

WHY?

An effective community consists of educated, mature people. How do we get these people? They are educated in the school and grow up in the home. If these two institutions had such unrelated purposes as this indicates, they could carry on separately. But children are also educated in the home and spend their formative years going to school. Now we have the home and the school carrying on similar functions. Such is the case in Canadian communities, therefore the two can not carry on in blissful ignorance of each other. Unless an attempt is made to co-operate the home and the school, these two institutions become inefficient.

During the 1920's an idea had begun to form which theorized an organization of educators and parents. By 1930 this theory had been put into practice. Parents and teachers joined in discussions about children. Its success can be measured only in part by the growing membership of 26,000.¹ Of course many problems still exist but time and work will eventually result in a more effective organization.

The Home and School Association is a democratic organization to which members come voluntarily. However, once they have joined, all members keep the objectives in mind and follow a Code of Ethics. A community needs an organization such as this to arouse public interest in the children.

The welfare of the children is foremost in the minds of parents and educators, and the Home and School objectives clearly indicate that all activity is directed in the best interests of the students. It is for the student that positive attitudes toward education are encouraged. The well-being of the child is under consideration when parents try to reform or revise certain policies connected with the school. The child is the object of legislation providing for additional services to the home for the purpose of improving the home environment. It is for the child that parents are willing to spend time learning new methods of teaching, why and how he is taught. The future of the child is what concerns parents and teachers when they attempt to instil a feeling of patriotism and good will.

Welfare is not restricted, however, to any particular phase of the child's development. Home, School and Community are all considered with equal importance, special attention being paid to youth programs, which can be useful to all ages. In many places, the Home and School organization sponsors recreational activity through the community. Health services are provided frequently for pre-schoolers as well as children of school age.

The improving of home life is a purpose of the Home and School which is by no means ignored. Home Economics Workshops for mothers in the community are often sponsored by the Home and School. Contact with the Red Cross gives an opportunity to provide free First Aid training to members of the community. Civil Defense training is another field which is considered.

Safety and protection is an area where the Home and School is of great help. Recently, Provincial legislation was passed regarding safety markings in school zones and new laws referring to school bus regulations. Accident Insurance to protect children on their way to and from school as well as during school hours was arrived at through its influence as well. The National Committee for 1962 has recently urged the Federal Department of Justice to take immediate action against criminal sexual psychopaths.²

1. YEARBOOK. Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations. "Report of the President". Mrs. R.V. McCullough. p. 3, 1962.
2. NATIONAL COMMITTEE. p. 9, 1962.

HOME AND SCHOOL
WHY?

The improvement of education is a great challenge to concerned citizens. The Home and School has secured legislation to raise the standard of education and is in the process of promoting more extensive advances. The resolutions of the Royal Commission of Education which were put into effect through legislation were indirectly a result of the Home and School since the Royal Commission was emphatically suggested and supported by the Association. Many people did not feel that a six-week training period was sufficient to produce a capable teacher. The Home and School did research into this and the results were such that the Association encouraged legislation to have the program withdrawn. Changes in the curriculum are not beyond the Home and School either. It was largely responsible for the return of Math 31 to the Grade XII Curriculum, as well as increasing the amount of English to be found in the High School.

As well as the Provincial level, Education is given encouragement on the local level. Prizes are awarded to outstanding students within the school, district, division. For example, the Kerby Scholarships of \$50.00 are given to the top Grade IX students from schools with less than and more than two teachers. To library services in different regions, the Home and School has given its support. To assist students in buying text books, the Association has initiated a rental plan which cuts the costs considerably. School equipment other than text books and library books are provided for by the Home and School. It is active in encouraging the community to help provide recreation equipment.³ Financial aid to the school from the Association is given frequently, usually with the help of the school division. That is, the Home and School might provide half the cost of some tumbling equipment and the division along with the Department of Education might provide the other half.

Co-operation between parents and teachers is essential but not sufficient. The Home and School must also work with the local board and the divisional board. Recommendations should go through the proper channels. Before a group of citizens can work successfully together, they must give the matter at hand a great deal of serious, intelligent thought. They must understand the issue and know the goals of teachers and administrators. Everyone must co-operate if any advances are to be made at all. A very difficult thing for many parents to realize is that teaching is a highly skilled profession. Unless this is realized, the opinions of teachers are often disregarded and bitter feelings result. According to Superintendent, J.N. Hull of Torrance, California, this is where difficulties are most likely to arise.⁴

The teacher, if he is wise, can find the Home and School a valuable aid to the school because of the services it provides. In an effective situation, everyone should encourage the other to experiment with new methods and ideas. Co-operation on a community-wide scale is desirable. If all activities are co-ordinated, the learning situation is expanded. A Co-ordination Council is an asset to the Home and School since it is made up of the heads of the different organizations within the community. The activities of the community can be co-ordinated and used to the advantage of the school. The Lion's Club is always willing to help the school and youth organizations if it knows where it can be of some help.

3. THE DYNAMICS OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP, R.F. Campbell and J.A. Ramseyer. reprinted August 1958. p. 170.
4. THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL, ed. by Samuel Everett. C. Appleton Century Co., New York. 1938. Chps. 1, IV.

HOME AND SCHOOL
WHY?

Co-operation within the community is not enough. The Home and School Association provides an opportunity to co-operate with other schools and organizations. The Annual A.T.A. Banff Conference is a good example of this type of co-operation. This Conference brings together people from all types of educational institutions and organizations. Representatives come from the University of Alberta; Alberta Teachers' Association; Alberta School Inspectors' Association; Alberta Federation of Home and School, as well as representatives from branches outside the province.⁵ Here the different organization heads can communicate with each other to better understand the purposes. Since Home and School is represented here, it can confer with these other organizations and influence them as well as become acquainted with their goals. The Conference does much to communicate and co-ordinate the branches.

Communicating ideas from one group of people to another is difficult. This can be illustrated by looking at the world situation. The clash of ideals is partly due to the difficulty of communicating. When misunderstandings are present, bitterness and animosity results. The same condition occurs when the attitudes of the community are not favorable to the school. The reason for a situation like this is that the school cannot or will not communicate.

Communication refers not only to a flow of ideas, but also to the understanding of those ideas. Classes reflect the attitudes of the community. Positive attitudes are indicated by willing students. Attitudes are very difficult to change since the change cannot be brought about by a mere factual presentation, but must come from a change from within the mind of the individual. The facts are essential, however before a change can take place.

Communication is a valuable area where political representation is concerned. Home and School members have an influence in the election of people who follow public opinion to public office. That is, the public elects a man who shares their views. He goes to Edmonton to represent the community on matters of provincial interest. His opinions in respect to education will mirror the desires of the people who elected him to the legislature.

When communication is not complete and the people of the community do not understand the purpose of the schools, difficulties arise. In Calgary, for example, a large number of residents are from the United States where the school is accredited to a certain extent to pose its own curriculum. When they do not realize that curriculum revision is not within the power of the school, they become disgusted with the setup. The influence of American television programs has given this same impression to many Canadians as well, as they watch news in which the P.T.A. has a different function than it does in Alberta.

One important advantage of the Home and School is that the principal of the school can talk directly to influential members of the community and explain school policies, curriculum, administrative methods and educational philosophy. Trouble begins when one faction, teacher or parent proceeds with disregard for the other.⁶ With the principal on the initiative of the Home and School, he can assist by explaining problems before they have a chance to become areas of friction, since these problems most frequently arise in the Executive.⁷ It is easier for the Home and School to arrange for demonstrations and exhibits if the school representative is a member of the Association Executive. If any one individual is said to be more important than the rest, the principal is that person. He is the link between the teachers and the laymen.

5. "WE TALKED OF MANY THINGS", Inez Castleton, A.T.A. Magazine, Oct. 1958, p. 15.
6. "PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS", S.R. Laycock, A.T.A. Magazine, Sept. 1956, p. 9.
7. "THE PRINCIPAL AND THE HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION", S.H. Churchill, A.T.A. Magazine, June 1960.

HOME AND SCHOOL
WHY?

The Home and School Association can be very valuable to a community if it is properly organized. This includes being a member of the Provincial Federation. It has an opportunity to influence nearly every facet of our society which deals with children. Educational, safety, health, welfare, citizenship, recreation and leadership committees are all influenced to some degree by the local Home and School organization. Although a community can get along without a Home and School, the community which has an organized Association of parents and teachers can do more in welfare, co-ordination and communication than any one which lacks a Home and School.

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3. R.F. Campbell and J.A. Ramseyer, The Dynamics of School-Community Relationship. Reprinted August 1958, copyright 1955.
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7. A.T.A. MAGAZINE - "The Principal and the Home and School Association",
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Information was also gathered from general sources such as:

The Speakers' Manual

Objects and Code of Ethics

General Information

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