PATTERNS OF 20th CENTURY ATTENDANCE: A SYSTEMATIC STUDY OF VICTORIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1910 AND 1921

by

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ABSTRACT

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, a loose coalition of educators and child reformers reached a 'new consensus' regarding how Canadian children were raised. Because public education systems touched almost all children, schools were targeted as instruments to effect this new consensus. In this period Canadian public education was extended to more students, in particular teenagers, as high school became a more common experience. Schools were also transformed, with the introduction of new curriculum and more efficient methods of organization and teaching. Educators and child reformers banded together to establish more standardized, efficient, child-centred systems of education.

This period has received scant attention compared to the nineteenth century and as a result there are many aspects of twentieth century schooling that we know little about. Notably absent are attendance studies. We know relatively little regarding questions of who went to school and for how long, and how these patterns changed in response to changes in school organization and curriculum. This gap in the historiography can be best addressed though systematic micro histories of particular locales, utilizing

school registers. Through quantitative analyses of such records, patterns of organization, enrollment, and attendance can be established for this crucial period. Hitherto this method has only been applied to the nineteenth century and the personal schedule of the census.

This thesis is a study of Victoria, British Columbia, in 1910 and 1921. School registers for over three thousand elementary and secondary students were analyzed to explore questions regarding the organization of urban schools and patterns of enrollment and attendance. The Victoria registers also facilitated an analysis of student mobility: both intra-city and extra-city movement.

The study illuminates the characteristics of one modern school system and suggests that as late as 1921, Canadian public education retained qualities of irregularity, both in organization and attendance, not unlike the nineteenth century. Not all children went to school regularly and some of the relationships between age, gender, school type and course, and attendance are exposed. Beyond this, many questions are raised regarding these and other relationships. The impact of vocational education, geographic mobility, and social class are speculated upon. Not definitive, this study rather suggests both a series of questions and a possible method to answer them.

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DEDICATION

With many thanks, to Drs. Chad Gaffield and Peter Baskerville, scholars and friends. The lessons they taught extend far beyond the pages of this thesis.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The foundation for the transformation of Canadian public education was laid in the very late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when school officials and social reformers established a new consensus on the ideals of Canadian childhood and adolescence. In the opening decades of this century many of these new ideals crept into the school systems. By 1921, though the program was far from complete, especially in rural areas, urban school systems were substantially transformed. And the new ideal, in policy formulation at least, was firmly in place.[1]

This new educational ideal had several objectives and as many policies to achieve them. The new education was to be at once both an improvement on the earlier model and substantially different in its goals, organization and practices. Improvement was to come in the form of modern, better equipped schools, smaller classes, more highly trained administrators and teachers and, of importance to this study, continued improvement in rates of both enrollment and attendance. Educational advancements of the nineteenth century focussing on age/achievement grading, standardized classroom organization and testing were to be extended. New to this period was a greatly enhanced concern with what was taught and how it was taught. A strictly

academic curriculum, presented in a traditional, impersonal manner came under attack. More relevant, child centred, manually oriented courses were prescribed in their stead. The vocational movement, with its emphasis on non-academic courses, especially in the higher grades, was a cornerstone of the new education. Related to this was the desire to extend secondary schooling to a majority of teenagers. More years of schooling, it was argued, was desirable for more than just the traditional minority of youths. Of course, the education the masses should receive was deemed to be both necessarily and desirably different than the traditional offerings.

Unlike the nineteenth century, we know little about individual patterns of twentieth century school behaviour. The shape of individual patterns of enrollment and attendance has been well described for the years following the birth of the systems. The contours of the period of transformation are relatively unknown. While the census aggregates, and in particular the 1921 supplementary discussion of attendance and illiteracy, are vastly superior to nineteenth century aggregates, they deny an appreciation of the complexity of twentieth century school behaviour. This appreciation can only be achieved through systematic studies of local sources, be they personal census schedules or school registers. Lacking such studies, relationships

of age, gender, grade, course and school type and location to attendance remain unclear. How organizational improvements manifested themselves is left similarly blurred. What, for example, was the impact of vocational education on patterns of enrollment and attendance among high school students? Or, in the absence of state-supported kindergartens, what patterns of age of entry emerged in individual locales? These, and questions like them, strike at the heart of understanding the rationale and impact of the new education. They can only be adequately addressed through a series of systematic micro-histories such as have been pursued with great reward for the earlier century.

Researchers of the early nineteen seventies discovered that nineteenth century rhetoric and ambition did not often equate with reality;[2] that while almost all parents and children very quickly accepted public education, material circumstance dictated irregular patterns of attendance. Despite the best efforts of nineteenth century officials, school attendance and school organization remained largely irregular and much less uniform than even the contemporary ideal. Economic concerns kept many children out of the classroom for much of the school year. Illness of students or siblings needing care, poor weather, bad roads, or simply distance to school added to the problem. Attendance irregularity was the reality even in the face of steady

school expansion and passage of compulsion laws. Familial conditions continued to prescribe school behaviour throughout the nineteenth century. Attendance, like childhood itself, remained an uneven and irregular experience.

The nineteenth century results, which emphasize complexity over simplicity, irregularity over regularity, and uniqueness over homogeneity, suggest that the aggregates of the early twentieth century probably mask systems still reactive to local and individual conditions. Twentieth century officials probably had as limited control over children as their nineteenth century counterparts did.

This study sheds light on the contours of early twentieth century educational organization and attendance by means of a systematic study of school registers. It is argued that only through such a systematic study of all students in a prescribed grouping (school, area, city) from school registers, can the detail of individual patterns emerge. School registers for selected Victoria, British Columbia, elementary and secondary schools were analyzed in such a manner for both 1910 and 1921.[3]

For 1910 four elementary and the one high school and for 1921 five elementary schools and the high school were examined. In 1910, 1414 elementary and 273 high school students were captured. In 1921 the totals were 1585 and 914. Three elementary schools were analyzed both times,

while for reasons outlined elsewhere,[4] one was dropped and two added in 1921. In both years, two types of elementary schools, enrolling very young and normal age groups were examined. As well, two distinct areas of Victoria were captured, one affluent and the other less so, but without a safely assigned economic quality.

The source utilized was the teacher's annual report. In June of each year classroom attendance totals were recorded on one record. The name, age, and number of days attended was recorded for each pupil. For this study each pupil was assigned a gender though it unfortunately did not appear on the record. Perhaps unique to these British Columbia records, the annual report recorded the movement patterns of students. In both years the destination of students leaving was recorded in a separate column. This captured those promoted or demoted to another class, those moving to another school or another city or those who left school for a variety of reasons. In 1910, but not in 1921, another column was reserved for the same movement inward. These together allowed an analysis of mobility, or stability, of the school population.

All information from the registers was made machine readable and entered into a computer. This data was then analyzed to determine what the patterns of organization were in the two years and in the various schools. Attendance

behaviour was analyzed to investigate what relationships there were, if any, between age, gender, grade, school type, location, course, and patterns of attendance.

This data was supplemented in two ways. The historiography of Canadian education and childhood was used for comparison and for fuller expansion of results discovered here. As well, the Annual Reports of the Department of Education and the Minutes of the Victoria School Board from 1900 to 1921 were read and are noted as impressionistic support or refutation of the systematic findings where applicable.

The study is pursued in eight chapters. One is this introduction. Chapter two discusses the historiography of Canadian educational history and attempts to place attendance research and thus this study in such context. Chapter three outlines briefly what systematic studies have discovered regarding attendance in the mid- to late nineteenth century, emphasizing the patterns which relate to this study. Chapter four discusses briefly the history of early twentieth century schooling and provides both a detailed outline of this study's methodology and the school system of Victoria. Chapters five through eight rely predominantly on data generated in this study. Chapter five, "The 20th Century Classroom," displays the characteristics of school, grade and course organization. The relative standardization and

stability of this city system is questioned. Chapter six, "Children in Motion," utilizes the movement variable in the annual report to discuss both school and city-wide movement as well as extra-city geographic mobility. Chapter seven, "Patterns of Attendance," pursues discussion of the relationships discovered between attendance and the range of factors afforded by the source. The final chapter, "Grandparents and Grandchildren," attempts to synthesize the major findings and suggest how this study adds to the interpretation of early twentieth century public education and childhood.

This study begins to expose the details of school attendance in this period. Victoria, as will be discussed further, possessed in most ways a modern urban school system. As such, this study is representative of a study of the impact of the new education and the new childhood as it related to school. Still, for a variety of obvious and perhaps not so obvious reasons, this study is limited.[5] Obviously, one study no more illuminates the national character of school attendance than do national aggregates illuminate the particular. A series of well chosen studies are necessary before it will be possible to piece together the complex puzzle. As well, unlike the census data available to nineteenth century researchers, this and other school registers display limited information. Variables such as parental occupation, ethnicity and family size

which proved consistently related to attendance are absent.[6] An extremely tentative discussion of class is entered but is not pursued with any vigour due to the lack of reliable evidence. In further studies these variables must be incorporated by linking other records to school registers.

Lastly, this study suffers the same two ills all systematic studies of attendance do.[7] One, relationships between variables and performance are difficult to ascertain with absolute certainty. A variety of studies have served to accentuate this for the nineteenth century. Even with the use of multiple regression analysis, a complex statistical operation, the relative influence of the variety of factors cannot be clearly determined. Relationships must be discussed devoid of causation, but rather as repeatedly occurring patterns. Second, ascribing human motivation across the decades almost solely on the evidence of number of days attended is tenuous at best. "Treacherous" is how the leading exponent of this practice calls it.[8] Clearly there is some danger in assigning historical motive in any study and systematic social history is no exception. Because ordinary people considered with respect to perhaps only one source are the focus of such studies, the danger is accentuated.[9]

Still, this study begins to expose the contours of the transforming Canadian school. No great divide separates the

old and the new education in the same way no such clear demarcation exists between the old and the new childhood. Rather, the transition from a childhood uniformly related to family economies slowly and unevenly gave way to a childhood almost entirely prescribed by regular school attendance. This process moved at an accelerated pace in the opening decades of the twentieth century, but not, this study hopes to expose, at the same rate for all children. If this study serves only to expose the continuing complexity of the relationship of school attendance to society and to allow the framing of more insightful questioning of this relationship, it will have been successful.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

[1]The best discussion of this transformation of Canadian education is presented in Neil Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth Century Consensus (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976). Robert M. Stamp, The Schools of Ontario: 1876-1976 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982) is also useful. For the fullest discussions of the recent historiography of Canadian education see J. Donald Wilson, "Historiographical Perspectives on Canadian Educational History: A Review Essay," Journal of Educational Thought, Vol. II, No. 1, 1977, and his introductory essay in J. Donald Wilson, ed., An Imperfect Past: Education and Society in Canadian History (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1984).

[2]For an outline of such studies see Chad Gaffield, "Demography, Social Structure and the History of Schooling," David C. Jones , ed., Monographs in Education V (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1981).

[3]See chapter four for details of this study. The problems encountered and the solutions chosen are elaborated on.

[4]See above note.

[5]The strengths and weaknesses of micro-histories, as well as a definition of what they ideally are, is provided in Chad Gaffield, "The Micro History of Cultural Relations: Prescott County and the Language of Instruction Controversy," paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, 1984.

[6]See Gaffield, "Demography, Social Structure, and the History of Schooling."

[7]Two discussions of school attendance research are presented by the same author. See Michael B. Katz, "Who Went to School?" in Katz and Paul H. Mattingly, eds., Education and Social Change: Themes From Ontario's Past (New York: University Press, 1975), and Chapter 9 of Katz, The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1982).

[8]Katz, Social Organization, p. 361.

[9]For elaboration and discussion of the literature, see Gaffield, "The Micro History of Cultural Relations."

CHAPTER TWO: REVISIONISM REVISITED

Until the late nineteen sixties and early nineteen seventies Canadian educational history was marked by several qualities now relatively absent in the historiography. Pre-revisionist histories were insular, traditional in method and rarely critical of the past. The revisionism of the last fifteen years, when the educational history of Canada was substantially re-written, challenged these assumptions regarding the approach, interpretation and focus of previous accounts.[1] Varied as they were, all revisionist efforts addressed one or more of these assumptions. Those who broached all three were labelled radicals while those who wished only to enlarge the focus of educational history were labelled moderates.[2]

A comprehensive review of the literature, either prior to or after the initial wave of revisionism is not the purpose here. Several such reviews exist.[3] What is the aim here is to place this study in the historiography of Canadian education, to suggest the studies it is similar to and those it stands in contrast to, to situate the growth of attendance research in educational literature. For purpose of discussion the historiography will be divided into pre-revisionist and revisionist eras, roughly divided by 1970 and the publication of Canadian Education: A History and the terms radical and moderate revisionism will

be used to discuss the two camps of post-1970 scholars[4].

The insularity of the pre-revisionists was not surprising. Most educational histories were produced by former or active educators.[5] Though the major pieces of the fifties and sixties were produced by academics working in universities, the authors were career educators. Their major role was the education of teachers. Thus, their narrow focus on schools and schooling as relatively isolated institutions is not unexpected. As well, in keeping with contemporary historical practices generally, 'mainstream' Canadian historians did not attempt discussions of topics now subsumed under the heading 'social history.'[6] Professional historians were much more comfortable with topics of political or military significance. No merging of social and educational history was attempted. What was discussed by the educationalists at this time were the promoters of schools, the growth of organizational apparatus, pedagogy, curriculum, and the continuous, inexorable expansion of schooling. Schooling was interpreted in a linear fashion, devoid of contextualization. Schools-in-isolation sufficed for educational history.

Related to this insular approach was the traditional method of research and presentation adopted by the pre-revisionists. Sources were limited to annual reports of departments of education, books and articles produced by

previous educators and the chronicles of the same. In short, the evidence used to weigh the educational past was almost universally the products of past educators. Another quality of this group was their reliance upon traditional manners of presentation. The histories were organized mainly in geo-political units and arranged chronologically. In keeping with the general historiography of this period, any but traditional approaches were anathema to this group.[7]

Lastly, this group was largely uncritical of the past. While Philips was most explicit in his intentions,[8] all the pre-revisionists believed in the enlightening power of public educational systems. As one pair of contemporary critics noted, this group shared "one fatal flaw. The development of the public school system and the whole idea of mass compulsory education was (interpreted as) desirable and the almost inevitable outcome of popular need and mass demand."[9] The growth of systems of public education was related inextricably with increasing democratization and with 'progress,' loosely defined. Promoters were given special treatment. Men such as Egerton Ryerson were discussed as heroic figures, largely responsible for the emancipation of generations of youngsters. Their motives and thus ultimately the rationale behind the growth of school systems went unpassed by a critical eye.[10]

By the late sixties researchers began to present two new arguments regarding the history of Canadian schooling. They attacked most explicitly the overly narrow view of education formerly adopted and the consistently optimistic view of the past expressed by the pre-revisionists. This new group questioned the overemphasis on the progressive motivations of leaders who promoted construction of universal, tax-supported educational systems.[11] The revisionists suggested that social control as much as a concern for increasing opportunity and equality motivated the promoters who birthed, nurtured and extended the systems of the mid- to late nineteenth century. Efficiency, some argued, was more desired than the extension of democratic opportunity. Social conservatism was said to have inspired as much or more school growth than social reform. School reform of one-half century was re-examined.[12]

It was argued that the real history of schooling extended far beyond the opinions and claims of school promoters themselves. Change came in two ways. The history of schooling was expanded to include discussion of who went to school, what was taught, political battles over schooling, school location, etc. The discussion of school related topics was extended both in scope and in depth of analysis. Related to this, schools and schooling were now connected to external forces. The forces which shaped schools and

the impact of schooling on society came under detailed examination.[13] Questions of why? dominated this debate. Why did some children go to school and not others? Why did schooling take the shape it did? Why was the curriculum designed as it was? As well, the emphasis shifted from an analysis of the promoters to one of the clientele. Historians of childhood, labour, ethnicity and feminism discovered educational history as a linchpin in various discussions. Studies of economic change, mobility and the life cycle utilized the school and school records as well.[14] The "dominant experience of growing up" came to be studied as such.[15]

Method also became a concern of some. Several of the radicals rethought the selection and use of sources. They rethought the utility of relying almost exclusively on in-house sources and suggested other sources which could both reveal much that was new about schooling, and allow a far more detailed consideration of what had already been studied.[16] Using hitherto unexamined records of, or relating to schools, particularly the personal schedule of the Census of Canada, quantifiers analyzed school attendance as part of larger reconstructions of past population patterns. Though the census records highlighted this new approach to sources, records as disparate as court records, records of literacy, school plans and school maps were engaged to

address the complete picture of schooling. These new sources, as with the census, were often treated in a systematic, quantitative manner.

This same group opted to avoid, where possible, the organization of history in traditional units entirely related to time and place. On this point they were less successful than the others. We know a great deal about south-central Ontario from 1851 to 1881 but much less of other areas and other time periods. Still the revisionists as a whole, and the radicals in particular, moved educational history substantially forward in the space of less than a decade.

Of particular interest here, is the historiography of school attendance, an integral part of the revisionist approach. The illumination and interpretation of attendance patterns is just what pre-revisionism was not. It demands systematic analysis, invokes a societal contextualization and allows an informed analysis of the motives and impact of the systems. Katz made the case for school attendance research most fully in his classic 1972 article "Who Went to School?" published in the special edition of History of Education Quarterly and republished in the 1975 volume. Katz listed three broad reasons why such analysis is invaluable to the history of education. One, the "literature of school attendance both reflects and

illuminates important topics in the history of social thought."[17] The discussion of schooling and in particular of attendance problems addresses who should go, why, how long, what mechanisms should be invoked to enforce such, and lastly, suggests how promoters viewed school, children and the state. The rhetoric of attendance is a measure of the attitudes surrounding the crucial issue of nineteenth century - getting children to go to school regularly.

Second, Katz argued that "patterns of school attendance may be redefined as the record of family decisions about formal education."[18] Utilizing attendance records, not literature, one can reconstruct school going decisions for the clientele. Both the views of schooling and material considerations are manifest in attendance patterns. From careful reconstruction and analysis of such records, a host of topics can be broached. The relationships of schooling and work, class, dependency, economic change, the life cycle, seasonal employment patterns, family size, geographical location, grade, age, may be illuminated by one full set of records. Patterns, as emphasized, are the key. Both attendance and non-attendance reveal something to the researcher. Interpretation fleshes out otherwise static records.

Finally, "school attendance is at the centre of educational history."[19] The literature abounds in discussions

of who went and the problems attendance/non-attendance caused. The essence of the growth and extension of public schooling is capsulized in the discussion of the dynamics of attendance at any particular time. School history, is, at its core, the history of going to school and attendance studies can expose this core. Attendance research is the essence of revisionism and at the heart of the 'new' educational history. The remainder of this study seeks to refine further this central aspect of the history of schooling with a study of twentieth century attendance patterns.

NOTES

CHAPTER TWO

[1]For overview of the educational historiography of this period see J. Donald Wilson, "Historiographical Perspectives,"; Gaffield, "Demography, Social Structure, and the History of Schooling." For an earlier, bibliographic essay, see Alan Child, "The History of Canadian Education: A Bibliography," Histoire Sociale/Social History (November, 1971).

[2]The label radicals and moderates was introduced by Neil Sutherland in his introduction to Katz and Mattingly, Education and Social Change. While there are some problems with these labels, notably what they mean and how one decides who deserves which label, they are at least potentially useful. They do, by and large, distinguish between those concerned with theory and method and those much less concerned with these topics.

[3]See note 1 for an overview of the literature.

[4]J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis P. Audet, Canadian Education : A History (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

[5]The best examples of this are Charles Philips, The Development of Education in Canada (Toronto: W. J. Gage, 1957); F. Henry Johnson, A History of Public Education in British Columbia (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1964), and Johnson, A Brief History of Canadian Education (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1968).

[6]For the relationships between trends in Canadian educational history and Canadian history writ large, see Wilson, "Historiographical Perspectives."

[7]For a critique of the pre-1970 literature and a plea for intellectual 'rigour' in the field of educational history, see Wilson, "Canadian Historiography," History of Education Quarterly, (Spring, 1969).

[8]In the forward to his survey of the history of Canadian education Philips stated that the book was "written from an uncompromisingly democratic and rather equalitarian point of view." (Preface, xii).

[9]Introduction to Alison Prentice and Susan Houston Family, School, and Society (Toronto: Oxford Press, 1975).

[10]For an expression of this perspective see the introduction to Alison Prentice, The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Canada (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977).

[11]The development of the revisionist perspective is briefly outlined in Chad Gaffield, "Demography, Social Structure and the History of Schooling." Much of this discussion relies on the interpretation presented in that article.

[12]For the most complete statement of the interpretation of the origins of mass public schooling in the nineteenth century see Michael B. Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," History of Education Quarterly, Winter, 1976, and Chapter nine of Katz and others, The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982). Criticism of this position is supplied in Canada by Wilson and Jones, "The 'New' History of Canadian Education," History of Education Quarterly (Fall, 1976) and in the United States by Sol Cohen, "New Perspectives in the History of American Education, 1960-1970," History of Education (Jan, 1973).

[13]See Gaffield, "Demography, Social Structure," for a discussion of this development.

[14]For a discussion of the groups which entered research closely related to the history of education see Gaffield, "Going Back to School: Towards a Fresh Agenda for the History of Education," paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, 1985.

CHAPTER THREE: WHO WENT TO SCHOOL?
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY EXPERIENCE

As chapter two argued, school attendance studies are at the heart of revisionist educational history. The most insightful educational studies have included some measure of school attendance analysis. Most have centred on the mid- to late nineteenth century. This time concentration is due to the availability of the personal schedule of the Canadian census. The personal schedule, which allows reconstruction of individual patterns of attendance, is only available for 1851, 1861, 1871, and 1881.[1] Most studies cover three or four census years in sequence. Due to the non-availability of this schedule, much less work has been done on the twentieth century.

It is important to note that two groups of researchers have analyzed attendance. Though not exclusive of each other, a few studies have focussed on school attendance as the most important and most informative variable of the childhood experience. Most Canadian studies have focussed on some areas of Ontario: most particularly Hamilton, Peel County and the Ottawa Valley. The only major non-Ontarian study involves a working class district of industrial Montreal.[2] Several American scholars have utilized that country's census to determine past patterns of attendance as well and two such studies for mid- to late nineteenth

century Massachusetts will be incorporated to enlarge upon the Canadian evidence.[3]

Wherever they have looked, researchers have discovered that nineteenth century promoters perceived irregular attendance as the major problem afflicting public education systems: poor attendance undermined both the finest efforts of the teachers and the loftiest ambitions of the education officials. Ian Davey quotes a superintendent in 1871 who asserted that "irregularity of attendance is the bane and curse of public schools; it is a log and chain upon the progress of instruction for it blasts and whithers the noblest efforts of teachers."[4] Promoters lectured teachers, school boards, politicians and parents on the necessity of achieving high rates of both enrollment and regular attendance. Susan Houston argues this insistence, almost devotion to high levels of attendance was due to the need to justify the compulsory taxation system that supported the public schools and an exaggerated but nonetheless real concern with "Street Arabs," children who neither worked nor attended school. Juvenile delinquency possessed an importance beyond its real size because the apparent evils of such non-attenders fuelled much of the concern with regular attendance.[5]

But throughout the nineteenth century, regular attendance remained a non-realized ideal. While enrollment

figures were everywhere uniformly high by 1871, attendance rates remained low. In Ontario, over one-half of the enrolled school-age population attended less than one-half the time from 1856-1871.[6] In British Columbia in 1881, while roughly ninety per cent of school-age children enrolled, daily attendance barely crept past 50 per cent.[7] Both urban and rural areas experienced similar disparities.

Promoters and educators blamed poor attendance on a variety of factors and suggested as many remedies. They criticized parents and local trustees for a lack of responsibility and an ignorance of the value of education. Public school supporters in Ontario were "inclined to lay the blame for continued irregular attendance on the 'criminal apathy and negligence of parents' who did not appreciate the value of an education to their children."[8] In British Columbia, Superintendent of Schools John Jessop likewise decried parental indifference. "A little judicious pressure brought to bear upon negligent parents in our school districts, by trustees, will soon make chronic non-attendance a thing of the past,"[9] he declared in 1873. In the same passage he explained that such pressure was necessary because " . . . parents themselves in some instances, require to be educated, in order properly to realise the fact that instruction is required for their offspring."[10]

Promoters hoped that regular attendance could be

achieved through legislation. This hope was not fulfilled. In Ontario, a modest surge in attendance did accompany compulsory laws in 1871 but Houston asserts that such legislation was largely irrelevant to this development.[11] She suggests that any increase was due to "the gradual acceptance of school attendance among the working classes." Houston and others argue that at least three factors influenced this gradual acceptance.[12] Employment possibilities for children declined in the latter part of the nineteenth century and eliminated alternatives to schooling for this age group. At the same time, schooling developed a dynamic of its own. Peer pressure probably developed among parents to send their children to school.[13] Lastly, families may have come to see schooling as a strategy to secure opportunity for their offspring. In this way parents accepted schooling as a positive agent of mobility and security, not because of compulsory laws.

Attendance literature and aggregate patterns demonstrate that irregular attendance was the most troublesome affliction of nineteenth century schools and that what progress was made, was achieved independently of compulsory laws, or parental education, or coercion. While most children enrolled in public schools, most went irregularly for reasons outside the realm of the school and the promoters. As one astute Ontario Superintendent noted in

1861, it is not "indifference but the pressing care of providing for their bodily wants (which) is . . . the more general cause of non-attendance."[14]

Analyses of the manuscript census and school registers allowed researchers to discuss relationships between attendance and age, gender, family size, religion, ethnicity, and parental occupation. Of particular interest here are the patterns exhibited relative to age and gender, the variables present on school registers. While enrollment levels rose within each age group in both urban and rural areas, all ages did not experience schooling uniformly. The age of entry, the ages at which most children went to school, and the age at which children left school, were responsive to local economic conditions, unique family conditions, and changing cultural perceptions of childhood. A brief discussion of the most prominent of nineteenth century attendance studies will illuminate how sensitive attendance was to the factors of age, gender, and parental occupation and will provide a backdrop for similar considerations of the twentieth century.[15]

In Hamilton, Katz discovered that between 1851 and 1871 the proportion of young people at school rose within each age group. By 1871, 85.1% of 7-12 year olds attended as compared to 50.6% twenty years earlier.[16] Gaffield discovered similar growth in rural Ontario. Attendance

percentage leapt from 1 in 10 to well over 50% for the 5-16 year age group in the years 1851 to 1881.[17] The rate was even higher for the more narrowly defined school age group of 7-12. Even in the working class wards of Montreal just over one-half of children in this age group attended.[18] The most common age for attendance was about 11 and this remained so as late as 1921.[19] Children older and younger attended much less often the further they were from this optimum age. Younger children, it is suggested, were held back from school by parents and occasionally, discouraged from attending by school officials.

Age of entry sparked debate among nineteenth century advocators. Kaestle and Vinovskis have demonstrated how the usual age of entry in Massachusetts shifted over the course of the century.[20] Early in the century, schooling for children as young as 3 and 4 was deemed appropriate. Past mid-century child experts argued that this was a dangerous practice and the average of entry crept upwards to 5, 6, and even 7. "Reacting to the warnings of psychiatrists and educators that the premature education of young children might cause them irreparable harm, school officials discouraged parents from sending their very young children to school and often tried to raise the school entrance age."[21]

Kaestle and Vinovskis concluded that this retarded age of entry was independent of size of community, gender

or social class. It seems cultural norms, perhaps shaped by child professionals, forced up the average age of entry in Massachusetts in a very short period.

In Hamilton, where the public education system was not as long developed as that of Massachusetts, the percentage of 5 and 6 year-olds attending actually increased from 1851 to 1871. But, perhaps more interestingly, between 1851 and 1861, the earliest years of public school system growth, the rate of 4 and 5 year-olds attending decreased. The rate for 4 year-olds fell from 3.9% to 2.3% while for 5 year-olds from 17.7% to 16.5%. These decreases occurred while other rates were increasing rapidly. Younger children were being eliminated from the public education system. Alison Prentice discovered there were two arguments against the 5 year-olds in the Upper Canadian system.[22] As in Massachusetts, educators suggested the public school was no place for very young children who might suffer some harm. Likewise, some school officials were concerned that some families were using the school as a babysitter and placing children in the schools for other than educational reasons. The 'child professional' campaigns and efforts by school officials drove very young children out of the schools. By 1881, 6 or 7 was the normal age of school entry.[23]

While almost all 11 year-olds attended school, rates

decreased beyond this age. For example, in Hamilton in 1861, where 78.7% of 10 year-olds and 78.3% of 11 year-olds attended, a paltry 29.2% of 16 year-olds did. Only 9.6% of 18 year-olds attended in the same year. Likewise in 1871, when those in the 7-12 range attended at an 85.1% clip, 13-16 year-olds managed a 45.8% rate, and this was not restricted to Hamilton.[24] In Montreal in 1871, 63% of 6-10 year-olds, 46% of 11-15 year-olds, and only 4% of 16-20 year-olds attended.[25] In the working class wards of Montreal as well as in the rural and semi-rural areas of south-eastern Ontario, teenage dropout rates were high. Those who have analyzed this phenomenon invariably point to the necessity for work, whether in the city, on the farm, or in the rural lumbering areas. Nineteenth century wage rates simply did not allow for single family wage earners and child labour was often a necessity. As Davey concludes, "it was not that parents did not want to send their children to school - the almost universal enrollments deny that - rather the rigour and rhythm of work made it difficult to keep them there for sustained periods of time."[26] As late as 1881 attendance patterns were directly related to the seasonal demands of the farm economy and strategies of urban, family economies.

Though there was an initial effort to exclude girls from public common schools, by the late 1850's they were

accepted as equally as boys.[27] Davey demonstrated that the percentage of female students increased considerably after 1853 and girls accounted for almost one-half of the students in public schools by the end of the decade. Though public systems developed largely separate facilities for boys and girls - separate classes or schools, playgrounds, and activities - they attended at comparable rates until the early teenage years. Both the industrializing cities and rural economies opened more jobs for boys than for girls and this distinction mirrored itself in attendance patterns through higher teenage rates for females than males.

While the impact of social class can only be loosely measured in this study of Victoria, due to the lack of information provided by the registers, a brief outline will serve as a background for what discussion is attempted. Most importantly, it is argued that social class related to attendance wherever a minority of the school age population attended.[28] One of the major determinants of who went to school in grades not universally attended was parental occupation. Children from the highest classes, from more affluent families, went for more years. Though no attempt will be made to discuss or weigh the complexities discovered, it should be noted that regardless of size or location of community, social class related to attendance. Sons and daughters of unskilled labourers went to school less often

and more often had jobs. Sons and daughters of skilled workers, merchants and professionals more often attended school and were much less likely to have jobs until their later teens. As well, the nineteenth century high school was largely the private preserve of the middle and upper classes until well into the twentieth century. The 'elite' character of secondary institutions continued throughout the early years of this study (1911).[29]

There are several conclusions to be drawn from the nineteenth century experience which colour this study. Most importantly, school attendance was widely irregular despite the best efforts of school promoters and educators. Regardless of the levels of school expenditure, the extent of attendance laws passed or the number of exhortations on the evils of non-attendance, children experienced school in relation to the demands of their family situation, economic fluctuations and conditions of nature. Even when levels of enrollment were high, attendance remained troublesome. This examination of attendance patterns in the early twentieth century begins to expose that in many ways continuity marked Canadian education from the late nineteenth century to the first years of the 1920's. It will be demonstrated that twentieth century school officials were plagued by many 'nineteenth century problems' and that just as in the earlier century patterns of irregularity and instability

existed side by side with patterns of regularity and stability.

NOTES

CHAPTER THREE

[1]For a discussion of researching past patterns of school attendance, see Katz, "Who Went to School?", in Katz and Mattingly, eds., Education and Social Change.

[2]For an outline of Canadian studies see Gaffield, "Demography, Social Structure and the History of Schooling." Studies used here include: Katz, The People of Hamilton, Canada West (Cambridge: Harvard Press, 1975); Katz and Ian Davey, "Youth and Early Industrialization,"; Bettina Bradbury, "The Family Economy and Work in an Industrializing City: Montreal in the 1870's," Historical Papers (1979); David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1981); Chad Gaffield, "Schooling, The Economy and Rural Society," in Joy Parr, ed., Childhood and Family in Canadian History (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982).

[3]Carl F. Kaestle and Maris A. Vinovskis, "From Fireside to Factory: School Entry and School Leaving in Nineteenth Century Massachusetts," in Tamara K. Hareven, ed., Transitions: The Family and the Life Course in Historical Perspective (New York: Academic Press, 1978); Kaestle and Vinovskis, "From Apron Strings to ABC's: Parents, Children and Schooling in Nineteenth Century Massachusetts," in John Demos and Sarane Spence Boocock, eds., Turning Points: Historical and Sociological Essays on the Family (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

[4]Ian Davey, "The Rhythm of Work and the Rhythm of School," in Alf Chaiton and Neil McDonald, eds., Egerton Ryerson and His Times (Toronto: Macmillan, 1978), p. 227.

[5]Susan E. Houston, "Social Reform and Education: The Issue of Compulsory Schooling, Toronto, 1851-71," in Chaiton and McDonald, eds., Egerton Ryerson and His Times.

[6]Davey, "Rhythm of Work," p. 227.

[7]Annual Report of the Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia, 1881-1882. (Hereafter referred to as Annual Reports)

[8]Davey, "Rhythm of Work," p. 227.

[9]Annual Reports, 1872-73, p. 13.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Houston, "Social Reform and Education."

[12]See Gaffield, "Demography, Social Structure and the History of Schooling."

[13]Ibid.

[14]Davey, "Rhythm of Work," p. 228.

[15]See Note 2.

[16]The figures used in this thesis for Hamilton come from either Katz and Davey, "Youth and Early Industrialization," or Katz, The People of Hamilton.

[17]Gaffield, "Schooling, the Economy, and Rural Society."

[18]Bradbury, "The Family Economy and Work in an Industrializing City."

[19]Census of Canada, 1921, Vol. 4:1114-1115.

[20]Kaestle and Vinovskis, "School Entry and School Leaving."

[21]Ibid., p. 156.

[22]Prentice, School Promoters, pp. 150-151.

[23]Kaestle and Vinovskis, "School Entry and School Leaving."

[24]Katz, "Youth and Early Industrialization," and The People of Hamilton.

[25]These rates have been recalculated from Bradbury's rates presented on page 80, "Family, Economy, and Work."

[26]Davey, "Rhythm of Work," p. 247.

[27]Davey, "Trends in Female School Attendance in Mid-Nineteenth Century Ontario," Histoire Sociale/Social History (November, 1975).

[28]Katz describes in some detail the relationship of schooling and nineteenth century society in the concluding

chapter to The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism. The class dimension of school participation is emphasized.

[29]Perhaps the best discussion of the transformation of the high school from a strictly minority institution to one increasingly attended by the majority of teenagers is included in Joseph F. Kett, Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America: 1790 to the Present (New York: Basic Books, 1977). See especially chapter five, "From Nurture to Adolescence."

CHAPTER FOUR: AN APPROACH TO STUDYING TWENTIETH CENTURY SCHOOLING

The nineteenth century was the century of the birth and rapid growth of state supported, standardized systems of public education. By 1900 "the vast majority of children received at least several years of schooling and many attended consistently from age six to sixteen."[1] Despite many problems, some of which were outlined in the previous chapter, Canadian public education touched most Canadian children and had become an object of much public concern and discussion. The efficacy of the system and its ability to prepare Canadian youth for the new century was questioned by educators, politicians, child reformers and businessmen. The new con s ensus reached by these many interested parties came to the fore before the Great Depression. The Canadian public education system dramatically expanded and retooled to meet the perceived demands the 'new' society put on it.

The twentieth century then, and in particular the opening few decades, was one of continued growth, extension and substantial transformation of Canadian school systems. The continued growth of the systems is best evidenced by the sheer numbers of students who poured into the schools in the opening two decades of the century. From 1901 to 1921 the total number of students in graded public schools

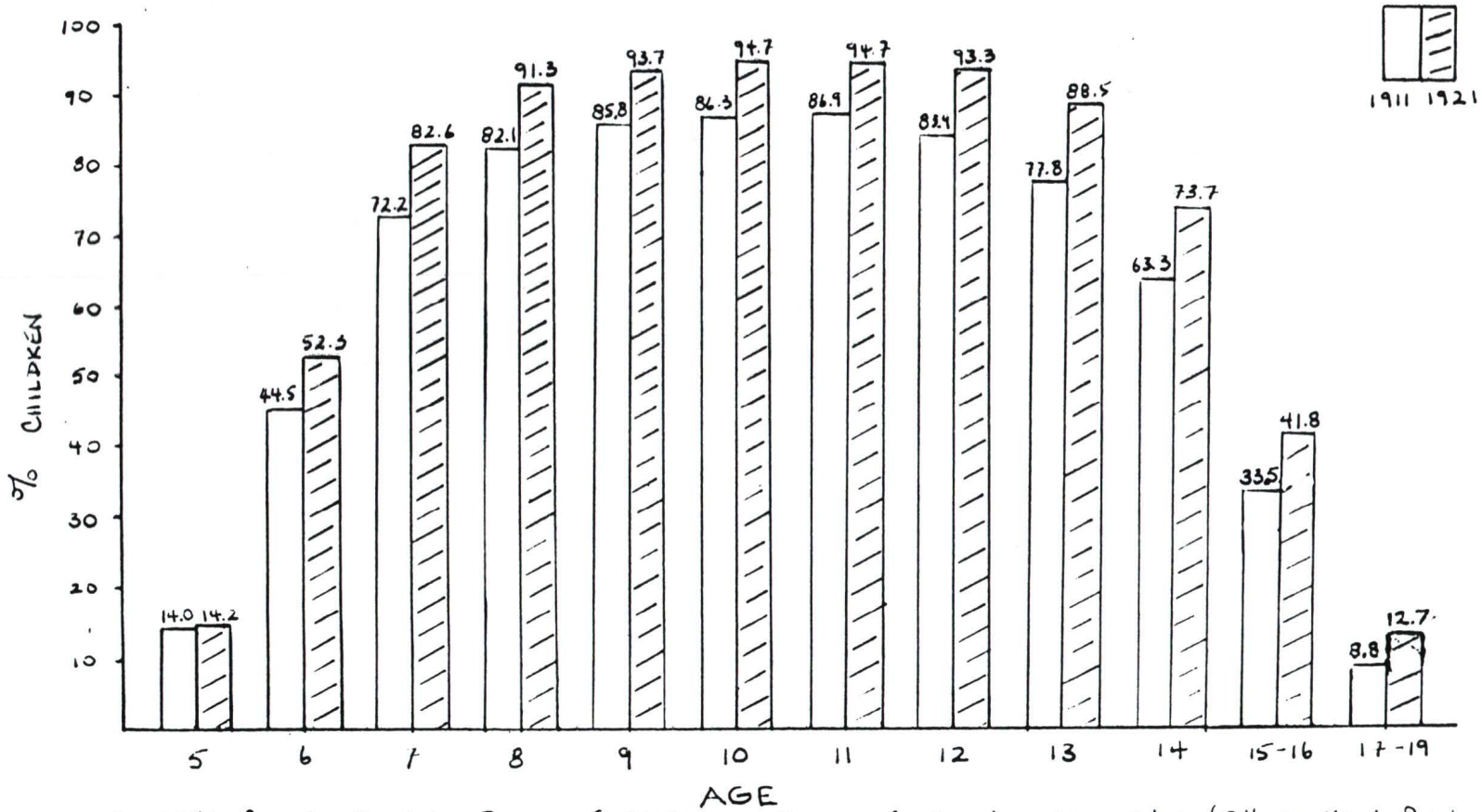
almost doubled from 911,661 to 1,710,943.[2] Though partly due to massive levels of immigration through these years, these figures also establish that a higher percentage of all school-age children were enrolling in school than ever before. Figure I demonstrates how many more children in each age group enrolled in 1921 than 1911.

For the crucial 7-14 age group, the age group who by design would attend common or elementary schools, and for whom most compulsion laws were designed, the rate rose from 79.78% in 1911 to 88.59% ten years later. Clearly more school-age children were going to school in 1921 than at the turn of the century. As well, the public school system was extending its influence over an even older group of students. As suggested in chapter three, in the nineteenth century high schools were largely elitist institutions. That they were slowly opening to a wider clientele is suggested by the increase in numbers of 15-19 year olds attending. Though all these children were certainly not in high schools, they were of 'high school age' and just as clearly many of them would have been in secondary institutions. The growth of high schools was one major area of the extension of public education in the period and will be discussed more fully shortly.

The third major quality of Canadian public education in the opening decades of this century was its uneven but

FIGURE I

PERCENTAGE OF CANADIAN CHILDREN AT SCHOOL, 1911 AND 1921



SOURCE: Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Census of Canada, 1931. vol. 1 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1936), 1114, 1115.

substantial transformation from traditional methods of instruction and subject matter to modern, new or progressive forms of education.[4] New or progressive education meant a variety of things to a variety of people. The term progressive is not in fact used in Canada to the extent that it is in the United States and at least one scholar has placed the progressive era in British Columbia education in the thirties.[5] Regardless of the title one assigns the era, the curriculum and many of the underlying assumptions regarding public schooling, if not the practices, were reworked from the late nineteenth century to about World War I.

Of great importance was the introduction of manual and then technical education into the elementary and secondary schools.[6] Discussed in the nineteenth century, the vocational movement made dramatic inroads in 1901 through the donation of manual schools to nine Canadian cities by tobacco millionaire Sir William Macdonald. Three years later these schools were taken over by local school boards and by World War I manual training was normal practice in graded city schools. The vocational movement, usually considered the appropriate name for all the new non-academic subjects, next forced itself into the high schools. By the teens most high schools had some combination of woodworking, metalworking or technical classes. Some cities, for

example Vancouver, had entire large high schools devoted to such study.

For girls, vocationalism brought commercial education as well as household or domestic science. While bookkeeping had been established in many high schools in the previous century, the early twentieth century saw tremendous expansion in enrollment, especially among females. Commercial education was the job-related course of study for girls that woodwork or metalwork was intended to be for boys. As well, girls in both elementary and high schools were exposed to modern, efficient methods of home management in domestic science classes. Also originating from the turn of the century, domestic science, as it came to be known, was quickly adopted for inclusion in elementary curricula. This often meant introductory needlework while in the high schools the emphasis was on home management and the appreciation of the role of the modern housewife.

All the curriculum reforms were intended to both make the contemporary schools more appealing to students unlikely to attend regularly and at the same time to make the schools more relevant to a changing society. Whether these curriculum reforms were truly progressive and the resultant school systems more rational and aligned with a changed society, is the focus of some debate.[7] What is clear is that a broad based group of reformers consciously tried to

alter the premises and reality of mass public schooling and that in some very substantial ways, the standard of the World War I period was distinct from that offered two decades earlier.

This period of growth, extension and transformation has not received the attention the nineteenth century has because many historians consider all but the earliest years of the twentieth century contemporary, and not suitable for study. As well, they perceive that the nineteenth century was the pivotal century in the development of modern Canadian society, especially in regard to institutional, or educational history.[8] Moreover, the sources available for the most valuable educational histories, manuscript censuses, are not available past 1881. Demographic research and what it reveals about patterns of attendance comes to a stop at that date. This will not change for several years to come.[9] Researchers have also exhibited a reluctance to employ twentieth century school maps, registers, or other disparate sources used to examine the previous century.

Unfortunately, many of the most important educational questions of the characteristics of children who did and did not attend school are more difficult, though not impossible, to answer without the census. Thus we know much less about the actual characteristics of twentieth century schooling than we do of nineteenth century schooling and

historiographical debates are notably absent as the focus turns increasingly to the twentieth century.[10] Indeed, this century is viewed in a more traditional and less critical manner than the past century. Neil Sutherland has described much of the sense of improvement historians attribute to this period.

> English speaking Canadians also improved the quality of their educational enterprise. Children and families made a greater investment in the time and effort they devoted to formal education. School systems improved the quality of their teachers, the teaching materials they worked with, and the physical environment their pupils worked in. In turn, teachers improved their methods and became much more adept in their handling of a wider range of children compared to the situation which had existed thirty years before. By 1921 a greater proportion of school-aged children went to school, and a greater proportion of those in school attended more regularly each year, stayed in school for a longer number of years, and were taught by teachers who were both better educated and better trained than their predecessors.[11]

This is the progress the annual reports and officially generated statistics reveal but problems persisted in the organization of schools and in the attendance of younger and older children.

Though the 1921 census supplement accurately noted that non-attendance was less than one-half in 1921 what it had been in 1911, many of those attending did not do so regularly. Nationally in 1911, 69.51% of those 7-14 attended 7-0 months, the normal length of time required to complete an academic year.[12] While this mark improved to

79.7% ten years later, over 20% of school-age children failed to attend for a complete school year.[13] This was the target of compulsion laws yet the 'failure' rate remained 20%. As in the nineteenth century, increased enrollments did not necessarily equate with generally high levels of attendance.

British Columbia experienced these same patterns of growth and transformation in the twentieth century. As Table I demonstrates, British Columbia's pace of growth even out-distanced the national average.[14] While nationally, enrollment almost doubled, in British Columbia it approached four-fold growth. This remarkable growth in British Columbia is attributed to two factors. Population growth was high - from 1901 to 1921 the population expanded from 178,657 to 532,672. In just the ten years from 1911 to 1921 the number of 7-14 year-olds in the province nearly doubled, while nationally only a 25% increase was recorded.[15] Secondly, more and more formerly unserviced areas were now touched by public schooling. Public expenditure on education sky-rocketed. While $532,672 was spent in 1901, $7,170,030 was lavished on schools 20 years later.[16] And, as with the rest of the nation, much of this increased expenditure and enrollment was focussed in the high schools. In 1901, 584 students attended five high schools. In 1921, 52 high schools housed

TABLE I

BRITISH COLUMBIA SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

1911 AND 1921

1911 AGE	GENDER	% AT SCHOOL	% ATTENDING 7-9 MONTHS	% TOTAL AGE GROUP ATTENDING 7-9 MONTHS
6-9	M	61.9	83.13	51.15
	F	63.85	83.07	52.24
10-14	M	76.56	91.9	70.35
	F	76.73	91.07	69.87
15-19	M	17.58	86.99	15.29
	F	29.82	88.88	22.05
1921				
6-9	M	77.74	88.54	68.8
	F	76.99	88.5	68.13
10-14	M	91.15	94.8	86.43
	F	91.25	95.1	86.77
15.19	M	30.39	90.4	27.47
	F	37.31	93.1	34.73

Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. 1:1132, 1133

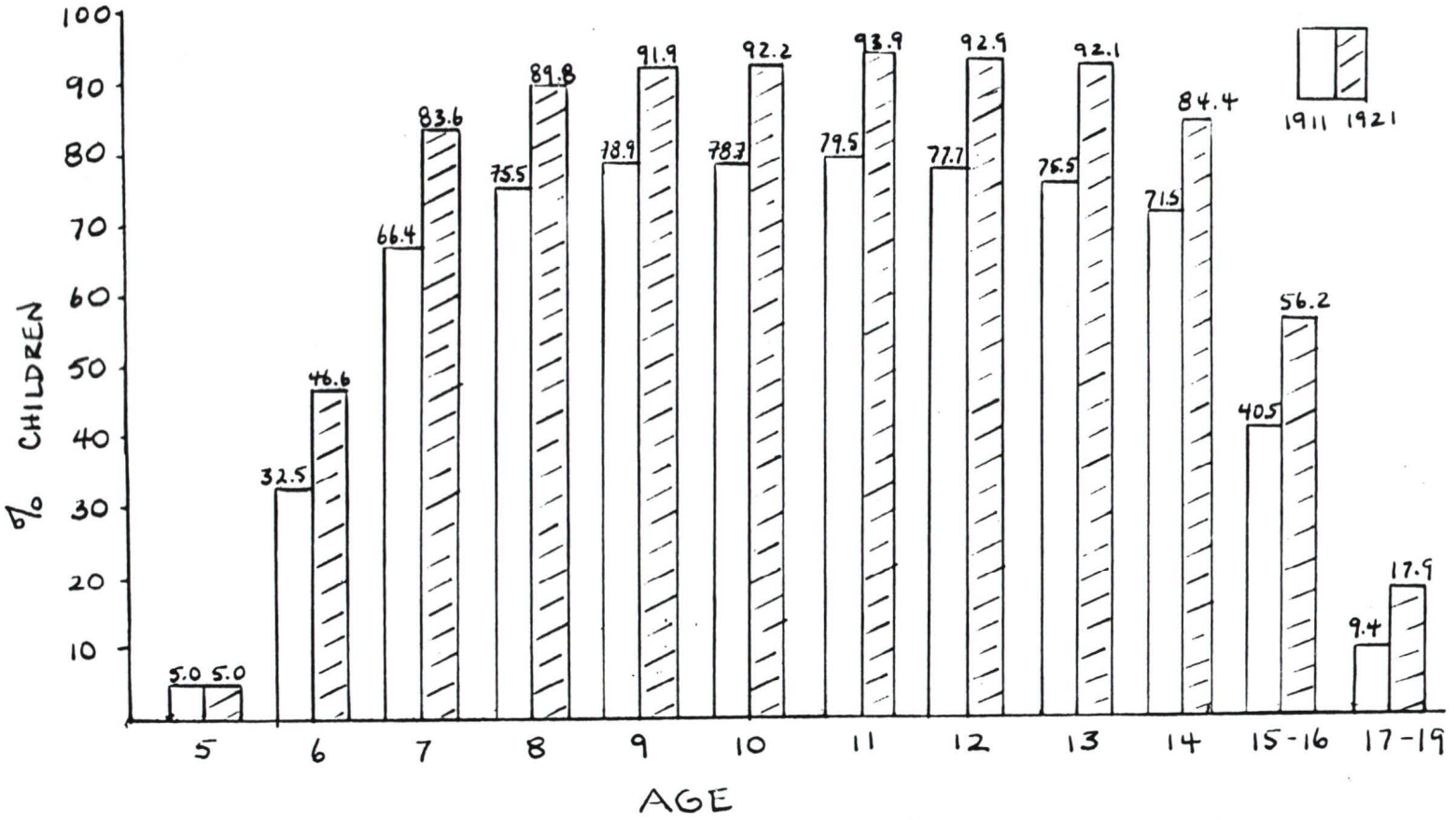
7,259 students.[17] In 1901 British Columbia had lagged far behind eastern provinces in high school participation, by 1921 rates for 15-19 year-olds slightly exceeded the national average of 18.69%[18] As Figure II illustrates, British Columbia experienced consistent growth in rates of participation by all ages. The British Columbia rates compare favourably with the national figures (Figure I).

British Columbia was representative of national trends in other ways as well.[19] Curriculum change, for example, was widespread in British Columbia. In 1901, in the wave of Macdonald sponsored manual schools, Victoria opened a manual training centre. Domestic science was introduced into Victoria's elementary schools in 1903, and into Vancouver in 1905. Bookkeeping was added in 1906, became a full commercial course in 1912 and expanded into a three-year programme in 1914. Manual training, originating in 1900 in Victoria elementary schools was extended in 1909 to some high schools. Vancouver established a technical high school in 1916 and by 1920 technical courses were also available in New Westminster and Victoria.

It is generally agreed that the same mix of incentives as produced national reform, reshaped British Columbia's schools. Officials concerned with rationality and efficiency along with progressive reformers, reached a consensus on an expanded, less academic curriculum. The new

FIGURE II

PERCENTAGE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA CHILDREN AT SCHOOL, 1911 AND 1921



SOURCE: Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Census of Canada, 1931. vol. 1 (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1936), 1132, 1133.

curriculum was designed to make graduates better suited for a changing economic and social order and to increase the number of students who did graduate. In British Columbia as elsewhere, one of the objectives of curriculum reform was to make school more appealing to teenagers faced with other-than-school options.[20]

Presumably, the quality of instruction improved along with the growth of the system. The province's first normal school was built, after much waiting, in Vancouver in 1901. This was followed in 1915 with another normal school in Victoria. Thus, certainly in 1921, the standard of provincial instruction could reasonably be presumed to have risen. At least it should have been more standardized than the situation resulting from the reliance on teachers trained outside provincial borders or in provincial high schools.[21]

At least in the urban centres, British Columbia possessed all that was 'new' in education. As the attendance figures suggest, the province also possessed some old problems including non, or irregular attendance. Once again, the aggregate growth figures tend to mask the contours of the attendance question. As Table I illustrates, a great number of children did not attend at all, or attended irregularly, in both 1911 and 1921. In 1911 the enrollment of young and old children was especially uncertain while

achieving regular attendance was even more problematic. Far from a majority of any age group in 1911 approached full attendance. Even among the best performing groups, the 10-14 year-olds, 30% of the children did not attend often enough to complete an academic year. The rates were very low among the oldest group, representative of the still low numbers of high school students. In 1921, though the rates were markedly improved, large pockets of younger and older children continued not to go to school often enough to fulfill an academic year. Still, the greatest percentage improvement was in the older groups as high school expansion continued to advance rapidly.

Two patterns stand out. One, as emphasized, many children attended irregularly. One-quarter to one-half of school age children (7-14) had no chance of normal progression because their attendance performance did not allow them enough days to complete a grade. Second, there was much less improvement over the decade in the percentage of those who attended seven to nine months than among the total. This suggests that even among those who did enroll, certain factors mitigated against full attendance in both years. While compulsion laws and tougher enforcement, combined with the closing of some job markets, might have pushed some students to enroll, they did not all attend regularly.

That full attendance remained a problem was recognized by school officials, especially in Vancouver. In 1907 the Vancouver City Superintendent remarked that "the number of pupils who do not wish to attend school, and whose parents are either indifferent to the matter or are unable to secure their attendance, is on the increase."[22] In that same year the Victoria School Board appealed for further state assistance in securing regular attendance. The superintendent asked the Board to interview the police commissioners in reference to a suggestion of the Chief of Police that an officer be appointed who would combine the duties of truant and curfew officer.[23]

In addition to state coercion, provincial educators appealed for parental co-operation in securing regular attendance and both the Vancouver superintendent and the Victoria School Board petitioned for a parental school for the most difficult children.[24] A true parental home for irregular attenders was never built and throughout this period educators criticized lack of parental concern as a cause of poor attendance. Irregular and non-attendance was especially acute among teenagers, many of whom failed even to enroll in school. This problem was combatted with tougher laws prohibiting child labour and with the rapid expansion of the provincial high school system.[25]

Paradoxically, severe overcrowding of Vancouver and

Victoria schools accompanied irregular attendance from about 1905 to 1915.[26] During this period of general economic prosperity, thousands of children flooded the school systems. At a time when educators were attempting to reduce the average size of classes and provide generally better facilities for students, class sizes remained large and inadequate facilities were pressed into service. In Victoria, for example, elementary classes remained as large as 42 as late as 1915. And the crowding was so severe that on occassion tents were used to house pupils and wooden structures in poor condition were commonplace. Severe overcrowding did not abate until economic conditions soured and population pressure eased. In Victoria at least, this occurred by the late teens.[27]

Grading and promotion were also concerns of educators. Fully graded city schools were standard in British Columbia by 1900 but problems persisted. Some teachers lamented the restrictions one promotion per year placed on the academic achievement of pupils.[28] While grading was regarded as a necessary method of school organization, more irregular promotion was desired by many. Examinations at Christmas and/or promotion at any time of the year, based on teachers' recommendations, were the accepted solutions. The Putman-Weir report of 1924 suggested, however, that this was not entirely successful.[29] Large numbers of children continued

to lag behind their academic level and this was partly attributed to the stifling nature of graded schools and 'platoon' promotion.

It is suggested that the best method to examine the extent and characteristics of the problems which plagued twentieth century educators involves a micro-study of one city school system which exhibited all the qualities of rapid growth, extension and transformation.

Victoria was a commerical city of 31,000 in 1911 and 38,000 ten years later. Declining as a manufacturing centre since 1891, Victoria experienced a sensational economic boom in the years from 1907 to about 1913 predicated on municipal road and sewer development and office and residential construction. By 1921 the city was again experiencing stagnation marked by unemployment and perhaps even net population loss.[30] These trends were reflected in the growth of the city's public elementary school system. Table II illustrates the yearly student population fluctuations, marked by rapid growth in the very early teens. In the twenty years from 1901 to 1921 the system more than doubled in size, in both numbers of students and numbers of schools. Like other Canadian centres modern education demanded more schools as well as the expansion and refurbishment of existing structures. Victoria's high school system expanded at a somewhat quicker pace. In 1901 the city high school

TABLE II

VICTORIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:

1900-1921

YEAR	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF PUPILS	DAILY NUMBER	DAILY PERCENTAGE
1900	8	2708	1947	71.8
1901	9	2905	2175	74.8
1902	9	2973	2235	75.1
1903	9	2943	2251	76.5
1904	9	2879	2255	78.3
1905	9	2864	2244	78.8
1906	9	2934	2316	78.9
1907	10	3070	2218	72.2
1908	9	3045	2294	75.3
1909	10	3081	2402	77.9
1910	10	3228	2492	77.1
1911	11	3610	2815	77.9
1912	13	4107	3207	78.1
1913	15	5201	4107	78.9
1914	20	5119	4165	81.3
1915	22	4851	4220	86.9
1916	21	4914	3980	80.1
1917	20	4894	4021	82.1
1918	19	4953	4102	82.8
1919	19	5269	4294	81.5
1920	20	5425	4350	80.2
1921	20	5576	4749	85.0

Source: Calculated from Annual Reports, 1900-1921.

housed 202 pupils; in 1911, 369; and in 1921, 923. In addition, by 1921, students on the periphery of the city system could attend one of two small high schools in the neighbouring suburbs. In 1921 these two schools housed 161 students.

Victoria's education system was also transformed through this period. Manual training and domestic science were common features of the elementary schools by the early teens. Evidence presented to the Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education confirmed that in Victoria "a school boy gets manual training from the time he enters the third reader, age about 10, until he reaches high school, age about 14 or 15."[31] The domestic science course was as extensive with almost all girls above grade three receiving training. Victoria High School offered advanced technical instruction to boys and commercial education to both boys and girls.

In other ways, too, the Victoria system was representative of early twentieth century public schooling. Attendance, class size and characteristics, grading, and retardation were problematic throughout this period. In particular regular attendance by all children remained an elusive goal, as Table II demonstrates. Though this table illustrates general improvement it also begins to expose the peaks and valleys that surely marked attendance in this period. The

detailed examination of these patterns is the great utility of this study.

Systematic, quantitative historical studies are not immune to leaps of historical judgement. Sources are often incomplete, unclear, or contradictory. In such cases the researcher must make a series of decisions which, ideally, are articulated for the reader. This study is no exception and the remainder of this chapter serves the purpose of outlining the mechanics of Victoria's educational system and discussing in detail the systematic portion of the study, emphasizing the problems encountered and how they were dealt with.

Two distinct geographic areas within the city were chosen for study: James Bay, and the North Ward. Throughout this period James Bay remained a markedly more affluent neighbourhood than the north-central region of the city, home to North Ward and surrounding schools. Though other neighbourhoods were more prestigious than James Bay, by 1910 it retained, in relation to the other area studied, an air of affluence. This distinction allowed a very tentative exploration of the relation of school characteristics and social class. The relationship to be remembered is the relative affluence of James Bay compared to the north-central region.

Once the areas of study had been chosen, schools had

to be picked. As Victoria possessed both 'primary' and 'intermediate' elementary schools an attempt was made to choose schools which were naturally 'linked.' Some schools offered only grades one to three and then graduated students to the local intermediate school. In James Bay, Kingston School fed South Park in 1910 and in 1921 was joined by Beacon Hill. North Ward, an intermediate school, was linked in 1910 to Hillside Primary and in 1921 to Fernwood. Due to geography, which did not isolate this area like James Bay, these schools had less precise links than in the southern neighbourhood. Still, the registers document that the majority of Hillside and Fernwood students moved on to North Ward.

In 1910, 1414 elementary students were recorded and in 1921, 1585. These totals constituted 38% and 27% of the total city elementary population. In both years, the total city high school population was recorded, though, as outlined, in 1921, neighbouring districts on the west and east of the city had their own, small secondary schools.

The record used for the analysis of individual patterns was the Teacher's annual report, an account of classroom activities completed each June by every teacher. All the students who appeared in an individual class during a given year were noted, along with several pieces of information for them. For each student, his name, age, days

attended, grade at beginning of year, promotion record, and whether he arrived late or left the class during the year was recorded. This was consistent for both years with the exception of the notation of arrivals, which was absent in 1921.

Several qualities of these variables should be clarified, and the process of adding variables explained. Age was recorded as the "last birthday," presumably meaning any birthday within the school year. This suggests that the age of some children was deceptively high. They may have had a birthday just prior to the creation of the record after spending the year in school at a lower age. This is to be kept in mind for the extensive discussion of retardation. While days attended was recorded for each student an attendance percentage was assigned all those students who, from the record, began and finished the year in the same school. The days attended recorded for them was simply divided by the total number of days that division was open that year. This percentage forms the basis of most of the analysis of chapter seven. Two other variables added to the pupils were gender and completed. Completed simply noted whether the student spent the whole year in the same school and is used in respect to the discussion of mobility of students and stability of classrooms. Gender was more problematic in that each student was assigned a gender from

his name. Some names could belong to either a boy or a girl so mistakes were likely made in this respect, but, it is suggested, not to the serious detriment of the study. The gender balance of the study is very similar to both the city aggregates and the figures provided for each division in the 1921 Provincial Annual Reports.

The notation of students arriving or departing part way through the year also posed a problem. Firstly, arrivals were not noted in 1921, though it is inconceivable that not one student arrived part way through the year. That there was no column reserved for such movement in this year might be evidence of decreasing concern with the problem and perhaps equally sound evidence of a real decline in movement. The second major problem with this notation was children who moved to or from Saanich, the district which bordered on the city's northern limits. Though movement to or from this district probably involved a residential move, it is possible that it merely involved a student exchanging a long trip to school for a short trip or vice versa. Logic suggests that they be recorded as out-of-city travellers but error was instead made on the side of caution and Saanich movement was recorded as intra-city movement. This means that the levels of out-of-city movement discussed here are probably slightly low.

The interpretation of grade was also problematic

because promotion was irregular and no source documents with absolute precision what normal progression was in either 1910 or 1921. Briefly, what was pursued was the reconstruction of the elementary and high school grading systems and the location of this study in such.

In both years the elementary system was a seven year, three level system. Divisions of junior, intermediate and senior divided the elementary schools and across these divisions were spread six grades. The grades were recorded on both the school register and the Annual Reports as first and second primer and readers one through four. For ease of comprehension, this study discussed them as grades one through six, the system of recording the province opted for in 1924. From the Annual Reports, the Courses of Study circulars, and the Putman-Weir Survey, the following table of 'normal' age/grade relationships was established.

Grade	Acceptable Age
1	6-7
2	7-8
3	8-9
4	9-10
5	10-12*
6	12-14*

*The third and fourth readers constituted two year courses.

Promotion through the lowest grades was expected to be quick and steady; the first four grades were commonly completed in

three years. The intermediate and senior grades, the third and fourth readers, were ideally completed in two years each, meaning that students completed the six grade system in seven years, or, by the age of 14, the last year of compulsory attendance. Putman-Weir discuss the propensity of some students to complete the course in six years and in effect have a year to do nothing, but this seems to have been the minority experience.[31]

High School grading was more easily explained. In 1910 no grade is assigned any of the students because the record failed to note any distinctions in the level of the divisions and the Annual Report of that year does not enable one to link divisions with academic content. Though the high school of that year was divided into junior, intermediate, and senior courses, their relation to the 1910 divisions is impossible to ascertain. Instead, division is the only grouping used for analysis. This is pursued on the assumption that the lower numbered divisions were more likely the senior and senior academic classes.

In 1921, though there was little problem with assigning grades, there was some difficulty interpreting their value. In 1921 Victoria High School had seven course divisions, five academic and two vocational. Four academic courses are treated similarly and are treated as grades, with one year advancement the expectation. Evidence does

suggest that this progress often slowed in the intermediate level and perhaps took two full years to complete the junior matriculation course.[32] This is considered in the discussions of the retardation level of the high school. Senior matriculation, the equivalent of first year university, was offered in Victoria High School in 1921 and the 39 students recorded in this course are considered separately. Also considered independently are the commercial and technical students. Both males and females were enrolled in the three year commercial course and boys in the technical course of the same length. That these streams were expected to last one full year less than the academic courses is taken into consideration in discussions of retardation.

The last problem associated with the 1921 high school was the unexplained appearance of one class of students in the fourth and fifth readers, grades six and seven. While grade six was an elementary grade, grade seven was never offered in the Victoria system and only 29 students in the entire province were listed as enrolled in it in 1921. The suspicion is that these students were deficient in some course(s) and were not formally accepted into high school yet, but, were of an age and general aptitude to attend secondary school. This remains an educated assumption not substantiated by any written or oral evidence and is treated as such in all discussions.

When these problems were surmounted, four files were created in machine readable form and entered into a computer. (Each file related to a school type and year, for example, elementary 1921.) An analysis of organization, geographic mobility and attendance was pursued with respect to the variables of age, gender, school type, school location, grade and division. Relationships were probed by cross-tabulating variables and displayed and discussed with relation to nineteenth century attendance studies, twentieth century educational literature and histories, and the official reports of the provincial and city school officials.

Comparison with the nineteenth century results is a crucial part of this study but is not without difficulty. Comparing results of periods from up to fifty and sixty years difference has its obvious pitfalls but as well, this study examines attendance while nineteenth century studies generally only consider enrollment, as recorded on the census (i.e. the census does not record daily whereabouts). This distinction is confusing because the nineteenth century studies refer to their results as attendance, with no respect for the distinction between that and enrollment. The examination of attendance allows a much more detailed view of schooling and how it was used by certain social groups, whether divided by age, gender, or school type or location. Unfortunately the register allows little examination which

might challenge the assumptions based on enrollment figures but the use of registers suggests an untapped source for future studies.

What this study can effectively manage is to probe the characteristics of individual school behaviour in the twentieth century. While the variables are limited in scope compared to the census, the age, gender, grade, course, and school analyses advance our understanding of this period. They allow the framing of more precise and insightful questions and in some cases, tentative answers, than is possible with aggregate data.

NOTES

CHAPTER FOUR

[1]Gaffield, "Schooling, the Economy and Rural Society," p. 69.

[2]Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. 1:1113-1115.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Neil Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society, provides the best overview of the new education - the impetus behind the policy formulation and to a lesser extent, the implementation of such.

[5]In the United States the Progressive Era has definite connotations for both the history of education and other topics of 'social history.' The standard interpretation of the educational changes wrought in this period is Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957 (New York: Random House, 1961). In Canada, Jean Mann has suggested the progressive era impacted British Columbia in the 1930's. See Jean Mann, "G.M. Weir and H.B. King: Progressive Education or Education for the Progressive State," in Wilson and Jones, Schooling and Society.

[6]The best discussion of this process is provided by Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society. See as well Robert M. Stamp, The Schools of Ontario; "Teaching Girls their 'God-Given' Place in Life: The Introduction of Home Economics in the Schools," Atlantis (Spring, 1977); "Technical Education, the National Policy and Federal-Provincial Relations in Canadian Education, 1899-1919," Canadian Historical Review (December, 1971).

[7]The debate over the rational behind the introduction of vocational education remains largely an American one. For a brief introduction to the debate see the collected essays in Harvey Kantor and David Tyack, eds., Work, Youth and Schooling: Historical Perspectives on Vocationalism in American Education (Stanford: Stanford Press, 1982).

[8]For example, see Chad Gaffield, "The Micro History of Cultural Relations: Prescott County and the Language of Instruction Controversy," paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, 1984. In a discussion of the time and location chosen for a micro study Gaffield argues that he was "impressed with a great deal of evidence which

suggested that the nineteenth century was really the formative period of modern society" (p. 9). This same argument is made with explicit respect to education in Katz, "The Origins of the Institutional State," Marxist Perspectives (Winter, 1978).

[9]There is a one hundred year period of closure on the personal schedule of the Canadian Census so the 1891 schecule will not be released until 1991.

[10]J. Donald Wilson recently referred to the 'smugness' of the discipline and bemoaned the lack of intellectual debate currently enjoyed by the history of education in Canada. See Wilson, "Historiographical Perspectives."

[11]Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society, p. 263.

[12]Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Illiteracy and School Attendance in Canada: A Study of The Census of 1921 With Supplementary Data (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1926), p. 9.

[13]Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. 1:1113.

[14]For the best discussion of provincial educational expansion see Timothy Dunn, "The Rise of Mass Public Schooling in B.C., 1900-1929," in Wilson and Jones, Schooling and Society.

[15]Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. 1:1113.

[16]Dunn, "The Rise of Mass Public Schooling," p. 36.

[17]Ibid., p. 29.

[18]Census of Canada, 1931, Vol. 1:1115,1133.

[19]Much of the following discussion relies on Dunn, "The Rise of Mass Public Schooling."

[20]See the introduction to Norton Grubb and Marvin Lazerson, American Education and Vocationalism.

[21]For a discussion of the training of British Columbia's teachers in this period, see John Calam, "Teaching the Teachers: Establishment and Early Years of the B.C. Provincial Normal Schools," B.C. Studies (Spring 1984).

[22]Annual Reports, 1907, p. 31.

[23]Victoria Minutes, May 8, 1907.

[24]Annual Reports, 1907, p. 31; 1910, p. 36. Victoria Minutes, October 9, 1907; December 11, 1912.

[25]See Dunn, "The Rise of Mass Public Schooling."

[26]Almost every year in this period both the Victoria and Vancouver city superintendents discussed this problem in the Annual Reports. The Victoria Minutes devoted considerable time to the issue also.

[27]This economic analysis, as much of the historical background of Victoria does, relies on Baskerville, Victoria: City on the Rim (Los Angeles: Windsor Publications, 1985).

[28]See form example p. 55 of the Annual Report, 1904. An appeal for consideration of individual talent is made: "the single child, not the class, is the educational unit."

[29]See especially Chapter XV, "Retardation in the Elementary Schools."

[30]Baskerville, Victoria.

[31]Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1913), Volume 4:2331.

[32]Putman-Weir, Survey, especially Chapter XV.

[33]See above note; Courses of Study, 1922; Courses of Study, 1918.

CHAPTER FIVE: CLASSROOM

By the early 1920's, the ideal Canadian classroom was graded, coeducational and much smaller than its nineteenth century counterpart.[1] Since the 1870's, Canadian educators argued that the most efficient school and classroom organization was in grades. Both the teachers' time and expertise and the individual students' abilities could be most effectively maximized under this system. Under a graded system, children would move from textbook to textbook, grade to grade, as their knowledge increased. Rather than progressing irregularly, levels of achievement would be standardized and promotion made a more objective exercise. Teachers, it was argued, could be more effective in a situation in which they taught children in one or at least as few grades as possible, rather than in many grades of loosely defined levels of achievement in one classroom. Standardization was the desired ideal. As well, by the early twentieth century, girls were accepted at all levels of public schooling and only in a minority of centres was there still provision for separate boys' and girls' facilities. Interestingly, Victoria was one of those cities. Boys' and Girls' Central schools, largely elementary institutions, remained in existence until the thirties. Still, even in Victoria, the overwhelming majority of students attended coeducational facilities. The ideal early twentieth

century classroom was not far removed from a modern situation in its basic organization.[2]

But, the ideal was rarely obtainable and even less often obtained in fact.[3] In the rural areas especially, a lack of finances denied local boards the ability to provide the modern well-equipped plants such standardized organization required, even if the number of pupils had justified construction of multi-roomed schoolhouses.[4] Rather, the one-room schoolhouse, multigraded and without modern standardization, if not the ideal, remained the reality for a great many Canadian students. This situation of too few students and too few dollars per school district was the inspiration for rural consolidated schools - which offered especially teenage students graded, well-equipped schools and a selection of courses.[5]

As an urban centre, Victoria had a very modern system. The entire city system was graded and the majority of students were in a class with only students of the same grade. While this rate is impossible to calculate from the Annual Reports for the schools in 1910, in 1921 20.3% of Victoria elementary students were in classes which contained students in another grade, always a grade directly above or below.[6] The majority of the city's students were housed in coeducational institutions. In 1910 37% and in 1921 only 16.2% of the school population were in either of the two

unieducational schools.

If the graded, coeducational classroom taught by a professional teacher and housed in a modern facility, was the ideal, Victoria was, certainly by 1921, an ideal system. An examination of its characteristics, is, reasonably, a preliminary examination of the characteristics of the best of Canadian education. The problems Victoria experienced can be expected to have been exacerbated elsewhere. An examination of Victoria should be an examination of the early twentieth century mesh of ideal and reality, about which we know relatively little. Beyond Sutherland's discussion of Albert School in Saint John, New Brunswick, few historians have addressed the composition of either the elementary or secondary schools of Canadian cities.[7] Questions of class size, composition, and stability remain unanswered.

It is clear that despite the increase in compulsion laws, the passage and enforcement of child labour laws and unprecedented levels of expenditures on school plants and personnel, the early twentieth century classroom remained a shifting, irregular, collection of children and youths. Attendance remained uneven even in the face of provincial compulsion statutes and the extensive use of truant officers. These measures, combined with traditional appeals for parental coercion, failed to achieve satisfactory

regular attendance. While promoters' concerns shifted, as in Victoria, to concerns of the education of immigrants and school finance, attendance remained a thorn in the side of educators. Combined with daily fluctuations were continuing high levels of geographic mobility which undoubtedly had profound, if unquantifiable, negative effects on the classroom operation. If, as in this study, a substantial percentage of the student population was in motion, continuity would have been almost impossible to sustain. As nineteenth century educators lamented the impossibility of educating non-attenders, surely transients posed the same problem for their twentieth century counterparts. Both the transients and the persistors would logically, due to the disruption of the classroom, have been negatively affected by high levels of geographic mobility. The best efforts of school officials - teachers, superintendents, and promoters - coupled with any amount of funding, could not counter the ills of shifting classroom populations.

As well, despite the concerted effort to introduce standard achievement-based grading, the twentieth century classroom remained a mosaic of age groups. This problem, too many children either ahead, or more commonly behind the 'normal' progression pattern was one of the major concerns of educators. We know little about the dimensions

of this problem other than provided by provincial aggregates and discussions by concerned shcool officials.[8] From such reports it is clear that 'normal' progression through even the common graded city school remained the minority experience.[9]

The most dramatic change in Victoria's public school system from 1910 to 1921 was the decrease in average class size. Confronted by alarming levels of school population growth, local officials opted to enlarge the system at an even quicker pace. The result was that by the end of the period, the average elementary classroom size had been slashed from 51.2 to 37.4. Moreover, by 1921, poor, wood, filthy, unheated, dilapidated structures which were necessary accommodation through the peak growth years of the 1910's, had been replaced by modern brick school buildings.[10] Expansion of physical plants combined with a stagnating population stabilized class sizes by the very late teens. Still, within these markedly improved class size averages remained distinctions of grade, division and school. For example in 1921 the average elementary class size, for schools of more than three divisions, ranged from 34.9 (Oaklands) to 42 (Quadra Primary). Classes in smaller schools ranged as high as 53.5 for the Chinese dominated Rock Bay school. Within single schools different grades/ divisions had markedly different class sizes. While some

classrooms in the same year were as small as 30, others were as large as 45 (North Ward).

In the high school the average class size actually increased from 30.3 to 32.6, a minimal increase considering the threefold growth of the school. But Victoria High exhibited the same irregularities the elementary schools did. In 1910 class size ranged from 21 in division 6 to 41 in two of the lowest divisions. In 1921 the range was from 23 in a commercial class to 44 in a technical class.

These variations in class size suggest a few things. First and most obviously, they suggest that increased expenditure on schools facilitated much smaller class size which in turn would have facilitated a more positive educational environment. Gone were the days of 60, 70 and even more in one classroom. In this way, monetary expenditure, a reaction to increasing concern over the importance of education, did in fact benefit the educational experience.[11]

More interesting perhaps, are the division/grade distinctions which existed even in 1921. The high school provides ample illustration of how the class size distinctions were loosely linked, it seems, to the nature of the class. As Table III illustrates, the 1910 ratio fairly closely related to the academic level. In the ungraded high school, the lowest divisions had fewer students per

TABLE III

VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL: 1910

DIVISION*	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
1	25
2	26
3	25
4	34
5	39
6	21
7	41
8	41
10	21

*Division 9 missing

class. While information on the exact nature of the classes is scarce, a relation seems clear.[12] Younger and/or less gifted children were in the higher division and subject to larger classes.

In 1921, the size of the technical classes, 44 and 43, suggest the lack of regard for smaller classes in this stream. As well, the commercial classes were somewhat larger than the average. The average size of 35.4 is skewed by one class with only 23 pupils, the senior commercial class. Without this class considered the average is over 38 (See Table IV). While only slight differences were apparent between some of the academic courses, the small size of the junior matriculation classes suggest the importance laid on this level. The large size (39) of the senior matriculation class is perhaps explicable by the fact there were only enough students for one class, not quite enough for two. Thus the class size could be explained as apologetically large.

Other questions arise from the patterns illustrated by Table IV. More students were in junior matriculation than were in the advanced preliminary course and more in the advanced than the junior grade. Several explanations are possible. This might have been a product of normal progression which slowed dramatically in junior matriculation and was somewhat quicker in the advanced than the junior grade.

TABLE IV

VICTORIA HIGH SCHOOL: 1921

COURSE	AVERAGE CLASS SIZE	TOTAL
Senior Matriculation	39 (1)	39
Junior Matriculation	29.5 (6)	177
Advanced Preliminary	35.25 (4)	141
Preliminary	33 (3)	99
Fifth Reader	32.2 (5)	161
Mixed	33 (1)	33
Technical	43.5 (2)	87
Commercial	35.4 (5)	177

There is some evidence that outstanding students passed both the two lowest grades in one year and this would largely explain this distinction, but three other explanations also seem reasonable.[13] The higher totals in each progressively higher grade may be evidence that progress was much slower than desired in these upper grades. Putman-Weir discussed this problem in 1924 and suggested that another year was indeed necessary to complete the high school course.

Alternate explanations suggest that Victoria High School experienced either substantial in-migration beginning at the junior matriculation level or that the drop-out rate accelerated at this same level. Either explanation would account for the large differences between enrollment in the various academic levels. The resolution of this issue, not possible here, would go some length toward illuminating the value students placed on matriculation in this period.

Historically, gender has been closely related to patterns of school enrollment. In Victoria, both the sample and the city as a whole demonstrated a consistent gender balance in both years. As Table V demonstrates, a single percentage point separated male and female elementary students in the study. Though this balance differs slightly from the city pattern, where slightly more boys attended,

TABLE V

ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENT

X GENDER: 1910, 1921

	1910		1921	
	#	%	#	%
MALE	712	50.4	701	50.6
FEMALE	702	49.6	684	49.4

the difference is small and partially accountable for by the selection of schools. The resemblance of the two populations is more prominent than the distinctions. This gender balance suggests at first glance that school going was a gender-neutral experience. While this is not entirely accurate, clearly, gender difference had lost much of the impact it carried in the nineteenth century city. As various studies in numerous locations have demonstrated, by the last one-third of the nineteenth century, schooling for those over about 12 years was more common for girls than boys.[14] For reasons largely of economic opportunity and necessity, teenage males attended less often. By the turn of the century, gender had little relationship to enrollment in the pre-teen years and as Table V indicates, this appears to have been true for Victoria. The high school experience also supports previous studies. While in 1910 the elementary schools posted a near perfect gender balance, 56.7% of the high school was female. Somewhat surprisingly, as the school opened to many more students in 1921, this gender imbalance continued. In the later year, 58.4% of the high school population was female, a slight increase. This is somewhat surprising in light of the assumption that as schooling became a more universal phenomena, distinctions of age and certainly gender broke down. But to probe the subtleties of the gender, grade and

school differentials of enrollment, age must be considered.

While the early common schools posed a problem to educators because of their wide age-spread in each class, as well as the sheer size of classes, the urban school ideal became an age/achievement graded system. By the early twentieth century, Charles Philips suggests, grading was largely achieved in most Canadian cities.[15] Still, as Sutherland demonstrates for Albert school in Saint John, New Brunswick, the ideal of closely age-specific classrooms was not always achieved in practice. Retardation remained a problem; children ahead or more commonly behind normal progression. The result was classrooms in Victoria where age differences of as much as 6 years appear common. For example, division 5 in North Ward and South Park schools in 1921 are displayed in Table VI. Chosen at random, these classes suggest the range of ages still present in a modern elementary school.

As well, the age of entry continued to be the source of some disruption. Age 6 was not an accepted age for entry or full attendance. Curiously from 1910 to 1921 it seems to have become less so. Gillian Weiss, in her history of provincial kindergartens, demonstrates that in the early twentieth century British Columbia did lag behind many North American locales in the schooling of young children.[16] In Canada, she suggests, Ontario was the exception with a

TABLE VI

NORTH WARD AND SOUTH PARK

Div. 5, 1921

NORTH WARD

AGE	GENDER		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
10	2	0	2
11	2	1	3
12	5	10	15
13	8	3	11
14	5	3	8
15	2	0	2

SOUTH PARK

AGE	GENDER		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
10	1	0	1
11	0	0	0
12	3	2	5
13	7	10	17
14	7	8	15
15	3	4	7
16	1	2	3

large public system. Secondly, only very recently (1973) did the province assume control of kindergartens. Together, this suggests that there was neither bottom-up nor top-down pursuit of education for very young children. Whether lack of facilities was more cause or symptom is unclear. What is clear is that unlike some North American regions, the education of the very young was not a large concern in British Columbia and this reluctance to enroll children at 5 or even 6 had reverberations to which we will return.

When considered in relation to age, some gender distinctions appear (Table VII). In each elementary grade, boys were always older than females by about .3 years. Over two sample years, the only exception to this was in 1910 when females averaged 14.1 years to 13.9 for males. In all 11 other cases, males were older. This slight though consistent difference may not have been significant. It may merely have been a reflection of the normal propensity of young boys to experience slightly more academic problems than girls. This difficulty might have slowed their progress enough to skew the averages in such a manner. Regardless of the cause(s) this table indicates that male retardation was a more serious problem than female retardation, though the major study in this period did not examine any gender differences.[17]

TABLE VII

AVERAGE AGE X GRADE X GENDER:

1910 AND 1921 ELEMENTARY

1910			AVERAGE AGE	
GRADE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
1	130	130	7.2	6.8
2	49	65	8.6	8.4
3	49	95	9.4	9.2
4	132	137	12.0	11.4
5	128	126	11.8	11.3
6	174	164	13.9	14.1

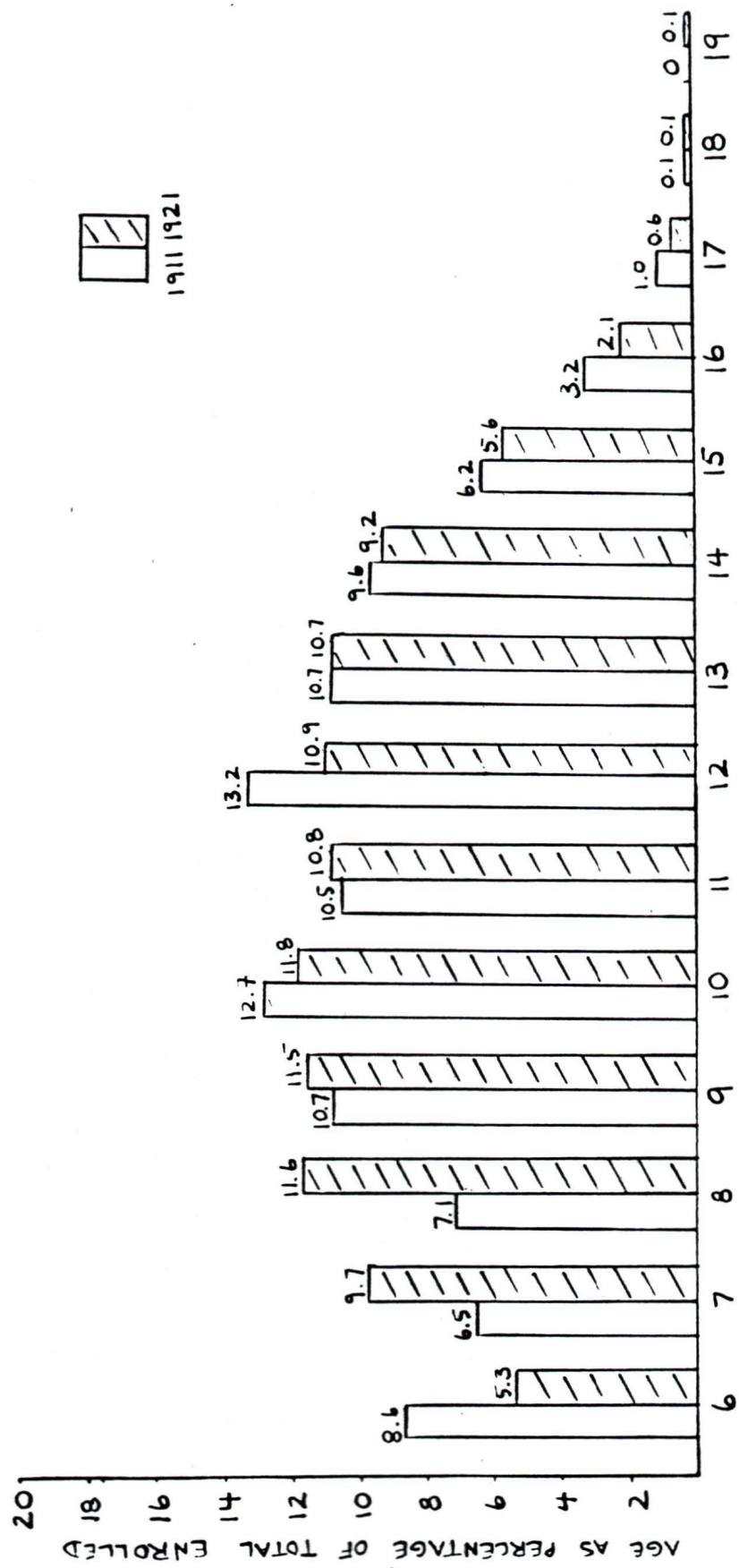
1921			AVERAGE AGE	
GRADE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
1	92	106	7.1	6.6
2	82	70	7.9	7.8
3	89	70	9.0	8.8
4	86	100	10.4	9.9
5	186	157	12.0	11.5
6	164	183	13.9	13.7

The provincial compulsion law of 1901 stated that all children in cities age 7-14 must attend school. All probably did not, though this study has little ability to discuss with precision levels of enrollment, especially for the lower ages. Still, some age patterns do seem apparent from the study. As Figure III demonstrates, few younger children attended. Though this is partially accounted for by the nature of the schools chosen - large intermediate schools biased against the very young - there was a marked propensity for those under 9 in 1910, and under 8 in 1921, not to attend. There appears to have been a 'threshold of universality' in both years. In 1910, universal attendance seems to have occurred at age 9. Those less than this age were much less likely to attend school. Oddly, this study captured more 6 year-olds than 7 year-olds, and this remains completely unexplained by either the author's reasoning or internal or external evidence. In 1921 the age of school entry was much more commonly 7 than 6. There is almost a two to one ratio among these two age groups, and while this is perhaps reasonable, considering the operative date of the birthday, the two year contrast is unexplained.

The age at which the highest percentage of children enrolled was 12 in 1910 and 10 in 1921. In 1910 the participation rate of this group outdistanced others considerably

FIGURE III

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COMPOSITION BY AGE



while in 1921, the percentage or total for all between 8 and 13 was uniformly high. These rates relate closely to national figures of the census of 1921. School participation was becoming common for a slightly older age group, and more common for all those over about age 8. Still, the rate dropped quickly after age 13 and elementary school participation was very unusual by age 16. This phenomena suggests two slightly different patterns in 1910 and 1921. In 1910, it simply seems to demonstrate that children in the mid- to late teens did not attend school. By 1921, though the rate in elementary schools remained minute, the high school began to capture increasing numbers of this age group. While in 1910 only 150 15 and 16 year-olds registered at Victoria High, in 1921 451 of the same age group did so. Taken together the school participation rate for this age group improved appreciably, consistent with the extension of the high school in this period.

In both years, a smattering of children older than 16 dotted the elementary classrooms. In 1910 they constituted 1.1% and in 1921 .8%.[18] This simply demonstrates that there continued to be a group of severe retardates who were from five to eight years behind a 'normal' level of achievement. Certainly, as one case evidenced, the association of children of this age group with the younger school population was a concern. In 1912 the City Board petitioned to

have a sign erected at city schools prohibiting the public use of school yards during normal hours of operation. This was in response to complaints that an eighteen year-old was hanging around the school and 'bothering' the younger children.[19] If this age mix was considered harmful to the educational process, surely internal contrasts were as bothersome. One can only imagine the impact an eighteen year-old would have in an elementary classroom today to picture the potential problem of serious retardates.

Putman-Weir devoted a complete, if short, chapter to the problem of retardation.[20] They considered it a serious problem afflicting both the students and the school budgets. Special concern was expressed that Victoria and Vancouver had levels of retardation as high as the provincial average, though this was partly explained away by the "large foreign population in these cities."[21] In Victoria, the average student was 9.02 months retarded. The chief causes were suggested as teacher inefficiency, student inability, lack of student effort, and illness. Putman-Weir recommended that supervision be upgraded, medical attention paid to students, especially in the rural areas, and, as was their answer to many problems, the adoption a a middle school, or junior high.[22] Other historians have noted the same problems and solutions for other locales.[23] Importantly, Lazerson argues that widespread retardation was a major motivation

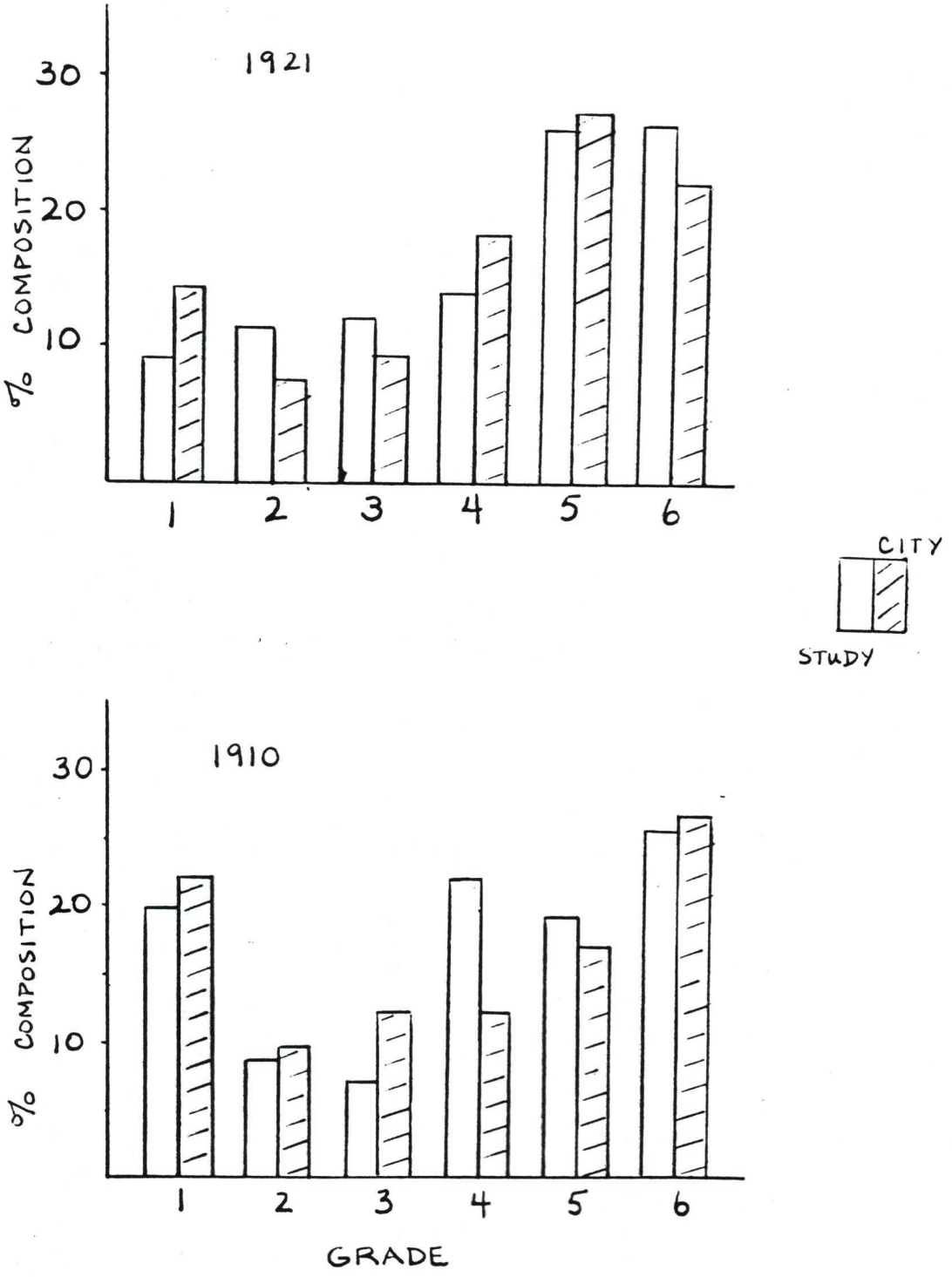
behind the manual training movement in Massachusetts as it appears to have been in the Canadian context as well.[24]

But retardation was seemingly less of a problem in 1921 than in 1910, as a curious shift in enrollment patterns suggests. As Figure IV illustrates, many fewer children enrolled in the first primer, the lowest grade, in 1921 than in 1910. The percentage of the total elementary population in this first grade dropped from 19.6% to 9.1%. The grade which increased most in size from 1910 to 1921 was grade five. Most other grades retained a very consistent percentage.

What this shift suggests is that many fewer children were retarding in the lowest grade(s) and what stagnation did occur, occurred in the middle grades of the elementary school. An alternate or contributory explanation could be that the in-migrants were disproportionately of the age/achievement level of grades three and above. This alone could not account for such a shift but neither is it argued that a decline in retardation in grade one was entirely responsible for the shift. Literary evidence does suggest that pupils in the first two grades may have been pushed out of the grades at Christmas. In more than one instance in the first years of the century the city superintendent proposed a system which would promote deserving students at any time.[25] He argued that a "platoon system" of

FIGURE IV

ELEMENTARY GRADE DISTRIBUTION:
STUDY AND CITY



Source: British Columbia, Department of Education Annual Reports: 1910, 1921.

promotion common to age graded schools, denied individual achievement and ultimately caused retardation. The extent to which his proposal was adopted is unclear from the annual reports or the board minutes, though the case of Kingston School suggests the practice may have been extensive in certain schools. In 1921 25.1% (68) of the pupils in this school moved internally. The timing of the moves is unknown but almost certainly these moves were part of a conscious program to relate, throughout the year, achievement and grade. And while this rate was unusually high for this study, all schools experienced some internal promotion. Demotion was much less common.

There was considerably less movement up or down in the higher grades. This is reasonable if one considers the head start literate children 6 or 7 could conceivably bring with them to the early grades. The effect of head starts would be minimized by the later years and compounded by the increasing difficulty of promotion beyond grade four. The initial advantage would be represented by a higher grade to age ratio but not necessarily by mid-year promotion. This demands further investigation but suggests the impact different educational experiences of very young children might have had on retardation and school organization. What kindergartens did exist might have been frequented predominantly by certain social groups or social classes and this

educational exposure mirrored in regular or exceptional academic progression. The extent and ramifications of the schooling of very young children in Canada remains unclear.

Finally, Neil Sutherland maintains that between 1910 and 1921 the average student attainment increased a full grade.[26] This was due, he suggests, to improvements in the educational system. This shift towards higher grade attainment for all age and gender groups was apparent in Victoria over the same period. Table VII displayed the elementary grades and the average age in the respective years. The shift was most dramatic in grade four where the average age dropped an astounding one and one-half years for both males and females. The drop in average age for the other grades was much less, but still significant. The contradiction to this pattern was in grade five where the average ages actually increased over the eleven years but this is explained in two ways. In 1921 almost all the 15, 16 and 17 year-olds were concentrated in grades five and six while in 1910 they were more likely to be in the lower grades. More importantly perhaps, Putman-Weir documented that on occasion teachers intentionally retarded children in the upper elementary grades because they feared the students would not succeed in either the high school entrance examinations or, if recommended, in the high school courses

themselves. The Survey attacked this practice as a substantial contributor to the retardation problem and appealed for a quick end to it. They argued that teachers retarded these students more out of fear for their own reputation than concern for the students. The Victoria evidence suggests this practice may have been widespread in 1921 when the promotion of students of secondary school was almost entirely based on teachers' recommendations.

Still, looked at another way, the grade to age ratio did increase uniformly in 1921. If charted (Table VIII), this pattern is clear. For example, eleven year-olds were most commonly in grade five in both years but in 1910 this was at a 46.8% rate while in 1921 at 65.3%. Likewise, while twelve year-olds were 38.7% likely to be in the same grade in 1910, this rose to 60.9% eleven years later. Fourteen year-olds were 62.0% in grade six in 1910 and 74% in 1921.

Two shifts occurred - both a slightly to dramatic higher grade attainment and a concentration of grades for each age. These gradual shifts towards standardized classrooms and promotion were representative of the observed transformation of public schools in Victoria in this period. The 1921 classroom was smaller and more standardized than in 1910 but still far from uniform in size or in age of students. Retardation was less of a problem in

TABLE VIII

AGE X GRADE: 1910 & 1921 ELEMENTARY

1910							AGE							
GRADE	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
1	118	70	42	21	7	-	2							
2	3	19	40	36	11	2	1	1	1					
3		3	14	41	24	4	3	2	3					
4			4	23	45	46	61	45	33	10	2			
5				13	52	59	70	38	14	4	3	1		
6					3	15	44	63	85	74	40	13	1	

1921							AGE							
GRADE	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1	77	67	45	11	2	1								
2	0	55	54	29	8	0								
3	0	12	45	60	35	9	3							
4		1	16	52	64	26	16	6	5					
5				7	53	98	92	55	28	6	4			
6					2	16	40	87	94	72	25	8	1	2

1921 than in 1910, but remained a major concern to educators. The accepted age of entry was, if anything, more ambiguous in 1921 than 1910.

This study demonstrates that historians have been correct in arguing that in the opening decades of this century Canadian public education became a more standard, uniformly arranged experience. More importantly, it has demonstrated that substantial irregularities persisted in the organization of classes, schools and even systems as late as 1921. The reasons for these irregularities and their impact on both students and schools can only be suggested from this study. But, as the following two chapters begin to document, these irregularities seemingly had serious implications for students especially.

NOTES

CHAPTER FIVE

[1]Charles Philips outlines the process of bringing the sexes together in common schools and classrooms in The Development of Education in Canada, pp. 375-386.

[2]Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society, provides the most detailed discussion of the twentieth century classroom. Sutherland analyzes Albert School in St. John's, New Brunswick.

[3]A discussion of the extent and character of problems that continued to plague educators in the twentieth century is missing in the literature. Sutherland touches on the problems, but as suggested, he is more concerned with policy formulation. That problems continued is hinted at by Stamp and others but never discussed in detail.

[4]Rural areas often retained one-room, upgraded schools well into the twentieth century because the lack of students precluded any other organization. See for example the discussion of such in Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society.

[5]Sutherland makes this point in chapter 12 of Children, "The Common Centre from Which Radiated Plans and Labours: The Macdonald-Robertson Movement Demonstrates the New Education to Canadians, 1900-1913."

[6]Annual Reports, 1921, pp. 44-51.

[7]Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society.

[8]Such sources included the Census of Canada, especially 1931; the Illiteracy and School Attendance supplement of 1921; and educational reports such as Putman and Weir, Survey of The School System (Victoria: King's Printer, 1926).

[9]Retardation is discussed extensively in contemporary accounts. This is most obvious in Putman and Weir, Survey of the School System, in which an entire chapter is devoted to the problem.

[10]In the early years of the city's boom, Trustees often complained about poor, unheated, filthy, wooden structures being pressed into service to house the rapidly growing

student population. In some years small numbers of students were even housed in tents for short periods.

[11]Timothy Dunn computes the expenditure on public education in B.C. rose from $532,692 in 1900-01 to $7,170,030 in 1920-21, "The Rise of Mass Public Schooling," p. 36.

[12]See Appendix I for an elaboration of methodological problems associated with this study. Briefly, the 1910 high school was ungraded by both the school register and the provincial Annual Reports. Many of the courses were taken by all students, some by the majority and a smattering taken by various minorities. Though there were undoubtedly divisions in the high school, they are impossible to ascertain from these records.

[13]Courses of Study, 1918, A50

[14]See Gaffield, "Schooling, The Economy, and Rural Society."

[15]Philips suggests that fully graded schools were common in Canadian cities and larger towns by the 1870's. Philips, The Development of Education in Canada. As well see chapter 10 of Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society.

[16]Gillian Weiss, "An Essential Year for the Child: The Kindergarten in British Columbia," in Wilson and Jones, Schooling and Society.

[17]Putman-Weir, Survey.

[18]The presence of Chinese students in the Victoria classrooms slightly skewed these results. For 1910 children with obviously Chinese names were noted for possible analysis. They are not presented in any of the data but it instructive to note here that of the 35 so classified, 3 were older than 16 and another 6 were 16. These are very high percentages of this group, confirming assumptions suggested elsewhere, but are not sufficient to dramatically skew the overall results.

[19]Victoria Minutes, October 9, 1912.

[20]Putman-Weir, Survey, Chapter XV.

[21]Ibid., p. 252. Orientals came under especially harsh attack for being retarded.

[22]Ibid., Chapter XV.

[23]Lazerson, Origins of the Urban School, especially Chapter V.

[24]The motivations for vocationalism are unclear. See note 5, ch. 4. For a brief, valuable overview of the American experience see the introduction to Lazerson and Grubb, American Education and Vocationalism.

[25]Annual Reports, 1903, p. 55.

[26]Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society, p. 166.

CHAPTER SIX: CHILDREN IN MOTION

Historians of the 1960's and 1970's were consistently amazed at the discovery of extremely high rates of geographic mobility wherever they looked in North America.[1] American and Canadian studies reached the same conclusion: nineteenth century society was on the move. While this had been assumed for many years for rural areas, especially the American West, the discovery of high mobility rates in cities such as Boston, Chicago and Hamilton generally surprised researchers.[2] The majority of the population of these cities were in almost constant motion. It was unusual to discover more than one-third of the population persisting for as long as a decade in one community.

In "Men in Motion," an early discussion of the discovery of these high rates of mobility,[3] Stephan Thernstrom and Peter R. Knights concluded to their astonishment that Boston, Massachusetts experienced about a 16% annual rate of transiency. When aggregated over a decade, 1880-1890, this pattern meant that something like 800,000 moved into and out of Boston to produce a net growth of just over 65,000. Two classes of society developed; the persistors and the transients. The persistors, the minority of the population which stayed put for decades, were associated with relative economic success. The second class, consisting predominantly of labourers of some type, formed

the majority of the population. This group was in constant motion, both about the city and out of it, replaced by hordes of immigrants in motion. All the evidence suggests that the transient groups were those most susceptible to the vagaries of the growing capitalist labour market.

Though Boston may have been especially vulnerable to such mobility, because it was a centre of European immigrants and possessed an extensive economic structure, its rates were not entirely unique. Hamilton, Canada's most studied nineteenth century city, experienced rates and patterns of geographic mobility similar to Boston's. Michael Katz estimated that in any one year from 1851 to 1881, roughly twice the total population resided in the city at some time.[4] Moreover, he discovered that the minority persisters achieved economic success while the majority group continued in motion, losers in the economic game. Additionally, large numbers of farmers moved in and out of the city on a seasonal basis: in the late fall and winter they sought wage labour positions in the industrializing city.[5]

Less than one hundred miles away, Peel County experienced similar rates of mobility.[6] Between 1851 and 1861 sixty percent of the adult population left Peel County, many moving west in search of cheaper, more plentiful land.

From 1861 to 1871 only one-third of all heads of families remained for the decade. David Gagan concluded that less than 10% of the population persisted through the two decades.[7]

Some educational historians have speculated on what these high rates of mobility meant for school children and the school systems. One group suggests that transiency was a recognized social evil and among the evils schooling was constructed to mitigate.[8] Children of a restless population could be taught acceptable social norms, discipline, and a minimum of academics despite their wanderings; immigrant children were the special targets of this program. One scholar at least has partially challenged this notion of social control. Chad Gaffield has questioned, without any real answer,[9] the role public schooling played in providing cohesiveness to children's lives. He argues that transient groups probably used schooling to provide continuity in family lives. If schools were ideally uniform in clientele and organization, a child might feel as at home in one as in the other. In this way schools were social glue for disadvantaged, perhaps often recently arrived labouring families. Though this thesis remains to be tested it suggests the potential complexity of the relationship of school and pupil, of state and family. The school may well have been used in a manner never intended.

Beyond the use of the schools, high rates of mobility surely disrupted the classrooms. The constant shifting of faces must both have retarded the educational advancement of those moving and upset the smooth operation of the classroom. The former problem would have been exacerbated, if as suggested, the children most in motion were those from the lower classes who were least likely to attend regularly or achieve high grade standings. Marvin Lazerson has argued that in Massachusetts the double phenomena of non-English speaking children and high rates of turnover posed the greatest problems in the classrooms and was a recognized problem among educators.[10]

Lazerson discovered concern with two types of mobility: in and out of the city and movement within the school system. Though movement within the city system (Boston) may or may not have been a product of residential movement, the result was the same. In the very late nineteenth century the combined rate was from 25 to 50% with up to one-half of this accounted for by inter-system movement. Though for the children involved, this probably put less strain on both their education and the education of their classmates, Lazerson argues the pressure on teachers was 'severe.'[11]

In the absence of census records, the basis of mobility studies, much less is known about the twentieth century.

Informed speculation suggests that while geographic mobility slowed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a certain continuity of patterns existed, motion, it is suggested, did not come to a screeching halt but rather slowed in an unknown, probably uneven fashion.[12] The annual report for the Victoria schools allows an exploratory discussion of early twentieth century rates and directions of mobility. As well, the impact on the classroom and schools can be measured quantitatively, though the qualitative dimension of this problem can only be discussed speculatively.

Victoria experienced both intra and extra city mobility. The extent of this mobility is measured by the number of students who started and finished the academic year in the same school. This establishes the percentage of students who failed, for whatever reason, to complete the year. In 1910, only 73.6% of the elementary students and 78% of the high school students started and finished the year in the same school. In 1921 the rates improved to 83.2% for elementary and 91.9% for high school students. In both years the high school students posted markedly better rates of completion. One possible explanation is that older students (children) did not move as much. Their parents would have probably been older than those of younger children and perhaps more established in the city. This would be

consistent with nineteenth century findings that younger, less established families (or singles) moved more often than older established families.[13] A second explanation suggests that children enrolled in the high school, still a minority experience, were from families more economically stable than most and therefore less likely to move. This quasi class analysis of high school performance fits with nineteenth century analyses of high school clientele, which clearly show that secondary school attendance was directly related to the occupational standing of the family.[14] Katz discovered that social class was related to attendance wherever a certain level of schooling was a minority experience.[15] Even as late as 1921 secondary education remained a minority experience in Victoria, despite its eleven year tripling in size. An alternate, less theoretical explanation might suggest simply that those who attended high school were more committed to an education and therefore logically attended all year more often than the younger children. Finally, for most students in the high school, the option of transferring to another school in the city was not open, though the inter-city rate does not nearly account for the entire elementary-secondary disparity.

That the completion performance for both school types improved over the eleven years, suggests that the population of Victoria was becoming less mobile and that schooling was

becoming an important experience for more and more children. Though historians are unsure exactly when geographic mobility slowed, at least one informed scholar has suggested that the 1920's marked a watershed of sorts.[16] Though presumably no great divide neatly separates old and modern patterns the immediate post World War I period is postulated as one of an entrenchment of society. Perhaps the 1921 mobility performance of Victoria students signifies part of this trend, or this slowdown in movement may have been a reflection of Victoria's economic condition. In 1921 the city's economy was stagnant, directly contrasting the boom in 1910. Alternately, the increased performance may simply have been tied to the general improvement in attendance evident since the nineteenth century. Increased rates of completion may have been a manifestation of increased devotion by both parents and children to education as an important institution deserving of regular and uninterrupted participation. Such an explanation would be consistent with theories of increasing devotion both to children as objects of affection and of schools as appropriate places for the nurturement of such.

The patterns both support and question some of these possible explanations. If children completed in response to the class position of their parents, it is reasonable to expect that higher percentages would have been recorded by students at the James Bay school. Though this is an

admittedly imprecise measure of class, James Bay was clearly a much more fashionable neighbourhood than the central and northern sections of the city encompassed by Fernwood, Hillside, and North Ward schools. Figure V demonstrates that there was an inconsistent pattern among the schools. While in 1910 South Park, a James Bay school, far outperformed North Ward, there was no difference in 1921. In the later year James Bay schools actually had a higher rate of non-completion, indicating no evident correlation between social standing and the relative propensity of children to spend a complete year in elementary school.

While school location seemingly had little obvious relation to completion, school type had a direct relationship. The two schools catering to an older age group, grades three and above, South Park and North Ward, had generally better performances. More than class, loosely defined, it seems age had a positive relation to finishing. The elementary schools with a much higher average age had much higher rates, especially in 1921. This relationship is emphasized by considering the still higher rates posted by the high school. Older children were more likely to start and finish the year in the same year than younger ones. But the patterns of the past are not so simple. Several factors seem to have mediated the simple age-finish relationship, especially gender. As Figure VI highlights,

FIGURE V

COMPLETION RATE BY SCHOOL

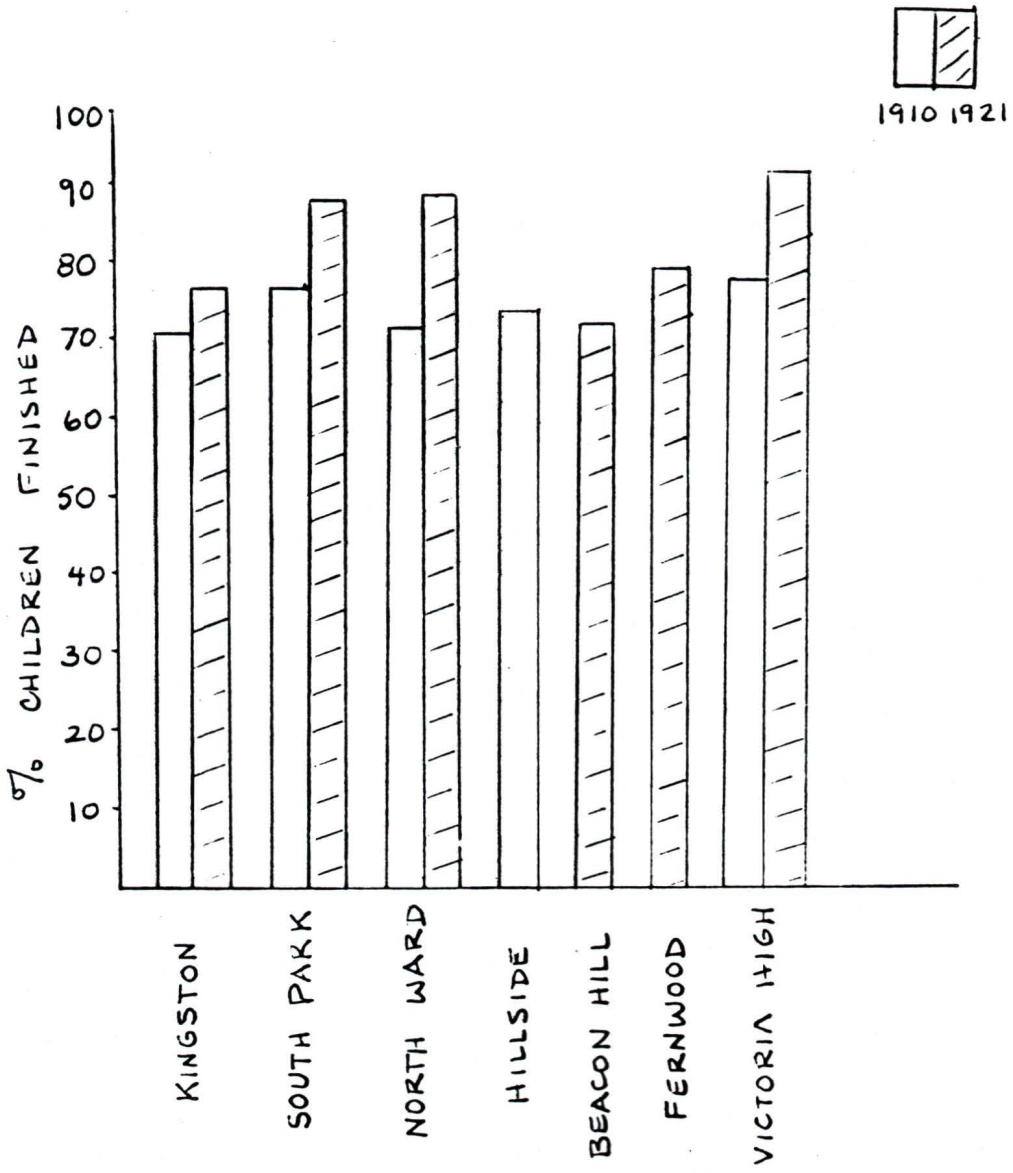
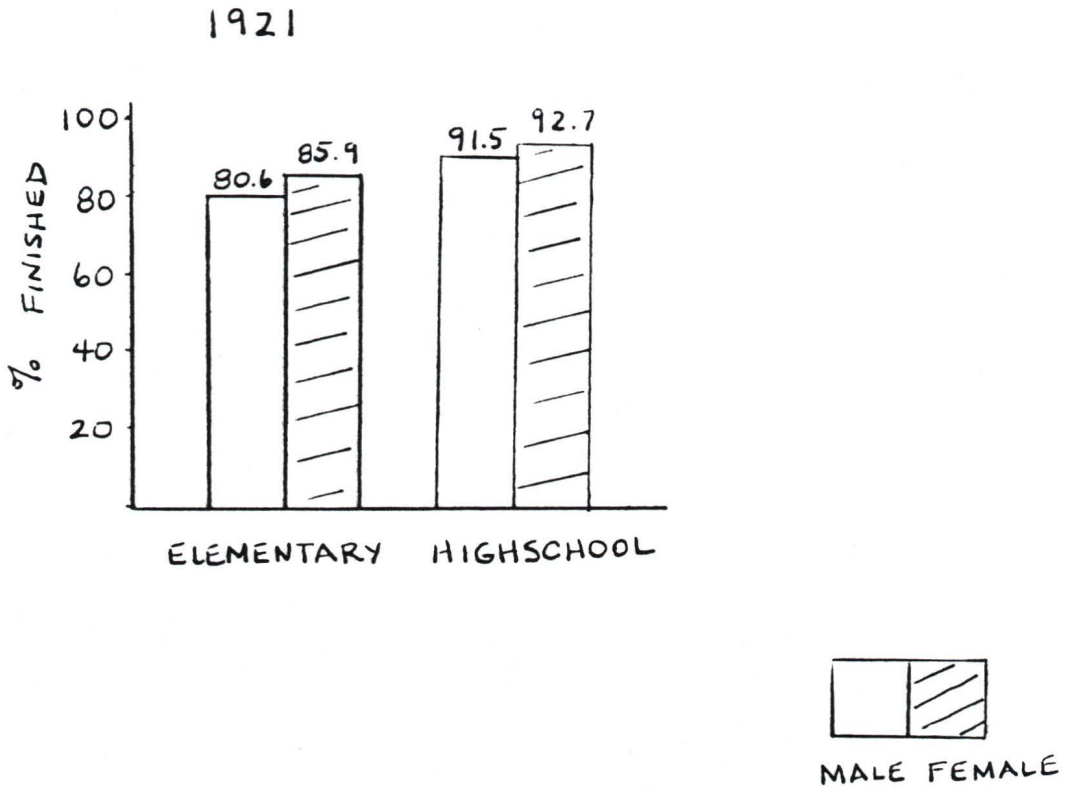


FIGURE VI

COMPLETION RATE: MALES AND FEMALES.



males were considerably more likely to spend the complete year in one elementary school. In high school the same pattern was evident in 1910, supporting the suggestion that early twentieth century patterns of completion were related to gender, roughly approximating age. The 1921 high school pattern neither refutes nor supports this suggestion. Rather its rates were very high for both males and females, evidence perhaps that as performance improved, factors of variance became much less important.

Even within these broad groupings and seemingly simple and logical relation between educational stability and pupils in older grades, the contours of the finishing experience expose a good deal about the 'social organization' of early twentieth century Victoria. The patterns of school arrival and school departure suggest a society still in flux and possessing an inexact definition of childhood and youth. Children were in motion in the schools, in the city and around the province and country. Youth, it seems, had no direct correlation to a set amount of schooling as leaving patterns remained irregular through 1921.

Historians have discovered three types of mobility which affected schools: movement of children within the school system, intra-city residential movement, and extra-city residential movement.[17] Lazerson argues that all three types of mobility plagued late nineteenth century

Boston, and that combined, up to 50% of the student population changed schools in any one year.[18] Likewise, Victoria experienced a high rate of intra-city movement. In 1910, 54 of the 1414 elementary students moved within the school system. Though this 3.8% figure does not approach Boston's rates of fifteen years earlier, it does suggest that about 2 pupils moved in or out of each elementary class in 1910. While this movement was probably not highly disruptive in itself, when added to other rates of movement, it gains in significance. As Table IX demonstrates, substantial numbers of pupils also arrived from further afield. All told, 124 of the 1414 elementary students in 1910 arrived from outside Victoria sometime during the school year. This total is surely a bit low because those arriving from Saanich, a neighbouring district, were recorded as inner-city movers. In fact, many of these may have been involved in selling a home or property, if such was owned, leaving a job and moving up to fifteen miles. Without these cases, 8.8% of the elementary students arrived from outside the city. With Saanich movement the figure would have approached 10%. Of those recorded as new arrivals, thirty-seven came from British Columbia centres, another 37 from other Canadian locations and 50, or 3.5%, from outside Canada. The majority of the non-Canadian movement involved arrivals from England.

TABLE IX

1910 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MOVEMENT

Arrival	
Victoria	54
B.C.	37
Canada	37
World	50
	178

Departure	
Victoria	72
B.C.	39
Canada	16
World	23
	150

The total influx of 8.8% does not seem inordinately high, especially for a period which, according to one report, "astonished old timers and indeed the province at large"[19] with its rapid growth. From 1901 to 1911 Victoria's population increased 52%, with much of this increase occurring in the later years. The aggregate school enrollment figures (Table II) indicate that many of these immigrants brought school-age children with them, suggesting that a substantial percentage of them were fairly young and perhaps not economically secure. This in turn suggests this group was likely to continue "travelling." The number of children pulled out of the school in the same year is perhaps evidence of this. Seventy-eight, or 5.5% of the total elementary population, left Victoria during the school year and as with the arrival figures, this total is surely slightly low and the 72 students moving within the city's borders slightly high.

Population increase or decrease is recorded with little attention to the number of people shuttling in and out of the area the total represent. One needs only to remember Thernstrom's Boston to appreciate the potential magnitude of this motion and how population aggregates mask the numbers of 'travellers' who moved through a city in any year. The 1910 school registers allow the construction of an informal, speculative pattern of this movement.

In 1910, Victoria experienced a 3.3% gain in the elementary age group, accounted for by an 8.8% rate of in-migration and a 5.5% rate of out-migration. These rates can be projected across the city by relating them to the total city elementary student population. The exercise suggests that almost 500 students were in motion in the one school year of 1910 and that over 200 pupils were added to the city rolls. In fact, the city's elementary school rolls increased 147 from 1910 to 1921, but innumerable factors obviously play a large role in this sort of exercise. The point is, many children moved through the school system and thus the city, to produce a net gain of 200 or 400 or whatever the total in any particular year. One can ponder how many children moved through the system in 1912-1913 when the city rolls expanded from 4107 to 5201.

Beyond suggesting that society continued to be in motion, this study confirms that classrooms continued to be in motion. Though much improved from Lazerson's informed estimate that up to 40 or 50% of classrooms turned over annually in the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries, the average Victoria classroom of 51 would have had approximately 15 students either enter or leave. This figure includes internal and external school movement and the 29.4% who left for work or because of illness. This

high rate of movement must have consistently upset the classrooms and reduced their educational potential.

The high school of 1910 demonstrated somewhat greater stability than the elementary system. Only 4.8% (13) of the 273 pupils arrived part way through the year. Combined with the 16.8% (46) who left, 21.6% of the student population turned over during the year. Combined with the 5 who moved internally, 23.4% either arrived or left, meaning that in an average classroom of 30 or so, about 7 pupils moved in or out (Table X). What is marked in this table is the number of high school pupils who moved in or out of British Columbia, as opposed to the much wider world the elementary transfers entailed. Why this difference? No doubt some who arrived in the high school came from other provincial communities expressly for secondary education, in 1910, British Columbia had only 21 high schools of which 4 were on Vancouver Island. The majority of the high school students in Victoria were over 15 and probably capable of establishing a semi-dependent or independent household in Victoria. Even a small number of such cases would have unbalanced the high school rate in respect to the elementary schools. The age pattern of the high school 'travellers' supports this possibility. Most of those who moved from other provincial locations were over 16, while most from other Canadian cities were under this age. While

TABLE X

1910 HIGH SCHOOL MOVEMENT

Arrival	
B.C.	8
Canada	4
World	1
	13
Departure	
Victoria	2
B.C.	5
Canada	1
World	2
	10

this demands much more study, perhaps this movement to a city with a high school was a regular phenomena of the early twentieth century. Such analysis would shed light on the value of high school education as perceived by various ethnic, occupational and regional groups. Moving for secondary schooling would certainly be evidence of the desire for education.

If we can conclude that the city and the schools were in flux in 1910, what can be said for the same eleven years later? Unfortunately, much less can be said. While in 1910 the elementary school register recorded both those who arrived and those who left, those who arrived in 1921 were not noted.[20] The register only had a column for departures. The change in the register suggests that there was a decline in interest in the rate and nature of students moving into the Victoria school system, and this serves as some indication of reduced levels of movement. But while it is reasonable to expect the numbers of arrivals was much lower - due to the slowing of the city's population growth - it is unreasonable to suggest that there was zero in-migration in the five elementary schools studied. Other studies are clearly needed to measure the degree of this reduced incidence.

What can be discussed are both the leaving rates for the high school and the leaving patterns for the elementary

schools. As in 1910, many students left for other city schools: in 1910, 5.1%, in 1921 9.5% (131). Why? Beyond the distinct possibility that this represented residential mobility, children and/or their parents may have perceived the city schools as substantially different from each other. Course offerings were similar though the schools were very unevenly equipped for the newer, non-academic courses. North Ward School had the city's finest manual training centre but, admittedly, the rate of movement was not significantly lower at this school. In some cases movement may have been a response to what parents or children viewed as poor or unfair instruction. Finally, the organization of the city's school system itself created movement since the schools, except for Boy's and Girl's Central, offered only the lowest grades or grades three and above. Those who did very well in the fall, in the lower schools, might have moved for the spring term to a school offering more advanced courses. This would be consistent with the increasing concern of education officials to match children as closely as possible to their personal achievement level and to avoid prolonged retardation in the lowest grades. Regardless of the reason, about three and one-half students out of an average class of 37 moved during the year. Movement between the city schools remained a substantial part of schooling in Victoria.

Beyond moving from school to school, elementary pupils in 1921 continued to be uprooted and moved out of the city. Ninety-six, or 6.6% of the elementary population, departed Victoria (Table XI). For the same reasons as in 1910, this figure is surely a bit low, as again, moves to and from Saanich, an adjacent district, were recorded as intra-city movement. This 6.6% rate of out-migration is larger than the comparable 5.5% of 1910, indicating more people were moving out of the city in 1921 than a decade earlier. If this rate was consistent across the city, 368 of the 5576 elementary pupils would have moved out, reasonable considering that out-migration was only a part of the population growth equation and that the school population growth of Victoria had slowed to a crawl. From 1920 to 1921 the city system grew by only 151 students. This low total was in stark contrast to levels of several hundred recorded a decade previously. What is striking about this pattern of out-migration is the overwhelming (78%) percentage who remained in British Columbia. In 1910 the comparable rate was 50%. That the 1921 rate was so much higher corresponds to the facts that Victoria's role as the dominant provincial city was decidedly denied by 1921 and that greater economic opportunity was offered by Vancouver.[21] As Peter Baskerville, a recent author of a history of Victoria argues, and as these numbers suggest, "throughout

TABLE XI

1921 ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL MOVEMENT

HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTURE	
Victoria	5
B.C.	5
Canada	1
World	2
	13

ELEMENTARY DEPARTURE	
Victoria	133
B.C.	72
Canada	14
World	6
	225

the 1920's there was an 'exodus' of working class people from Victoria."[22] Though the class component of these out-migrants cannot be established, their exodus from the city, bound for other provincial points, is very marked.

The rate of migration to other parts of Canada remained consistent with the 1910 figures. In both years only 1% of the student population left for points east of the Rocky Mountains. This continuity suggests that Canada held no more promise for success in 1921 than in 1910. Still, in 1921 Canada was a more favoured destination than foreign countries. While in 1910 29.5% (23) moved outside Canada, to Britain, Europe and America, in 1921 this was reduced to 6.25% (6). Generally reduced geographic mobility combined with weakening links with the Old World most likely accounted for this reduction.

The high school of 1921 was a very stable institution, though, as with the elementary schools, the register only recorded departures, not arrivals. Still, the absolute trickle of departures is adequate proof of this stability. Only 15, or 1.6% of the secondary students moved out of the city, a pattern consistent with both the 1910 secondary figures and the suggestion that older students were less likely to move out of the city. Why? As suggested for 1910, reasons of familial economic stability are the most plausible and historically generated: affluent families

more often had children of this age in school and less often in a job.[23] Also, the limited number of high schools decreased the opportunity for secondary students to change institutions.

Taken together, the evidence of this chapter demonstrates that the people of early twentieth century cities continued to be in motion. Canadian society continued to contain within it a group of 'travellers,' moving into and out of urban centres and the school system of Victoria was directly affected by this movement. In 1910 14.2% of the elementary school population either moved into or left the city during the academic year. In 1921, 6.65 moved out of the city. The change in direction, from overwhelming in-migration to a much higher rate of out-migration mirrored the larger social trends experienced by Victoria. By 1921 the boom experienced in the early teens was finished and school population growth slowed dramatically. Along with a high rate of geographic mobility the Victoria schools experienced intra-city movement: students changing schools some time during the year. In 1910 8.9% of students switched schools and in 1921 this rate increased slightly to 9.5%.

These rates, together with children leaving for work, to be at home, because of illness, or for other personal reasons, meant that about one-quarter of the elementary

school population was in motion in each year. How this affected the classrooms can only be suggested. As Lazerson argues for Boston, such turnover must have put pressure on the teachers. Combined with the informed assumption that the most mobile children were also the poorest, least academically proficient, one can speculate that the problem was most likely acute.

But this study raises more questions regarding mobility than it answers. While it demonstrates that mobility continued in significant numbers it fails to identify who the travellers were and why they were travelling. More significantly for the history of education the study raises questions. How did the travellers use the school? Why did large numbers move between city schools? Did the travellers attend very often when they were in one place? What role did public schooling play in supporting a still restless population? How important was public education to families on the move? Did school, as one author suggests, help facilitate the smooth transition from city to city? Children remained in motion in the early twentieth century. Educational history should attempt to discover how uniform schooling was used by parents and children and how the still unsettled classrooms reacted to and accommodated this steady stream of travellers.

NOTES

CHAPTER SIX

[1]For an outline of the major studies of the 1960's and 1970's as they related to the history of education see Gaffield, "Demography, Social Structure and the History of Schooling." As well, see chapter three of Katz, The People of Hamilton.

[2]As outlined in "Men in Motion," (see below) there had been many more years of interest in rural mobility. The celebration of western migration across America had inspired many studies.

[3]Stephan Thernstrom and Peter R. Knights, "Men in Motion: Some Data and Speculations About Urban Population Mobility in Nineteenth Century America," Journal of Interdisciplinary History (1970).

[4]Katz, The People of Hamilton, chapter three.

[5]Ibid.

[6]In addition to Hopeful Travellers, see Gagan, "Geographic and Social Mobility in Nineteenth Century Ontario: A Microstudy," Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology (May, 1976), and Gagan and Herbert Mays, "Historical Demography and Canadian Social History: Families and Land in Peel County, Ontario," Canadian Historical Review (March, 1973).

[7]Gagan, Hopeful Travellers, p. 95.

[8]Educational historians who subscribe(d) to the theory of 'social control' include most prominently Alison Prentice and Susan Houston. Michael Katz, while emphasizing complexity, also supports the thesis of the institutionalization of social problems through mass public education. This included the problem of assimilating immigrants.

[9]In "Demography and Social Structure" and in "Going Back To School," Gaffield suggests that the relationship between students, parents and public schooling was probably much more complex than the simple imposition of systems of education. He wonders how 'travellers' used the schools as they moved from community to community.

[10]See Lazerson, The Origins of The Public School, pages 1-35.

[11]Ibid., p. 15.

[12]See Katz, The People of Hamilton, chapter three, and The Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism, chapter nine.

[13]See note 12.

[14]This point is made by several authors. Perhaps the earliest statement was Katz, The Irony of Early School Reform. The same point is made less critically by Joseph Kett, Rites of Passage.

[15]Katz, The Social Organization, chapter nine.

[16]See note 12.

[17]Thernstrom and Knights, "Men in Motion."

[18]See Lazerson, note 11.

[19]Peter Baskerville, City on The Rim: A History of Victoria, B.C. (Los Angeles: Forthcoming), Chapter 4, p. 1.

[20]See Chapter 4.

[21]The decline of Victoria by 1921 is well documented. See for example Harry Gregson, A History of Victoria (Victoria: Morriss Printing, 1970).

[22]Baskerville, City on The Rim, Chapter 4, p. 19.

[23]See note 14.

CHAPTER SEVEN: PATTERNS OF ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance by students has long been considered the linchpin of public education systems.[1] And while the performance of enrolled students dramatically improved in the first twenty years of the twentieth century, there remained important distinctions in attendance patterns by different age, gender, grade, course and even school groups. As Neil Sutherland has commented, in 1920 regular attendance was a "as yet uncompleted effort."[2] He notes that there were four groups of attenders; those who almost always went; seasonable attenders with high rates in winter and low in summer; an irregular group; and those he refers to as non-attenders.[3] And though the 1921 study of illiteracy and school attendance in Canada notes with satisfaction that one-half again as many students attended school in 1921 as did in 1910,[4] problems persisted.

In the twentieth century certain school officials believed that the problem was less pressing than others. Marvin Lazerson argues that truancy had become a subordinate issue in the hierarchy of urban educational problems. Educators were more concerned with curriculum development and pedagogical improvement.[5] In Canada as well, there appears to have been a certain complacency regarding satisfactory levels of attendance. Though mentioned in the Annual Reports and school board minutes, attendance was

often subsumed by discussions of expenditures, facilities and curriculum.

Still, as even the census figures reveal, attendance remained irregular. Nationally in 1911, well over 10% of the 7-14 age group did not attend at all (see Figure I, p. 38), while in 1921, this had been markedly reduced, but still hovered around the 6% mark. Substantial numbers of children, even those facing compulsion laws, continued to pursue activities outside school, and as Figure II indicates, British Columbia's attendance rates were very similar to national patterns.

The turn of the century saw a brief restoration of interest in regular attendance in British Columbia and the passage of both compulsion and child labour laws in the hope that children could be driven from homes, the streets, and the labour market, and into schools. In 1901 all 7-14 year-olds in cities had to attend the full year, while in 1919 this was extended to municipal districts and in 1921 the upper age was stretched to 15 for the whole province.[6] At the same time the child labour legislation was enacted though as Timothy Dunn suggests, "it is difficult to estimate the effectiveness because it was piecemeal and its enforcement uncertain."[7] Prior to 1900 the only legislation focussed on mine labour. In 1900 the shops regulation act "prohibited youth employment in retail establishments

for more than 66 hours per week,"[8] but hotels, restaurants, and pawn-broking shops, all child-labour hotbeds, were exempt from the legislation. In 1901 the act barred males under 14 and females under 15 from working in factories with power machinery. "Perhaps the most comprehensive legislation was the 1921 Employment of Children Act. It denied males under 14 and females under 15 employment in primary and secondary industries."[9]

However, several historians maintain that children continued to work thoughout this period. Dunn argues this case for British Columbia, Jane Synge for Hamilton and Rebecca Coulter for Edmonton.[10] The attendance figures demonstrate that enrollment and attendance both grew from age of entry to about age 13 and then began to fall off. By age 16 and 17, even in 1921, public schooling was an experience of a minority of children. The census data indicates that many of the majority worked. In 1921 5.5% of males and 2.2% of females age 14 in Victoria were reported to be gainfully employed. The rates rose to 19.5% and 5.1, 43.5 and 20.9, and 56.6 and 37.7% by age 17."[11] Moreover, just as in other areas, provincial school officials realized the extent of the problem exceeded official figures. The Vancouver superintendent noted in 1910 that the province "needs a new law to fine those who employ children under 14 years during school hours."[12] Three years earlier the

same official had commented that "quite a number of pupils were out of school (that year) because their parents wished them to work."[13]

The record used in this study provides data for an analysis of the numbers of students who left school for work in 1910 and 1921, and allows a speculative discussion of the relations of age, gender, course and wage labour in Victoria. The teacher's record noted if students left for work just as it noted if students moved to another city. Also noted were those students who 'left,' without further explanation, and these cases are included in some calculations on the assumption that there is a good possibility these children went to work. The number of these pupils is small and mention is made when they are included in the total hereafter.

In 1910 a substantial number of elementary students left for work while in 1921 such departures were almost completely a high school phenomena. In 1910, 37 or 2.6% of the total elementary population left for work. Combined with the 12, or .8% who were listed as having 'left,' 3.4% of the elementary population could reasonably be assumed to have left for full-time labour. In 1921 this number was reduced to the almost invisible total of 5. While at first glance even the 1910 figures appear very low, when considered in relation to age and gender they gain in significance. Among 15-16 year-old males, elementary retardates,

13, or 13.8% 'left,' or left for work. Four, or 44% of the 17-18 year-olds did likewise. Even among females, just under 7% of those 15-16 left for these reasons. These rates emphasize that considerable numbers of children continued to opt for wage labour over schooling in the twentieth century. For reasons of choice or necessity, many children who registered, removed themselves to pursue work. To be remembered is that among these age groups, school enrollment itself was a far from universal fact. These children who withdrew came from the minority of this age group who enrolled.

In the high school, 14.6% of the male population left in 1910 for one of the two stated reasons. Eighty-five percent went to work. As in the elementary school, many fewer females left for this reason. In 1921, twenty (5.3%) males left for work and another four for reasons unstated, while eleven females went to work and seven were listed as leaving. Again, older students were more likely to leave for a job. In 1921 almost all the females moving to an occupation were 16 or above. Moreover, in 1921 the high school students who left for work overwhelmingly were concentrated in two groups; those in vocational studies and those in the lowest, mixed class. That both commercial students and boys from the technical classes were much more likely to leave for jobs indicates that these students were

more likely either to want a job or have to take a job, even though, especially in the case of the technical students, they were on average much younger than the other high school students. This suggests that these students were drawn from a background that necessitated or encouraged early entry into wage labour. As well, skills learned in vocational classes, if only rudimentary at best, may have been readily marketable. Both the clientele and results suggested by this study would have very much pleased the promoters of non-academic schooling. Imparting work skills to the labouring classes was the raison d'être of vocationalism.

Many others, undoubtedly not working, did not attend regularly either. As Table I shows, as late as 1921, 10% of even the most regular age groups failed to attend for the full year. Moreover, because the census only recorded monthly enrollment, the daily rates are unknown. That daily attendance was a serious problem is suggested by the many resolutions the Victoria Board passed in favour of compulsion laws.[14] And though expansion, dollar expenditures, Chinese students, and children from outside the district, dominated school board discussion, truancy remained a concern, as in a small local crisis in 1918 when it appeared there might not be a truant officer in the city. The board asserted that it "does not deem it advisable to be without

the services of a truancy officer and wishes to make an appointment."[15] Clearly, despite attention being focussed in many different directions, school officials had to be concerned about continuing irregular patterns of attendance.

Figure VII illustrates this point for Victoria. These patterns of attendance are probably inflated because they only include children who started and finished the year in one school and it is reasonable to suspect that the mobile students, especially those who dropped out, attended less often than their 'normal' classmates. The attenders were arbitrarily divided into four groups: those who went less than one-half the time; those who went more often, but still very poorly; those who attended fairly often; and a group of regular attenders.

For both the elementary and secondary schools, attendance improved in 1921, especially among the top group, those who attended over 90%. High school rates were better in both years, markedly so in 1921. The 1921 elementary pattern was a little surprising in that more students attended less than one-half the time in 1910. Why? While it might be only that the lack of notation of arrivals affected the attendance percentages (see chapter six), the number of days attended support the percentage figures. The days attended table (XII) includes all students who attended at any time during the year and the similarity of

FIGURE VII

ATTENDANCE %

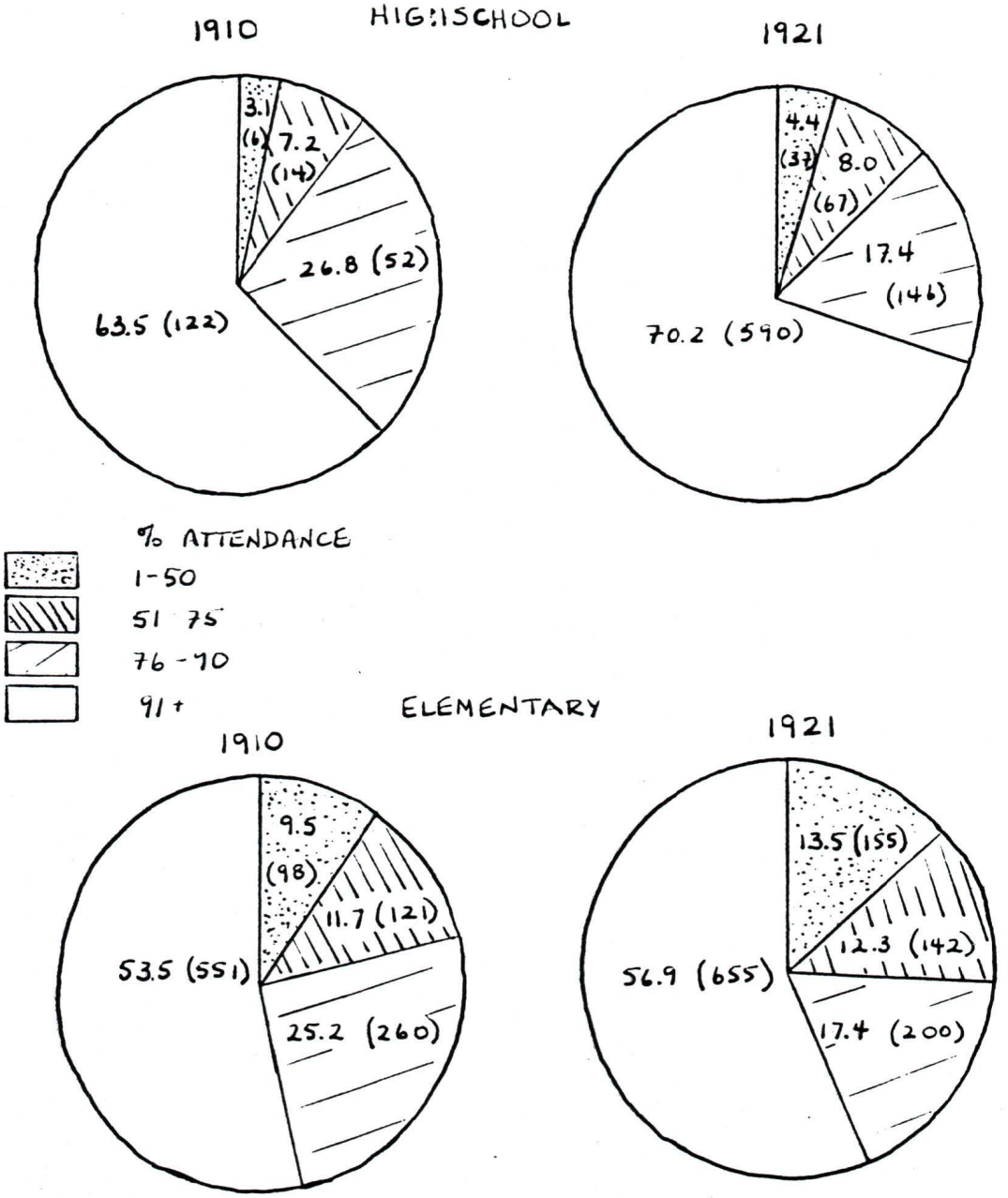


TABLE XII

DAYS ATTENDED

	1910		1921	
	Elementary		Elementary	
Days				
1-50	160	11.3%	198	14.3%
51-100	197	13.9	177	12.8
101-150	190	13.5	199	14.4
151-175	166	11.8	285	20.6
176+	701	49.6	526	38.0
	1412		1385	
	High School		High School	
1-50	18	7.1%	46	5.0%
51-100	25	9.9	58	6.3
101-150	30	11.9	97	10.6
151-175	36	14.3	215	23.5
176+	143	56.7	498	54.5
	252		914	

the two patterns is evidence that unrecorded movement was not a major reason for an apparent increase in irregular attendance. Likewise health does not appear to have caused this decline in performance. While influenza swept the city in 1919-1920 the 1920-21 school year was, by all reports, free of any major health problem. Neither the Mayor's annual report on health, nor the Annual Reports nor the School Board Minutes document any major illnesses.

Though only one high school was captured in the sample, four, and then five elementary schools were examined. Figures VIII and IX display the rates for the schools in each year. Remembering that in each year two schools, South Park and North Ward, enrolled only older children, comparisons can be best made across the schools with similar clientele. But first, note that just as the performance rates of the secondary students were in both years better than the elementary students, in 1910 and 1921, the intermediate schools had higher levels of attendance than the primary schools. Older students, up to the early teens, went more often than their schoolmates. This is consistent with national patterns where children 11 and 12 posted both the highest enrollment and attendance rates. Still, though young teenagers were less likely to enroll, the attendance performance of those who did remained high.

Among the primary schools, two distinct areas of the

FIGURE VIII

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE : PERCENT x SCHOOL

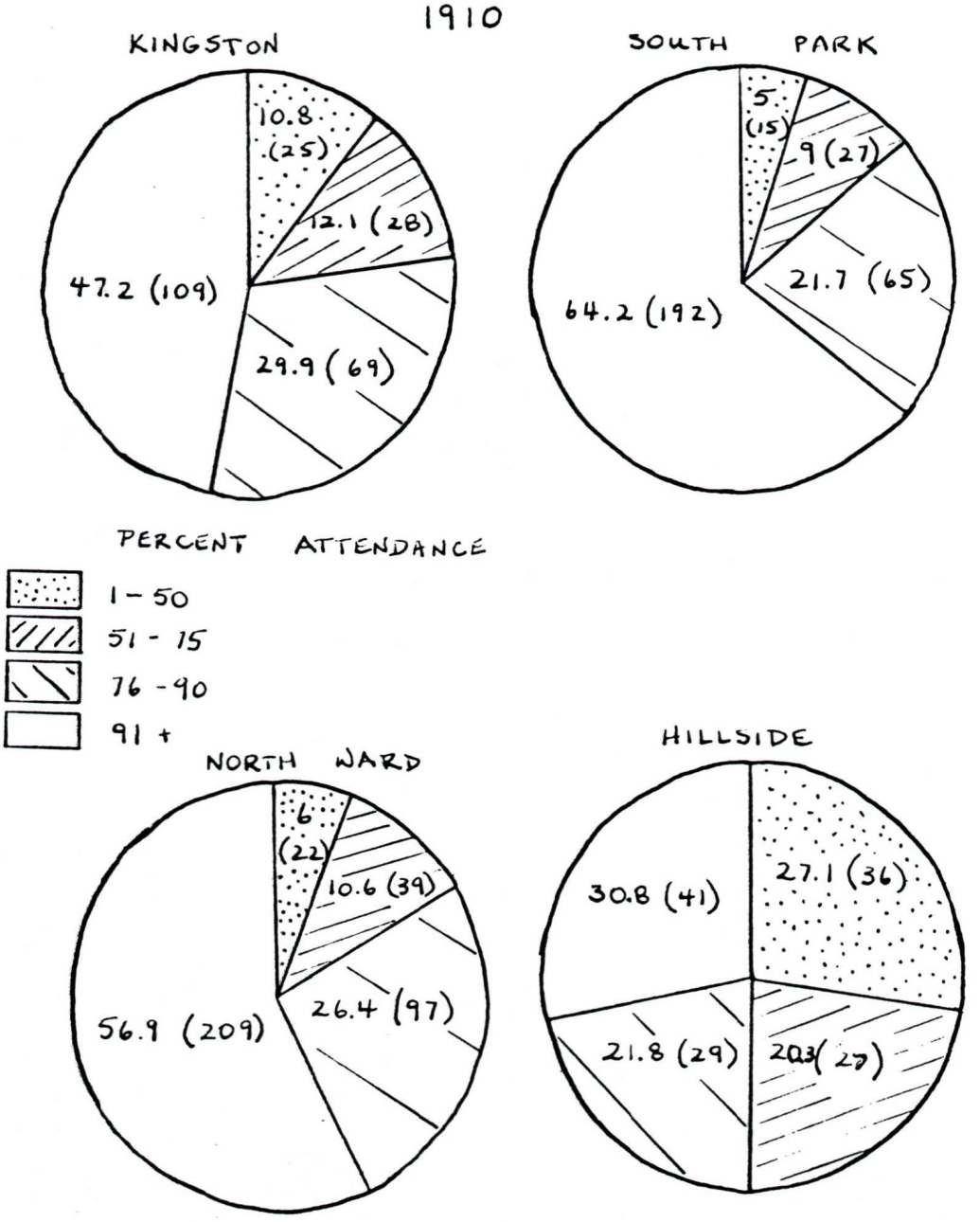
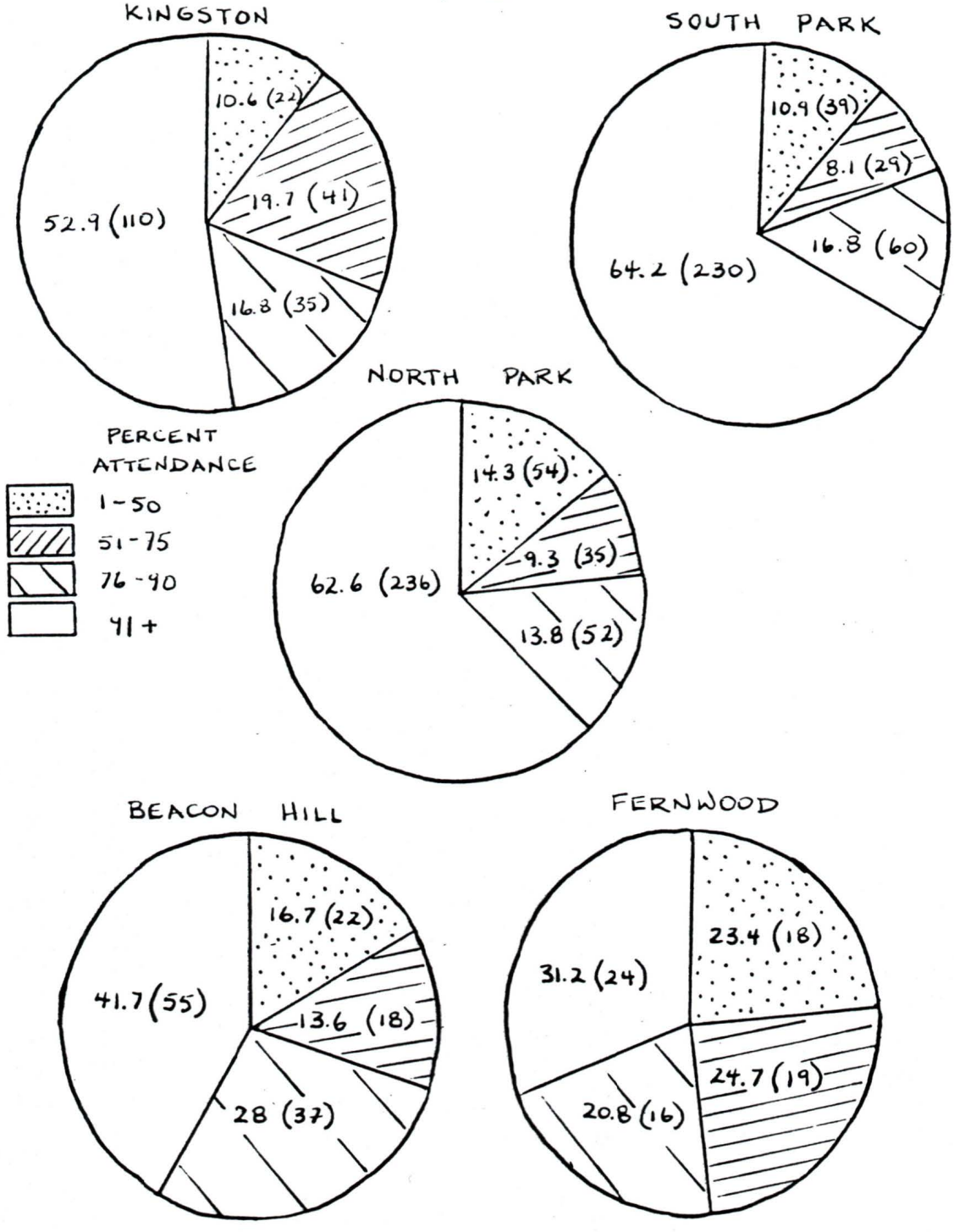


FIGURE IX

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE × SCHOOL

1921



city were represented, James Bay and the North-Central area. James Bay was a more affluent neighbourhood and predictably, children at these schools went more often than those in the more northern section of the city. In 1910, while 47.2% of the elementary students at Kingston Street School in James Bay went more than 90%, just over 30% attended that often in the northern ward, at Hillside School. At the other end of the scale, while just over 10% in James Bay went less than one-half the time, over one-quarter of the Hillside students attended this poorly. Kingston school had fewer children in the next poorest category as well. Seemingly, children of more affluent parents attended more often than those not so affluent. While not enough evidence exists to discuss social class adequately, this dimension seems to have played a role in school performance even in the lowest grades.

This conclusion is both consistent and inconsistent with nineteenth century results because while class was a major determinant of school attendance, at least two historians, Michael Katz and David Tyack, argue similarly that it was a major dynamic only in situations of minority schooling. They argue that where schooling was universal for young children, class distinctions had much less impact.[16] In this way this study questions the declining importance of class with the encroachment of universality.

Perhaps the class dynamic was only muffled, not extinguished. Such subtleties could reasonably be expected to have existed in the nineteenth century as well and gone unnoticed by these scholars because the census data only registered enrollment, not attendance. This result emphasizes the utility of examining registers as opposed to less precise records and suggests the revisionists might be revised with the use of more detailed sources than they employed.

In 1921 the same pattern emerged. Kingston, the original James Bay elementary school, had the best performance followed by Beacon Hill, a school constructed on the periphery of James Bay, and lastly by Fernwood, a small school located in the less affluent north-central section of the city. Kingston's percentages improved slightly over the decade, though more children fell into 50-75% range than the 76-90% range. Beacon Hill recorded levels almost exactly between Kingston and Fernwood. Like Hillside in 1910, Fernwood had less than one-third of its pupils attending over 90% and near one-quarter of its students going less than one-half the time. Like 1921, the loosely defined class distinctions seem closely followed by these results, though the age of the Fernwood children undoubtedly played a part as well. The surprise is that such distinctions were apparent even in the lowest grades and they were

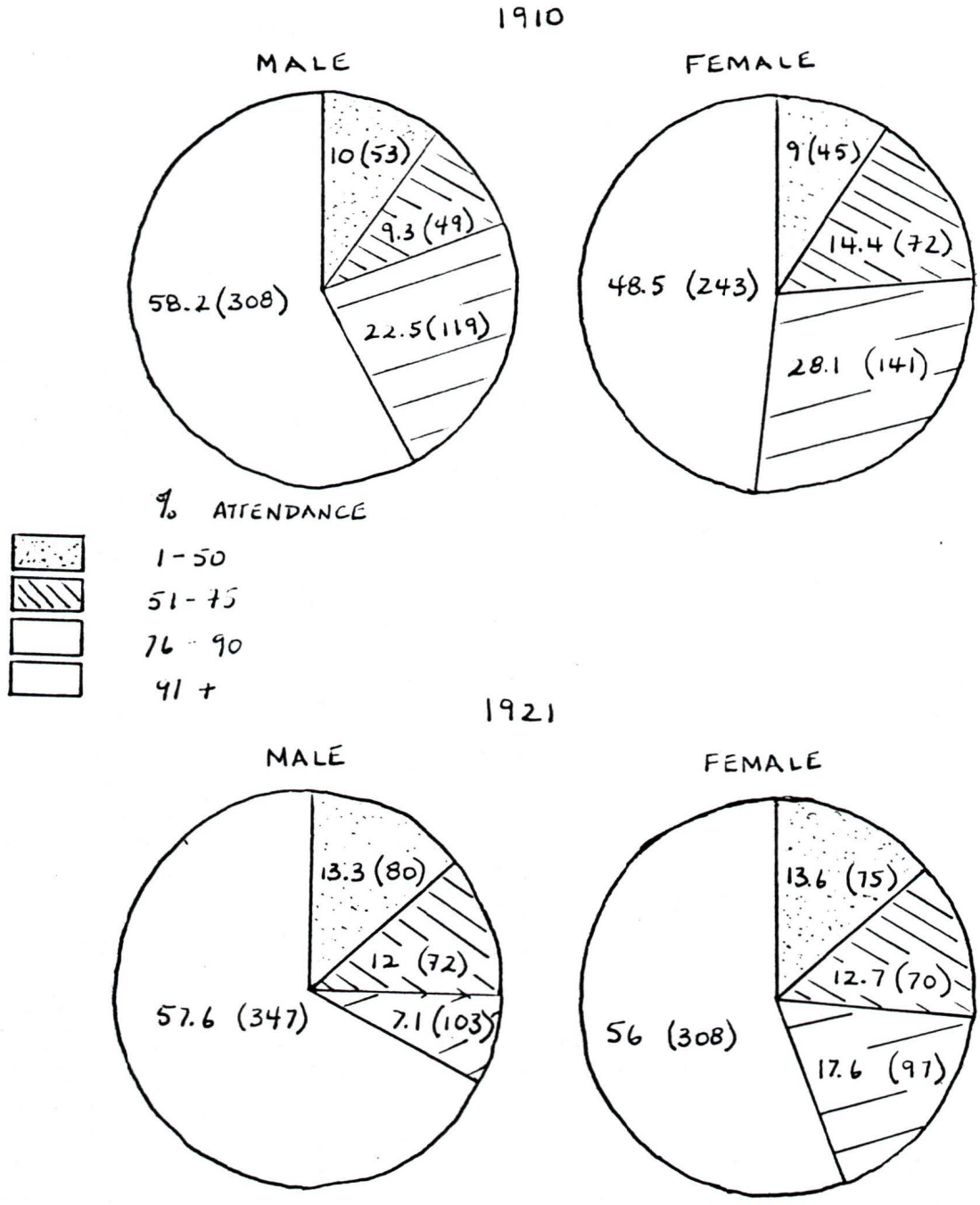
apparent as well from the number of days attended.

School location had the same relation to attendance among intermediate schools. In both years South Park had more regular and fewer irregular attenders. And while in 1910 many North Ward students attended at the 76-90% rate, this group largely disappeared in 1921 and the students were largely bunched in the upper and lower categories. Three patterns emerged; older grades had better performance; students in James Bay posted higher rates; and in 1921, more pupils attended at both the highest and lowest rates though the overall performance improved.

Like school location, gender distinctions were apparent in the attendance patterns, most markedly at the elementary level (Figure X). In 1910 males in elementary schools were 10% more likely to attend regularly while females were more likely to be in the second group, 76-90%. Why? Perhaps elementary-age females combined other activity with schools which was not demanded of, or available to males. The easiest explanation is the almost stereotypical suggestion that females of this pre-teen age group were required to stay at home and care for others. Though decades apart, this would be consistent with conclusions from the nineteenth century when an important role for non-working, school-aged females, was the care of younger siblings, especially in the months of great sickness.[17]

FIGURE X

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE: % x GENDER



Unfortunately, the sources employed do not provide data on seasonality, leaving no way to test this. But that this gender distinction had almost entirely disappeared by 1921 possibly supports the contention that rising, single household wages allowed more children to attend school more regularly.[18] If by 1921 considerably more Victoria homes were supported by a single, presumably male household wage, more mothers would reasonably be at home to 'release' their daughters to attend school more regularly, but this explanation is tentative, at best. Perhaps females were simply held back in poor weather in 1910 to protect themselves and this distinction failed to assert itself eleven years later. Beyond the 1921 pattern, when males were 10% more likely to attend regularly, the high school rates were very similar.

Much more than gender, age was related to attendance performance. In both 1910 and 1921 there was a clear correlation between age and attendance in the elementary schools. As Figures XI and XII demonstrate, attendance increased from age 6, through 7-10, peaking in the 11-14 age group and then decreasing slightly in the later age groups. The patterns were very consistent with each other within the single years. The changes from 1910 to 1921, already outlined, were uniform across these groupings. Why did children of about age 11 attend most frequently so uniformly

FIGURE XI

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE: PERCENT x AGE

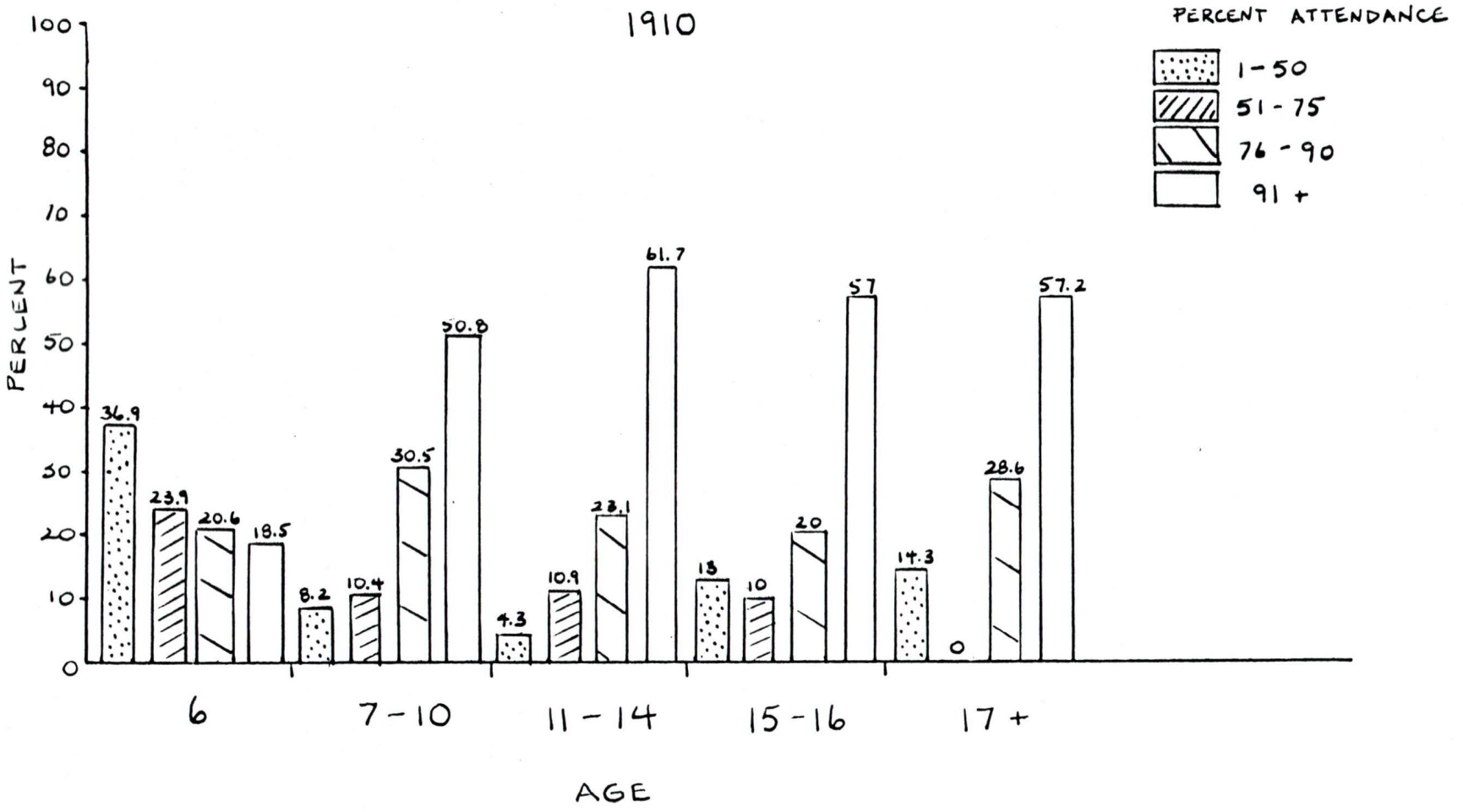
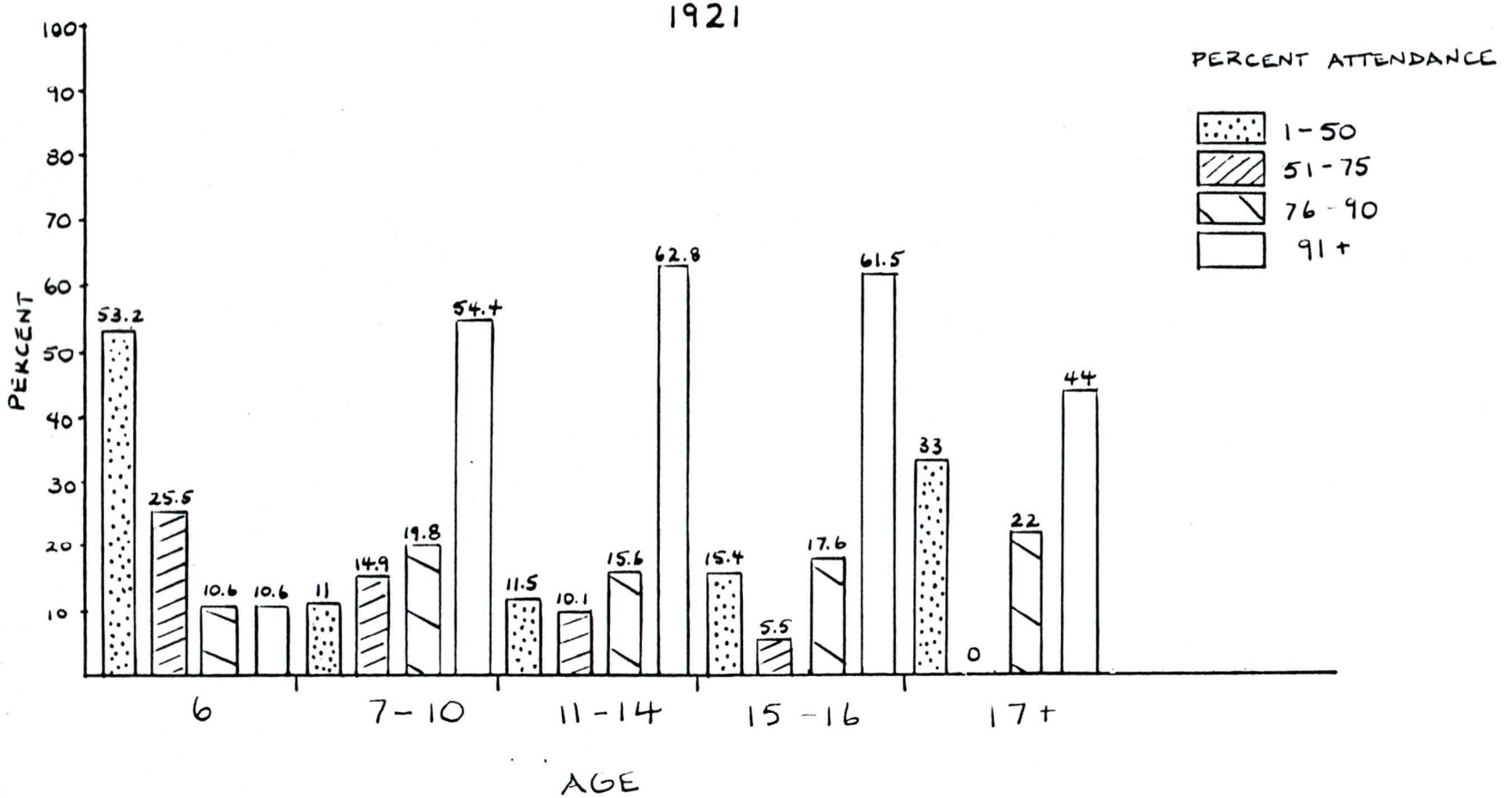


FIGURE XII

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE : PERCENT × AGE

1921



in Victoria and Canada in the twentieth century? In the nineteenth century children this age were both encouraged to go to school and were free from the demands of labour - either at home or in the market place. Very young children, it is suggested, were kept at home for various reasons; distance to school, illness, and what would be loosely called 'cultural' factors.[19] As the 1921 census supplement argues, Canadians were unlikely to send 6 year-olds to school. Even 7 year-olds were held back from school in large numbers. There seems to be no adequate reason for this beyond a widespread perception that public education was not beneficial for very young children. Certainly this is evident in the work of Lazerson and of Kaestle and Vinovskis on nineteenth century New England. They discuss how the culturally accepted age of entry shifted from 3-4, to 5-6 and even as high as 7, dependent, they argue, on shifting perceptions of this age group.[20] In Victoria, this study captured zero 5 year-olds, suggesting that 6 or 7 was the usual age of entry and the number of 8 year-olds in the first grade point to cases of very retarded entry or severe primary retardation. This gives some credence to a vulnerability thesis surrounding these children, because there was no minimum age necessary to enter the schools.

Not only did 6 year-olds post low levels of enrollment, they attended very irregularly. In 1910 less than 20%

attended very well (91%) while in 1921 a startingly low 10.6% attended at this rate. In the later year, over 50% of students age 6 went less than one-half the time.

That there was little difference between the 11-14 and 15-16 age groups was surprising. The only major difference was that the older children were somewhat more likely to attend less than one-half the time. Still, the patterns were more similar than dissimilar. By definition, the 15-16 year-olds were, in the description of the day, retarded. The 'normal' maximum age for the elementary schools should have been no more than 14. The numbers suggest simply that 15 and 16 year-olds who were still able and willing to attend elementary school experienced patterns similar to those of the 11-14 grouping. If they could afford to go, they went. Of course, attendance figures perhaps do not measure <u>ability</u> or <u>desire</u> to attend as accurately as enrollment rates. Attendance performances could presumably be measuring the best and the brightest, the 15 and 16 year-olds concerned for their education. The very small sample size in both years of pupils 17 and over leaves little room for discussion. But it is important to note that this age group had yet to be purged from the elementary schools despite the fact that they might have been ten years older than their schoolmates.

The high school pattern was more responsive to age

in both years. The general rule was the younger the pupil, the better the performance. Figures XIII and XIV demonstrate that the youngest group, the 14 year-olds, consistently had more of its number attending over 90%. In order, the 15-16 group had more in this range than the 17-18 group. This pattern also held for the small number of those 19 and over.

That the younger students went more often than their older schoolmates is not surprising. By definition, younger children in the high school were regular or superior achievers. With a few exceptions in 1921, they must have passed regularly through the system to have reached high school by that age.[21] The same argument could be extended to the 15-16 group and the 17-18 group. Interesting in 1910, a high number of pupils attended from 76-90% of the time which may indicate that many students combined schooling and other activities.

The age-attendance relationship also continues to suggest that older children, whether in elementary or secondary schools, who did stay in school, went quite regularly. Though the high school patterns, even for 1921, suggest a combination of activities, the more outstanding pattern is of generally good attendance. The threshold of attendance in high school seems not to have been by age or gender but by enrollment. If one went, one went regularly.

FIGURE XIII

PERCENT ATTENDANCE BY AGE

1910 HIGHSCHOOL

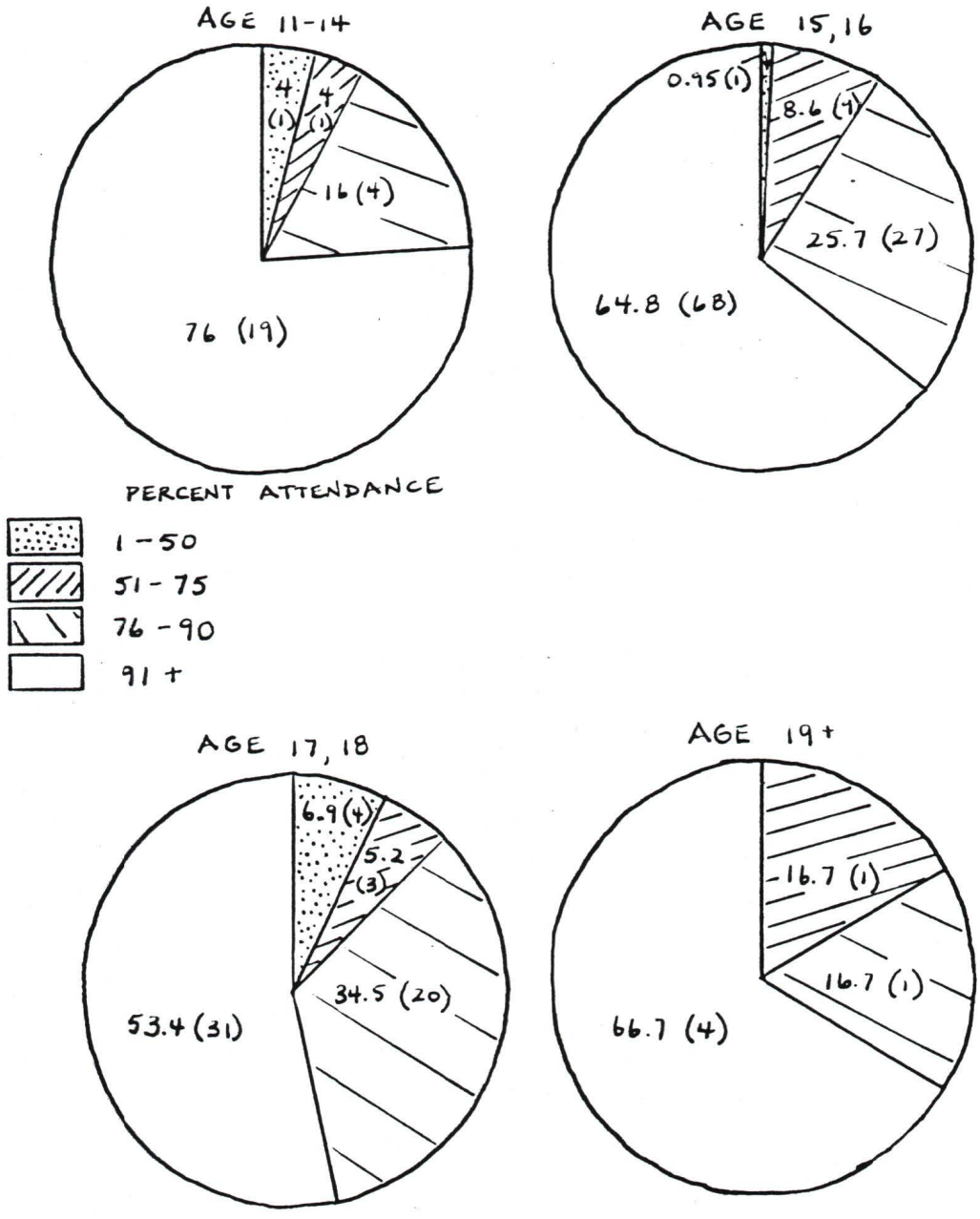
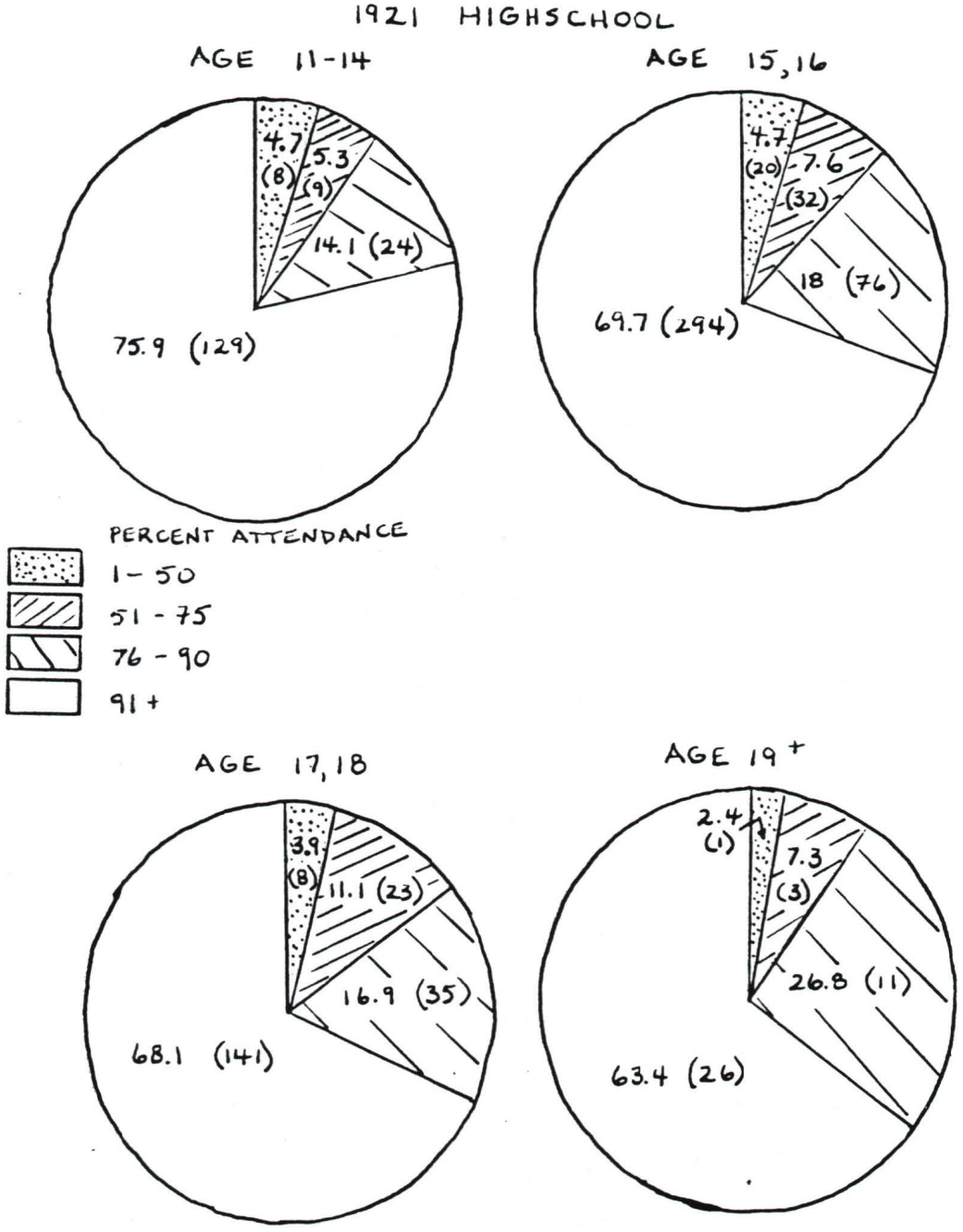


FIGURE XIV

PERCENT ATTENDANCE BY AGE



Independent of age, rate of attendance increased by grade. While concentrations of age did occur in certain elementary grades, as chapter five outlines, even in 1921 a large age variance remained the rule, not the exception. Still, in both years, there was a linear increase in performance from grades 1 to 5 and then a slight decrease in grade 6 (Figures XV and XVI). In the high schools distinct patterns were associated with divisions in 1910 and grades in 1921.

No discussion of classes is possible for the 1910 high school because it is impossible to determine either from the annual reports or the registers what exactly divided the classes. It is, however, safe to conclude that the top divisions (lower numbers), were preparing students for university entrance while lower (higher numbers) divisions were not. Table XIII illuminates the correlation between division and attendance.

In 1921 grade had as significant a relation to attendance as division in 1910 (Table XIV). Students in the lowest grades, six and seven, did not attend very regularly. In the one division that was mixed, with two grades in one classroom, attendance was very low. In the seventh grade class, students attended considerably more poorly than higher academic classes though why this grade was offered in the high school is unclear. Also unclear is why the

FIGURE XV

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE PERCENT x GRADE

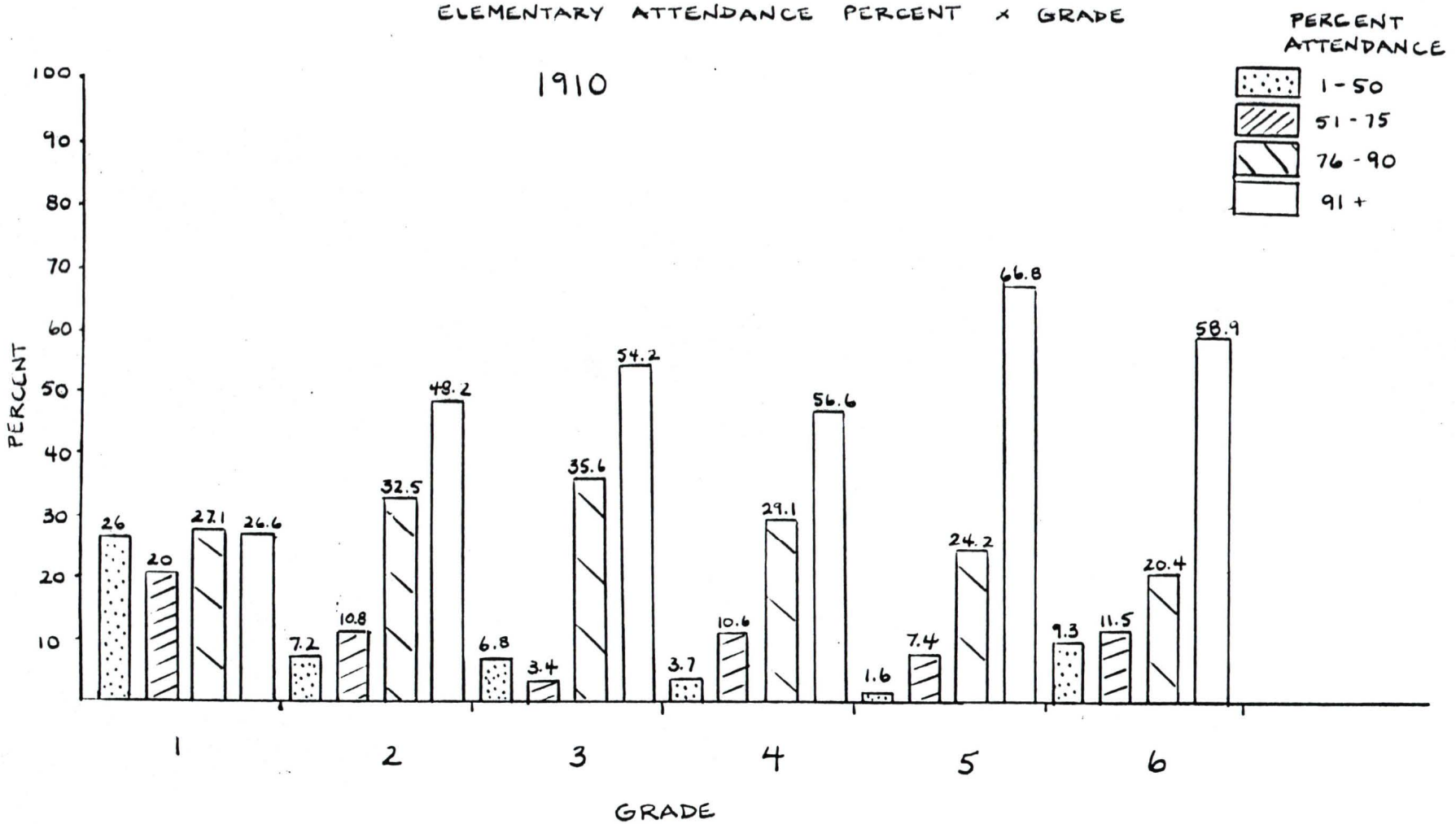


FIGURE XVII

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE PERCENT × GRADE

1921

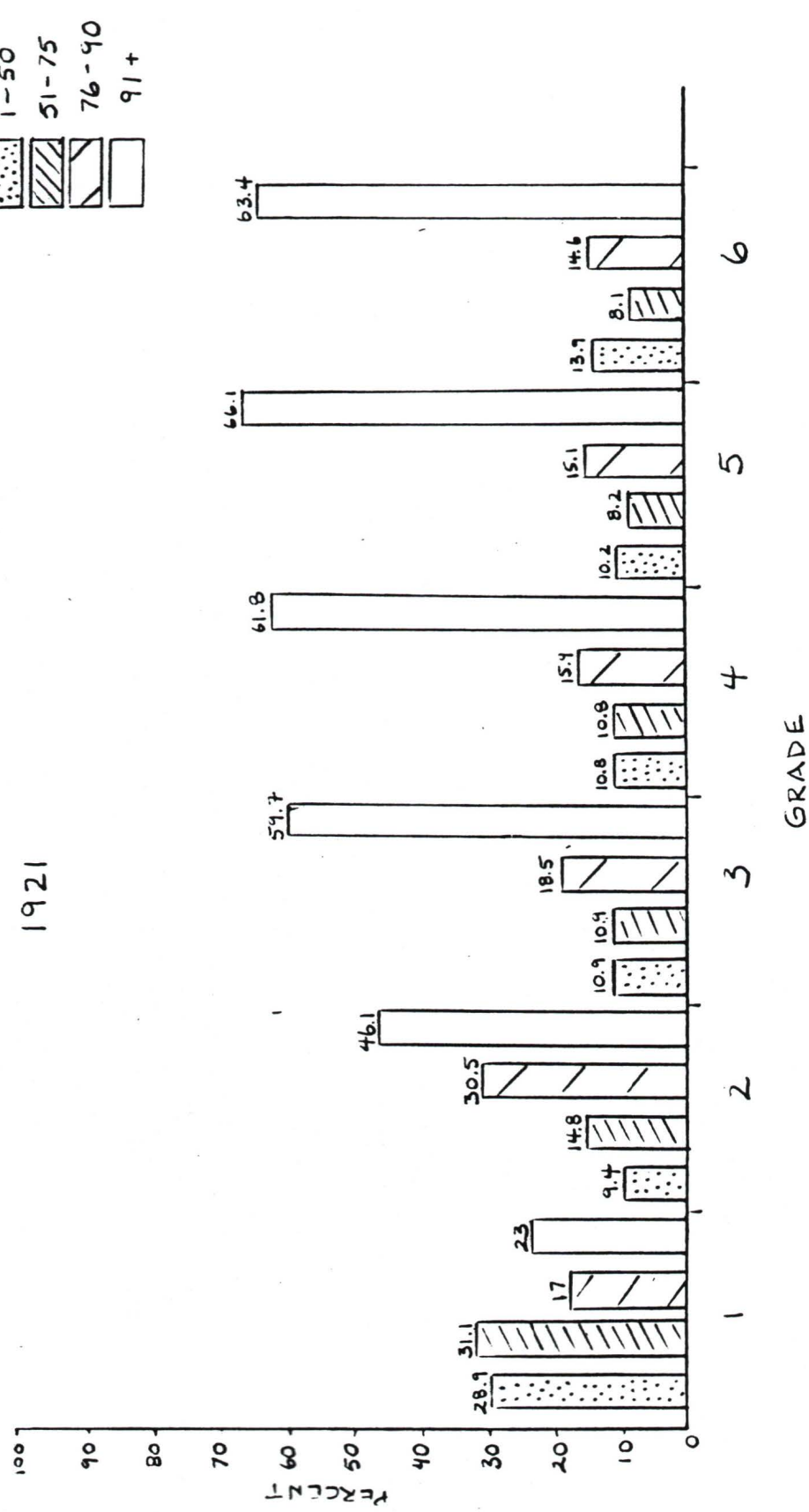


TABLE XIII

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE X

DIVISION: 1910

Division	1-50%	51-75%	76-90%	91%+
1	-	1/4.2	7/29.2	16/66.7
2	-	2/9.1	5/22.7	15/68.2
3	-	4/22.2	8/44.4	6/33.3
4	2/7.4	3/11.1	7/25.9	15/55.6
5	4/15.4	2/7.7	6/23.1	14/53.8
7	-	-	6/22.2	21/77.7
8	-	1/2.9	8/23.5	25/73.5
10	-	1/6.3	5/31.3	10/62.5

TABLE XIV

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE X COURSE: 1921

Course	1-50%	51-75%	76-90%	91%+
Senior Matriculation	1/2.6%	5/12.8	4/10.3	29/74.4
Junior Matriculation	4/2.4	13/7.7	30/17.7	122/72.2
Advanced Course	4/3.1	10/7.7	19/14.6	97/74.6
Preliminary Course	3/3.2	8/8.5	19/20.2	64/68.1
Fifth Reader	12/8.3	9/6.2	19/13.1	105/72.4
Mixed	1/3	7/21.2	7/21.2	18/54.5
Techincal	5/6.8	7/9.5	14/18.9	48/64.9
Commercial	7/4.5	8/5.1	34/21.8	107/68.6

attendance performance was low, but a glance at the ages of the students indicates that a high proportion of them were retardates, perhaps more likely to mix other activities with school. This is consistent with other findings for older than normal students.

Attendance patterns were also intimately related to gender distinctions. None of the top four academic grades had similar patterns of attendance for both males and females. Females recorded better performances in the senior and preliminary grades and males went more often in the junior matriculation and advanced preliminary courses. Why? Speculative explanations would seem warranted on two levels.

Some historians suggest that increased skill levels in an increasingly complex economy, meant that better employers demanded a high school education and that this stimulated increased secondary enrollment for both males and females, who were now "expected to 'do something' after (they) left high school."[22] Thus what students studied and how well they did became important. In Victoria this might be said to have appeared true for boys but not, by these figures at least, for girls. As other historians have noted, employment possibilities for women in the twenties remained dismal[23] and secondary education had less value for teenage girls than boys. Perhaps these figures of poor

female attendance more accurately mirror this reality than the suggestion that young girls increasingly needed more and more years education.

The concept of the value of education in the job market, or accreditation, is also unclear.[24] Though the measurement of ability by the number and quality of years in high school grew rapidly in this period, historians have yet to reach a consensus on its roots or its impact, but this linking of job entry to educational attainment might have boosted high school attendance for males.

Related to the value of a secondary education was the introduction of vocational education. Though there is debate over the reasons for its introduction and swift expansion in Canadian schools in this period,[25] some points are clear from the literature. First, the vocational movement was an attempt to make the public school more relevant to the labour demands of the industrialized economic order. As Putman-Weir questioned as late as 1924, "Why teach our boys Latin and French when they have to become messengers, clerks and day-labourers."[26] Or conversely, as one historian argues, it was illogical to teach academics to boys entering an increasingly technological society.[27] Either way, promoters believed vocationalism could more adequately prepare boys for their labouring future. This concept extended to women. If, as the ideal remained, women became

housewives, they should be prepared to accept their role,[28] or if they were to move into the commercial realm, they should be equally well prepared through high school courses in stenography, bookkeeping and typing.

There was also a general perception that such relevant training courses would help cure the drop-out problem. If school were more enjoyable and more related to their future, teenagers would be more likely to attend more often and for more years, or so promoters thought. Lazerson is most explicit in connecting the drop-out and irregular attendance problems among teenagers to the vocational movement.[29] Massachusetts officials believed both boys and girls were leaving school by choice because of the irrelevancy of the school curriculum. Neil Sutherland suggests a similar thesis for Canada. He argues that it was hoped a broader curriculum, including domestic science and manual training, would make consolidated schools more attractive to rural teenagers. "This improved quality of education in turn would arouse the interest of pupils so much that the 'attractiveness' of consolidated schools would itself become 'a form of compulsory education'."[30] As the superintendent of Vancouver schools suggested, "if a school were organized where the bulk of the attention was given to manual instruction by which they (drop-out students) might be fitted more directly for the trades, these boys and girls might be

induced to stay in school for a longer period."[31] And it is clear, as from this quotation, that vocational education was aimed at a certain group - the less intelligent and those who dropped out early.[32] Educators hoped these children would attend longer and more often in manual, domestic or commercial streams.

Did they? Certain impressionistic evidence suggests that children enjoyed these new courses. For example, in 1913, the Vancouver superintendent reported that at one school, where the boys were not allowed manual training in the day, many stayed after school 3-5 days of the week to do shop work.[33] And in 1916, the Victoria superintendent reported that spirit was high in the commercial courses.[34] In Victoria, both commercial and technical education seemingly flourished, in the late teens and early twenties. In 1921 177 students were in commerce, 150 girls and 27 boys, and eighty-seven more boys were in the technical class.[35]

Both the course construction and the clientele of the Victoria vocational streams were different from the academic. The average age of the commercial students was considerably lower than the average of the top three academic groups,[36] partly because their course was three years in length compared to four years for the academic stream. That the average age of the technical class was even further below the school average suggests that technical students

stayed even fewer years in high school. While once again, even their enrollment might have been a minor victory for the school officials, we have no way of testing this. What is clear, is that they were younger than all other groups aside from those students still in the elementary readers but enrolled at the high school. They appear to have continued to drop out at an earlier than normal age.

Both commercial and technical students attended more irregularly than the students in the upper academic courses (Table XIV) and were considerably more likely to attend less than one-half of the time. Technical students especially were more likely than most students to combine other activities with schooling. This is reasonable because labour related courses might logically have been suitable for, and chosen by, students engaged in even a part-time manner, with paid labour.

In the commercial class there was a marked difference in the attendance patterns of males and females. Of the twenty-four males, eighteen, or 75%, went more than 90% of the time. The other six attended less than 75%. Eighty-nine (67.4%) of the females attended very well but thirty-four, or 25%, went from 75% to 90% of the time. This suggests that many more females combined other activities with commercial education. This may have been due to the fact that the females in the commercial classes were

much older than their male counterparts and there may have been more demands on them to either combine work and school or perform household duties. Conceivably, either might have pulled them out of the classroom with some regularity. Or, the very regular attendance of all but a few males might reflect a difference in the perceived value of commercial education. Perhaps more so for males than females, a high school commercial education was worth obtaining in 1921, despite evidence that Victoria provided opportunities for female clerical work.

Non-academic courses were also offered in Victoria's elementary schools. Manual training for boys and domestic science for girls were mandatory after grade three. Registers for non-academic courses at North Ward allow an analysis of the attendance performance in these classes, though the analysis is much less fruitful than for the high school because all children in the school took the courses and the measurement of attendance performance is thus not the measure of a specific group of children. Moreover, non-academic education for elementary students consisted solely of one, one-half hour class per week and the exercises were more related to eye-hand co-ordination than vocational training. Still, an examination of the attendance of these one-half day sessions reveals something about the perceived value, or at least enjoyment of such classes.

In both cases the registers included students from ten to thirteen years of age, the most prominent group in the elementary schools. Table XV displays the patterns of attendance. Both the boys in manual classes and the girls in domestic classes attended much more regularly than the average for their age group. In the fall term, boys attended manual class at an astonishing 97.2% rate. This fell in the spring term to a still reasonable 81.9%. The average for the year was 86.5%. The very high rate in the fall term might attest to the popularity of such hand-learning courses. No levels of attendance in any other grouping approached this rate. The dramatic drop-off in the spring suggests that as students got older - even by a few months - they were less likely to attend well. Second, some students may have dropped out by the late spring and taken up a new activity full time. Only one such case was recorded but the few other extremely low rates suggest a movement away from school in this spring period, either daily, or permanently, by dropping out.

Domestic science likewise enjoyed high rates of attendance. Six groups, with seven to ten students in each, were analyzed for the entire year. The attendance rates ranged from 89.6% to 95.5% and the average was 92.9%. These high rates suggest that as with manual education, domestic science was a popular course and can only be

TABLE XV

ELEMENTARY VOCATIONAL

COURSE ATTENDANCE: 1921

MANUAL

October - December - 19 Boys - 10 Dates

97.2%

January - June - 19 Boys - 23 Dates

81.9%

DOMESTIC

Group	Average %
1	94.95
2	94.9
3	95.45
4	89.35
5	91.5
6	95.1

92.87% (Avg.)

TABLE XVI

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE X AGE X GRADE: 1910

	GRADE ONE			GRADE TWO			GRADE THREE	
%	6	7-10	11+	6	7-10	11+	7-10	11+
50	34/38.2	15/14.9	1/50	-	6/7.9	-	3/5.4	1/33.3
75	22/24.7	16/15.8	1/50	-	6/7.9	3/75	2/3.6	-
90	19/21.3	33/32.7	-	-	24/31.6	1/25	20/35.7	1/33.3
90+	14/15.7	37/36.6	-	3/100	40/52.6	-	31/55.4	1/33.3
	89	101	2	3	76	4	56	3

	GRADE FOUR			GRADE FIVE			GRADE SIX			
%	7-10	11-14	15+	7-10	11-14	15+	7-10	11-14	15-16	17+
50	2/4.4	3/2.2	2/25	-	2/1.5	1/16.7	2/66.7	12/6.9	10/11.6	1/14.3
75	5/11.1	13/9.6	2/25	3/6.3	10/7.4	1/16.7	-	24/13.8	7/8.1	-
90	18/40	37/27.2	-	11/22.9	34/25	1/16.7	1/33.3	33/19	19/22.1	2/28.6
91+	20/44.4	83/61	4/50	34/70.8	90/66.2	3/50	-	105/60.3	50/58.1	4/57.1
	45	136	8	48	136	6	3	174	86	7

TABLE XVII

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE X AGE X GRADE: 1921

%	GRADE ONE		GRADE TWO		GRADE THREE	
	6	7-10	6	7-10	7-10	11-14
1-50	22/53.6	17/18.1	3/50	9/7.3	11/1.0	2/22.2
51-75	12/29.3	30/31.9	-	19/15.4	10/9.1	3/33.3
76-90	3/7.3	20/21.3	2/33.3	37/30.1	18/16.4	4/44.4
91+	4/9.8	27/28.7	1/16.7	58/47.2	71/64.5	-
	41	94	6	123	110	9

%	GRADE FOUR		GRADE FIVE			GRADE SIX			
	7-10	11-14	7-10	11-14	15-16	7-10	11-14	15-16	17+
1-50	11/10.2	6/12.5	5/9.3	25/10.4	1/11.1	1/50	26/12	13/15.8	3/33.3
51-75	10/9.3	7/14.6	4/7.4	22/9.1	-	-	20/9.3	5/6.1	-
76-90	16/14.8	9/18.8	6/11.1	38/15.8	2/22.2	-	29/13.4	14/17	2/22.2
91+	71/65.7	26/54.2	39/72.2	156/64.7	6/66.7	1/50	141/65.3	50/61	4/44.4
	108	48	54	241	9	2	216	82	9

explained by children consciously attending school on the days when they had manual or domestic training scheduled. As school officials noted, non-academic courses had a wide popularity for elementary students though the limited nature and extent of the courses should caution against concluding that children appreciated rational, or job-related education. Rather, the attendance rates indicate that students appreciated less structured, more manual educational sessions.

Beyond manual courses, distinctions in attendance were present in different elementary grades, as Figures XV and XVI show. Percentage increased consistently from grade one to five and then slightly tailed off in grade six. Grade one had terrible attendance, grade two a little better, and so on. This probably correlated, loosely at least, with age, which we have seen to be the most profound indicator of attendance. But there were important qualities to this age/grade/attendance relationship. Tables XVI and XVII expose the dimensions of this relationship. In 1910, with the exception of grades one and four, few age/grade distinctions are noticeable. In grade one, as expected, the 6 year-olds went very irregularly compared to the older groups. In grade four, the youngest group, who would be over-achieving to be in this grade, rarely went often. No reason seems apparent why many more in this group went 76-90% of the time. Again, though, the serious retardates, in this case

those 15 and over, had erratic attendance.

This erratic attendance is one of the two conclusions that can be drawn from 1910. At best, serious retardates, four or more years behind normal achievement, attended erratically. As well, beyond age, attendance seems somehow related to grade. Both the individual age patterns and those within this table are not consistent. But, when put in grades, they become fairly consistent. In 1921 the same pattern is visible. For example, the 7-10 year-olds attended more frequently in grade five than four, and better in four than three. The 11-14 year-olds went more regularly in six than five and in five than four. And again, the serious retardates, exhibited erratic-to-poor performance. Once again, grade seemingly had more impact on attendance than age, except for very young and very old children.

The important pattern discernible from the attendance/grade/gender table (Tables XVIII, XIX) is how, over the grades, the relative propensity to attend well, or poorly, shifted. In 1910, and more noticeably in 1921, the percentage of either gender who attended well or poorly reversed, or gained in similarity. In 1921 females were decidedly poorer attenders in grades two and three. When rates were low, female rates were lowest. In grade three that year the gap closed and in grades five and six boys were slightly

TABLE XVIII

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE X GENDER X GRADE: 1910

%	GRADE ONE		GRADE TWO		GRADE THREE		GRADE FOUR		GRADE FIVE		GRADE SIX	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1-50	30.6	21.3	5.7	8.3	3.0	10.3	3.1	4.3	2.0	1.1	9.8	8.7
51-75	18.4	22.3	8.6	12.5	0.0	6.9	8.25	13.0	6.25	8.5	8.4	15.0
76-90	21.4	33.0	31.4	29.2	30.0	41.4	25.8	32.6	14.6	34.0	23.8	16.5
91+	29.6	23.4	54.3	50.0	67.0	41.4	62.9	50	77.1	56.4	58.0	59.8

TABLE XIX

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE % X GENDER X GRADE: 1921

%		GRADE ONE		GRADE TWO		GRADE THREE		GRADE FOUR		GRADE FIVE		GRADE SIX	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1-50	27.8	30.1	8.2	10.7	13.3	8.5	4.1	17.5	10.6	9.6	16.1	11.7
51-75	30.6	31.7	8.2	23.2	6.7	15.2	17.8	5.0	8.9	8.1	7.7	8.4
76-90	15.3	19.1	32.9	26.8	18.3	18.6	12.3	16.2	16.6	13.3	12.9	16.2
91+	26.4	19.1	50.7	39.3	61.7	57.6	65.7	61.3	63.9	68.9	63.2	63.6
	72	63	73	56	60	59	73	80	169	135	155	154

poorer attenders. The same trend is discernible in 1910. By grade six, the percentage of poor male attenders increased dramatically in both years, especially in respect to the comparable female rate as the percentage of poorly attending females dropped. The propensity of females to attend more often in higher grades is consistent with other patterns. It seems that higher grades exacted a greater dedication from students.

The propensity for the rate of poor male attendance to increase dramatically in respect to females is perhaps less easily explained. Though the rates were not terribly poor, roughly similar to the females, what is striking is how the gap closed in the higher grades. One explanation that seems reasonable is that in both 1910 and 1921, male Victoria elementary students could find part-time jobs. Conceivably, the two activities would sometimes clash and take the boys out of school. Or perhaps more simply, as boys aged, truancy became less frightening, more inviting and school was often skipped. The impressionistic evidence could support either thesis. Much more analysis is needed to explain this pattern.

Home labour or wage labour may have accounted for the tendency for a higher percentage of females to attend less than one-half the time. In large families especially, even 8 and 9 year-old girls could be of use in the home.

Or, perhaps the extent of young elementary-age labour in early twentieth century cities has yet to be disclosed. Perhaps young girls were just as likely to find part-time work in Victoria in 1910 and 1921 as young boys. Once again, such discussion awaits further research, though this study suggests that work was not entirely foreign to either gender.

Though as with the discussion of teenage labour, much of this chapter demands further research, it has illuminated the irregularity of early twentieth century attendance patterns. It has exposed that similar to the nineteenth century, attendance was sensitive to age and gender and has extended our appreciation to include the relation to school type, location and course. Most importantly, it has provided preliminary analysis which allows for the framing of more insightful questions regarding schools and school attendance.

NOTES

CHAPTER SEVEN

[1]See for example Katz, "Who Went to School?" or Gaffield, "Demography, Social Structure, and the History of Schooling."

[2]Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society, p. 168.

[3]Ibid., p. 159.

[4]Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Illiteracy and School Attendance in Canada: A Study of the Census of 1921 with Supplementary Data (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1926), p. 9.

[5]Lazerson, Origins of the Urban School, p. 138.

[6]Johnson, A History of Public Education in B.C., pp. 55-56.

[7]Dunn, "Teaching the Meaning of Work," p. 34. Much of the following discussion relies on both this article (pp. 34-35) and his M.A. thesis.

[8]Ibid., p. 34.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Dunn, "The Rise of Mass Public Schooling,"; Jane Synge, "Growing Up Working Class,"; and Rebecca Coulter, "The Working Young of Edmonton."

[11]Census of Canada, 1921, Vol. 4:574.

[12]Annual Reports, 1910, p. 36.

[13]Annual Reports, 1907, p. 31.

[14]See Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society, p. 159; Victoria School Board Minutes, October 14, 1908, March 12, 1913, March 11, 1914.

[15]Victoria School Board Minutes, October 21, 1918.

[16]Selwyn Troen quoted in Tyack, One Best System, p. 67. As well see various works by Michael Katz, especially

chapter nine, Social Organization of Early Industrial Capitalism.

[17]For discussions of 'real' impediments to regular attendance in the nineteenth century see Davey, "The Rhythm of Work," and Gaffield, "Schooling, the Economy and Rural Society."

[18]The case for the impact of a rising standard of living is made most explicitly by Sutherland in Children in English Canadian Society, p. 165.

[19]Ibid. As well, see Kaestle and Vinovskis, "From Fireside to Factory," for a discussion of the changing cultural perceptions of children and how this impacted school attendance in nineteenth century Massachusetts.

[20]Kaestle and Vinovskis, "School Entry and School Leaving."

[21]There were classes of grade sevens and eights in the high school in 1921. These were nominally 'elementary' grades. The children in these, not notably young, were probably mild retardates.

[22]Stamp, Schools of Ontario, p. 111.

[23]For a comprehensive discussion of this blurred topic see Veronica Strong-Boag, "The Girl of the New Day: Canadian Working Women in the 1920's," Labour/Le Travailleur (1979).

[24]For the most comprehensive discussion of accreditation see Kantor and Tyack, Work, Youth and Schooling.

[25]For two alternate interpretations see Dunn, "Teaching the Meaning of Work," and Stamp, The Schools of Ontario.

[26]Putman-Weir, Survey, p. 83.

[27]Stamp, Schools of Ontario, pp. 107-110.

[28]See: Stamp, Canadian Education: A History; Stamp, in Robert S. Patterson, John W. Chalmers and John W. Friesen, eds., Profiles of Canadian Educators (Toronto: D.C. Heath, 1974); Dunn, "Teaching the Meaning of Work."

[29]Lazerson, Origins of the Urban School.

[30]Sutherland, Children in English Canadian Society, p. 193.

[31]Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education, Vol. 4:2333.

[32]Putman-Weir, Survey, pp. 60-61.

[33]Annual Report, 1913, p. 55.

[34]Annual Report, 1916, p. 42.

[35]These figures are from the Annual Reports, not from the school registers.

[36]The ages are from the register.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION: GRANDPARENTS AND GRANDCHILDREN

This study has argued the importance of school attendance studies to an examination of the history of education and the history of childhood, and has contended that despite its early twentieth century growth, extension and transformation, Canadian public education retained, by 1921, important irregularities consistent with its nineteenth century heritage. As Katz, Davey and others have demonstrated, nineteenth century school attendance was intimately related to factors of age, gender, social class, family size and economic opportunity, as well as distance, weather and other 'natural' factors. Early twentieth century aggregates, whether those of provincial departments of education or calculated from national census returns, mask irregularities and project a picture of steady, regular improvement in attendance. While several historians have observed that the aggregates are misleadingly optimistic, little is known of the particulars of early twentieth century classrooms and students. This study extends our appreciation of the contours of both.

Even in an 'ideal' modern school system such as boasted by Victoria, school organization, student mobility and school attendance remained areas of irregularity. While the average classroom shrank in size from 1910 to 1921, not all

schools and not all divisions experienced this shrinking uniformly. Differences remained between primary and intermediate schools, between richer and poorer areas, and, in individual schools, between higher and lower grades. As well, within individual classrooms, wide ranges in ages persisted. As late as 1921 ranges of 7 or 8 years were not uncommon. Age/achievement grading had not yet standardized modern classrooms to an extent desired by school officials or suggested by some literature.

Age of entry likewise remained irregular and problematic. While school officials desired school entry by age 6, 7, or 8 appears to have been accepted ages of entry. Thus, the first and second grades had a wide mix of ages and likewise a wide mix of attendance rates. Moreover, this delayed age of entry reverberated through the system in the form of serious retardation. Students in grades four, five and six were often four or more years older than 'normal' for that grade. A leading concern of contemporary educators, severe retardation marked this study. While the age/grade patterns tend to confirm Sutherland's contention that on average, children in 1921 achieved about one grade more than their 1910 counterparts, problems remained. Many students still failed to progress normally, one grade per year, in 1921. The extent of this problem, though not the causes, is graphically demonstrated by this study.

Compounding these problems of entry and retardation was the continuation of high levels of geographic mobility. Scholars were astonished to discover how high rates of urban mobility were in the nineteenth century, both in and out of communities and within the school systems of individual centres. Both problems persisted, albeit at lower levels. For reasons explained in chapter six, 1921 probably does not serve as adequate a barometer of this phenomena as does 1910, but even in the latter year, children were in motion. In 1910, only 73.6% of elementary students completed the year in the same school in which they began. In 1921 this rose to 83.2%, but this is perhaps an inflated figure. In the high school, much more stability was experienced, and rates of 78% and 91.9% were registered. The rates and patterns of mobility discovered reinforced the assumed demographic transition of Victoria. In 1910 a high immigration was recorded, substantially from outside Canada. In 1921, out-migration was the only form of recorded mobility. In this later year, 5.5% of elementary students left the city, most for other British Columbia locations, particularly Vancouver. Beyond reinforcing speculations on provincial demographic patterns, these results hinted at the levels of instability experienced in the classroom. In 1910, the average classroom of 51 had 15 students arrive or depart over the course of the year. In the high school that

year, 7 out of 30 made a move in or out. This shuffling surely disturbed the chemistry of the class. The rates are lower in 1921 but still, stability had not yet exerted itself on the classroom.

At the heart of this study is the illumination of the irregular patterns of attendance. Despite child labour laws, compulsory attendance laws, unprecedented levels of educational expenditure, the growth of accreditation phenomena, the supposed leap in individual income and the increase in emotional investment in children, other activities continued to be combined with schooling. Either out of necessity, choice or apathy, most children continued to attend irregularly. Whether measured by age, gender, school type, and location, or type of course enrolled in, irregular patterns of attendance emerge. Younger and older children went less often than those around age 11. Females generally attended less often, though this also related to factors of age and grade. The elementary schools in the more affluent districts boasted higher levels and higher graded and more academic courses exhibited generally better performances.

This study adds to the historiography of childhood and education in this period, particularly Sutherland's Children in English Canadian Society, subtitled "Shaping the Twentieth Century Consensus." Concerned with policy

formation, not necessarily the reality of childhood, Sutherland argues that a 'new consensus' of child-rearing had been gradually reached by the 1920's, though a majority of children perhaps did not feel its full effects until sometime later. The gradualness by which this consensus exerted itself is graphically illustrated in school attendance patterns.

A major plank of the childhood reform platform centered on public schooling, because public schools were an institution which touched almost all children. More children were to be taught for more days and more years, in upgraded and better equipped schools in which the quality of instruction was both standardized and improved. Finally, what was taught and how it was taught was to become both more closely related to the world around the students and more responsive to individual concerns. Child centred, rational education involved new, less academic courses and greater concern with individual attention, and more closely monitored individual achievement. The educational experience was, in the new consensus, to be substantially made over.

Three qualities marked this study of Victoria which related to this discussion of the new childhood. First, there was a gradual improvement in the attendance performance of children in public schools. This pattern was present irrespective of age, grade, etc., though more marked for some groups than others. The aggregate attendance

improvement was not a mirage, it simply masked the irregularities and problems which persisted. Second, the high school grew rapidly and captured an increasing number of teenagers to become the most visible part of the extension of the public school system. With secondary schools leading the way, more children did attend public school. Thirdly, both students and education officials, at both levels of schooling, received curriculum changes well.

But at the individual level, other activities continued to be combined with schooling for large numbers of school-age children. Moreover, the drop-out rate suggests that for a still substantial group, activities were pursued at the expense of schooling. Work was the most common of these. Consistent with Synge's Hamilton and Coulter's Edmonton, children in Victoria continued to work in the twentieth century. However, as with much of the discussion pursued in this paper, these relationships of schooling and idleness and schooling and work demand much further analysis.

To conclude from such an exploratory discussion, punctuated by an admittedly preliminary discussion of teenage labour is at once both perilous and challenging. One is reminded that the evidence allows few, if any, safely drawn conclusions. At the same time it has opened the door to a great many questions and suggested possible explanations tc be examined more fully.

In 1910 and even as late as 1921, school organizations, student stability, and attendance remained irregular and subject to many factors more commonly associated with the nineteenth than the twentieth century. Despite their best efforts, school officials remained plagued by problems largely out of their hands. As in the nineteenth century, childhood experience and the transition to adolescence and then adulthood was subject not to uniform biological or institutional determinants but rather, to unique socially, culturally and economically imposed factors. For various reasons, childhood seems to have continued to interact with public schools at its own pace - not the pace of the school officials. The twentieth century official could no more force an early age of entry than could his nineteenth century counterpart. Attendance, while markedly improved over earlier periods, continued to be sensitive to age, gender, grade and school. This suggests that social, familial or economic demands and opportunities continued to influence school attendance decisions. The population was still in motion and the brick school buildings could no more stem this than could the wooden schoolhouses of an earlier period. The twentieth century classroom continued to be in motion. Finally, the age of transition to paid labour, or in effect, to adulthood, continued to be irregular. Clearly some children continued to be economic producers from their

earliest teens, but an increasing number became full time high school students until their middle to late teens.

The history of early twentieth century education displays links backwards and forwards. Backward, to a period dcminated by the natural rhythm of work and the demands of nature and forward, to a period of extended artificial dependency, dependent on cultural definitions of adolescence. Whether for most children their experience looked back or forward, is a question to be resolved with further inquiry. Whether most early twentieth century children experienced public school as their grandparents did, or as their grandchildren would, remains unresolved.

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APPENDIX

CODEBOOK

1910 Elementary

	Variable	Column	Value(s)
1.	School	1	1= Kingston 2= South Park 3= North Ward 4= Hillside
2.	Gender	2	1= Male 2= Female
3.	Division	3	1-9
4.	Age	4-5	6-19
5.	Days Attended	6-8	1-188
6.	Attendance %	9-11	1-100%
7.	Completed Year	12	1= Yes 2= No
8.	Reader/Primer	13	0= No Information 1= First Primer/Chart 2= Second Primer 3= First Reader 4= Second Reader 5= Third Reader 6= Fourth Reader
9.	Arrived From	14	0= No Information 1= Internal 2= Victoria 3= B.C. 4= Canada 5= World
10.	Left For	15	0= No Information 1= Internal 2= Victoria 3= B.C. 4= Canada 5= World 6= Work 7= Left School 8= Working at Home/Home 9= Suspended/Ill/Dead

CODEBOOK

1910 High School

	Variable	Column(s)	Value(s)
1.	Division	1-2	1-10
2.	Gender	3	1= Male 2= Female
3.	Age	4-5	6-22
4.	Days Attended	6-8	1-202
5.	Attendance %	9-11	1-100%
6.	Completed	12	1= Yes 2= No
7.	Arrived From	13	0= No Information 1= Internal 2= Victoria 3= B.C. 4= Canada 5= World
8.	Left For	14	0= No Information 1= Internal 2= Victoria 3= B.C. 4= Canada 5= World 6= Work 7= Left School 8= Working at Home/Home 9= Suspended/Ill/Dead

CODEBOOK

1921 Elementary

	Variable	Column(s)	Value(s)
1.	School	1	1= Kingston 2= South Park 3= North Ward 5= Beacon Hill 7= Fernwood
2.	Division	2-3	1-14
3.	Gender	4	1= Male 2= Female
4.	Age	5-6	5-19
5.	Days	7-0	1-188
6.	Attendance %	10-12	1-100%
7.	Completed	13	1= Yes 2= No
8.	Arrived From	14	0= No Information 1= Internal 2= Victoria 3= B.C. 4= Canada 5= World
9.	Left For	15	0= No Information 1= Internal 2= Victoria 3= B.C. 4= Canada 5= World 6= Work 7= Left School 8= Working at Home/Home 9= Suspended/Ill/Dead
10.	Reader/Primer	16	1= First Primer/Chart 2= Second Primer 3= First Reader 4= Second Reader 5= Third Reader 6= Fourth Reader

CODEBOOK

1921 High School

	Variable	Column(s)	Value(s)
1.	Division	1-2	1-28
2.	Gender	3	1= Male 2= Female
3.	Age	4-5	10-29
4.	Days	6-8	1-188
5.	Attendance %	9-11	1-100%
6.	Completed	12	1= Yes 2= No
7.	Arrived From	13	0= No Information 1= Internal 2= Victoria 3= B.C. 4= Canada 5= World
8.	Left For	14	0= No Information 1= Internal 2= Victoria 3= B.C. 4= Canada 5= World 6= Work 7= Left School 8= At Home 9= Suspended/Ill/Dead
9.	Grade/Reader/Course	15	1= Senior Matriculation 2= Junior Matriculation 3= Advanced Courses 4= Preliminary Course 5= Fifth Reader 6= Mixed 7= Technical 8= Commercial

VITA

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Author: [redacted]

DAN ROBERT HAWTHORNE

Date Aug 13/85