5	1	49	3	7	60
20.5-21.5	1	3		2	6
21.5-22.5		7		1	8
22.5-23.5		6	1	1	8
23.5-24.5		8		2	10
24.5-25.5	1	17	2	1	21
25.5-26.5		6		3	9
26.5-27.5		5	1		6
27.5-28.5		4			4
28.5-29.5		1		2	3
29.5-30.5		7	2	1	10
30.5-31.5					
31.5-32.5		2			2
32.5-33.5		1			1
33.5-34.5		1			1
34.5-35.5		2	1		3
35.5-36.5		2			2
39.5-40.5		1			1
40.5-41.5		3			3
41.5-42.5		1			1
59.5-60.5		1			1
Total	284	3,093	231	312	3,920
Median	3.9	4.1	4.4	4.7	4.1

immediately preceding odd number of years. Thus, the number having served eight years is greater than the number having served seven, the

number having served ten years is greater than the number having served nine, the number having served twelve years is greater than the number having served eleven, and so on. The only exceptions to this tendency are found at the fifteenth and the twenty-fifth years. The explanation of these facts is obvious. They indicate that, except for the shorter terms of service, the reports are more or less inaccurate. Census-takers have always had similar experiences. They have consistently found more persons reported at the even than at the odd ages. Errors of this kind, however, do not impair the substantial validity of the conclusions to be drawn from the table. The reports for the shorter terms of service are probably fairly reliable. Since the median falls within this division of the distribution, the central tendency can be computed with relative accuracy, and errors of one or two years in the remainder of the table are of no particular importance. The general impression conveyed by the table would seem to be trustworthy.

A comparison of the data obtained from the four types of boards shows some small but probably unimportant differences. The median term of service is greater in the city boards than in the county boards and is yet longer in the state and the college and university boards. The difference of almost a whole year between the median term of service for the county boards and the median term of service for the college and university boards probably possesses some significance. Apparently, the membership of those boards which are more remote from the people possesses a slightly greater stability than does the membership of the boards which are more responsive to public opinion. The condition here is very similar to that which was discussed in the preceding section on term of office.

An examination of the returns from cities of different sizes reveals no consistent tendencies. Among the six classes of cities the median tenure of office ranges from 3.9 to 4.4 years. This range of a half-year can hardly be regarded as significant, particularly since the variations discovered show no relation to the size of the cities. The greatest difference in practice happens to occur between cities of from 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants and cities of from 10,000 to 25,000 inhabitants.

In the case of the various geographical areas somewhat more significant differences are found. In fact, the widest range in the median terms of office which has been discovered is found among the geographical divisions. The shortest period of service is found in the Western and in the East North Central states. The medians for these two groups of states are 3.7 and 3.8 years, respectively. At the other extreme is the South Atlantic division, with a median of 5.2 years. The other four great groups

of states occupy a central position and are very close together. This would seem to indicate that in the South Atlantic states at least there is a certain stability in the board which is not found in the other areas and which seems to be particularly lacking in the West. This greater stability of the board in the southeastern states possibly reflects a greater stability in society.

One would expect to find some clear relation between tenure of office and methods of selecting board members. Such, however, seems not to be the case. There are four methods of selecting members which are employed with sufficient frequency to be worthy of examination in this connection, namely, election at large, election by wards, appointment by mayor, and appointment by city council. The median numbers of years served by members chosen in these four different ways are 4.1, 3.8, 3.8, and 4.2, respectively. That appointment by mayor or by council does not result in greater permanence in board membership is difficult to believe. Yet this seems to be the case. In order to put at rest any fears which the reader may have regarding the adequacy of the data, the point should be made that for each method of selection data were received for at least 145 board members. These facts seem to suggest that under the conditions of the modern city, with the extreme mobility of its population, the complexity of its institutional life, the number and variety of its interests, and the uncertainty of its politics, the tenure of office of board members can hardly be increased by changing the method of selection. The stability of board membership appears to be a function of the kind of society served rather than of the political device employed in the choice of that membership.

However, a more striking relation, or absence of relation, remains to be considered. If stability of the board is not to be secured by adopting the right method of selecting members, it can certainly be obtained by extending the legal term of office. So the argument naturally runs, but in actual fact the argument seems to be faulty. The evidence available shows no relation between the legal term of office and the number of years which board members serve. Thus, for 261 members serving on boards with legal terms of two years the median tenure of office is 4.2 years, while at the other extreme, where the legal term is six years, the median tenure of 499 board members is but 4.4 years. The medians for boards with terms of office of intermediate length depart but little from the medians of these two extreme groups. Tenure seems to remain constant despite changes in the term of office prescribed by law.

What the optimum tenure of office for board members may be lies

somewhat beyond the range of present knowledge. Moreover, conclusions regarding this matter can hardly be reached in the absence of agreement regarding the function of the board member. If he is supposed to express the point of view of the lay mind, unhampered by knowledge of school affairs, a short tenure of office is no cause for alarm. On the other hand, if he is expected to carry heavy burdens in the formulation of the details of school policy and in the appraisal of the minutiae of administration, a longer period of service is essential. It is evident, however, from certain facts presented in earlier paragraphs that it is extremely difficult to control the number of years which board members will serve. Perhaps the wise course to pursue is to adapt the function to the board rather than the board to the function. At a particular time and place the tenure of office may be determined by the nature of society.

#### TIME DEVOTED TO BOARD DUTIES

The amount of time which board members devote to school duties must have some important bearing on the functions which school boards can discharge. Much that was said in the immediately preceding paragraphs in connection with the discussion of tenure of office might be repeated here. If school-board members devote an important portion of their time to school-board duties, we may expect them to bear responsibilities which they could not bear if the time which they devote to these duties were more limited. This question would seem to bear some relation to the division of functions between board and superintendent.

The present investigation represents a wholly inadequate attack on this question. It is inadequate because it is not supported by other investigations and because it is hardly capable of standing alone. Other studies, both more intensive and more extensive in character, should be undertaken. Moreover, the accuracy of the data to be presented here leaves much to be desired. The superintendent of schools was asked in each case merely to estimate the amount of time which an ordinary board member devotes to the duties of his office during the year. No doubt errors of considerable magnitude often crept into these estimates. However, since this question is of major importance from the standpoint of determining the functions of the board of education, the writer feels that the data secured are of sufficient worth to be recorded. The findings may stimulate others to undertake more comprehensive investigations of the same question.

By an inadvertence the state board of education was not included in this study. As a consequence, data from but three types of boards are

available. The practices discovered in these boards are presented in Table IX. According to this table, much the same situation prevails among the county, city, and college and university boards. The median number of hours devoted to school-board duties annually by the ordinary member is not far from fifty in each case. This means that five or six full working days are rendered the community in the course of the year.

TABLE IX  
NUMBER OF HOURS DEVOTED TO SCHOOL-BOARD DUTIES  
ANNUALLY BY MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Number of Hours	City Boards	County Boards	College and University Boards
1 - 12½	11	10	6
12½ - 37½	118	9	3
37½ - 62½	144	21	11
62½ - 87½	42	5	3
87½ - 112½	52	2	1
112½ - 137½	8	5	.....
137½ - 162½	13	.....	2
162½ - 187½	6	.....	.....
187½ - 212½	5	.....	1
212½ - 237½	1	.....	.....
237½ - 262½	6	.....	1
262½ - 287½	1	.....	.....
287½ - 312½	3	.....	.....
312½ - 337½	.....	.....	.....
337½ - 362½	.....	.....	.....
362½ - 387½	.....	.....	.....
387½ - 412½	1	.....	.....
412½ - 437½	.....	.....	.....
437½ - 462½	1	.....	.....
Full time	.....	.....	1
Total	412	52	29
Median	51.0	46.4	51.1

If the results of this investigation are reliable, the wide range in practice is a matter of genuine significance. To the performance of their duties the members of certain boards devote less than twelve hours a year, while in at least one instance the discharge of board duties demands an annual expenditure of more than 400 hours per member. The most extreme case, that in which the board members give full time to board duties, is not included in the comparison because the board involved is not to be classed in the same category with the other boards studied. In North Dakota all state educational institutions are placed under the control of a single board, whose members receive a yearly compensation of \$3,000 each and devote their full time to the work of the board. After excluding

this board from the comparison, the range of practice remains sufficiently wide to be worthy of study. Clearly, the function of a member of a board which requires but ten hours of service a year must be very different from that of a member of a board which requires one hundred or more hours a year. In Los Angeles the minimum amount of time demanded of the board member is 450 hours, and some members give as much as 1,000 hours a year to the duties of office. In Providence 60 hours is the practice; in Columbus, 100; in Cleveland, 170; and in Dayton, 400. A study of the activities in which these boards engage should raise some fundamental questions regarding the functions of the board of education.

TABLE X

MEDIAN NUMBER OF HOURS DEVOTED TO SCHOOL-BOARD DUTIES ANNUALLY BY MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION—CITIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO POPULATION

Population	Number of Cities	Median
2,500-5,000.....	68	38.0
5,000-10,000.....	85	48.0
10,000-25,000.....	138	48.5
25,000-50,000.....	64	59.0
50,000-100,000.....	29	75.0
100,000 or more.....	28	96.4
All classes of cities.....	412	51.0

Among the cities there seems to be some relation between the burden placed on board members and the size of the city. An examination of Table X shows this to be the case. In this table is reported the median number of hours devoted to school-board duties annually by members of boards in the six classes of cities included in the study. The median advances steadily from 38.0 hours in cities of less than 5,000 inhabitants to 96.4 hours in cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants. While there is, of course, great variation in practice within each group and while errors probably crept into the reports on this item, these differences are of sufficient magnitude to be significant. As school boards function today, these facts suggest two conclusions. There seems to be some relation, in the first place, between the size of the city and the amount of business which a board must transact and, in the second place, between the amount of business to be transacted and the amount of time which board members must devote to their duties. In the large cities the demands which board membership makes on the individual's time constitute a genuine burden.

This situation suggests the query as to whether a member of the less favored economic classes can afford to serve on the board without financial compensation.

The practices with respect to the amount of time devoted to board duties likewise seem to vary somewhat in different parts of the country. The range of the medians is from 35.0 hours in the South Atlantic states to 58.9 hours in the Western states. The corresponding figure for New England is 43.4; for the South Central states, 45.5; for the Middle Atlantic states, 55.4; for the West North Central states, 55.7; and for the East North Central states, 57.1. The striking fact revealed in this portion of the study pertains to the state of California. For the thirteen cities reporting from this state the median is 79.2. Whether this reflects the unusual interest of the people of California in education, which has often been remarked, the present investigation does not reveal. Nevertheless, it suggests the existence in California of a conception of the function of the board of education which is certainly unlike that which prevails, let us say, along the South Atlantic seaboard.

All these findings merely indicate the need for further investigation. It is, of course, conceivable that the errors of this study are so large that none of its conclusions are valid. Whether this is true, only the use of more careful methods in additional research will determine. Moreover, the amount of time which board members should devote to school duties is not known because what boards should do remains a subject of controversy. Detailed study of the activities of boards of education should be undertaken. The discovery of the relation, if such there be, between the amount of time which a board devotes to school duties and the character of the activities in which it engages should make an interesting research. Until studies of this kind have been made, informed and reasoned judgment can scarcely be passed on the present situation.

#### COMPENSATION OF BOARD MEMBERS

According to a fine old aristocratic tradition, a citizen should render public service without thought of financial reward. The aristocratic origin and nature of this tradition should be observed, however. If service in the common interest makes large demands on the citizen's time, the rendering of such service is necessarily limited to those members of society who have other means of support. Nevertheless, students of school administration have commonly favored this aristocratic tradition. The common argument in favor of this practice is that compensation, unless it is provided on a sufficiently generous scale to rival the economic rewards

offered at the higher levels of industry and commerce, must inevitably draw inferior men to the school board. On the other hand, if no form of financial remuneration is attached to the office, the argument is advanced that only men who are single-minded in the public service will be attracted to membership. This would seem to be an over-simplification of the forces which drive men in our industrial society. If, in the absence of compensation, men as a rule sought membership on boards of education purely from disinterested motives, this line of reasoning might be accepted as substantially sound; but few who are familiar with the current situation, at least in our cities, would maintain that this form of motivation generally prevails. Not uncommonly membership on the board of education has its extra-legal perquisites as well as the rewards which are written in the law.

TABLE XI  
COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Compensation	Number	Per Cent
No compensation . . . . .	451	86
Compensation per annum (\$12.00 to \$1,200.00) . . . . .	49	9
Compensation for officers only . . . . .	20	4
Compensation per meeting (\$1.00 to \$10.00) . . . . .	6	1
Total . . . . .	526	100

The extent to which our cities have followed the practice of compensating their boards of education is shown in Table XI. According to this table, only rarely does the American city provide financial compensation for the members of its board of education. In 86 per cent of the cities included in this study they serve without compensation. Here and there, however, other practices are followed. In most instances where compensation is provided, a fixed annual sum is stipulated, but there seems to be little agreement among the cities as to how large this sum should be. The range is from twelve to twelve hundred dollars. The most frequent compensations of this order are fifty and one hundred dollars. In some cases only officers receive compensation. Occasionally, members are compensated according to the number of meetings attended. Here again there is little uniformity. This form of remuneration ranges from one to ten dollars a meeting. The city, however, has apparently favored the development of the tradition that service to the public schools should be rendered without economic reward.

Among the county boards the practice of compensating members is

much more common. This fact is revealed by an examination of Table XII. In only 25 per cent of the boards included in the investigation is no compensation provided. Moreover, there is great variety in the methods employed. The most common practice is to provide compensation by the day. Compensation per annum, however, is found with almost equal frequency. Provision for traveling expenses, mileage, compensation per meeting, compensation per hour, and compensation per month are methods which are employed occasionally. Explanation of the difference in the treatment accorded the city board and the county board with respect to

TABLE XII  
COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS OF COUNTY BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Compensation	Number	Per Cent
Compensation per day (\$2.00 to \$6.25) . . . . .	18	30
Compensation per annum (\$30.00 to \$150.00) . . . . .	16	27
No compensation . . . . .	15	25
Traveling expenses only . . . . .	3	5
Mileage only . . . . .	2	3
Compensation per meeting (\$5.00) . . . . .	2	3
Compensation varies with members . . . . .	2	3
Compensation per hour (\$1.00) . . . . .	1	2
Compensation per month (\$35.00) . . . . .	1	2
Total . . . . .	60	100

the question of compensation is not difficult. In the case of the county board attendance at meetings often requires the members to be absent from their places of business for a day or even for several days at a time. A certain amount of traveling is likewise necessary. This creates a situation in so far as compensation is concerned somewhat different from the situation ordinarily found in the cities. As a consequence, the counties seem to have established a tradition of providing compensation for the members of their boards of education.

Facts regarding compensation were also secured for the college and university boards. The practices followed in the forty-one boards of this type for which data are available are reported in Table XIII. The tradition portrayed here seems to be very much like that found in the cities. For the most part, service on the boards which control our state colleges and universities is rendered without compensation. In twenty-four of the forty-one cases involved traveling expenses only are provided. This practice, of course, should be construed as meaning no provision for compensation because the member receives no remuneration for the time devoted to

board duties but is merely reimbursed for expenditures made in going to and from board meetings. In the city no such expenditures of any consequence are involved. In two instances, although traveling and absence from business are necessary, no compensation whatsoever, not even traveling expenses, are allowed. Moreover, according to the reports of the heads of a number of the other state universities, the board members, although entitled under the law to traveling expenses, customarily bear the costs involved in attending the meetings of the board. Under these conditions the board member gives not only of his time but even of his resources in performing the duties of his office.

Apparently, the tradition which has developed about the college and university boards is somewhat at variance with that which has evolved in

TABLE XIII  
COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF CONTROL OF STATE COLLEGES  
AND UNIVERSITIES

Compensation	Number	Per Cent
Traveling expenses only.....	24	59
Compensation per day (\$4.00 to \$10.00) and traveling expenses.....	7	17
Compensation for officers only.....	5	12
Compensation per annum (\$100.00 to \$3,000.00).....	3	7
No compensation.....	2	5
Total.....	41	100

connection with the county boards. This difference in tradition has appeared although the conditions regarding traveling and absence from business are much the same in the two cases. The explanation of this situation is to be found, no doubt, in the perpetuation of the aristocratic tradition in the college and university boards. Members of these boards are more or less deliberately drawn from the prosperous and economically powerful elements in the population. As a consequence, without hardship they can easily bear the expenses involved in attending meetings of the boards. Inability to do this might even be regarded as evidence of unfitness for the office. In more ways than one the college represents the aristocratic tradition in American education. By the right of inheritance it is the possession of the favored classes. Only their children are likely to attend it. Why, therefore, should they not be allowed to control it? The case of the county board, on the other hand, is quite different. This board is of the people and is a product of the demand on their part for

the general extension of educational opportunities. Its concern is with a form of education which may be regarded as the property of all classes. Conditions of membership on this board, therefore, should be of such character as to invite membership from the less favored as well as from the more favored classes.

In an effort to discover whether there is any relation between compensation and permanence of tenure, the writer made a study of the tenure of the members of those city boards in which compensation is provided. Since attendance at board meetings entails a certain amount of personal sacrifice, the association of compensation with service on the board might naturally be expected to make members content to serve for longer periods. However, the evidence brought to light by a study of the actual situation reveals no such tendency. In fact, the median number of years served by members of the compensated boards happens to be three-tenths of a year less than the median number of years served by members of the non-compensated boards. In so far as permanence of tenure is concerned, therefore, it would seem that factors other than the factor of compensation constitute the limiting conditions.

What effect, if any, compensation has on the quality of board members remains to be determined. That compensation is likely to attract inferior men to the board may appear reasonable, but that it actually does seems doubtful. Data to be presented in a subsequent section dealing with the occupations of board members will suggest the wisdom of deferring judgment until the evidence is in. At this point attention will merely be directed to the experience of a superintendent in one of our large cities who has been associated with a relatively well compensated board for a long period of years. In Rochester each of the five members of the board of education receives an annual compensation of twelve hundred dollars. In reply to a query regarding the effect which this compensation has on the quality of board members, Superintendent H. S. Weet writes as follows:

I think anyone who is familiar with conditions in Rochester will tell you that during the twenty-five years that the board has been thus compensated it has been of a high order. Certainly, compensating board members has not in this case had the effect of producing an inferior board. I am by no means ready to advocate salaried boards of education, but there is something to be said in favor of such action. We regularly hold a two-hour session every Thursday, from eleven o'clock until one, with a great many special meetings in addition. All business is done by the board of five members serving as a committee of the whole. My rather limited observation leads me to believe that we make much heavier demands on our board here in Rochester than are usually made.

On the other hand, my own conviction is that these weekly meetings, in which all business is transacted by the board, acting as a committee of the whole, are about the most vital factor in developing an intelligently interested board.

This statement, along with other evidence which may be presented, suggests the need for a careful and systematic study of the question. The experience of the city of Rochester cannot simply be disregarded. However, an investigation of this problem must be beset with many difficulties. Not the least of these is the determination of the proper function of a board of education in a democratic society. Just what is meant by quality of school-board membership must be subjected to the closest possible scrutiny. Perhaps the absence of compensation for service on the board has no effect whatsoever on membership. If, however, this practice actually does tend to exclude or limit the representation of certain classes on the board, the wider social significance of this fact must be carefully considered. Students of education must beware of the natural tendency to appraise a board of education in terms of its effect on the administration of the schools. The more fundamental questions probably have to do with the representation of the various interests and groups in the community and with the formulation of the fundamental educational policies.

## CHAPTER IV

### SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION

The present chapter brings us to the heart of this investigation. The primary object of the study was not to accumulate additional data on the general organization of the board of education. This question has often been the subject of study in the past. The fundamental purpose of the present inquiry was to secure certain personal and social data regarding those citizens who constitute our boards of education. Facts were gathered concerning age, sex, education, occupation, and parental relationship. Such facts should throw some light on the character, interests, and bias of those persons who shape the policies of public education.

#### AGE OF BOARD MEMBERS

One of the most important questions that may be asked regarding the members of our boards of education is the question of age. It is generally believed that, as a generation grows older, it becomes more conservative, tends increasingly to present a closed mind to the world, and is inclined to turn its eyes toward the past. The truth of this belief has never been made the direct object of scientific study, but the evidence of biology, of psychology, and of common observation would seem to lend it support. Since the days of primitive man, the control of education has commonly been vested in the old men of the group. That this has tended to make organized and formal education conservative, if not reactionary, in its outlook, few students of education would deny. The condition in our own society today, therefore, should be of peculiar interest.

Data regarding the ages of board members were obtained from four types of boards. The findings of this division of the study are recorded in Table XIV. According to this table, the membership of American boards of education is very heterogeneous from the standpoint of age. The original data show that the actual range in age is from twenty-two to eighty-five years. Both extremes of this range are found in the city boards. Apparently, eligibility to membership embraces the entire period of maturity, from the years of early manhood or womanhood to the grave. The great majority of the members of these boards, however, are of intermediate age. The years from thirty-five to sixty-five include practically the entire membership. Beyond either of these limits only rarely is an individual asked to serve on the board.

A comparison of the different types of boards reveals some interesting relationships. The median ages of the members of city and county boards are identical. In each case this measure is 48.3 years. In 1922 Struble found the median age of 888 members of city school boards to be 48.4 years.<sup>1</sup> The close agreement of the two studies suggests a relatively stable condition with regard to age among city boards. Exhibiting a greater age on the average by five and one-half years than the members of county and city boards, the members of state and college and university boards

TABLE XIV

AGES OF MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION (FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Age	City Boards	County Boards	State Boards	College and University Boards
Below 30.....	1	2	.....	.....
30-34.....	4	5	1	1
35-39.....	11	13	7	4
40-44.....	19	16	11	10
45-49.....	22	22	17	16
50-54.....	20	15	18	25
55-59.....	10	11	18	16
60-64.....	7	9	11	15
65-69.....	3	4	11	8
70-74.....	2	2	3	4
75 or more.....	1	1	3	1
Total.....	100	100	100	100
Number of members...	2,862	283	184	261
Median.....	48.3	48.3	53.9	53.8

likewise show age distributions almost identical in character. In the one case the median is 53.9 years and in the other 53.8 years.

The greater age of the members of the state and college boards is probably to be explained in part by the methods of selection which prevail in these boards. Another factor, no doubt, and one that is probably of more significance, is the greater geographical area over which state and university boards have jurisdiction. In order to secure membership on either of these boards a candidate must have broad and influential connections and must receive more than local support. His name must be known beyond the narrow limits of the locality in which he lives. In other words, the political route which leads to the state or university board is somewhat longer than that which leads to the city or county

<sup>1</sup> George G. Struble, "A Study of School Board Personnel," *American School Board Journal*, LXV (October, 1922), 49.

board. These conditions would seem to give age an advantage over youth in the competition for membership on the boards of wider authority.

A study of the presidents of the city boards of education shows them to be older by two years on the average than the ordinary members. Thus, the median age of the presidents of city boards is 50.5 years, whereas the median age of the entire membership is 48.3 years. The first conclusion suggested by these facts is that within the group is a certain respect for age. A further study of the situation, however, indicates that the greater age of the board president reflects the recognition of specific board experience rather than respect for the advancing years. The office of president is seldom offered to board members during either their first or second year. This position is naturally reserved for those who are experienced in board business and are familiar with the problems of the school. The median number of years which the presidents of the city boards have served is 6.0 as opposed to 4.1 for the membership as a whole, including the officers. This difference of practically two years is sufficient to account for the greater age of school-board presidents.

Among the cities there is great variation in the average ages of board members. On examination, the actual range is found to be twenty-three years. In Selma, Alabama, the average age of the members of the board is approximately sixty years. In the case of Duryea, Pennsylvania, on the other hand, the corresponding measure is but thirty-seven. Selma, the reader will remember, is served by a self-perpetuating school board. This, no doubt, is an important factor in accounting for the extraordinary average age of this particular board. Why Duryea should have a board composed of relatively young men, the present study does not reveal. Perhaps it is traceable to the operation of those chance influences which in the course of time give to any city now younger and now older boards.

If the cities are classified according to population, no important differences in the ages of board members are discernible. The median age of board members in cities having populations between 2,500 and 5,000 is 47.5 years. In the cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants this measure is but 48.8. Since the median age for an intermediate group of cities, namely, those having populations between 10,000 and 25,000, is 48.7 years, there seem to be no good grounds for assuming that the slight differences between the smallest and the largest cities possess any significance. Apparently, in securing that social recognition necessary to school-board membership, the factor of age operates equally in the larger and the smaller cities.

The differences among the various geographical divisions are some-

what larger. Location seems to be more important than size of city. The differences here, however, are by no means pronounced. According to the data available, the board members in the New England, the South Central, and the Western states are, on the average, about two years younger than the board members in the Middle Atlantic and the South Atlantic states and about one year younger than the board members in the East North Central and the West North Central states. These differences can hardly be regarded as significant, however, since they lie easily within the

TABLE XV  
METHOD OF SELECTION AND AGE OF SCHOOL-BOARD MEMBERS  
(FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Age	Election at Large	Election by Wards	Appointment by Mayor	Appointment by Council	Selection by Other Methods
Below 30.....	1	2	1	.....	.....
30-34.....	4	7	5	2	7
35-39.....	12	11	9	11	17
40-44.....	19	19	20	16	11
45-49.....	23	21	20	18	13
50-54.....	18	20	19	29	25
55-59.....	10	9	13	11	8
60-64.....	7	6	7	8	10
65-69.....	3	4	4	3	1
70-74.....	2	1	1	2	7
75 or more.....	1	.....	1	.....	1
Total.....	100	100	100	100	100
Number of members.....	1,764	311	171	107	72
Median.....	48.0	47.8	49.0	50.7	50.7

error of the investigation. In all parts of the country citizens of approximately the same ages seem to be attracted to the city boards of education.

In an earlier paragraph the comment was made that some relation exists between the method of selection and the age of board members. The truth of this observation rests on the facts presented in Table XV. All the city boards included in the investigation were grouped into five divisions on the basis of the method employed in the selection of members. According to a table already examined,<sup>1</sup> there are but four methods of selecting board members which occur with any degree of frequency, namely, election at large, election by wards, appointment by mayor, and appointment by council. In the table each of these four methods is given distinct status, and all other methods are grouped under a single category. An examination of the medians for these groups shows that, on the whole,

<sup>1</sup> Table IV, p. 16.

the boards with the youngest members are those whose members are elected by wards. The median age advances as members are elected at large, appointed by the mayor, and appointed by the council. Whether the rigors of a political campaign carried to the people tend to place the older men at a disadvantage or whether the mayor and the council are influenced to appoint older men because of their superior wisdom is a question which this study cannot answer. The fact remains, however, that selection by popular vote seems to favor the younger aspirants while selection by appointment appears to give the advantage to the older candidates for office.

Before this discussion is concluded, a few comparisons between school-board members and certain other groups will be of interest. In 1904 Orth made a study of the ages of the members of the state legislatures of Vermont, Ohio, Indiana, and Missouri.<sup>1</sup> As a part of the present investigation, age data have been secured for 750 men whose names were selected at random from Volume 14 (1926-27) of *Who's Who in America*, for the ninety-six members of the United States Senate in 1926, for four hundred members of the United States House of Representatives in 1926, and for the nine members of the United States Supreme Court in 1926. Data for these groups and for the four types of boards of education included in this study are reported in terms of median ages in Table XVI. According to this table, the membership of school boards is recruited from men of intermediate age. If the situation in our state legislatures today is similar to what it was in 1904, the members of these bodies are, on the average, a few years younger than the members of boards of education. On the other hand, the members of Congress are somewhat older. Likewise, the median age of the men whose names are recorded in *Who's Who in America* is somewhat greater than the median age of school-board members. In the United States Supreme Court we have a body which in this respect occupies a unique position. In 1926 the average age of its members was sixty-six years. Of the groups compared in the table, the United States Senate is its closest rival, with a median age of 59.3 years. Whatever may be the merits of the Supreme Court, it is undoubtedly well qualified by its membership to pay homage to precedent. Possibly this is the service which it is expected to render our rapidly changing industrial society, but we should probably be thankful that the destinies of American education are not placed in the hands of a body of this character.

In the matter of age the foregoing presentation suggests that the

<sup>1</sup> Samuel P. Orth, "Our State Legislatures," *Atlantic Monthly*, XCIV (December, 1904), 728-39.

American board of education leaves little to be desired. On the whole, its membership is both mature and relatively young and vigorous. For the most part, the men and women who shape the policies of public education in the United States would seem to be in the prime of life. At the same time, the ordinary board is composed of individuals representative of the different age groups in the population. Both the younger and the older generations are given membership on the board. The generation which is about to leave the stage of action forever and the generation which is just entering upon it for the first time are both found in this body. Therefore, in so far as age reflects the various interests of society, those interests

TABLE XVI

COMPARISON OF THE AGES OF SCHOOL-BOARD MEMBERS WITH THE AGES OF MEMBERS OF CERTAIN OTHER GROUPS

Group	Median Age	Number of Cases
Lower houses of state legislatures* . . . . .	45.3	624
State senates* . . . . .	45.4	144
City boards . . . . .	48.3	2,862
County boards . . . . .	48.3	283
College and university boards . . . . .	53.8	261
State boards . . . . .	53.9	184
United States House of Representatives . . .	54.3	400
Men in <i>Who's Who in America</i> . . . . .	57.5	750
United States Senate . . . . .	59.3	96
United States Supreme Court . . . . .	66.0	9

\* Adapted from Samuel P. Orth, *op. cit.*, pp. 728-39.

would seem to be in a position to make themselves heard on the board of education.

#### SEX OF BOARD MEMBERS

According to Chancellor, women seldom make good school-board members.<sup>1</sup> Whether this represents merely the prejudice of a man-made world or whether it is a fair characterization of the work of women on school boards is not a matter of great importance here. Women constitute one-half of society and therefore may be expected in one way or another to influence educational policy. Moreover, in view of the changing economic, political, and intellectual status of women and the rapidly growing tendency on the part of women to engage in those activities and enterprises which in former times were the special prerogatives of men, a study of the representation of women on boards of education is of unusual inter-

<sup>1</sup> William Estabrook Chancellor, *Our Schools: Their Administration and Supervision*, p. 13. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1915 [revised].

est today. Much has been said and written about the peculiarly intimate relation of woman to education and the care of the child. To some this interest in the younger generation, which is assumed to have a biological foundation, gives to woman a sort of natural right to direct the work of the school. With the conflicting views and prejudices, however, we are not concerned. Our problem is, rather, that of determining whether woman is actually coming to occupy an important position on those bodies to which society has formally delegated the responsibility of directing the organization and administration of the educational program.

The situation as revealed by the present study is shown in Table XVII. Data on the representation of the sexes were secured from the district boards as well as from the four types of boards to which reference has more commonly been made. Rather marked differences are found

TABLE XVII  
SEX OF MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION IN 1926

	Number of Men	Number of Women	Total	Percentage of Women
974 district boards.....	2,545	169	2,714	6.2
473 city boards.....	2,527	422	2,949	14.3
58 county boards.....	299	39	338	11.5
39 state boards.....	252	20	272	7.4
42 college and university boards.....	351	29	380	7.6
All boards.....	5,974	679	6,653	10.2

among these boards. If the inclusion of women on these governing bodies may be regarded as an advanced or progressive tendency, the cities appear to form the vanguard of progress. Fourteen and three-tenths per cent of the members of the city board are women. This means that one of every seven members is a woman. In this extension of membership to women the county board is not far behind the city and occupies second place. Following at some distance and at approximately the same point in the procession are the college and university and the state boards. Bringing up the rear and most conservative of all is the district board. With but 6.2 per cent of its membership women, it no doubt preserves for us the conditions that have generally prevailed in American education in the immediate past.

To an observer unfamiliar with the patriarchal tradition of our society, perhaps the most striking fact reported in this table is the severe discrimination against woman. While her representation is greater on certain types of boards than on others, in the city boards where her position

is strongest she may be outvoted six to one. This discrimination against woman is further revealed by a consideration of the distribution between the two sexes of the office of president of the board. For the men the ratio of presidents to members on the city board is one to six, whereas the corresponding ratio for women is one to twenty-nine. As will be shown in a later section of the report, no occupational group among the men approaches this low ratio of presidents to members. The nearest competitor is found in the men engaged in the various forms of manual labor. Their ratio is approximately one to fourteen. Apparently, while women have been successful in forcing their way into the board of education in small numbers, they have not been able to secure representation equal to that of men in the positions of executive responsibility. They are expected to follow the leadership of the other sex.

The occupational distribution of the women members of the city boards of education is interesting. While the detailed consideration of the occupational data will be reserved for treatment elsewhere, facts for the women members may well be presented briefly here. The range of occupations represented is very wide. It includes housewives, teachers, social workers, physicians, philanthropists, managers, lawyers, authors, journalists, dentists, merchants, musicians, farmers, and others. This list in itself is indicative of the changed status of woman. The great majority of the women members, however, approximately 75 per cent, are following woman's conventional occupation, that of housekeeping. Only two other callings, teaching and social work, have more than a meager or insignificant representation on boards of education.

In chapter ii the statement was made that for 386 cities data on the representation of the sexes on boards of education were secured at two different times. These cities were canvassed first in 1920 and again in 1926. During this six-year period, and the reader must bear in mind that the same cities are involved, the percentage of women increased from 8.2 to 14.6. This represents an extraordinary change in so brief a period. In his study in 1922 of 169 cities, which, on the average, were somewhat smaller than the cities included in the present investigation, Struble found women constituting 9.3 per cent of the membership of boards of education.<sup>1</sup> The corresponding percentage for Nearing's study in 1916 of 104 cities of more than 40,000 inhabitants was 7.0.<sup>2</sup> The results of these two investigations would seem to corroborate the findings of the present

<sup>1</sup> George G. Struble, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Scott Nearing, "Who's Who on Our Boards of Education," *School and Society*, V (January 20, 1917), 90.

study. Apparently, the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 marked an important conquest in woman's struggle for political enfranchisement. In the meantime, whatever success may have attended her efforts in other fields, her advance in securing membership on city boards of education has been phenomenal. If this advance should continue at the same rate for a generation or two, the determination of school policy would pass definitely out of the hands of the sex which has controlled formal education in the past. However, before general conclusions and interpretations of this character are formulated, the data at hand should be subjected to further analysis.

TABLE XVIII  
PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN MEMBERS OF 386 CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION  
IN 1920 AND IN 1926—CITIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING  
TO POPULATION

Population	1920	1926	Number of Boards
5,000-10,000.....	8.1	12.9	113
10,000-25,000.....	7.6	13.3	156
25,000-50,000.....	6.8	16.0	60
50,000-100,000.....	11.3	13.5	35
100,000 or more.....	11.5	22.1	22
All classes of cities.....	8.2	14.6	386

Have the changes with respect to the representation of the two sexes on the board of education progressed equally in cities of all sizes? The answer to this question is found in Table XVIII, and, for the most part, it is an affirmative answer. In each of the five groups of cities for which facts were secured for the two years the increase in the representation of women on the boards is conspicuous. In no one of the groups did the movement mark time during the period. Yet in the rate of change there were some important differences. The change which took place in cities having populations between 50,000 and 100,000 was relatively small, while that which occurred in cities of from 25,000 to 50,000 inhabitants was relatively large. The impression conveyed by the table is that the growing strength of women on boards of education is general.

Aside from reporting the changes which occurred during the years from 1920 to 1926, Table XVIII reveals certain significant relations between size of city and representation of women on school boards. The position of woman seems to be somewhat stronger in the larger cities than in the smaller cities. This is characteristic of the situation in both years

for which facts are available. Nearing found the same condition in 1916. He classified his 104 cities into three groups on the basis of population. In the first group he placed the cities having populations between 40,000 and 100,000; in the second, those having populations between 100,000 and 500,000; and in the third, those having populations of more than 500,000. The percentages of women on the boards of education in these three groups of cities were 5, 8, and 12, respectively.<sup>1</sup> The demand on the part of women for a larger rôle in social and political affairs appears to center in the great cities. The complex metropolitan communities represent the most extreme departure from that simple rural society of the past which was based on the patriarchal family.

TABLE XIX

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN MEMBERS OF 386 CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION  
IN 1920 AND IN 1926—CITIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING  
TO GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISION

Geographical Division	1920	1926	Number of Boards
New England.....	7.8	18.1	81
Middle Atlantic.....	5.6	13.1	84
South Atlantic.....	3.1	12.1	18
East North Central.....	9.9	13.4	98
West North Central.....	8.2	15.7	38
South Central.....	5.1	13.4	30
Western.....	14.5	12.8	37
All divisions.....	8.2	14.6	386

An examination of the data secured from the several geographical divisions raises certain doubts regarding the sweeping character of the changes in the representation of the sexes which took place between 1920 and 1926. The facts for the seven great groups of states are given in Table XIX. Attention will first be directed to the situation as it existed in 1920. In that year conditions in different parts of the country were very uneven. The Western states were apparently far in advance of the other geographical divisions. In this section 14.5 per cent of the members of city boards of education were women. The nearest rival of the West in this respect was the East North Central area, in which the corresponding percentage was 9.9. At the other extreme were the South Atlantic and the South Central divisions, with percentages of 3.1 and 5.1, respectively. In general, the more conservative areas were found in the East and the South; the more progressive, in the West and the North.

<sup>1</sup> Scott Nearing, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

Six years later the situation was almost wholly transformed. The geographical division occupying first place in 1920 held the next to the last place only by a narrow margin in 1926. In this western area the percentage of women on boards of education actually decreased during the six-year period from 14.5 to 12.8. Only in the South Atlantic states did the women have a smaller representation than in the West. The states which appeared extremely conservative in 1920 have witnessed an extraordinary advance, but the progressive states of that time have experienced no corresponding change. With the exception of New England, the situation is now fairly uniform throughout the nation. In the case of New England an increase in the percentage of women from 7.8 to 18.1 places this geographical division in first place. Taken by itself, this fact suggests that within thirty or forty years the New England boards will be controlled by women. An examination of the remainder of the table, however, gives rise to serious doubts regarding any such possibility.

What position woman will occupy on the boards of the future cannot, of course, be foretold. Some of the evidence presented here, however, suggests the operation of certain checking influences. A consideration of the detailed facts from particular boards indicates that the growth of woman membership during the six-year period under investigation is traceable largely to the inclusion of a woman member on a board where previously women had not been represented. There seems to be no tendency for women to increase their membership on individual boards. A community without a woman on its board may feel that it is a bit behind the fashions, but, after securing one such member, it seems to feel no great impulsion to secure another. Probably the country is already approaching a condition of equilibrium with respect to this matter. The ordinary board will possibly have one woman member, and the ordinary community may come to regard it as desirable for the feminine point of view in the population to be guaranteed a hearing on the board, but that we are moving in the direction of a strictly feminine board is hardly sustained by a critical examination of the data here presented.

No attempt has been made here to evaluate women as members of boards of education. Such an evaluation must await the formulation of some fundamental conception of the social function of the board. The interest in the foregoing pages has therefore been to present a picture of the existing situation. However, in concluding this discussion, reference should perhaps be made to the wider issues involved. Quite regardless of the personal qualifications of women, the thesis might be defended that women should be given representation on the board of education to the

degree to which they represent a special interest in society. At the same time the composition of the board should insure a hearing to the remaining great social interests. On the other hand, to the degree to which the interests of women change and become as varied as the interests of men, they might be expected eventually to represent not only what has been known in the past as the "feminine interest" but any other legitimate social interest with which they might happen to become identified.

#### EDUCATION OF BOARD MEMBERS

The extent and nature of the formal education received by board members must be a matter of great importance. The influence of the school at its various levels on those who attend it must be a powerful factor in giving to them their particular points of view, systems of value, and social philosophies. Long years at school are also expected to develop the insight into life, the breadth of social understanding, the freedom from narrow bigotry, the tolerance of strange ideas, and the loyalty to the common good which are essential to the proper functioning of a board of education. This power of the school has long been recognized by students of education; its wholly beneficent influence on school-board members has usually been assumed. Thus, Chancellor voices the opinion that "uneducated and unlearned men" seldom make good board members.<sup>1</sup> To this assumption, however, though it seems an obvious platitude, one may conceivably take exception. Much depends on one's conception of the function of the board of education. It might be unwise to have this body composed entirely of persons who have experienced long years of attendance at school. Let us turn from speculation to an examination of the facts.

Data for the members of the four types of boards investigated are summarized in Table XX. An understanding of this table requires a word of explanation regarding the educational categories employed. The board members are classified into three groups. A finer classification could perhaps have been made, but this threefold classification seemed adequate for the purposes of the present investigation. The measure of formal education achieved by those placed in these three groups is suggested by the three descriptive terms used in the table, namely, "elementary," "secondary," and "higher." A board member who has not attended any form of secondary school or college is placed in the first group; one who has passed beyond the elementary school and into the secondary school but has not attended any higher institution is placed in the second group; and

<sup>1</sup> William Estabrook Chancellor, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

one who has passed beyond the secondary school and attended, for however short a period, either college, university, or professional school is placed in the third group. Thus, according to the table, 61 per cent of the members of the four types of boards combined have gone beyond the secondary school in their formal education; 20 per cent have reached the secondary school but have gone no farther; and 19 per cent have not passed beyond the elementary school. These facts indicate that, from the standpoint of the educational opportunities which they have enjoyed, school-board members are very highly selected.

Table XX further shows that the educational qualifications of board members vary greatly with the type of board. In this respect the county board clearly stands at the foot of the list. However, if data had been

TABLE XX  
EDUCATION OF MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION  
(FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

	Elementary	Secondary	Higher	Total	Number of Members
County boards.....	42	24	34	100	326
City boards.....	23	31	46	100	2,757
State boards.....	7	10	83	100	213
College and university boards..	6	14	80	100	277
All boards.....	19	20	61	100	3,573

gathered from district boards, a still lower standard of formal education would undoubtedly have been found. Forty-two per cent of the members of the county boards have not passed beyond the elementary school, and only 34 per cent have attended college or some form of higher institution. This type of board stands relatively close to the people. At the other extreme are the state and the college and university boards. The educational qualifications of the members of these two types of boards are almost identical. Only very rarely does an individual with but elementary-school training find membership on either board. Indeed, membership is almost entirely confined to those who have attended, if they have not graduated from, some institution of higher learning. The city boards occupy a middle position; yet here almost one-half of the members have had college experience.

These facts indicate quite explicitly that a particular board of education reflects more or less faithfully the conditions which surround it. The closer the board is to the people in origin and function, the more the board takes its color from the people; conversely, the more remote the board is

from the people, the more the board takes its color from some special group or class. This statement of principle should be corrected by the statement that the board always shows some bias toward the more influential and powerful classes. For example, the county board, though more democratic in its membership than any one of the other boards, in its composition seems to be disproportionately sensitive to the more favored elements of its constituency.

That the tendency is somewhat stronger in the larger cities than in the smaller cities to choose as board members individuals who have enjoyed unusual educational opportunities is shown by Table XXI. Here are presented comparative data on this question from the six groups of

TABLE XXI  
EDUCATION OF MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION—  
CITIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO POPULATION  
(FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Population	Elementary	Secondary	Higher	Total	Number of Members
2,500- 5,000.....	26	35	39	100	424
5,000- 10,000.....	26	30	44	100	644
10,000- 25,000.....	22	32	46	100	961
25,000- 50,000.....	23	25	52	100	367
50,000-100,000.....	21	31	48	100	227
100,000 or more.....	8	25	67	100	134
All classes of cities..	23	31	46	100	2,757

cities. While there are some exceptions to the rule, the percentage of board members having no more than an elementary-school education varies inversely as the size of city. In the proportion of members who have attended college the reverse relationship seems to hold. The representation of members of this type increases with the size of the city. The reader should observe, however, that in both instances there is a genuine break in the series between the cities of less than 100,000 inhabitants and the cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants. Apparently in these relationships the population differences which separate the lower five groups of cities are not particularly significant. The very large cities, however, seem to be in a class by themselves. In the cities having populations of less than 5,000 each of the three levels of educational attainment is rather well represented. In the case of the very large cities, on the other hand, the percentage of members with only elementary-school training is 8, while the percentage of members having attended some form of higher institu-

tion is 67. Again, the fundamental proposition may be advanced that the larger the population area involved, the less likely is the board membership to reflect the characteristics of the masses of the people.

The extent of the education of the board members varies somewhat with geography also. The facts are summarized in Table XXII. According to this table, three of the great geographical divisions are rather close competitors for the honor of having the most highly educated boards of education. Among the Western states only 14 per cent of the board members have not gone beyond the elementary school. The corresponding percentages for the South Atlantic and the New England states are 15 and 17, respectively. On the other hand, in the percentage of members

TABLE XXII

EDUCATION OF MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION—  
CITIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO GEOGRAPHICAL  
DIVISION (FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Geographical Division	Elementary	Secondary	Higher	Total	Number of Members
New England.....	17	30	53	100	527
Middle Atlantic.....	32	28	40	100	646
South Atlantic.....	15	34	51	100	159
East North Central.....	23	32	45	100	667
West North Central.....	24	28	48	100	332
South Central.....	24	31	45	100	227
Western.....	14	36	50	100	199
All divisions.....	23	31	46	100	2,757

having enjoyed college privileges, New England leads with 53 per cent, and the South Atlantic and the Western states follow with percentages of 51 and 50, respectively. These three groups of states would seem, therefore, to be tied for first place and rather distinctly in the lead of the other four divisions. At the other extreme, in undisputed possession of last place is the Middle Atlantic area. In the states of this territory 32 per cent of the members of boards of education have not attended high school, while only 40 per cent have received the benefits of college experience. The Central states, both north and south, occupy an intermediate position.

The evidence presented in Tables XX-XXII shows quite clearly that, in so far as educational qualifications are concerned, school-board members represent a rather high degree of selection. The first and natural reaction to this situation is favorable. No doubt, many persons regard this condition without question as extremely desirable. Within limits,

much certainly can be said in defense of such a point of view. Should not those citizens who have enjoyed unusual educational privileges be expected to make the best school-board members? The obvious answer to this question would seem to be affirmative. Yet, if intelligent men and women can be found in the community who have not attended college or even the secondary school, they might be expected to bring to the deliberations on educational policy a certain freshness of point of view which would be helpful. When all the members of the board are to a large degree products of the same educational system, they are likely to manifest a uniformity of outlook which will make difficult the adjustment of the procedures of the schools to the changing needs of society. They will show in their own persons the bias and tradition of the schools. In all probability, they will be inclined to place an inordinately high appraisal on the work of the upper divisions of the system. To them the sacrifice of the interests of the lower schools in favor of the interests of the higher schools will seem altogether fitting and proper. Moreover, so long as formal education at the upper levels remains selective, the graduates of the higher institutions will not only tend to exhibit alike the stamp of the schools but also tend to engage in the same narrow group of occupations and thus to form an educated class, a class apart from the masses. Their interests will consequently appear to conflict with the interests of the great majority of the people, and they will be tempted to defend their own interests in the development of school programs.

#### OCCUPATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS

The occupational data are perhaps the most significant findings of the present investigation. That the occupation is a central fact in the life of the ordinary individual, no one would deny. It is obviously of critical importance in determining the economic status and financial security of the individual. So fundamental is the economic factor in a pecuniary civilization that the occupation thus indirectly, and within limits, determines place of residence, educational advantages, recreational opportunities, the intimate associations of friendship, and social standing in the community. It also is instrumental in shaping one's social philosophy and in fixing one's loyalties in those bitter economic and industrial conflicts which characterize the present age. As a consequence, data on the occupations of board members provide a peculiarly valuable measure of the breadth and variety of interests and points of view represented on boards of education.

In order to organize the detailed facts regarding occupation, some

sort of occupational classification which would be significant was found to be the first necessity. The type of classification desired was one which would divide the members into a small number of groups each of which would exhibit a considerable measure of economic and social homogeneity. After some experimentation it was decided to recognize the following large occupational divisions: proprietors, professional service, managerial service, commercial service, clerical service, manual labor, and agricultural service.<sup>1</sup> Although these terms are supposed to be descriptive, a word of explanation regarding the composition of each of the seven classes will not be out of place.

In the group of proprietors are included bankers, brokers, druggists, hotel owners, laundry owners, lumbermen, manufacturers, merchants, mine owners, publishers, and many others. With the exception of farmers and certain shopkeepers who combine a skilled trade with the commercial function, all owners of enterprises in whatever field are placed in this group. Because of its great economic power, it is without qualification the most influential occupational group in any American urban community. Its members constitute the backbone of chambers of commerce, industrial associations, and numerous taxpayers' organizations. In a society based on private property, they occupy the seats of power since they have direct control over the economic resources of the community.

In the professional service are included architects, authors, clergymen, dentists, civil engineers, journalists, lawyers, physicians, surgeons, teachers, and so on. This is a rather homogeneous group and requires little comment. Its membership ordinarily constitutes the most highly educated element in the American community.

In the managerial service are included all persons, except those included in the first group, who occupy managerial or directing positions in either public or private enterprises. In the ordinary industrial organization this means all forms of service from foreman to superintendent. Contractors, managers, and officials of all kinds are placed in this group.

In the commercial service are included all persons, except those classified in the first group, who are engaged in buying or selling. Buyers, commercial travelers, insurance agents, real-estate agents, salesmen, and others are found in this group.

In the clerical service are included all those engaged in clerical,

<sup>1</sup> With some slight modification this classification was taken from the author's monograph on *The Selective Character of American Secondary Education*, pp. 21-25. Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 19. Chicago: Department of Education, University of Chicago, 1922.

secretarial, and accounting activities. Particular groups classified under this division are accountants, bookkeepers, cashiers, clerks, and others.

Under the category of manual labor is placed a great variety of occupations. It includes all persons engaged in any form of manual labor except agriculture; consequently, in the ordinary American city it is by far the largest of the seven divisions. It includes skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled labor. It embraces members of the building trades, machine trades, printing trades, and all other trades found in the manufacturing

TABLE XXIII

OCCUPATIONS OF MALE MEMBERS OF PUBLIC BOARDS OF EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES (FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Occupation	District Boards	County Boards	City Boards	State Boards	College and University Boards	All Boards
Proprietors . . . . .	2	18	32	18	33	21
Professional service . . . . .	1	22	30	53	41	29
Managerial service . . . . .	*	5	14	2	5	5
Commercial service . . . . .	*	3	6	*	1	2
Clerical service . . . . .	*	2	6	1	*	2
Manual labor . . . . .	1	4	8	*	0	3
Agricultural service . . . . .	95	44	2	2	9	30
Ex officio . . . . .	0	2	*	24	11	7
Unknown . . . . .	1	0	2	0	0	1
Total . . . . .	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of members . . . . .	2,545	299	2,943	252	351	6,390
Number of boards . . . . .	974	58	509	39	42	1,622

\* At least one member was reported for this occupation, but the representation is too small to show in this table.

and mechanical industries. It likewise includes persons engaged in both railroad and street transportation, public service, personal and domestic service, mining, lumbering, and fishing.

The seventh and last group—agricultural service—includes all persons actually engaged in any sort of agricultural enterprise. Among the occupations placed in this group are dairying, farming, fruit growing, gardening, and ranching. While not important in the great industrial cities, in many of the states in the South, the Middle West, and the far West agriculture remains the great economic interest of the people.

This description of the occupational classification employed will probably make Table XXIII somewhat more intelligible than it otherwise might be. In this table are presented in summary form the occupational data brought to light in the investigation of the membership of five types of boards of education. According to this table, two out of every one

hundred of the 2,545 members of the district boards included in the study are engaged as proprietors, one in some sort of professional service, none in managerial service, and so on. The remainder of the table will be understood if read in the same way. An examination of the last column shows the members of the five boards to be drawn for the most part from three occupational groups, namely, proprietors, professional service, and agricultural service. In fact, these three groups provide 80 per cent of the membership of the five types of boards investigated. The other occupations have but slight representation.

The several types of boards show great variation in social composition. The district board is made up almost exclusively of farmers, 95 per cent of the men on these boards coming from this single occupation. The county boards, likewise, serving as they do an essentially rural population, draw very heavily from the agricultural service. Forty-four per cent of their members are farmers. Unlike the district boards, however, these boards have large representations from the proprietors and professional service. The city boards show a somewhat greater measure of heterogeneity. In fact, the city board has a more varied composition than any of the four other bodies included in this study. No one of the different occupational groups is wholly without representation, and no single group possesses sufficient strength to dominate the board. Nevertheless, the city boards are drawn for the most part from three very closely related groups, namely, proprietors, professional service, and managerial service. The state board shows still another tendency. The professional service furnishes more than one-half of its membership. There is also a large representation here that holds office *ex officio*. The college or university board is composed predominantly of proprietors and professional men. Here also an important proportion of the members serve *ex officio*, but the university board differs from the state board in its recognition of the farming population. Another fact of some significance regarding this board is that it is the only board on which labor is wholly without direct representation.

A significant contrast may be drawn between the district and county boards on the one hand and the other three types of boards on the other. The former probably represent the older tradition in the development of the American public school. These boards have been intimately associated with the masses of the people in their struggle for educational opportunities. The intimacy of this association is clearly reflected in the membership of the county and district boards. These boards are composed largely of individuals chosen directly from the ranks of the people.

Attention was directed to this fact in an earlier connection when the education of board members was under examination. The other three types of boards show a different condition. These boards draw their members to a very large degree from what might be described as the favored elements in society. Even in the cities, where the laboring classes constitute well over 60 per cent of the population, only 8 per cent of the members of the boards of education are engaged in manual labor. Thus, only on the rural boards is the membership drawn directly from those occupations in which the great majority of the people engage. The representation of labor on the state board is so small as to be almost invisible, while on the college or university board, as we have already observed, it is wholly absent.

Does this situation not offer a partial explanation of the very general opposition on the part of the rural population to the modification of the district system and the organization of larger units for school support and administration? Do the rural inhabitants not fear that such a change in the educational system means the removal of the schools from their direct control? The hearings in New York State a few years ago on the bill which was planned to encourage the abandonment of the district school indicated the existence of some such fear. The present study shows that there is undoubtedly a basis in fact for this feeling. As the unit under the control of the board increases in size, importance, and complexity, the elements in the population from which members may be drawn become more and more restricted and a different type of citizen is attracted to service on the board. That this necessarily means a superior type of citizen would be difficult to prove. To the student of education, he may seem so because he has enjoyed exceptional educational advantages and because he follows an occupation which carries an uncommon measure of social prestige. His intelligence quotient also is probably considerably above the average. Whether this judgment is sound or not is a question which will be discussed in a later chapter. The point to be made here is merely that, as the unit of school administration changes, the control of education may pass out of the hands of one class and into the hands of another. This would seem to be a matter of the first importance and one that should receive further critical study.

This discussion leads naturally to the consideration of one additional fact which is revealed in Table XXIII. Only 2 per cent of the members of the state boards are classified as representing the agricultural service. That all the members so classified really follow the occupation of farming the detailed reports make extremely doubtful. Apparently, some of them

are placed in this classification by the grace of wealth accumulated in more remunerative callings through which they are enabled to satisfy an avocational interest in agriculture. But let the classification stand unchallenged as it is. Nothing would show more emphatically and conclusively the urban and industrial domination of American civilization. Practically the entire lay membership of the state boards of education is chosen from the population of the city. In many of our great agricultural states educational policies are determined by boards on which there is not a single representative of agriculture. In fact, farmers are found on but four of the thirty-nine boards included in this study. That the state school systems should consequently fail to grapple courageously and effectively with the problems of rural education is precisely the result to be expected. If the educational interests of the rural population are ever to receive adequate consideration, intelligent representation from the farm must be secured on the state board of education.

A study of the detailed facts regarding the occupations of board members brings out certain significant aspects of the situation that are not revealed by the data presented in Table XXIII. The table gives the representation of the great occupational divisions; knowledge of the representation of particular occupations is equally illuminating. An examination of the facts shows that the board membership is drawn not only from a few occupational divisions but also from a very small number of occupations. For example, 486 of the 2,943 city board members included in the study are merchants. This occupation has the largest representation. The lawyers come second, with 335 members; the physicians third, with 266 members; the manufacturers fourth, with 183 members; and the bankers fifth, with 180 members. Except for shifts in the relative positions of the several occupations, the situation is much the same in the other boards. If the heavy representation of the agricultural service on the county board is disregarded, the merchants are found to occupy first place on this as on the city board. By displacing the lawyers, the physicians hold second place instead of third place. As will be shown later, the relation between these two occupations is interesting. On the less powerful boards, the boards which are closest to the people, the physicians tend to hold the stronger position. On the other hand, on the more influential boards, the boards in which membership carries considerable prestige and power, the lawyers are found in greater numbers. On the state board the educators provide by far the largest occupational representation. In fact, 79 of the 252 members involved are drawn from this single group. This strong inclination on the part of the state board is to be accounted for almost en-

tirely in terms of specific legislative enactment. Why the American people have so generally adopted the practice of including on the state board such a large number of persons who follow education as a profession remains to be explained. With respect to other boards which shape educational programs, they have pursued a different policy. A further analysis of the state board is of interest. After the educators come the lawyers. The merchants occupy third place; the bankers, fourth place; and the manufacturers, fifth place. The physicians, as well as all the remaining occupations, have a very meager representation. On the college and university boards the lawyers occupy an overwhelmingly dominant position. One hundred and one of the 351 members of these boards are lawyers. Merchants hold second place, bankers third, farmers fourth, manufacturers fifth, physicians sixth, and educators seventh. The occupational affiliations of the other members are very scattered, but the fact should not be obscured that this board is dominated by the lawyer. In concluding this study of the particular occupations from which the members of the several boards are drawn, the statement may be made that, where the rural population has lost its hold on the schools, the board is very largely in the hands of merchants, lawyers, physicians, bankers, manufacturers, and persons in positions of executive responsibility.

The status of the clergy on boards of education deserves special comment. All the evidence which has come down from the past indicates that in the early history of our country the control of education was in the hands of the clergy. Even after the separation of church and school the minister apparently continued to exercise great influence in determining educational policy. In the meantime, a fundamental transformation has taken place. On the public boards of education today, clergymen are practically without representation. Among the 2,943 members of city boards of education for whom data were secured, there are but 32 clergymen. The dentists, an occupational group which is without the tradition of social leadership and which is not ordinarily regarded as having any special interest in public affairs, have sixty-nine board members, more than twice as many as the clergy. Engineering, another of the newer professions, has thirty-one representatives. On the other types of boards the situation is the same. Everywhere the minister is without strong or even modest representation. Whether this decline in the power of the clergy over the school merely reflects the decline of the church as a social institution or whether it is to be traced to the religious and sectarian heterogeneity of the American people is a question for speculation. The point to be emphasized here is that, with the development of our industrial

civilization, the control of education has passed from the ministry. This shift of power from clergy to laymen is one of the most significant changes which have affected American education in the course of a century. This change, along with the shift of power from the farm to the city, marks the birth of a new civilization, a civilization dominated by the interests and ideals of industry, commerce, and finance.

In a number of the states the colleges of agriculture and mechanic arts are separated from the state universities and are provided with their

TABLE XXIV

OCCUPATIONS OF MALE MEMBERS OF THIRTY-FOUR BOARDS OF CONTROL OF STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES AND OF EIGHT BOARDS CONTROLLING STATE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES (FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Occupation	College and University Boards	Agricultural-College Boards
Proprietors.....	33	32
Professional service.....	44	28
Managerial service.....	5	2
Commercial service.....	2	0
Clerical service.....	*	0
Manual labor.....	0	0
Agricultural service.....	6	26
Ex officio.....	10	12
Total.....	100	100
Number of members.....	286	65

\* At least one member was reported for this occupation, but the representation is too small to show in this table.

own boards of control. A comparison of the social composition of these boards with the social composition of boards that govern the state universities is of interest. The facts are found in Table XXIV. According to this table, some conscious effort has been made to adjust the membership of the board to the type of institution to be served. Thus, on the boards controlling the agricultural colleges, more than one-fourth of the membership is drawn from the agricultural service. In the case of the state universities the situation is quite different. Here, although in a number of instances the institutions have agricultural colleges or departments, the rural population is provided with very meager representation. Contrast the two types of controlling bodies. Whereas 26 per cent of the members of the agricultural-college boards are farmers, only 6 per cent of the members of the university boards come from this occupational group.

The only other difference between the boards from the standpoint of social composition is found in the professional service. The percentages for the state universities and the agricultural colleges are 44 and 28, respectively. This seems to mean that in constituting the boards that control the agricultural colleges a certain number of farmers are substituted for a like number of lawyers. Apparently, farmers are thought to have some special rights or interests with respect to the control of the agricultural college, but in the control of other forms of education they are assumed to have neither rights nor interests. This condition no doubt

TABLE XXV  
OCCUPATIONS OF MALE MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION—  
CITIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO GEOGRAPHICAL  
DIVISION (FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

OCCUPATION	GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS							ALL DIVISIONS
	New England	Middle Atlantic	South Atlantic	East North Central	West North Central	South Central	Western	
Proprietors . . . . .	21	26	40	36	33	39	35	31
Professional service . . . . .	40	28	30	25	29	25	30	31
Managerial service . . . . .	15	17	12	14	11	8	15	14
Commercial service . . . . .	7	4	9	6	8	10	8	6
Clerical service . . . . .	6	9	3	8	5	6	2	6
Manual labor . . . . .	7	11	3	7	9	9	6	8
Agricultural service . . . . .	2	1	1	1	4	3	3	2
Unknown . . . . .	2	4	2	3	1	*	1	2
Total . . . . .	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of members . . . . .	585	669	184	676	365	266	198	2,943

\*At least one member was reported for this occupation, but the representation is too small to show in this table.

reflects the aristocratic tradition of higher education combined with the curious psychology of a complacent commercial civilization.

A more detailed study of the occupations of the members of the city boards of education will now be made. In Table XXV are given the facts regarding the occupational composition of city school boards in the different geographical areas. An examination of this table shows that, on the whole, the boards are very much alike all over the United States. Everywhere the boards are composed almost entirely of persons drawn from the favored social and economic classes. Yet certain minor differences may be observed. In New England, for example, the professional service occupies a peculiarly strong position on city boards of education. On the other hand, in these northeastern states less authority is given the

proprietors than in any other area. This tendency of New England to place trust in the followers of the professions, particularly the lawyers, rather than in the proprietors, particularly the merchants, is perhaps the most significant departure from the general practice on the part of any great geographical division. Another fact of interest in this connection is that only in these states of Puritan ancestry does the tradition of clerical control of education survive at all. Twenty of the thirty-two clergymen found on the city boards of education were serving New England communities.

Each of the other great geographical divisions shows more or less variation from the country average, although the West North Central and the Western states approximate this average very closely. In the Middle Atlantic area the boards exhibit the greatest social heterogeneity. Here the proprietors and the professional service combined have their smallest representation, while the managerial service, the clerical service, and manual labor show the greatest strength. On the other hand, in the South Atlantic states the opposite condition seems to exist. In these states the proprietors and the professional service combined show a strength not found elsewhere. The combined representation of these two groups amounts to 70 per cent of the entire board membership. The other groups, particularly manual labor, are given but slight recognition. In harmony with the findings in other departments of this investigation, these facts indicate that in the control of education the South Atlantic states follow what may be called the "aristocratic tradition." The peculiarities of practice in the other geographical divisions are so small as scarcely to merit discussion.

Between the social composition of the board of education and the size of city which the board serves, there seems to be some consistent relation. The data presented in Table XXVI shows this to be the case. An examination of this table reveals two tendencies which appear to be mutually complementary. The representation from the professional service varies more or less directly with the population of the city. Thus, in cities of the smallest size, cities with populations between 2,500 and 5,000, only 20 per cent of the board members are drawn from this occupational group. At the other extreme, in the cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants, this percentage rises to 47. Moreover, with each advance in the size of the city, the representation from the professions increases. In the largest cities almost one-half of the board members are chosen from this small occupational group. These facts would seem to be in harmony with the educational data already presented.

The other clear-cut tendency is one that might not have been anticipated. The representation of manual labor seems to vary inversely with the size of the city. One might expect the laboring classes to show their greatest strength on boards of education in the great industrial cities, where labor organizations are powerful. Such an expectation is clearly not supported by the facts. Nowhere is labor represented in proportion to its numbers in the population, but its percentage of board members is twice as great in the smallest cities as in the largest cities. Apparently, successful candidacy for board membership in the great cities requires a wider range of contacts and acquaintanceship than a laboring man possesses.

TABLE XXVI  
OCCUPATIONS OF MALE MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION—  
CITIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO POPULATION  
(FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

OCCUPATION	POPULATION OF CITIES						ALL CLASSES OF CITIES
	2,500 to 5,000	5,000 to 10,000	10,000 to 25,000	25,000 to 50,000	50,000 to 100,000	100,000 or More	
Proprietors.....	41	27	32	27	30	25	31
Professional service.....	20	26	30	33	35	47	30
Managerial service.....	12	16	14	16	13	9	14
Commercial service.....	8	7	5	8	7	10	7
Clerical service.....	7	9	7	6	3	3	6
Manual labor.....	10	10	8	6	6	5	8
Agricultural service.....	2	3	1	1	1	0	2
Unknown.....	0	2	3	3	5	1	2
Total.....	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of members.	375	679	1,013	431	274	171	2,943

The existence of powerful opposing employers' and taxpayers' organizations which control the organs of public opinion probably more than counterbalances the strength of labor's own organizations. Only in the small communities is the selection likely to be based on personal knowledge of the candidates.

No other equally distinct relations between the social composition of the board and the population of the city are revealed by the table. However, there are certain additional tendencies which, though somewhat obscure, merit passing notice. The clerical service seems to follow the same course as manual labor by showing less strength in the larger cities than in the smaller cities. That the group of proprietors behaves in similar fashion, the table would appear to suggest; but on this point the evidence is by no means clear.

An examination of the original data reveals certain interesting facts regarding specific occupations which are obscured in the summary presented in the table. Thus, among the proprietors, bankers and manufacturers tend to displace the merchants in the larger cities. In cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants the bankers and manufacturers combined just equal the merchants, while in cities of less than 5,000 inhabitants the former have only about one-half the representation of the latter. Within the field of the professional service also certain significant shifts may be observed. The contrast between the lawyers and the physicians is of special interest. In the group of smallest cities these two occupations have the same representation, but in the largest cities the lawyers show almost double the strength of the physicians. These facts support the conclusions derived from an examination of the composition of the different types of boards.

The earlier investigations by Nearing and Struble reveal, so far as they go, the same relationships discovered in this study. Consider Nearing's findings first. Since his occupational categories differ somewhat from those used here, it is difficult to make the comparison between the two studies complete. There is one point, however, at which the comparison can be made. The category of professional service carried approximately the same connotation in both investigations. Nearing studied only cities of more than 40,000 inhabitants. In presenting his data, he classified his 104 cities into three groups. In the first he placed those with populations between 40,000 and 100,000; in the second, those with populations between 100,000 and 500,000; and in the third, those with populations of more than 500,000. The percentage of board members drawn from the professions rose from 35 in the first group to 41 in the second and to 46 in the third.<sup>1</sup> These percentages agree fairly closely with those presented in Table XXVI for cities of corresponding size.

Struble did not classify his cities according to size, but he states at one point that he included in his study of 169 cities a number of communities of less than 2,000 inhabitants and but two of more than 250,000.<sup>2</sup> This suggests that the average for his cities was somewhat smaller than the average for the cities of the present investigation. Since he reported his findings in detail, a full comparison with the results of this study can be made. Of the 761 male members of boards of education for whom he secured occupational data, 41 per cent were drawn from the proprietors, 25 per cent from the professional service, 12 per cent from the managerial

<sup>1</sup> Scott Nearing, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> George G. Struble, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

service, 5 per cent from the commercial service, 4 per cent from the clerical service, 6 per cent from the agricultural service, and 7 per cent from the laboring classes.<sup>1</sup> These percentages correspond rather closely to those for the group of smallest cities in the present investigation. Moreover, the relatively heavy representation of farmers suggests that the average size of his cities was rather small.

TABLE XXVII  
RATIO OF SCHOOL-BOARD MEMBERS TO PRESIDENTS  
(RATIOS COMPUTED FOR THE MORE IMPORTANT  
OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS)

Occupation	Ratio
Lawyers.....	3.5
Professional service (total).....	4.6
Dentists.....	4.6
Managerial service.....	4.9
Physicians.....	4.9
Manufacturers.....	4.9
Bankers.....	5.0
Educators.....	5.1
Proprietors (total).....	5.5
Merchants.....	6.5
Commercial service.....	6.9
Clergymen.....	8.0
Engineers.....	10.3
Clerical service.....	10.7
Agricultural service.....	10.8
Manual labor.....	13.9
All occupations.....	5.8

The discrimination against certain occupational groups is further revealed by a study of the occupations of the presidents of the city boards of education. As the selection of the board members reveals the bias of the electorate or of the selecting power, so the choice of the board president reveals the bias of the board itself. The data are presented in Table XXVII. In this table is reported for each of certain of the more important occupations or occupational divisions the ratio between members and presidents. The ratio was computed by dividing the total number of board members from a particular occupation by the number of presidents from the same occupation. The lawyers are apparently the most favored occupational class. In proportion to their numbers they provide a larger

<sup>1</sup> George G. Struble, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

number of presidents than any other group. Thus, the ratio of 3.5 means in this case that for every 3.5 lawyers serving as board members one occupies the position of president. Professional service as a whole comes second, dentists third, managerial service fourth, physicians fifth, manufacturers sixth, bankers seventh, and so on. Perhaps the most significant fact in the table relates to the position of representatives of the laboring classes. They furnish but few board presidents. Their actual ratio of presidents to members is but 1 to 13.9. In general, the table indicates that those classes which are least well represented on the board are least likely to have their members elected to the office of president.

Another measure of the influence of the various occupational groups is found in the tenure of office. Since the authority of a board member must be determined in part by the extent of his experience on the board, the question of tenure would seem to be important. This problem was attacked by making a study of the tenure of the labor members of the city boards of education. A rather striking condition was discovered. On the average, the tenure of a labor member is one year less than the tenure of members drawn from other occupational groups. Thus, whereas the median tenure of office for all board members is 4.1 years, that for the labor members is but 3.1 years. These facts suggest again the rather precarious position which the laboring classes hold on boards of education in American cities. They seem to experience difficulty in securing membership on these boards, and, after securing membership, they experience the same difficulty in retaining it. From every standpoint the more favored classes appear to dominate the board.

The thought has sometimes been expressed that there is some relation between the method employed in the selection of board members and the social classes from which they are drawn. The extent to which this is found to be the case within the limits revealed by the present study is shown in Table XXVIII. In this table the 2,943 members of city school boards are classified according to method of selection. As an earlier table shows, there are but four methods employed with sufficient frequency to be considered in this comparison, namely, election at large, election by wards, appointment by mayor, and appointment by council. The other seven methods employed in the cities included in the present investigation are grouped together under a single category.

While the evidence is far from conclusive, Table XXVIII suggests that boards composed of members elected either at large or by wards rest on a somewhat wider social base than those which are appointed either by the mayor or by the council. The story is told for the most part in the

representation given to the clerical service and to manual labor. In both of these instances the data show clearly that, for the cities studied, clerical workers and manual laborers have somewhat better chances of securing membership on elective boards than on appointive boards. If the representations of these two occupational groups are combined, the percentages of the elective boards are 15 and 16, while the percentages of the appointive boards are 8 and 5. Apparently, candidates from the less favored classes are more acceptable to the people than to either the mayor or the council. An examination of the combined representations of the two great groups, the proprietors and the professional service, reveals the

TABLE XXVIII

METHOD OF SELECTION AND THE OCCUPATIONS OF MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION (FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Occupation	Election at Large	Election by Wards	Appointment by Mayor	Appointment by Council	Selection by Other Methods	All Methods of Selection
Proprietors . . . . .	28	34	41	48	40	32
Professional service . . . . .	31	26	31	26	30	30
Managerial service . . . . .	15	13	10	12	10	14
Commercial service . . . . .	6	8	8	6	7	6
Clerical service . . . . .	7	7	3	1	7	6
Manual labor . . . . .	8	9	5	4	2	8
Agricultural service . . . . .	2	2	0	1	2	2
Unknown . . . . .	3	1	2	2	2	2
Total . . . . .	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of members . . . . .	2,108	448	190	154	43	2,943

other side of the picture. On the boards whose members are elected at large the percentage drawn from these two occupational groups is 59. The corresponding percentage for members elected by wards is 60. On the other hand, where members are appointed by the mayor, this percentage is 72; and where the members are appointed by the council, 74. Thus, while the evidence is not wholly convincing, the conclusion may be held tentatively that the method of selection employed is a factor of considerable importance in determining the social composition of boards of education. The appointing agents are apparently inclined to make their appointments from members of their own social and economic groups. Since they are commonly drawn from the more favored classes, their appointees are predominantly members of these same classes.

Another question which has received some attention in educational discussions pertains to the relation between the compensation of mem-

bers and the social composition of boards of education. The statement has commonly been made that, if compensation is provided, an inferior class will be attracted to membership on the board. So simple has been the line of reasoning in support of this view that it has practically gone unchallenged. However, before examining the argument, we should note that in the minds of those who have made this statement an inferior membership means, to a certain degree at least, a membership drawn from the less favored social classes. That this is a doubtful criterion for judging the quality of board members will be pointed out later, but let this assumption rest for the moment. The a priori argument in favor of this position, like most a priori arguments, appears to require little defense. That the association of compensation with board membership will attract individuals who are drawn by the thought of compensation seems so obvious a principle that it scarcely needs to be stated. Since the compensation provided by the city for this service is almost certain to be meager, it will attract only those persons who are in somewhat straitened economic circumstances. Hence, the course of wisdom is to provide no compensation and thus to insure the extension of board membership to persons who have no ulterior motive but who are willing to serve because of interest in, and devotion to, civic affairs. Moreover, the presumption is that such persons will come from those classes which, because they enjoy an economic security resting on private enterprise, will not feel the urge of the economic motive in their public relations.

In order to throw some light on this question, the members of city boards were divided into two classes. In the one were placed all those who receive no compensation whatsoever and in the other those who receive some compensation, however meager. Since the practice of compensating board members in our cities is far from common, this second group is relatively small. In fact, only 213 of the 2,943 members for whom occupational data were secured receive compensation. In some instances, as a re-examination of Table XI (p. 30) will show, the compensation received is almost negligible. Yet the comparison of these two types of boards from the standpoint of social composition will be interesting and suggestive, if not convincing. The facts are presented in Table XXIX.

An examination of Table XXIX indicates that the conventional line of reasoning may be faulty. If a good school-board member is defined as one who is drawn from the more favored social and economic classes, provision for compensation would seem to improve the quality of the membership. Two differences in the occupational distributions for the two

types of boards should be noted. In the first place, the proprietors appear to exhibit an unusual sensitiveness to compensation. Forty-four per cent of the members receiving compensation are drawn from this occupational group, whereas only 30 per cent of the members of the non-compensated boards are proprietors. In the second place, the two least favored groups in this classification, the clerical service and manual labor, have much larger representations on the non-compensated boards than on the compensated boards. A satisfactory explanation of this situation is difficult to discover. The differences are altogether too large to be ignored. Yet one hesitates to ascribe them to the presence or absence of compensation.

TABLE XXIX

COMPARISON OF OCCUPATIONS OF MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION WHO SERVE WITH COMPENSATION AND OF MEMBERS WHO SERVE WITHOUT COMPENSATION (FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Occupation	Members Receiving Compensation	Members Receiving No Compensation
Proprietors.....	44	30
Professional service.....	29	30
Managerial service.....	14	14
Commercial service.....	6	7
Clerical service.....	2	7
Manual labor.....	4	8
Agricultural service.....	*	2
Unknown.....	1	2
Total.....	100	100
Number of members.....	213	2,730

\* At least one member was reported for this occupation, but the representation is too small to show in this table.

In order to uncover, if possible, some other factor or principle of explanation, the data were subjected to further analysis. The hypothesis seemed at least tenable that the difference might be due to the operation of certain selective influences which were more or less concealed in the tabulation of the data. The first thought was that the fifty-five compensated boards might be confined to certain areas or to cities of a certain size. Since the composition of board membership has been shown to vary somewhat with geography and with the size of the city, the returns were examined for the purpose of testing these hypotheses. The examination showed that the compensated boards were drawn from cities of all sizes but that they were confined to a few states. The largest number was reported from Indiana. In fact, all the boards in this state for which facts

were secured were of this type. The only other states represented with a compensated board were California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Utah, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

In order to eliminate the factors of size of city and location, the fifty-five compensated boards were compared with fifty-five non-compensated boards which were matched as closely as possible with respect to these two factors. The factors of organization were also matched where feasible. The fruits of this attack on the problem are reported in Table XXX. A

TABLE XXX

COMPARISON OF OCCUPATIONS OF MALE MEMBERS OF FIFTY-FIVE CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION WHO SERVE WITH COMPENSATION AND OF FIFTY-FIVE CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION, MATCHED AS TO LOCATION AND SIZE OF CITY, WHO SERVE WITHOUT COMPENSATION (FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Occupation	Members Receiving Compensation	Members Receiving No Compensation
Proprietors.....	44	33
Professional service.....	29	29
Managerial service.....	14	11
Commercial service.....	6	7
Clerical service.....	2	8
Manual labor.....	4	9
Agricultural service.....	*	2
Unknown.....	1	1
Total.....	100	100
Number of members.....	213	290

\* At least one member was reported for this occupation, but the representation is too small to show in this table.

glance at this table reveals a situation almost identical with that portrayed in the preceding table. Apparently, the differences between the compensated and the non-compensated boards are not to be explained in terms of the operation of the chance factors of geography and size of city. When the two sets of boards are matched in these respects, the members receiving compensation for their services remain a relatively highly selected group. Where no financial considerations are attached to the office, the board exhibits a relatively large representation from the less favored groups, particularly from the clerical workers and the laboring classes.

Before concluding that the provision of a decidedly modest, if not a nominal, compensation for services on the board has a pronounced effect

on the social composition of the membership, let us examine one other possibility. The compensated board seems to be on the average an extremely small board. According to Table XXX, there were 290 male members serving on the fifty-five non-compensated boards and but 213 serving on the compensated boards. If the total number of possible members, both male and female, is computed for the two sets of boards on the basis of the number of members provided by law, the corresponding figures are 317 and 235. The medians are 5.7 and 3.8, respectively. This

TABLE XXXI

COMPARISON, WITH RESPECT TO LEGAL NUMBER OF MEMBERS, OF FIFTY-FIVE CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION WHOSE MEMBERS SERVE WITH COMPENSATION AND FIFTY-FIVE CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION, MATCHED AS TO LOCATION AND SIZE OF CITY, WHOSE MEMBERS SERVE WITHOUT COMPENSATION

Number of Members	Boards Whose Members Serve with Compensation	Boards Whose Members Serve without Compensation
3 .....	35	8
4 .....		1
5 .....	9	27
6 .....	5	7
7 .....	2	8
8 .....	2	
9 .....		1
10 .....	1	
12 .....	1	1
16 .....		2
Total .....	55	55
Median .....	3.8	5.7

means that the compensated board ordinarily has two members less than the non-compensated board.

These differences seem to be so significant that the detailed facts regarding the number of members for the two types of boards are presented in Table XXXI. According to this table, thirty-five of the fifty-five compensated boards have but three members each. On the other hand, in the case of the boards whose members serve without compensation, the most frequent practice is the five-member board. This wide divergence exists in spite of the fact that in the selection of the fifty-five non-compensated boards an effort was made to match the compensated boards not only in location and size of city but also in number of members. The three-member boards of the former type simply could not be found for the same area

and for cities of approximately the same population. However, that the effort to match the boards in this respect was not wholly unsuccessful is revealed by the median number of members on the 474 non-compensated boards included in this study. That median is 6.6. If the median of 3.8 for the compensated boards is compared with the median of 6.6, we have the true measure of the difference in size between the two types of boards. Of what significance is this fact in explaining the greater degree of social selection which is characteristic of the compensated board? A consideration of this question will be of interest.

The explanation is really quite simple. The compensated board is naturally a small board, and a small board is naturally a highly selected board. The compensated board tends to be a small board for economic reasons. So long as the community is able to secure the services of board members gratis, it is not likely to see the wisdom of having a small board; but, as soon as the community is asked to pay for the services rendered, it experiences an improvement in its vision and it sees quite clearly that a small board can perform its work just as efficiently as a large board. The small board is a highly selected board because each position on the board carries great power and influence in the control of the schools. As a consequence, competition for membership becomes keener, and only representatives of the favored and dominant groups in the community are likely to be successful candidates for office. So long as the board is large, these dominant elements will have no objection to the inclusion on the board of one member from some less favored group; but, as soon as the number of members is reduced, let us say, to three, the situation undergoes radical change. On a board of three one member is very powerful and may cause trouble, whereas on a larger board a single member, unless he is a very extraordinary type of person, can have but little influence. Thus, according to this line of reasoning, the factor of compensation operates in an indirect rather than in a direct fashion to produce a board whose membership is somewhat selected from the standpoint of social composition.

That this explanation is not derived wholly from speculation is shown by another type of evidence secured. The 529 boards included in the investigation were grouped into three classes on the basis of the number of members. In the first class were placed the 79 three-member boards; in the second class, the 354 boards having from four to seven members; and in the third class, the 96 boards having more than seven members. Occupational data for the male members of these three groups of boards are presented in Table XXXII. This table shows at a glance that the membership of the three-member board is rather highly selected and

selected as that of the compensated board is selected. Seventy-two per cent of the members are drawn from the proprietors and the professional service. On the other hand, the combined representation of the commercial service, clerical service, manual labor, and agricultural service is but 13 per cent. Contrast with these facts the data for the board with from four to seven members. The corresponding percentages for the same two combinations of occupational groups are 58 and 25, respectively. However, the very large boards do not show the still greater representation expected of these less favored groups. Apparently, this is due to the fact that these large boards are confined for the most part to the larger

TABLE XXXII  
OCCUPATIONS OF MALE MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION—  
BOARDS CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF MEMBERS  
(FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Occupation	Three Members	Four to Seven Members	Eight or More Members	Boards of All Sizes
Proprietors . . . . .	39	29	34	32
Professional service . . . . .	33	29	30	30
Managerial service . . . . .	15	14	14	14
Commercial service . . . . .	3	7	7	6
Clerical service . . . . .	4	7	6	6
Manual labor . . . . .	5	9	6	8
Agricultural service . . . . .	1	2	2	2
Unknown . . . . .	0	3	1	2
Total . . . . .	100	100	100	100
Number of members . . . . .	211	1,920	812	2,943

cities and in these cities certain contrary influences are at work which have been discussed in an earlier section. In the great urban centers the capitalistic and professional classes seem to dominate the situation as they do not in the smaller communities. Nevertheless, the large board, although it is ordinarily found in the metropolis, exhibits a considerably smaller degree of social selection than does the three-member board. The association of compensation with the small board would seem, therefore, to be the most probable explanation of the restricted character of the membership of the compensated board. Thus, operating in an indirect fashion, the provision for compensating members appears to produce a result the exact opposite of that which is expected on a priori grounds.

Before leaving this study of the occupations of board members, let us examine comparative data from certain other groups. Such a comparison should show us whether in its social composition the board of

education occupies a unique place among legislative bodies in American society or whether it is merely representative of the fundamental trends in our civilization. Data are available for certain state legislatures and for the United States Congress. Occupational data for the state legislatures, taken from the study by Haynes,<sup>1</sup> are summarized in Table XXXIII. Since the facts were gathered and presented by another investigator, they could not be thrown into precisely the same form that has been used in the present investigation. In reporting his findings, Haynes recognized specifically but four occupations, namely, farmers, lawyers, merchants, and manufacturers. Legislators drawn from all other occupations were placed in a single group.

TABLE XXXIII  
OCCUPATIONS OF MEMBERS OF STATE LEGISLATURES, ACCORDING TO  
HAYNES (FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Occupation	Senate	Lower House
Farmers.....	19	34
Lawyers.....	36	18
Merchants.....	17	15
Manufacturers.....	6	8
Miscellaneous.....	22	25
Total.....	100	100
Number of members.....	1,021	3,556

While the unanalyzed character of the data severely limits the number of comparisons that can be made, the general impression conveyed by this table is not unlike that conveyed by the tables on the occupations of board members. Both the state legislature and the board of education are composed largely of members of the more favored social groups. As one might expect, the senate is a more highly selected body than the lower house. In the latter is found, for example, a much larger proportion of farmers and a much smaller proportion of lawyers than in the former. Data not presented in the table make possible a study of the representation of the several occupations in the different geographical divisions. Such a study reveals certain rather pronounced differences. Thus, in the eastern states the farmers show but little strength, whereas the merchants, manufacturers, and managers are represented in rather large numbers. In the southern states the most striking fact observed is the large hold which

<sup>1</sup> George H. Haynes, "Representation in State Legislatures," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, XV (March and May, 1900), 204-35, 405-25; XVI (July and September, 1900), 93-119, 243-72.

the lawyers have on the legislature. In the central and western states a position somewhat intermediate between that of the East and the South is found. These generalizations regarding the characteristics of the legislatures in the different areas appear to apply almost equally to the senators and the members of the lower house.

In his study of the occupations of the members of the legislatures in Vermont, Ohio, Indiana, and Missouri, Orth<sup>1</sup> reported his data in sufficient detail to make possible a much closer comparison with the findings of the present investigation. A summary of his data, compared with the

TABLE XXXIV

COMPARISON OF OCCUPATIONS OF MALE MEMBERS OF FIVE TYPES OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION (SEE TABLE XXIII) AND OCCUPATIONS OF MEMBERS OF LEGISLATURES OF VERMONT, OHIO, INDIANA, AND MISSOURI\* (FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Occupation	Senate of State Legislature	Lower House of State Legislature	Average for Two Houses of State Legislature	Average for Five Types of Boards of Education
Proprietors . . . . .	25	21	23	21
Professional service . . . . .	56	30	43	29
Managerial service . . . . .	0	0	0	5
Commercial service . . . . .	0	1	†	2
Clerical service . . . . .	0	†	†	2
Manual labor . . . . .	3	7	5	3
Agricultural service . . . . .	14	36 <sup>†</sup>	25	30
Ex officio . . . . .	0	0	0	7
Unknown . . . . .	2	5	4	1
Total . . . . .	100	100	100	100
Number of members . . . . .	147	614	761	6,390

\* Adapted from Samuel P. Orth, *op. cit.*, pp. 728-39.

† At least one member was reported for this occupation, but the representation is too small to show in this table.

average for five types of boards of education, is reported in Table XXXIV. An examination of this table shows that one of the occupational categories, namely, managerial service, which was employed in the study of school-board membership, does not appear in the classification of the occupations of the legislators. That there were no representatives of this group in the legislatures of the four states seems unlikely. The absence of this group in the table is rather due to difficulties in fitting Orth's data into the classification employed here. He probably reported some persons engaged in managerial service as business men and others as professionals. The ex-officio group also, and for obvious reasons, is not found among the legislators. At other points the two classifications are in agreement.

<sup>1</sup> Samuel P. Orth, *op. cit.*, pp. 728-39.

According to Table XXXIV, the legislators in the four states in 1904 were drawn from almost the same occupational classes as the members of boards of education in 1926. The senators are somewhat more highly selected than the members of the lower house, but the two groups combined look much like the school-board membership. The chief differences are the somewhat larger representation of the professions (and this means lawyers) in the legislatures and the somewhat larger representation of managers, salesmen, and clerks on the school boards. Manual labor shows a bit more strength in the legislatures than on the boards. The table indicates, however, that the classes which dominate our boards of education are also the classes which rule our state legislatures. The rural

TABLE XXXV  
OCCUPATIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS, 1926  
(FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

Occupation	Senate	House of Representatives
Proprietors.....	24	15
Professional service.....	70	72
Managerial service.....	0	3
Commercial service.....	2	5
Clerical service.....	0	1
Manual labor.....	0	1
Agricultural service.....	4	3
Total.....	100	100
Number of members.....	95	406

population continues to wield considerable power, but the growing strength of the financial and professional elements characterizes our society.

Occupational data for the members of the United States Congress for the year 1926 were also secured. The results of this aspect of the study are reported in Table XXXV. In this table, in terms of the occupational classification used elsewhere in the study, the senators and representatives are compared. In the social composition of their membership, the two houses of Congress are very similar and are not unlike the more influential boards of education. If the ex-officio members of the state boards and the university boards are disregarded, these bodies are found to approach the national legislature very closely in this respect. The membership of Congress is drawn almost exclusively from the proprietorial and the professional classes. The less favored occupational groups are almost without direct voice in the national councils. The House of Representatives, with

its somewhat smaller delegation from the proprietors and its somewhat larger delegation from the managerial service, commercial service, clerical service, and manual labor, is a degree closer to the people than the Senate, but the differences are too small to merit emphasis.

The fundamental fact, however, regarding the occupations of the members of Congress which has often been alluded to by other investigators is not shown specifically in Table XXXV. Reference is made to the dominating position of the lawyer. In a very real sense, the federal Congress is a convention of lawyers. Practically the entire representation from the professional service is drawn from this single occupational group. In this respect the Senate and the House of Representatives show almost no difference. The actual percentages for these two bodies are 63.0 and 62.5, respectively. These facts are in complete accord with the findings of the present investigation. The more important and influential the board, the greater is the representation of lawyers. That the power of this group should find its point of culmination in the halls of Congress is to be expected. Apparently the profession of law holds with a strong hand the political institutions of the nation.

The outstanding conclusion to be drawn from this study of the occupations of the members of boards of education is that the control of education and the formulation of educational policy are intrusted very largely to representatives of the more favored classes. To this statement exceptions may be made for isolated city boards here and there and for the boards in the smaller districts and rural communities. The important boards are dominated either by those who control the economic resources of the country or by those who are associated rather intimately with the economically powerful classes. In other words, the ordinary board is composed, for the most part, of merchants, lawyers, bankers, manufacturers, physicians, and persons in responsible executive positions. The present investigation, therefore, supports the findings of the few earlier and less comprehensive studies that have been made. Consideration of the social significance of these facts will be reserved for the final chapter.

#### REPRESENTATION OF PARENTS ON BOARDS OF EDUCATION

According to an ancient tradition, parents rather than childless persons and parents having children in the public schools rather than parents having children elsewhere should be chosen for membership on boards of education. In Norway the education law definitely stipulates "that at least one-half of the members on the school board must be parents having

children in school at the time of their term on the board."<sup>1</sup> Lying back of this tradition apparently is the thought that only persons who have had children possess the experience necessary to guide the public instruction of the young. Then, there is the second assumption that the parent who has children in the public school at the time he serves makes a better board member than one who lacks this relationship with the school. The presence of his own children in the school is assumed to influence the board member to maintain a vital interest in the work of the school. How sound these assumptions are we have no means of knowing. If they are sound, one would be justified in contending that they should apply to teachers as well as to board members.

Somewhat meager data on this question were secured for the members of the county and city boards of education. For the district boards the

TABLE XXXVI

PROPORTION OF MEMBERS OF BOARDS OF EDUCATION HAVING CHILDREN IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS (FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

	County Boards	City Boards
Members having children in the public schools . . . . .	60	53
Members not having children in the public schools . . . . .	40	47
Total . . . . .	100	100
Number of members . . . . .	291	2,871

data could not be obtained without great difficulty, and for the state and the university boards they would hardly be significant. A summary of the findings is presented in Table XXXVI. An examination of this table shows that in both the cities and the counties more than one-half of the board members have children attending the public schools. The percentage is somewhat higher for the county boards than for the city boards. For example, of the members of the former, 60 per cent are reported as having children in the public schools, whereas for the members of the latter the corresponding percentage is 53. This difference perhaps can be accounted for in terms of birth statistics. The fact is well known that the birth-rate is somewhat higher today in the rural community than in the urban community. Among the farmers the birth-rate is particularly high; and 44 per cent of the male members of these county boards are farmers.

<sup>1</sup> Gabriel Loftfield, "Teachers in Norway as Members of School Boards," *School and Society*, XXI (April 11, 1925), 441.

Yet that other factors may be at work is suggested by the analysis of the data from the cities.

There seems to be a relation between the size of the city and the tendency to select as members of the board of education persons who have children in the public schools. An examination of Table XXXVII shows this to be true. Thus, in the smallest cities the percentage of members having children in the schools is 64. In these communities the representation of parents is even higher than in the counties. At the other extreme are the cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants, with a percentage of 41. As a general rule, the percentage of parents on the board declines with the increase in the size of the city. The exception to this generaliza-

TABLE XXXVII

PROPORTION OF MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION HAVING CHILDREN  
IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS—CITIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO POPULATION  
(FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

	POPULATION OF CITIES						ALL CLASSES OF CITIES
	2,500 to 5,000	5,000 to 10,000	10,000 to 25,000	25,000 to 50,000	50,000 to 100,000	100,000 or More	
Members having children in the public schools.....	64	57	50	49	50	41	53
Members not having children in the public schools.....	36	43	50	51	50	59	47
Total.....	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of members.....	402	688	997	404	268	112	2,871

tion is found in cities of intermediate size. In communities of less than 10,000 inhabitants and in communities of more than 100,000 inhabitants, the relation seems to be pronounced, but between these two limits the differences in size of city apparently have no significance. However, that there is a negative relation between parental representation on the board and the population of the city can hardly be questioned.

The explanation of this relation is not altogether clear. A plausible explanation can, of course, be easily invented, but, whether such an explanation is genuine or not, one cannot say. However, there is an explanation which has the support of other findings of this study. It would be in harmony with those findings to maintain that in the smaller cities the more intimate personal data regarding the candidate for board membership are known to, and are considered by, the electorate. In the larger cities facts of this character are much less likely to be known to the voters.

Thus, possibly in the small community the parental relationship of the candidate is a factor in the choice of members because it falls within the range of common knowledge, whereas in the large cities such a fact would be relatively unknown to the electorate. In the great urban center the knowledge which the ordinary voter obtains regarding any candidate for public office reaches him indirectly through imperfect news-gathering agencies and various channels of propaganda. Such knowledge is seldom of a direct and personal character. The voter sees the candidate only from a distance and through the medium of spectacles which present selected and distorted views of the object of vision.

TABLE XXXVIII

PROPORTION OF MEMBERS OF CITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION HAVING CHILDREN IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS—CITIES CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISION (FACTS GIVEN IN PERCENTAGES)

	GEOGRAPHICAL DIVISIONS							ALL DIVISIONS
	New England	Middle Atlantic	South Atlantic	East North Central	West North Central	South Central	Western	
Members having children in the public schools . . .	41	51	53	51	68	68	59	53
Members not having children in the public schools	59	49	47	49	32	32	41	47
Total . . . . .	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of members	553	653	176	714	316	251	208	2,871

Another explanation is found in the relative conservatism of the smaller community. Our civilization is being transformed in the city. The tradition that the school-board member should have children in the public school, if there has been such a tradition, is a part of the rural heritage. With the development of the complex industrial city, with its varied and conflicting interests and groups, new issues arise and new factors appear on the scene. As a consequence, the criteria for the selection of board members change. In this new situation the question of parenthood as a qualification for membership seems unreal and smacks of sentimentalism. For the city electorate other questions move into the focus of attention.

Among the several geographical divisions also there are some rather striking differences in the representation of parents on school boards. These differences are reported in Table XXXVIII. The reader will observe that New England is at the foot of the series. In the cities reporting from this area only 41 per cent of the school-board members have children

attending the public schools. The Middle Atlantic states and the East North Central states follow with a percentage of 51. With a corresponding figure of 53, the South Atlantic states fall into practically the same category. Then come the Western states, with a percentage of 59. Finally, at the top of the series are the West North Central states and the South Central states, with a percentage of 68. Between the New England states on the one hand and the states in the last two divisions on the other, there is indeed a wide range.

As in the case of the cities, the explanation here is by no means clear. On the surface, there seems to be some relation between the reaction of the community to this question and the extent of industrialization. In the more highly industrialized areas the representation of parents on the board is much lower than it is in those divisions of the country that have clung to the rural civilization. Certain it is that in the great agricultural areas, in those sections that have not been greatly influenced by immigration and the development of industries, there persists a strong tendency to elect as members of school boards persons in the community who have children attending the public schools. Apparently, with the advance of the newer industrial order, this tradition weakens.

#### THE TYPICAL BOARD OF EDUCATION

Let us assume now that the typical American school board may be described in terms of the medians, averages, or central tendencies presented in the foregoing pages. That this does a certain violence to the facts in some instances and portrays a school board that is seldom found in the flesh, the writer is prepared to admit. Yet such a method will convey to the reader a fairly reliable picture of the general situation and will, at the same time, focus attention on the more fundamental factors and tendencies. At the very least, it will present some of the more significant findings of this investigation in a form so succinct and concise that they may be easily grasped and understood.

As the reader knows, the data secured for certain boards were much more comprehensive than the data secured for other boards. So meager was the information gathered for the district board that no attempt will be made to describe this board in its typical form. All we know is that it is ordinarily composed of three members and that these three members follow the occupation of farming. In proportion to the completeness of the data at hand each of the other four boards will now be described according to the method suggested. For this description a single paragraph will be adequate.

The typical county board of education in the United States is com-

posed of six members. These members are elected by the people for a term of four years. One of the six members is a woman, who follows the occupation of housewife. Of the five men, three are farmers; one is a merchant; and one is a physician. Four of the members have children attending the public schools of the county. From the standpoint of formal education, they reflect somewhat favorably the attainments of the citizens of the community. Three of the members are products of the elementary school only; one has attended the secondary school; and two have enjoyed college or university privileges. In age, they exhibit a range of approximately thirty years, or a range from thirty-five to sixty-four years. The remaining four members are distributed between these two extremes at the ages of forty-one, forty-six, fifty, and fifty-six years. In length of service on the board, they likewise show considerable diversity. At the one extreme is a novice who is serving his first year, while at the other is a veteran who has already given fifteen years of service to the board. The others show tenures of office of two, three, five, and six years, respectively. On the average, these members devote approximately forty-six hours a year to board duties. For this service they receive financial compensation at the rate of three dollars a day.

The typical city board of education in the United States is composed of six members. These members are elected at large for a term of three years. One of the six members is a woman, who follows the occupation of housewife. Of the five men, one is a merchant; one, a lawyer; one, a physician; one, a banker, manufacturer, or business executive; and one, a salesman, clerk, or laborer. Three of the members have children attending the public schools of the city. From the standpoint of formal education, they constitute, in comparison with the city population as a whole, a highly selected group. But one of the members is a product of the elementary school only; two have attended the secondary school; and three have enjoyed college or university privileges. In age, they exhibit a range of twenty-six years, or a range from thirty-seven to sixty-three years. The remaining four members are distributed between these two extremes at the ages of forty-two, forty-six, fifty, and fifty-four years. In length of service on the board, they likewise show considerable diversity. At the one extreme is a novice who is serving his first year, while at the other is a veteran who has already given fifteen years of service to the board. The others show tenures of office of two, three, five, and eight years, respectively. On the average, these members devote approximately fifty-one hours a year to board duties. For this service they receive no financial compensation.

The typical state board of education in the United States is composed

of seven members. With the exception of two ex-officio members, they are appointed by the governor for a term of four years. One of the members is a woman, who follows the occupation of housewife. Of the six men, one is the state superintendent of public instruction; one is the secretary of state; one is a superintendent of schools; one is a university president; one is a lawyer; and one is either a merchant or banker. From the standpoint of formal education, they constitute, in comparison with the general population of the state, a very highly selected group. Not one of the members is a product of the elementary school only, and but one advanced no farther than the secondary school, while six have enjoyed college or university privileges. In age, they exhibit a range of thirty-one years, or a range from thirty-nine to seventy years. The remaining five members are distributed between these two extremes at the ages of forty-six, fifty, fifty-four, fifty-eight, and sixty-three years. In length of service on the board, they likewise show considerable diversity. At the one extreme is a novice who is serving his first year, while at the other is a veteran who has already given eighteen years of service to the board. The others show tenures of office of two, three, five, six, and nine years, respectively.

The typical board controlling the state college or university in the United States is composed of ten members. With the exception of one ex-officio member, they are appointed by the governor for a term of six years. One of the members is a woman, who follows the occupation of housewife. Of the nine men, one is the state superintendent of public instruction; three are lawyers; one is a merchant; one, a banker; one, a farmer; one, a manufacturer; and one, a physician. From the standpoint of formal education, they constitute, in comparison with the general population of the state, a very highly selected group. But one of the ten is a product of the elementary school only, and one advanced no farther than the secondary school, while eight have enjoyed college or university privileges. In age, they exhibit a range of thirty years, or from forty to seventy years. The remaining five members are distributed between these two extremes at the ages of forty-five, forty-eight, fifty-one, fifty-three, fifty-five, fifty-eight, sixty-one, and sixty-four years. In length of service on the board, they likewise show considerable diversity. At the one extreme are two members who are serving their first year, while at the other is a veteran who has already given twenty years of service to the board. The others show tenures of office of two, three, four, five, seven, ten, and fifteen years, respectively. On the average, these members devote approximately fifty-one hours a year to board duties. Aside from traveling expenses, they receive no financial compensation for this service.

These descriptive statements show that the American people have followed no single pattern in the development of those boards through which they are supposed to express their will on educational matters. In forms of organization and methods of procedure, these boards show great diversity. Provided we are learning from the various experiences, this situation is a fit subject for felicitations rather than otherwise. With respect to the social composition of a particular board of education, a somewhat different situation is found. At certain points here the study reveals a representation on the board of various interests and groups. In the case of age, for example, the ordinary board is drawn from a fairly wide range. Both the younger and the older members of the mature generation are represented. With respect to sex, education, and occupation, the board shows a tendency to be narrowly selective. It is composed, for the most part, of college and university men who occupy favored positions in society. The dominant classes in our society dominate the board of education. The social and educational significance of this fact will be considered in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CONTROL OF EDUCATION

This final chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the bearing of the present investigation on one of the most fundamental of educational problems—the problem of control. The nature of the school must inevitably reflect the forces that control it. As a fountain cannot rise higher than its source, so an educational program can scarcely be expected to exhibit a quality which lies beyond the wisdom and good will of those who fashion its boundaries. Hence, whether the splendid theories regarding the nature, power, and beneficence of education are ever to be realized depends in no small measure on these fundamental conditioning influences. No educational theory bears fruit in a social vacuum; if it is to assume the living form, it must find lodging in some social environment. This environment contains the factors which arrest as well as those which quicken its growth. Certainly, much of the futility which has characterized educational thought from the time of Plato down to the present is traceable directly to its failure to gain access to the school. This failure is traceable not to the unsoundness of its doctrines but rather to its inhospitable reception at the hands of the forces controlling education. Moreover, unless more attention is given to the social setting in which the school functions, there is little reason for believing that the present scientific attack on education will not be equally sterile. Only as the conditioning agencies and forces are won to the support of a liberal and creative type of education will the school ever be able to make positive contributions toward the regeneration of the individual or the reconstruction of society.

What light do the facts presented in the foregoing pages throw on this question of the social control of education? How well qualified are the members of the American board of education to discharge the very heavy responsibilities which society has placed on them? The study shows that, for the most part, they are drawn from the more favored economic and social classes. They are also persons who have enjoyed unusual educational advantages. To these generalizations, exceptions should be made in varying measure for the district board, the county board, and the board in the smaller urban community. However, for the boards of our great industrial cities, for the boards that determine the educational

policies of our states, and for the boards that control our state colleges and universities, these generalizations require little qualification. The persons who are chosen for membership on the more powerful boards of education are those who have attended our secondary schools and colleges and occupy the privileged positions in society. The occupations which they most frequently represent are those of the merchant, the lawyer, the banker, the manufacturer, and the physician. From the ranks of the less favored classes few members are chosen.

What is the educational significance of this condition? Do these facts bear any relation to the fundamental problem of the control of the school? Is not the present board membership drawn from precisely those elements in the population best equipped by nature, training, and opportunity to furnish intelligent social leadership? Ordinarily, the board member is a citizen who has succeeded in the competition for those rewards which our society regards as worthy. He has received the benefits which flow from unusual educational advantages; he has been ambitious; he has acquired property; he has won social and economic standing; he has exercised authority—in a word, according to current standards, he is a success. His personal competence is beyond question. Surely, with citizens of this type as its members, a board would seem to be unusually well constituted to serve the best interests of society.

With this view, many of our most vigorous and thoughtful students of school administration are in accord. Indeed, dissenting voices from within the profession are seldom heard. Quotations from two outstanding figures in this field who have had wide influence on the development of educational theory during the present generation will suffice to represent this prevailing opinion. Writing in 1904, Chancellor issued a pronouncement on the personal qualifications of board members so unequivocal and categorical, and withal so convincing, that it has scarcely been challenged by subsequent writers. According to him, the following classes of persons may be expected as a rule to make good board members:

1. Manufacturers accustomed to dealing with bodies of men and with important business interests. They handle large amounts of money and of property, and are not frightened at bond issues and at the totals of annual appropriations. They know that a hundred thousand dollars can be spent as honestly as ten dollars.

2. Merchants, contractors, bankers, and other men of large affairs. A board of education controls a business, and deals with the business side of education.

3. Physicians, if in successful practice. They are too busy to worry over details as do most professional people of small affairs. At the same time, their interest in hygiene and sanitation is invaluable. Their success evidences a sound,

natural judgment, and their wide knowledge of life tends to develop common sense.

4. College graduates in any walk in life who are successful in their own affairs remember what education has done for them. They usually understand the rights of children and adults to the inheritances of the race in literature, art, industry, as well as in the three R's. When, however, such graduates do not properly appreciate culture, they are peculiarly dangerous to the educational welfare of the community.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, Chancellor contended that the following classes of persons seldom furnish valuable board members:

1. Inexperienced young men, whatever be their calling.
2. Unsuccessful men.
3. Old men retired from business.
4. Politicians.
5. Newspaper men.
6. Uneducated and unlearned men.
7. Men in subordinate business positions.
8. Women.<sup>2</sup>

These views of Chancellor have apparently received but little criticism. Twelve years later Cubberley, writing what has proved to be the most widely read and influential book on school administration of our generation, borrowed directly from his predecessor. In 1916 he stated his views as follows:

To render such intelligent service to the school system of a city as has been indicated requires the selection of a peculiar type of citizen for school-board member. In many respects it calls for a higher and more intelligent type of community service than is called for in any other branch of municipal work. Remembering that it is the function of a school board to select experts for the executive work, and to govern by deciding upon the larger matters of policy, expansion, and expenditure, and not to administer, in any detail, the school system under their control, we can deduce the type of man most likely to prove useful as a member of a city board for school control.

Men who are successful in the handling of large business undertakings—manufacturers, merchants, bankers, contractors, and professional men of large practice—would perhaps come first. Such men are accustomed to handling business rapidly; are usually wide awake, sane, and progressive; are not afraid to spend money intelligently; are in the habit of depending upon experts for advice, and for the execution of administrative details; and have the tact and

<sup>1</sup> William Estabrook Chancellor, *Our Schools: Their Administration and Supervision*, pp. 12-13. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1915 [revised].

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

perseverance necessary to get the most efficient service out of everybody from the superintendent down. Such men, too, think for themselves, can resist pressure, and can explain the reasons for their actions. College graduates who are successful in their business or professional affairs, whatever may be their profession or occupation, also usually make good board members, provided their education has been liberal enough to enable them to understand properly the cultural side of public education.

On the other hand, the list of those who usually do not make good school-board members is much larger. Inexperienced young men, unsuccessful men, old men who have retired from business, politicians, saloon-keepers, uneducated or relatively ignorant men, men in minor business positions, and women, are usually considered as undesirable for board membership. All such persons tend to deal too much with details, to miss the importance of large points of view, and tend to assume executive authority when and where they should not. Perhaps still more objectionable than any of these are people of any class or either sex who desire to ride an educational hobby, or those who wish to get on the school board to revolutionize things. The crank, the hobby-rider, or the extremist should never be put on boards of education. What is wanted is a sane, an evenly balanced, and an all-around administration of the schools, leaving the details of administration to those who can handle them best.<sup>1</sup>

If the views of these two writers are accepted as sound, the present situation with regard to board membership leaves little to be desired. To a very large degree those persons whom Chancellor and Cubberley regard as well qualified for this type of service control our boards of education today. These bodies would therefore appear to be properly constituted for the efficient discharge of their functions. From certain other quarters, however, from sources which, for the most part, lie outside the profession of education, contrary opinions are occasionally advanced. Particularly from the ranks of organized labor are doubts that all is well on boards of education being expressed. The following statement from the official organ of a minor labor organization reveals a distrust of capitalistic influence in the control of education.

Out of sixty-seven cities which have replied to a questionnaire addressed to some 204 cities of 40,000 or greater population by the New York Teachers' Union, only seventeen can point to labor representatives on their boards of education as evidence that the workers' interests are in a measure at least safeguarded. In the remaining fifty cities, the entire boards of education are made up of spokesmen of capitalism.<sup>2</sup>

In 1922, when organized labor was displaying considerable interest in

<sup>1</sup> Ellwood P. Cubberley, *Public School Administration*, pp. 124-25. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916.

<sup>2</sup> "Few Cities Have Labor on Board of Education," *Headgear Worker*, IV (November 21, 1919), 3.

the organization of its own schools and colleges, the American Federation of Labor in an interesting statement summarizing its general educational policies issued a pronouncement on the significance of labor representation on boards of education. The relation between such representation and the movement for labor education was indicated as follows:

To summarize its general conclusions, your committee recommends that central labor bodies, through securing representation on boards of education, and through the presentation of a popular demand for increased facilities for adult education, make every effort to obtain from the public schools liberally conducted classes in English, public speaking, parliamentary law, economics, industrial legislation, history of industry, and of the trade union movement, and any other subjects that may be requested by a sufficient number, such classes to be offered at times and places which would make them available to workers. If the public school system does not show willingness to co-operate in offering appropriate courses and type of instruction, the central labor body should organize such classes with as much co-operation from the public schools as may be obtained.<sup>1</sup>

In the latter part of this pronouncement a suggestion is made that organized labor might find it necessary to establish schools and classes of its own for the purpose of teaching certain of the social studies. In view of the fact that the laboring classes contributed largely to the successful issue of the Nineteenth-Century struggle for free schools, this attitude of suspicion toward the public schools is full of meaning. Apparently, they are beginning to distrust the very institution which they helped to create. They are beginning to fear that the agency through which they aspired to freedom may become a weapon turned against them or an instrument whereby some ruling caste may seek to hold them in bondage. This lack of confidence in the public school on the ground that it is under the control of the great capitalistic and employing interests is further revealed by the utterances of various leaders of organized labor. James H. Maurer, president of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor and one of the leaders in the organization and development of labor schools and colleges, has expressed this distrust with peculiar power in the following statement.

It is exceptional to find an opportunity in the established schools for free and open discussion of the social and economic questions that are of vital interest to workingmen. . . .

In one Pennsylvania city, where we asked for the use of a public-school room for one of our labor education classes, we were told that the board of education would gladly give us the use of a room provided we would accept the

<sup>1</sup> *Education for All*, p. 21. Washington: American Federation of Labor, 1922.

teacher it would appoint for us. The proposition that adult working-class students should elect their own teacher was too radical for that board. Yet, in the same schools the chamber of commerce, the American Legion, and similar organizations can send representatives at any time to talk to the students on any subject. Even a junior chamber of commerce has been organized in the high school.

From all parts of the country come hundreds of authentic reports of restrictions put upon professors and teachers who would discuss labor problems freely. But what else can we expect? The boards of education and the boards of trustees of the colleges and universities are composed almost entirely of influential business and professional men who have a deep-seated fear and hatred of anything that can be construed as encouragement to the labor movement. They are extremely conservative, if not reactionary, on all social and economic questions. Only here and there is labor represented on a school board, and even then we have only about one representative of labor to six or eight business and professional men.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly, the fundamental motive underlying the labor-education movement is a growing distrust of the public school. Numerous statements to this effect from other labor officials and leaders could be quoted. The laboring classes are becoming interested in the social and economic order in which they live and work; they are convinced that they are the objects of exploitation by the favored classes; they desire the power which comes from clear insight into the forces which surround them; and they do not trust the instruction which society provides for them through schools controlled by boards of education composed, for the most part, of persons representing the employers' point of view. In no other way can the establishment and support of schools of their own on the part of organized labor be understood. Throughout the history of labor's struggle for freedom this fear of an education provided by the favored classes has found continuous expression. Labor today stands with Thomas Hodgskin when in the early part of the Nineteenth Century he wrote: "It would be better for men to be deprived of education than to receive their education from their masters; for education, in that sense, is no better than the training of cattle that are broken to the yoke."

Already this attack by organized labor on the public school on the ground that it is dominated by anti-labor interests has borne some fruit besides the establishment of labor schools. It has begun to receive the attention of persons here and there who are in positions of educational leadership. The president of the National Association of State Universi-

<sup>1</sup> James H. Maurer, "Labor's Demand for Its Own Schools," *Nation*, CXV (September 20, 1922), 277.

ties, addressing the association on November 16, 1925, while refusing to concede the truth of the allegations of labor regarding the control of public education, frankly recognized the skepticism of labor concerning the disinterestedness of the boards which control the state colleges and universities. He spoke in part as follows:

In spite of unquestioned advance in the elimination of undemocratic survivals in the universities, two considerations indicate the incomplete conquest of the public mind by the American universities. One of these is the attitude of a great element of our population, namely, organized labor. The active movement for the establishment of independent labor colleges in the United States where exist state-supported institutions in nearly every commonwealth, is an impressive phenomenon. These labor colleges, say their sponsors, are designed, not, as many believe, to saturate labor with propaganda; they are designed rather to provide their students with a sound education in history, economics, government, and the like.

The motive for instituting these schools is in part a distrust of higher education as at present organized in this country. Many leaders in the ranks of organized labor believe the state universities, as well as private foundations, are under the domination of special interests. They believe that leisure-class ideals of culture still enjoy prestige in American universities, and that university training now, as in the Middle Ages, places a stigma upon manual labor. . . .

However much we who represent state-supported education may deplore this misunderstanding of the educational aims of our institutions, and however we may disagree with the above interpretation of the "white collar job," the fact remains that this attitude of organized labor suggests an imperative task of no small magnitude. Perhaps the representation of labor on boards of regents will do much.<sup>1</sup>

Dissent from the conventional view regarding the social composition of the board of education, a dissent which rests on a somewhat wider analysis of the problem, has been expressed by Duggan. Writing in 1916, before the appearance of the labor-education movement, he made a fundamental diagnosis of the weakness of the board of trustees which is composed very largely of business men and lawyers. Although he had the college and university boards in mind, his remarks might be addressed with equal force to boards of other types. The following paragraph presents his point of view.

A board of trustees was and is almost wholly made up of business men and lawyers. From its personnel as well as its method of appointment it was essentially a conservative body. The average lawyer is guided by precedent and has his

<sup>1</sup> Ernest H. Lindley, "The Universities and the People," *School and Society*, XXII (December 5, 1925), 700.

face turned to the past, the average business man usually wishes conditions as they are at present to be maintained. Representation of more varied interests would be desirable, but the ministry, journalism, teaching, social service, pure science or literature, in short, vocations dealing essentially with ideas and having their faces turned to the future, were conspicuously absent on boards of trustees.<sup>1</sup>

These two sets of quotations represent two very different views regarding the nature of the good board of education. This divergence of opinion would seem to be traceable to some disagreement or misunderstanding with reference to the function and responsibilities of the board. According to Chancellor and Cubberley, a good board is one that facilitates the task of school administration and makes easy the way of the administrator. The emphasis here is placed not on the character of the educational policies formulated but on the efficiency with which they are executed. If this view of the function of the board is assumed to be correct, then without doubt a board constituted as these two writers suggest would be a satisfactory type of board. If efficiency is accepted as the standard of judgment, then the major question to be asked regarding a member should refer to his personal competence. As individuals, the merchants, bankers, lawyers, physicians, manufacturers, and executives are competent people. They may therefore be expected to handle the business of the board with dispatch. Moreover, since such persons and school administrators have probably attended the same schools and colleges, since they are likely to belong to the same social groups and clubs, and since they are inclined to feel membership in the same social classes, they will have much the same general outlook on life; they will possess the same social philosophy; and they will feel themselves associated in the protection of the same privileges. In a word, both administrators and board members will speak the same language. On fundamental social and educational questions they will exhibit the same prejudices and attitudes. Such a combination of circumstances should certainly insure the efficient transaction of business.

There is another point of view, however, regarding the fundamental function of the board of education. This conception of the board is implied in the pronouncements of the labor organizations. According to this view, the nature of the educational policy formulated is more important than the mode of its execution. Moreover, these labor organizations would maintain that the nature of the policy must reflect the experience,

<sup>1</sup> Stephen P. Duggan, "Present Tendencies in College Administration," *School and Society*, IV (August 12, 1916), 229.

point of view, and interests of those who formulate it. The argument may be advanced that these board members, though drawn from a restricted class, will, because of the superior educational opportunities which they have enjoyed, rise above a narrow loyalty to their own group and formulate educational policies in terms of the common interest. We all wish that this were so, but there is little evidence from the human past to support it. The rare individual will strive earnestly to have regard for the best interests of all classes, but no one can transcend the limits set by his own experience. The best of us are warped and biased by the very processes of living.

With this second view regarding the function of the board of education and the limitations of the ordinary board member, the writer finds himself in fundamental agreement. The basic service which the board renders society is the formulation of general educational policy. It should do other things. It should levy taxes and secure the revenues necessary for the support of public education. Even this provision of financial support implies some formulation of policy. There must be something to support. If this major contention regarding the function of the board is granted, it naturally follows that the composition of the board of education is a matter of great social significance. The question is at once raised: To what element or elements of the population should society intrust its destiny? The criterion of personal competence is not enough. To permit one class or element to legislate for another would seem to be dangerous. Such a practice would open the way to exploitation of the most grievous type. Moreover, the whole of wisdom resides in no single class or group.

This question of the control of education takes one to the heart of the social problem. With the growth of the school, its importance increases in corresponding measure. So long as the school remained a minor social institution, touching but small numbers of children and for but short periods of time, the character of the forces which controlled it was not a matter of great moment one way or the other. As the school has evolved into a major social institution, the very future of society has been placed increasingly in its keeping. Furthermore, as the school passes beyond the discharge of its traditional function of teaching the tools of knowledge and interests itself in moral and civic education, this question of control becomes more and more vital. The extraordinarily rapid expansion of the secondary school during the past generation is a case in point. The opportunities of secondary education are being extended to larger and larger numbers of persons. Apparently, this movement will be checked only when practically all children of appropriate age are in high school. Since

the mastery of the tools of learning is largely a function of the elementary school, since the study of foreign languages and higher mathematics no longer occupies the center of the secondary-school program, and since the high school is concerning itself increasingly with the teaching of literature, civics, economics, sociology, and government, the institution offers itself as a powerful agency of propaganda to any group able to secure dominion over it. The temptation on the part of any controlling element in society to employ such an instrument to promote its own special point of view is certain to be extraordinarily seductive. Is any class able to withstand it? A major task which confronts us, therefore, is that of devising some means of so controlling the school that it may not become the subservient tool of some powerful interest or group in the community.

The very conception of the nature of education and of the fundamental purpose of the school is at stake. Is education to be regarded as a process of indoctrination or of enlightenment? Is the school to be conceived as a broadly educative agency, an agency which may be trusted to strive earnestly, and without prejudice, to give to the youth of the nation genuine insight into the present complex industrial civilization, or is it to become an instrument by means of which some dominant class or sect impresses upon the mind of the coming generation its own special bias or point of view? That the latter conception of the school may triumph in our society is suggested by certain of the data brought to light in the present investigation. The policies of our schools are being formulated by the dominant elements in the community. To expect them to display a wisdom which transcends their experience is to expect the impossible, but to grant so much is not to justify the present situation. Nor is that situation to be condoned on the ground that it is amply supported by precedent. In times past the school has certainly with monotonous frequency been the tool of dominant classes and has been made to guard the special interests of those classes. Whatever may have been the practice of other ages, we may at least harbor the hope that the school at some time and place may serve the larger and more generous purpose.

In shaping educational policy, the peculiar limitations of any dominant social class should be noted. Whether that class is a priesthood, a holy order, a military aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, or the proletariat matters not. They all suffer from the same affliction. A dominant class is a privileged class, a class that is favored by the existing social arrangement. It therefore tends to be conservative, to exaggerate the merits of the prevailing order, and to fear any agitation favoring fundamental changes in the social structure. It represents the past rather than the

future; its creative period lies in a preceding age; its genius has already found expression. As a consequence, it is content to enjoy and conserve the fruits of its period of struggle. On the other hand, the forces which represent the future, the forces which will fashion the civilization of tomorrow, are not now in the seats of power. In fact, just what these forces are can scarcely be discerned with surety even by the wisest of men, for they exist today only in embryo. They consequently do not appear significant, and they are significant only in potentiality. The latent strength of any social movement is not to be measured by its present vitality nor by any mark of identification. History tells us that the dominant forces of any age rarely extend the hand of welcome to their successors. To the degree, therefore, that the school is under the control of these forces, however benevolent they may appear, the chances are that its face will be turned toward the past. Its function will be defensive and conservative rather than creative and progressive.

The dangers that may beset the school when controlled by some special group were clearly recognized and stated by Sumner almost a generation ago. His major contention was that the school tends to promote orthodoxy of thought and belief. Orthodoxy, of course, means the peculiar doxy of the class or sect in power. Thus, while the particular form which the mental pattern assumes undergoes change with the rise and fall of dominant groups, the school will seek to fashion its pupils all according to one pattern, whether it be the pattern of the Catholic, the Protestant, the Communist, or the 100 per cent American. Writing in 1906, Sumner thus described this tendency of the school to work according to a single pattern:

School education, unless it is regulated by the best knowledge and good sense, will produce men and women who are all of one pattern, as if turned in a lathe. When priests managed schools it was their intention to reach just this result. They carried in their heads ideals of the Christian man and woman, and they wanted to educate all to this model. Public schools in a democracy may work in the same way. Any institution which runs for years in the same hands will produce a type. The examination papers show the pet ideas of the examiners. It must not be forgotten that the scholars set about the making of folkways for themselves, just as members of a grown society do. In time they adopt codes, standards, preferred types, and fashions. They select their own leaders, whom they follow with enthusiasm. They have their pet heroes and fashion themselves upon the same. Their traditions become stereotyped and authoritative. The type of product becomes fixed. It makes some kind of compromise with the set purposes of the teachers and administrators, and the per-

sons who issue from the schools become recognizable by the characteristics of the type. It is said that the graduates of Jesuit colleges on the continent of Europe are thus recognizable. In England the graduates of Oxford and Cambridge are easily to be distinguished from other Englishmen. In the continental schools and barracks, in newspapers, books, etc., what is developed by education is dynastic sentiment, national sentiment, soldierly sentiment; still again, under the same and other opportunities, religious and ecclesiastical sentiments, and by other influences, also class and rank sentiments. In a democracy there is always a tendency towards big results on a pattern. An orthodoxy is produced in regard to all the great doctrines of life. It consists of the most worn and commonplace opinions which are current in the masses. It may be found in newspapers and popular literature. It is intensely provincial and philistine. It does not extend to those things on which the masses have not pronounced, and by its freedom and elasticity in regard to these it often produces erroneous judgments as to its general character. The popular opinions always contain broad fallacies, half-truths, and glib generalizations of fifty years before. If a teacher is to be displaced by a board of trustees because he is a free-trader, or a gold man, or a silver man, or disapproves of a war in which the ruling clique has involved the country, or because he thinks that Hamilton was a great statesman and Jefferson an insignificant one, or because he says that he has found some proof that alcohol is not always bad for the system, we might as well go back to the dominion in education of the theologians. They were strenuous about theology, but they let other things alone. The boards of trustees are almost always made up of "practical men," and if their faiths, ideas, and prejudices are to make the norm of education, the schools will turn out boys and girls compressed to that pattern. There is no wickedness in any disinterested and sincere opinion. That is what we all pretend to admit, but there are very few of us who really act by it. We seem likely to have orthodox history (especially of our own country), political science, political economy, and sociology before long. It will be defined by school boards who are party politicians. As fast as physics, chemistry, geology, biology, bookkeeping, and the rest come into conflict with interests, and put forth results which have a pecuniary effect (which is sure to happen in the not remote future), then the popular orthodoxy will be extended to them, and it will be enforced as "democratic." The reason is because there will be a desire that children shall be taught just that one thing which is "right" in the view and interest of those in control, and nothing else. That is exactly the view which the ecclesiastics formerly took when they had control. Mathematics is the only discipline which could be taught under that rule. As to other subjects we do not know the "right answers," speaking universally and for all time. We only know how things look now on our best study, and that is all we can teach. In fact, this is the reason why the orthodox answers of the school boards and trustees are mischievous. They teach that there are absolute and universal facts of knowledge, whereas we ought to teach that all our knowledge

is subject to unlimited verification and revision. The men turned out under the former system, and the latter, will be very different agents in the face of all questions of philosophy, citizenship, finance, and industry.<sup>1</sup>

In this statement Sumner has clearly outlined the weaknesses of any dominant group when it seeks to shape educational policy. The special limitations of the particular elements that control the school today should also be examined. In general, the contention that we live in a business man's age cannot be challenged. When the head of the Civic Development Department of the United States Chamber of Commerce stated recently that "capitalism is today triumphant and the American business man, as its conspicuous exponent, occupies a position of leadership which the business man has never held before," he was merely recognizing a *fait accompli*. Our boards of education are composed of business men. What this is likely to mean for American education is obvious. There is grave danger that the curriculum, methods of instruction, administrative organization, and criteria of successful achievement in the school will be derived from the procedures, needs, and ideals of commerce and industry. Evidence is already accumulating to indicate that this is taking place. The form which this philosophy might assume has been outlined succinctly by Otto. According to his analysis, it may be epitomized in the three following cardinal doctrines.

I. The hopes men set their hearts upon are to be dictated by business men: in large matters, and ultimately, by the great industrial and financial leaders; in small matters, and immediately, by the business fraternity in every community.

II. The technological means for the realization of these hopes are to be furnished by men of science. It must be their privilege to further the ends of business through the discovery and application of natural laws.

III. The apprenticeship necessary to prepare the rising generation to take its place quickly and efficiently in the industrial system, is to be supervised by the educators; and to foster devotion to those moral and religious codes wanting which the mass of men cannot be held to habits of sobriety and industry, but are prone to attempt radical reconstructions of the economic order, is the obligation of religion.<sup>2</sup>

The hope in the present situation lies in the fact that in the ordinary American industrial community there are developing various opposing and checking influences of some strength. Even the ranks of business are sometimes broken by internal dissension. They often find it difficult to

<sup>1</sup> William Graham Sumner, *Folkways*, pp. 630-32. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1906.

<sup>2</sup> M. C. Otto, *Natural Laws and Human Hopes*, p. 90. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1926.

present a united front toward their economic opponents. A very casual acquaintance with the situation in almost any American city shows this to be the case. Contending economic, religious, and racial groups are perpetually engaged in efforts to influence public-school policy. A major obstacle to the direct representation of these conflicting interests on the board is found in the methods employed in the selection of board members. Through these methods, the dominant forces in the community win practically all the seats on the board. If they are able to win one, they are able to win all. Thus, board members, though varying greatly with respect to personal traits, such as intelligence and probity, are fundamentally alike in point of view. The educational issues which divide them are minor rather than major issues. They look out upon the world through much the same eyes. As a consequence, they fall an easy prey to the temptation to use the school as an instrument for indoctrination.

Yet, in the great industrial center the board finds itself restrained today to some extent by these various minority interests which have no direct representation on the board. Through manifold indirect and devious ways, they seek to make effective whatever power they possess. Through the instrumentalities of formal resolution; political threats; the fomentation of group rivalries; the dissemination of gossip, rumor, and misinformation; and the creation of an atmosphere of general unrest and suspicion, they strive to influence the formulation of policy. At the same time they are prone to entertain a deep resentment against the action of the group or groups which happen to be in power. Moreover, feeling relatively helpless and having no trustworthy knowledge of what is actually taking place, they give free rein to their imaginations and people the political world with demons and sprites. As a result, there often exists in the larger community a general condition of misunderstanding and mistrust regarding the work of the school. An organized group which, in matters that it regards as important, has no channels through which it may give effective expression to its ideas can find self-justification only in withdrawing from the world or in resorting to a campaign of accusation and crimination.

For this condition there is no simple remedy. From some quarters has come the suggestion that the existence of the various forces at work in the community should be given recognition. These forces, so it is argued, cannot be ignored; for better or for worse they are with us; and the more articulate ones are certain to bring their influence to bear upon the school. At the very least, they may pursue a policy of obstruction and introduce into the situation the psychology of conflict. Why, therefore,

should not the more important interests be recognized frankly and be given membership on the board of education? This would relieve the board from any flagrant class or sectarian bias. It would make impossible the complete domination of educational policy by any single group through the manipulation of political machinery and the agencies of public opinion. At the same time, in the formulation of educational policy, it would give legitimate representation to important bodies of opinion which today are without such representation on boards of education. Under a system of control of this character the school could hardly become an instrument of propaganda or indoctrination.

The basic merit of this proposal, however, remains to be considered. It would give to the membership of the board of education a realistic and functional character which it lacks today. The time has arrived when we should cease to deceive ourselves with the pleasing fiction that the ordinary board member, or member of any legislative body, represents the general public, whatever that may be. This was impossible even in the simple and relatively homogeneous community of the past. In the great industrial city of the present it is a patent absurdity. It is a pious fraud. The member of a dominant group, because he is peculiarly tempted to identify the interests of society with the interests of his class, is particularly inclined to regard himself as a spokesman for society at large. We should come to recognize each individual for what he is, namely, an individual whose experience is limited, who looks at the world from a special point of view, and who is likely to represent the interests of some particular element or faction in society. If these facts were recognized, a board member could frankly and honestly present the case for his group. He would not be encouraged, as he is at present, to play the hypocrite and plead a special cause in the name of the public interest. Moreover, the various minorities in the community, being given legitimate channels through which to work, would find less cause to obtain their ends by indirection.

Some years ago the American Federation of Labor made a definite recommendation regarding the constitution of the board of education along the lines suggested. Although the recommendation referred specifically to the state board of education, the principle involved might be applied to any type of board. This organization proposed the following amendment to the educational law of the state.

That a State Board of Education is hereby created, to consist of five members to be appointed from the state at large; two members to be representatives of education, one to be a representative of the manufacturing and commercial

interests, one a representative of the agricultural interests, and one a representative of labor. The governor shall appoint the members of the board for a term of five years.<sup>1</sup>

Whether a provision of this kind which would touch both the state board of education and the local boards would be practicable is a debatable question. Interests other than those suggested by the American Federation of Labor should probably be recognized, but that is a mere matter of detail. If we are to insure for the American public school a broad and generous educational policy, some such provision should be made. Because of the growth of the school on the one hand and the development of a complex industrial civilization on the other, this question is rapidly becoming acute. So long as the school was an unimportant educational agency, or so long as it was under the direct control of the various private interests and agencies in the community, this question was a matter of little consequence. As the school has expanded and has come to play the rôle of a major social institution and as the state has assumed responsibility for its direction, the situation has undergone fundamental change. Because of this fact, the school has become potentially a very dangerous, as well as a very beneficent, human enterprise.

The development of a complex industrial civilization has likewise made the question assume a new aspect. So long as the community maintaining the school was a simple community of homogeneous interests and ideals, the question of the control of the school could be left quite wisely to the board of education of the conventional type. The methods of selecting board members which are employed today might under those conditions be expected to insure a fairly satisfactory membership. This membership would be homogeneous and like-minded, but so was the community. However, as this simple community has evolved and been transformed into the complex industrial community of the present, the situation has been greatly altered. No longer is the ordinary American community homogeneous as regards interests, philosophy, and ideals. Hence the need of guarding the integrity of the various minority groups. In the absence of a board of education which in its membership represents the various groups and points of view in the community, provision for such protection can hardly be assured. The methods whereby public education is controlled should be subjected to the most searching scrutiny. Perhaps the present investigation has done no more than raise the question; but, if it has accomplished so much, it has achieved its fundamental purpose.

<sup>1</sup> *Education for All*, p. 17. Washington: American Federation of Labor, 1922.



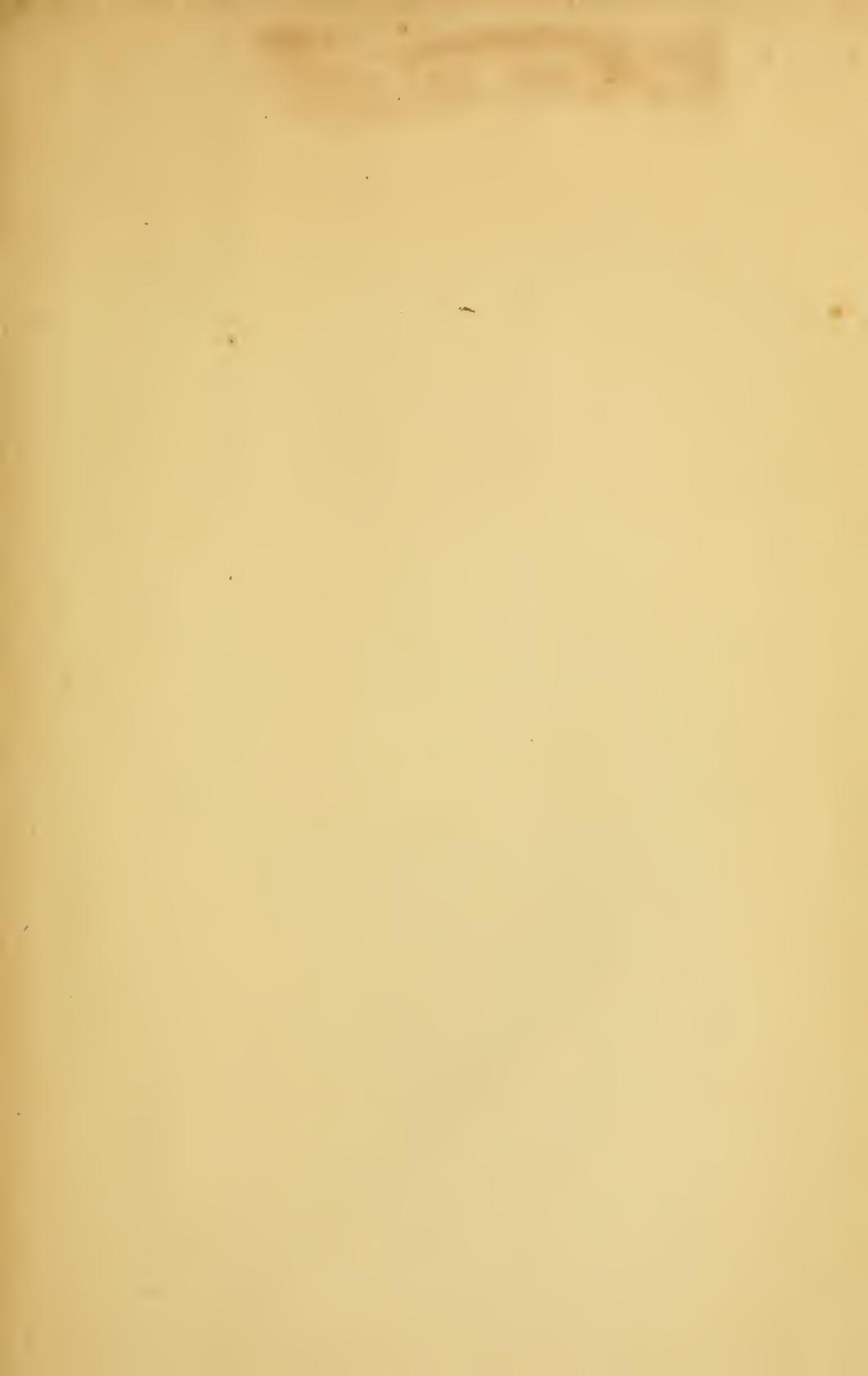
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