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A General Survey of the School System in Foster County, North Dakota

John J. Hogan

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A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN
FOSTER COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA

A Thesis

695
31

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
University of North Dakota

By

John J. Hogan

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education

August

1937

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This thesis, offered by John J. Hogan, as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Education in the University of North Dakota, is hereby approved by the Committee under whom the work has been done.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The history of education gives us a story of one continual gradual advance up to about 1930. At that time, began one of the most serious economic depressions that ever occurred in this country. It had been preceded for some years by an agricultural depression and together they have resulted in the first stop in the steady advance of education. Since about 1930, it has not only been very difficult to advance, in an educational way, but it has been almost as difficult not to retreat. People finding difficulty in paying their taxes became more and more conscious of their taxes and more critical of the ways in which these taxes were being used. This situation has continued for a number of years and changes will undoubtedly have to be made to ease the tax burden on property especially and still give the schools an adequate means of support. Progressive changes instituted as soon as possible by people who are friendly to education are very necessary, so that education may continue its upward climb, the tax burden be lessened on the people, public support be gained for worthwhile educational policies, both new and old, and equality of educational opportunity be available to all children.

Problem

It is the purpose of this survey to investigate and study the school systems of Foster County, North Dakota with the intention of bringing to light the good and bad features of the present systems and to suggest changes which might tend to eliminate the bad ones. The problem will be investigated upon the following lines:

General situation
Population and its trends
Transportation
School Organization
Teachers and Pupils
Financial situation, cost of schools, income, and debt
Comparison of ability and effort to support schools

Sources of Data

Most of the data used have been secured from the records of the county superintendent of schools and the county auditor. Other local sources of information and material were the offices of the county engineer, the county agricultural agent, the county treasurer, and the field writer of the "Writer's Guide," a W. P. A. project. Individual interviews have been valuable also. Information on state education was gathered mostly from the Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Annual Report of the Director of Secondary Education, reports of the State Tax Commission, and various other publications of the State Department of Public Instruction. Letters of inquiry were also used to get information from the State Land Department, the Bank of North Dakota, and the Census Bureau at Washington, D. C.

Organization of Data

To begin with, a general description of the county, including its population and transportation is presented. This is followed by a study of the school situation of the county, including number and kind of districts, number and grades of teachers, and information concerning pupils. The greatest stress is placed on the financial situation, which is presented in a study of income, expenditures, and debts of school

districts, as well as a comparison of ability and effort to support education. The closing chapter states the conclusions reached from the study and offers some suggestions for improving the situation.

Limitations

The study is limited in some respects by the fact that changes were made in 1932 in the accounting and recording systems of state school organizations, also by the fact that certain material needed to show certain points could not be obtained. Errors in transferring figures from various records and in computing others may have been made; but an attempt has been made to keep these to a minimum. Any errors found in any of the records were corrected before being recorded. It is not expected that this study will solve completely all problems raised, but rather that it will show the situation as it is now and thereby may be of aid to others who may wish to continue along any one of the lines investigated.

CHAPTER 2

GENERAL SITUATION IN FOSTER COUNTY

Foster County was named in honor of James S. Foster of New York, who settled in what is now South Dakota in 1864 and spent the remainder of his life in the interests of the Dakotas. Although the territorial legislature created Foster County on January 4, 1873, it was not until October 11, 1883 that the first meeting of the county commissioners was held in Carrington, which became the permanent county seat at the following meeting.

The earliest white people in what is now Foster County were fur traders and trappers along the James and Sheyenne rivers. After the establishment of Fort Totten near Devils Lake and Fort Seward at what is now Jamestown, a trail called the old ox-cart or stage trail was run across Foster County just east of the James River. A number of expeditions, military, exploring, and otherwise, notably those of General Sibley, Captain J. L. Fisk, and Governor Stevens of the new territory of Washington crossed the county in its early years. It was not until 1882 that settlers began to make permanent homes in this territory. Most of them were of Anglo-Saxon-American birth, with a small percentage coming directly from the British Isles and from northern and western Europe.¹

Area and Boundaries of Foster County

Foster County is the smallest of the fifty-three counties of

¹Writer's Guide, Foster and Eddy Counties, W. P. A. Project, 1936.

North Dakota having only eighteen townships and an area of only 644 square miles. There are eight other counties that have a smaller population, Foster County in 1930 having 6353 people. It is bounded on the north by Eddy County, on the east by Griggs, on the south by Stutsman, and on the west by Wells County (Figure 1).

Physical Features of Foster County

Foster County lies in a drift prairie region which stretches eastward from the Missouri River. The east half of the county is crossed from north to south by two moranian ridges but the west half is more level, being a gentle sloping plain about 1600 feet above sea level. The large number of sloughs, small lakes, and rivers indicate a young land surface all of which is slightly rolling or hilly. The highest part of the county is along the James River, being a glacial moraine forming the walls of the valley. The James River is one of the longest and most crooked of all of the unnavigable rivers in the United States and runs into the Missouri at Yankton, South Dakota. Lake Juanita is the only real lake in the county, being stocked with fish and surrounded by a natural growth of trees. Drift soil, containing much water-laid gravel, covers most of the county. This soil is for the most part a good grade of loam which is very productive if given enough moisture. The northern third of the county differs somewhat from the rest by the soil being somewhat lighter and the land more level.²

Climate

The climate of Foster County is quite varied, ranging from 110° above to 58° below zero. Summers are usually pleasant with warm, sunny

²Writer's Guide, Foster and Eddy Counties, W. P. A. Project, 1936.

8½ x 11 Outline Map
NORTH DAKOTA

SCALE
0 5 10 20 30 40 MILES

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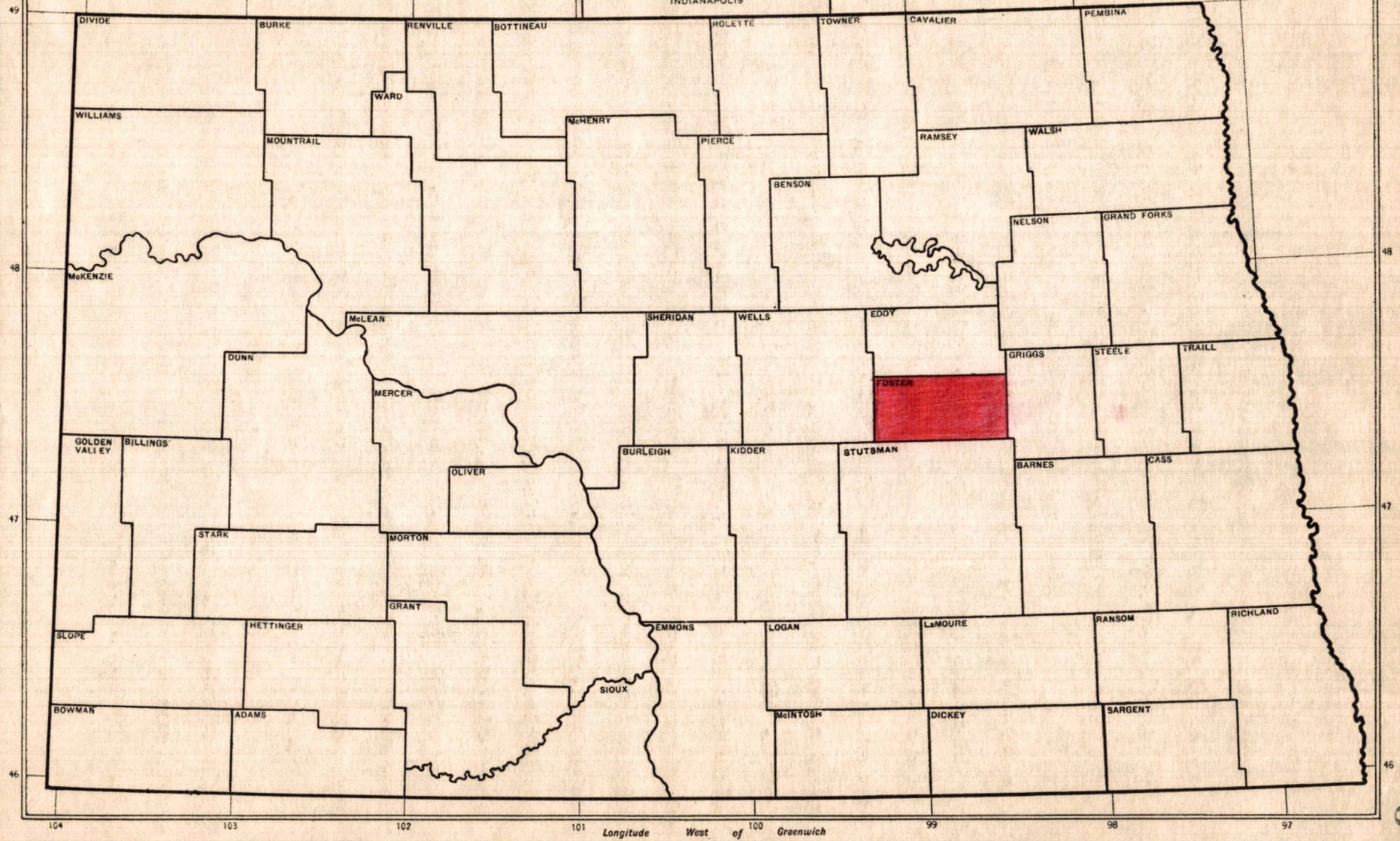


Figure 1. Location of Foster County in North Dakota.

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days and cool nights. Falls and springs are also usually pleasant, although often accompanied by high winds which ordinarily die with the sun. Winters are usually quite severe. The average growing season is 127 days, the longest period of daylight being on June 21st, at which time the sun shines 15 hours and 55 minutes. About one-third of the normal rainfall of 17.35 inches falls during the growing season and most of the rest before winter. It comes mostly from the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. Any moisture falling runs off quickly, as the county is a prairie district with few trees, although it abounds in native grasses and flowers, as well as many birds and small animals.³

Agriculture and Other Occupations

The region occupied by Foster County is strictly agricultural and rural. It is also the only county in the state whose entire area is fit for cultivation.⁴ Of the 2,155 people ten years of age or over engaged in gainful occupations, 1,235 are engaged in agriculture. Table 1 shows the number gainfully employed in ten of the leading occupation groups of the county. Those engaged in agriculture form over fifty-seven per cent of all those gainfully employed. This is a somewhat larger per cent than for the state as a whole, where the per cent is fifty-five and nine-tenths.⁵ Every other kind of work done in the county is incidental to agriculture. Formerly, small-grain farming was about the only kind engaged in, but today it is quite diversified, resulting in a prosperous farming region when rainfall is sufficient.

³Ibid.

⁴Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930.

⁵Ibid.

Transportation

Only five of the eighteen townships of Foster County have no railroads within their borders. The other thirteen have a total of eighty-two and five-tenths miles, with no point in the county being more than eleven miles from a railroad, by way of a regularly traveled road. The main lines of the Great Northern and Soo railroads both cross the county from southeast to northwest; while three branch lines of the Northern Pacific, one running entirely across the county from south to north, further supply the county. (Figure 2).

The county is comparatively well supplied with roads.

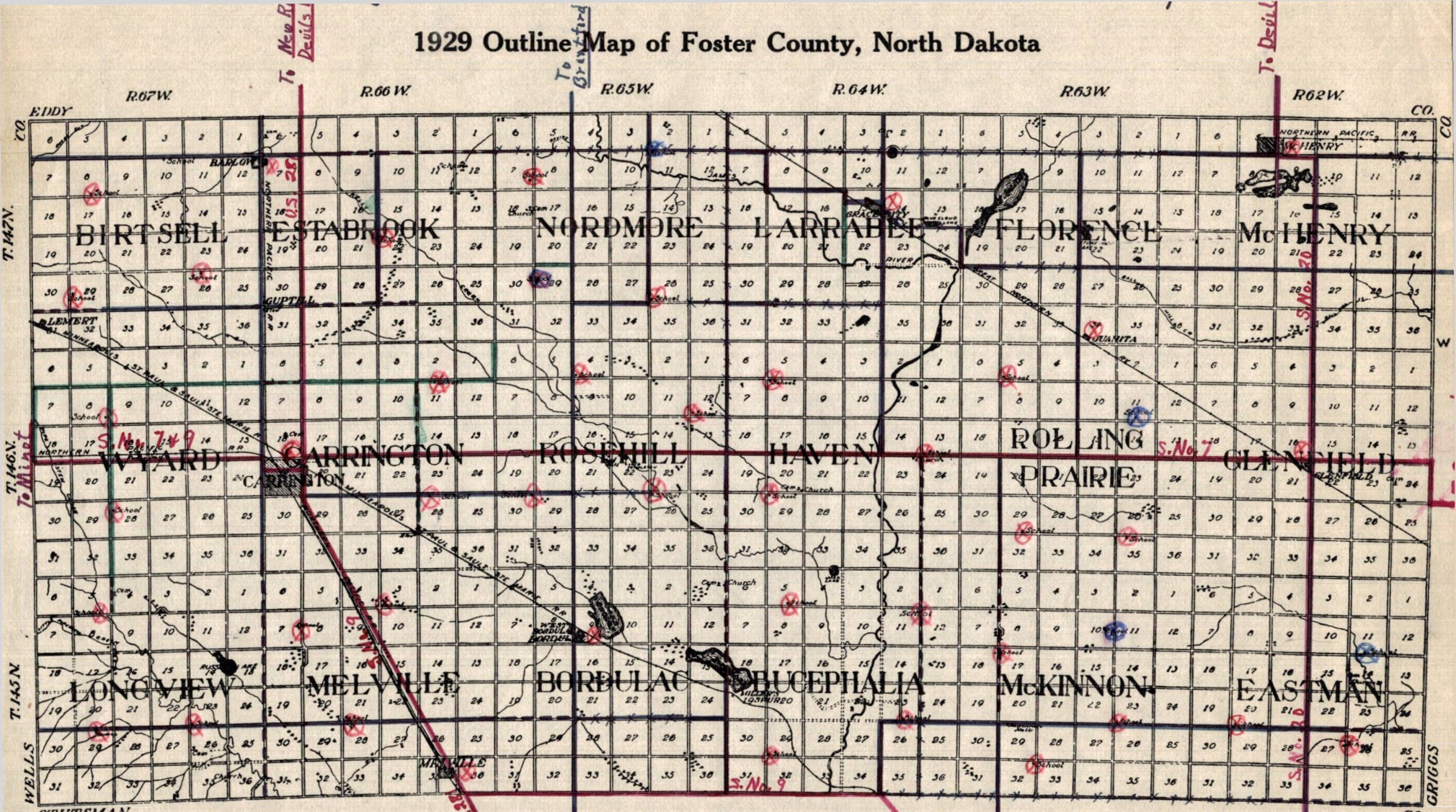
Table 1

Number and Percentage of Persons Ten Years of Age and Over Gainfully
Employed in Leading Occupations of Foster County, 1930^a

Occupations	Number	Per Cent
Agriculture	1,235	57.3
Farmers	719	33.4
Managers	11	0.005
Laborers	505	23.5
Professional and semi-professional	177	8.2
Wholesale and retail (except autos)	151	7.0
Building Industry	60	2.8
Food and allied industries	55	2.6
Manufacturing trades	76	3.5
Railroads	47	2.2
Other transportation and communication	38	1.8
Hotels and restaurants	41	1.9
Other domestic and personal service	85	4.0
All others	200	9.3
Total all occupations	2,155	100.0

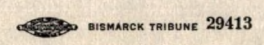
^aFifteenth Census of the United States, 1930.

1929 Outline Map of Foster County, North Dakota



STUTSMAN
 Highways Paved or Graveled Graded Proposed
 State & Federal ———— x x x x
 County ———— x x x x
 Township ———— x x x x

Schools In Use ⊗
 Schools Not In Use ⊗



BISMARCK TRIBUNE 29413

To Jamestown

To Valley City

To Kenesaw

To Valley City

CO

T. 147N.

T. 146N.

T. 145N.

WELLS

CO

W

CO

GRIGGS

R. 67W

R. 66W

R. 65W

R. 64W

R. 63W

R. 62W

To Devils

To Grenville

To Devil

It is crossed by one federal and three state highways, and has also many improved county and township roads which are being rapidly extended. The federal and state highways are ordinarily kept free of snow in winter, but in late years, the county roads have not always been kept free of snow.

Comparison of the Wealth of the County with That of the State

A comparison of the farm wealth of Foster County with that of the state of North Dakota shows in every case that the proportionate wealth of the county is equal to or greater than that of the State (Table 2).

Table 2
Comparison of Farm Wealth in Foster County with That
of North Dakota, 1930^a

Item	North Dakota	Foster County	Per Cent
Area in acres	38,657,894	368,619	.0095 ^b
Value of land and buildings	951,225,446	9,230,979	.0097 ^b
Hay and forage	19,509,883	186,707	.0095
Livestock	116,689,893	1,124,047	.0096 ^b
Dairy products sold	23,944,839	251,135	.0105
Wool	1,471,601	25,057	.0170

^aFifteenth Census of the United States, 1930.

^bFigures for 1929.

Population

Foster County has a population of practically the same density as the state of North Dakota (Table 3). Although its density might be expected to be greater than it is since it is in the more populous

Table 3
 Number and Distribution of Inhabitants in Foster County
 and North Dakota, 1930^a

Township	Population	Per Square Mile
Bordulac	308	8.6
Bucephalia	201	5.6
Carrington City	1,717	54.2
Carrington Township	234	
Eastman	179	5.0
Florance	284	7.9
Glenfield	409	11.4
Haven	208	5.8
Larrabee	320	8.9
Longview	178	4.9
McHenry Village	219	13.1
McHenry	251	
McKinnon	229	6.4
Melville	263	7.3
Nordmore	226	6.3
Rolling Prairie	207	5.8
Rose Hill	203	5.6
Wyard	193	5.4
Foster County	6,353 ^b	9.9
North Dakota	680,845 ^b	9.7

^aAuditor's Census Record, 1935.

^bFifteenth Census of the United States, 1930.

eastern third of the state, still the fact that it has few large towns probably accounts for it.

There has been an increase in the population of Foster County from 1910 to 1930 of nineteen and six-tenths per cent. In 1910, the total population was 5,313; in 1920, it was 6,108; while in 1930, it was 6,353.⁶

National Origin of the People

In 1930, the population of Foster County was practically all white, there being but two Indians and a few Japanese. The percentage of foreign born has decreased steadily from twenty-seven and one-tenth per cent in 1910 to fourteen and three-tenths per cent in 1920, and then to twelve and one-tenth per cent in 1930. During the same period, the percentage of those born of native white and mixed parents has increased from eighty-five and six-tenths to eighty-seven and eight-tenths per cent.⁷

Of the various nationalities, the Norwegian group is the largest, just as it is in the state as a whole (Table 4). Yet, the number of Norwegians in Foster County as compared with the total population is smaller than the number of Norwegians in North Dakota as compared with the total population of the state. Similarly, the number of Russians in Foster County is proportionately less than in the state as a whole. On the other hand, the German group has a larger percentage in the county than in the state. The per cent of the above named groups in the state were as follows: Norwegian - eighteen and three-tenths, German - seven

⁶Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930.

⁷Ibid.

Table 4
National Origins of People in Foster County, 1930^a

Country	Number of Foreign Born	Number Born of Foreign Parents	Per Cent of Strain
British Isles, other than Irish Free State	38	127	2.6
Irish Free State	5	79	1.3
Norway	219	700	14.4
Sweden	85	198	4.4
Denmark	40	107	2.3
Netherlands	17	51	1.1
Germany	112	560	10.6
Poland	18	39	0.9
Czechoslovakia	17	53	1.1
Austria	20	57	1.2
Russia	47	131	2.8
Rumania	28	74	1.6
Canada-French	11	43	0.8
Canada-Other	83	262	5.4
All other	28	82	2.3
Total	768	2,558	52.8

^aFifteenth Census of the United States, 1930.

Illiteracy in Foster County

As would be expected, illiteracy is greater among the foreign born than among the native whites in both the county and the state (Table 6). There has been a general decline in the proportion of illiteracy for all classes in the state as a whole, except that for the native white class this has remained the same from 1920 to 1930. Strange to say, however, there has been an increase in the percentage of illiteracy for all classes in the county in the same period. This is still stranger, because the percentage of illiteracy for Foster County declined from seven-tenths of one per cent for all classes in 1910 to three-tenths of one per cent in 1920, while in the state of North Dakota it declined from three and one-tenth per cent for all classes in 1910 to two and one-tenth per cent in 1920.⁹ Since the United States, as a whole, had in 1930 four and three-tenths per cent of illiteracy, North Dakota with its total of one and five-tenths per cent and Foster County with one per cent have good records.

Table 6

Comparison of Illiteracy in Foster County and in North Dakota
Among Persons Ten Years of Age and Over

Item	Foster County		North Dakota	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
All classes	12	0.3	9,937	2.1
Native White	6	0.2	1,307	0.4
Foreign born White	6	0.7	7,238	5.6
All classes	49	1.0	7,814	1.5
Native White	11	0.3	1,763	0.4
Foreign born White	36	4.7	4,649	4.4

^aFourteenth Census of the United States, 1920.

^bFifteenth Census of the United States, 1930.

⁹Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920.

Summary of Chapter 2

Foster County, having but eighteen townships and 644 square miles, is the smallest county in North Dakota. It is located in the west-central part of the eastern third of the state, in a region of drift prairie. It is strictly agricultural and rural with the entire area suitable for cultivation. Diversified farming with small grains as the chief crop is the occupation of fifty-seven per cent of all gainfully employed persons in the county, all other occupations being incidental to it. Adequate transportation is supplied by the main lines of the Soo and Great Northern railroads, and by three branch lines of the Northern Pacific, as well as by one federal highway, three state highways, and a good system of county and township roads. In all cases, the proportionate wealth of the county is equal to or greater than the wealth of the state.

The population has been increasing, and was in 1930, 6,353, with but 768 foreign born Whites and two Indians. The Norwegian group is the largest being fourteen and four-tenths per cent of the population, but are less in evidence than they are in the state as a whole. The German and Canadian groups are second and third in importance, being more in evidence in the county than they are in the state as a whole; while the Russian group is much less in evidence in the county. Illiteracy is greatest among the foreign born. Only one per cent of the people of Foster County were illiterate in 1930, as compared with one and five-tenths per cent for North Dakota and four and three-tenths per cent for the United States as a whole.

CHAPTER 3

SCHOOL SITUATION IN FOSTER COUNTY

There are four different kinds of school districts to be found in North Dakota but only two of them, the common and the special are to be found in Foster County. Common school districts "consist of not less than one congressional township and shall have at least \$12,000 in taxable property and at least ten children residing in them."¹ Special school districts are organized in and around cities and villages by elections called by the county superintendent of schools on petition of a majority of the voters.² When the majority of the voters in the area affected vote to separate from the common school district, the area described in the petition is organized into a special school district.³

Of the nineteen school districts in the county, seventeen are common and the other two are special.⁴ Both of the special districts - Melby and Carrington - and fourteen of the common school districts comprise regular size townships. The only irregularity in this respect was brought about with the formation of Barlow School District. This was done by taking four sections from each of Birtsell and Estabrook School Districts, leaving thirty-two sections in each of them, and making Barlow a school district of only eight sections (Figure 3).

Number and Kind of Schools in Foster County

In the nineteen school districts in Foster County there are

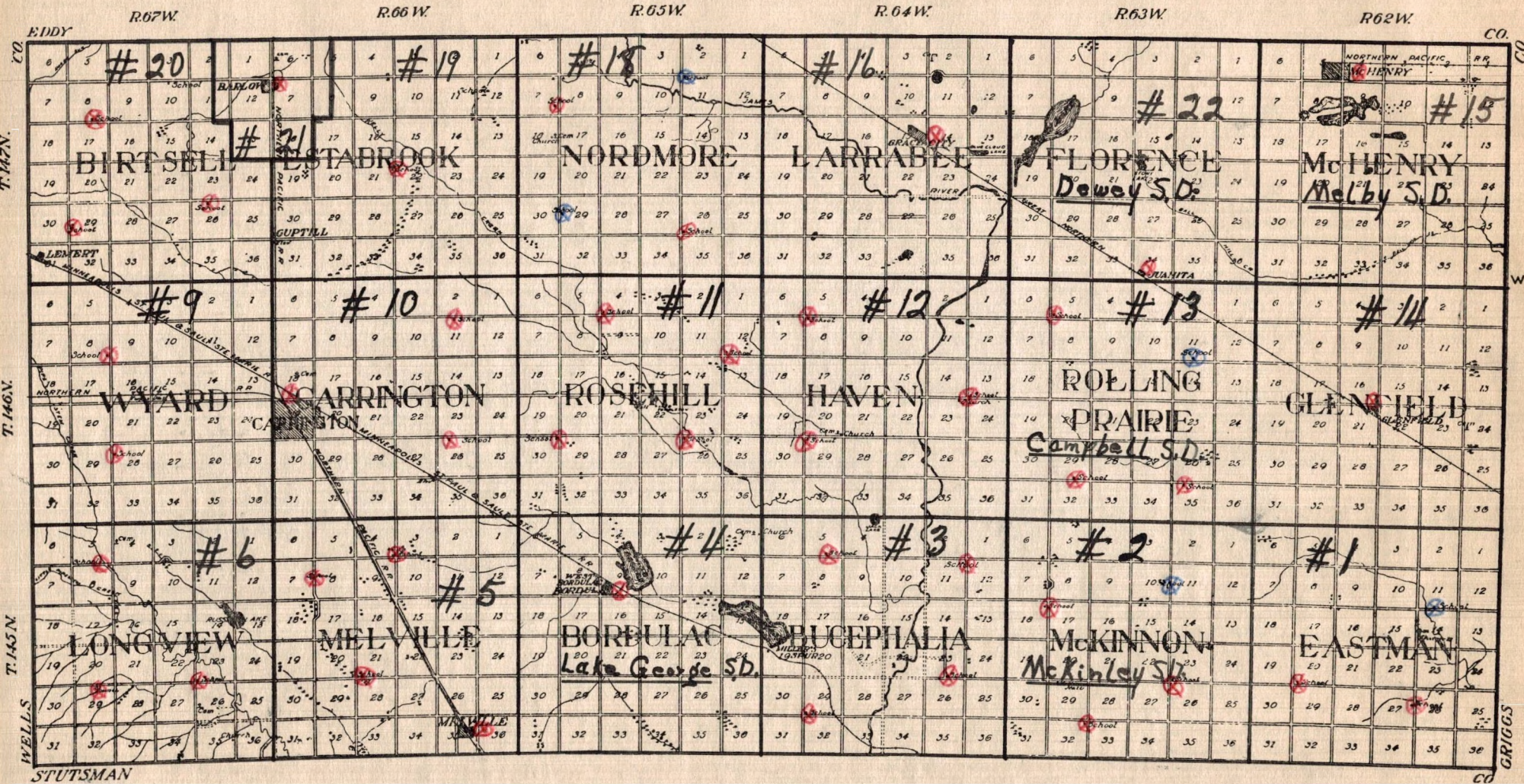
¹General School Laws, State of North Dakota, Department of Public Instruction, Bismarck, North Dakota, 1935, Sec. 77, p. 40.

²Ibid., Sec. 142, 143, 144, p. 62.

³Ibid., Sec. 1235, p. 62.

⁴County Superintendent's Annual Report, 1935.

1929 Outline Map of Foster County, North Dakota



School District Boundaries —————
Schools In Use ⊗
Schools Not In Use ⊗

Figure 3. Location of Schools and School Districts in Foster County.

fifty-six schools, counting each grade school and each high school as a separate school. There are forty-nine school houses, five of which were not used in 1935. The number of schools not in use, all of which have been one-room schools, has fluctuated from one to six in the years from 1930 to 1935 as shown by Table 7. The only classified high school in the county is at Carrington. This is probably due to the fact that higher and more costly standards must be maintained in such schools. There are six consolidated schools in the county. Eight schools in the county offer high school work.

Table 7

Number and Kinds of Schools in Foster County^a

Year	Classified High Schools	Consolidated Schools	Town Graded Schools	One-Room Schools In Use	Schools Not Used
1931	1	6	1	38	1
1932	1	6	1	33	6
1933	1	7	1	33	6
1934	1	6	1	35	5
1935	1	6	1	35	5

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1931-1935.

Table 8

Comparison of One-Room Rural Schools in Foster County with Respect to Number, Length of Term, and Enrollment, 1935^a

District	Number of Schools	Length of Term	Total Enrollment
Eastman	2	9 mo.	34
McKinley	3	9 mo.	42
Bucephalia	4	9 mo.	41
Melville	4	9 mo.	55

Table 8 (Cont.)

District	Number of Schools	Length of Term	Total Enrollment
Long View	3	9 mo.	46
Wyard	2	9 mo.	34
Carrington	2	9 mo.	28
Rose Hill	4	8 3/4 mo.	40
Haven	3	9 mo.	43
Campbell	3	9 mo.	40
Nordmore	2	8 mo.	31
Birtsell	3	9 mo.	53

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Report, 1935.

Table 8 compares the one-room schools in the various districts as to number, length of term, and enrollment for the year 1935. It is seen that there was an average of almost three schools for each of the districts having one-room schools in 1935. All but one of these districts have nine-month terms. Average enrollments varied from ten to seventeen. The average enrollment for all one-room schools in 1935 was thirteen and nine-tenths per cent.

A comparison of schools other than one-room for the year 1936 is to be found in Table 9. The school term for all is uniformly nine months, the pupil-teacher ratios in the grades vary from nineteen and five-tenths to thirty-nine and three-tenths; while the pupil-teacher ratios in high schools vary from nine to thirty-two. Six of these eight schools offer four years of high school work, one offers but two years of high school, and the other offers the grades only.

Length of School Term

A study of Table 10, which is a comparison of the school terms of Foster County and those of North Dakota, shows that ninety-five and five-tenths per cent of the schools in the county have terms of nine

months and the remaining four and five-tenths per cent of the schools of the county have terms of eight months. In the case of the state of North Dakota, thirty-nine per cent of the schools have terms of nine months, forty per cent have terms of eight months, and twenty per cent have terms of seven months, leaving fifty schools or one per cent having terms of less than seven months. In other words, the schools of Foster County are much closer to providing equal educational opportunities with regard to the length of time spent in school than are the schools of the state as a whole. At present, there are still two schools of the county that provide less than nine months of school for all pupils.

Number of Teachers

Foster County has proportionately less schools with but one teacher and more schools with four or more teachers than has the state. The ratios are eighty-one and four-tenths to eighty-five and eight-tenths per cent, and fourteen to eight and nine-tenths per cent respectively. Table 11 further shows that the ratio of schools having two teachers only is two and three-tenths per cent for the county and three and three-tenths per cent for the state. Those having three teachers are in the ratio of two and three-tenths per cent for the county and two per cent for the state. In other words, the state has four and four-tenths per cent more schools with but one teacher than has Foster County; while the county has five and one-tenth per cent more schools with four or more teachers than has the state.

Table 9
Comparison of Kinds of Schools in Foster County,
Other Than One-Room Rural, 1936^a

District	Number of Schools	Length of Term	Number of Grade Pupils	Number of Grade Teachers	Number of Years High School	Number of High School Pupils	Number of High School Teachers
<u>Graded and Consolidated</u>							
Barlow	1	9 mo.	23	1	2	9	1
Lake George	1	9 mo.	74	3	4	56	2
Glenfield	1	9 mo.	92	4	4	70	3
Melby	1	9 mo.	97	4	4	64	2
Larrabee	1	9 mo.	73	3	4	39	2
Estabrook	1	9 mo.	32	2	0	0	0
Dewey	1	9 mo.	57	2	4	26	2
<u>Classified</u>							
Carrington	1 ^b	9 mo.	354	9	4	175	7

^aNorth Dakota Educational Directory, 1935-1936.

^bHas two one-room schools also.

Table 10
Comparison of the School Terms in Foster County
and North Dakota, 1934^a

Number of Months Taught	Foster County		North Dakota	
	Number of Schools	Per Cent	Number of Schools	Per Cent
Less than 7 months	0	0.0	50	1.0
7 months	0	0.0	983	20.0
8 months	2	4.5	1965	40.0
9 months	42	95.5	1918	39.0
Total	44	100.0	4916	100.0

^aBiennial Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1934, p. 62.

Location of Schools

The distance of each grade school in Foster County to the next nearest one varies from a little over two miles to about nine and one-half miles, with the median distance being about three and one-half miles (Table 12). The distance from each high school to the next nearest one varies from a little over five miles to about eleven and one-half miles, with the median distance being about eight and three-quarters miles. With both grade and high schools being in such close proximity to each other, it is obvious that a great deal of combining and eliminating might be done, resulting in larger units of support which would not only lessen the tax burden on those least able to pay but would also help to equalize educational opportunities for all.

Certification of Teachers

Four types of certificates are authorized by law in the state of North Dakota. The lowest of these is the second grade elementary certificate which is granted to persons over eighteen years of age who are found to be proficient in reading, language, grammar, arithmetic, geography, United States history, physiology and hygiene. It is issued on examination only, is valid for two years, and is renewable only on examination.⁵ The next lowest grade of certificate is the first elementary which is issued on examination and on the basis of education in normal schools and teachers colleges. Graduates from high school having completed the one-year course of teacher training at any of the

⁵General School Laws, North Dakota, 1935, Section 582, p. 224.

Table 11

Per Cent of Schools with One, Two, Three, or Four or More
Teachers in Foster County and North Dakota^a

Number of Teachers in Schools	Per Cent of Schools in Foster County	Per Cent of Schools in North Dakota
One	81.4	85.8
Two	2.3	3.3
Three	2.3	2.0
Four or more	11.0	8.9
Total	100.0	100.0

^aBiennial Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1934,
p. 44 and 63.

Table 12

Distance of Each Grade School and Each High School in Foster
County to the Nearest School of Its Kind by Road^a

Distance in Miles	Number of Elementary Schools	Number of High Schools
0.0 - 2.0	0	0
2.1 - 2.5	4	0
2.6 - 3.0	6	0
3.1 - 3.5	12	0
3.6 - 4.0	11	0
4.1 - 4.5	5	0
4.6 - 5.0	0	0
5.1 - 5.5	1	2
5.6 - 6.0	0	0
6.1 - 6.5	1	0
6.6 - 7.0	1	0
7.1 - 7.5	0	0
7.6 - 8.0	1	0
8.1 - 8.5	0	0
8.6 - 9.0	0	4
9.1 - 9.5	1	1
9.6 - 10.0	0	0
10.1 - 10.5	0	0
10.6 - 11.0	0	0
11.1 - 11.5	0	0
11.6 - 12.0	0	1

^aComputed from map of Foster County with schools located on it.

aforementioned schools, or an equivalent course from outside the state, and are at least eighteen years of age may receive the first grade elementary certificate.⁶

The next grade of certificate above the first elementary is the second grade professional which is given to graduates of the standard two-year course of a North Dakota normal school or teachers college who are at least eighteen years of age. The certificate is good for three years. When the holder has had eighteen months of successful teaching experience, it may be made good for life.⁷ The fourth and highest certificate granted in North Dakota is given to graduates of four-year college education courses in any of the state schools or to graduates of any college or university who have at least sixteen semester hours of courses in education to their credit. This certificate is good for three years and may be made good for life upon the completion of eighteen months of successful teaching experience.⁸

An examination of Table 13 shows that Foster County was considerably ahead of the state as a whole, as to certification of teachers in 1930, having had sixty-one per cent of its teachers holding professional certificates. In 1934 Foster County had only fifty-eight per cent of its teachers holding professional certificates, while the state had raised its percentage to sixty-three. Apparently this was only a temporary setback for the county, since in 1935, seventy-two per cent

⁶Ibid., Section 583, p. 224.

⁷Ibid., Section 584, p. 225.

⁸Op. Cit., Section 584, p. 226.

of its teachers held professional certificates, twenty-five per cent held first grade elementary certificates, and only three per cent held second grade elementary certificates.⁹ Similar information for the state for 1935 is not available for comparison. Neither the county nor the state is entirely up to the commonly accepted minimum standard of two years beyond high school for elementary school teachers.¹⁰ This means that a large number of teachers of both the county and the state are displacing others better qualified than themselves.

Professional Training of Teachers

Table 14 shows that all of the graded schools of the county, both rural and town, have reached the commonly accepted standard but the one-room rural schools in 1935 still had twenty-two teachers with less than two years of professional training, and two of these had less than one year of such training.

Experience of Teachers

Comparison of experience of teachers in both Foster County and North Dakota must be somewhat incomplete, since no data is available for teachers having taught four, six, seven, or nine years. A study of Table 15 will show that in 1930 sixty-two per cent of the teachers of North Dakota had three years or less experience, and forty-four of the teachers of Foster County had three years or less experience. By 1934, only forty-three per cent of the teachers of the state had three years or less experience and only twenty-five per cent of the teachers of Foster County had a similar amount of experience. It is evident

⁹County Superintendent's Annual Report, 1935.

¹⁰W. E. Peik, The Training of Teachers in North Dakota, Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1930, p. 35.

Table 13
Comparison of Certification of Teachers in Foster County and
North Dakota for 1930 and 1934

Type of Certificate	Foster County		North Dakota	
	Number	Per Cent ^a	Number	Per Cent ^a
	1930 ^b			
Second grade elementary	4	4	1,785	21
First grade elementary	32	35	2,208	26
Professional	55	61	4,418	53
	1934 ^c			
Second grade elementary	8	7	459	5
First grade elementary	40	35	2,528	32
Professional	67	58	5,010	63

^aTo the nearest per cent.

^bBiennial Report, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1930, p. 129, 133, 140.

^cBiennial Report, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1934, p. 46, 49, 54.

Table 14
Comparison of Training Beyond High School of Teachers
in Foster County^a

Year	1930		1935	
	Number	Per Cent ^b	Number	Per Cent ^b
One-room rural schools				
Twelve weeks normal or less	32	84	2	6
One year normal			20	57
Two year normal	6	16	12	34
College graduate			1	3
Schools other than one-room ^c				
Twelve weeks normal or less	4	7		
One year normal				
Two year normal	37	70	29	62
College graduate	12	23	18	38

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1930, 1935.

^bTo the nearest per cent.

^cThere is only one rural graded school in Foster County.

Table 15
Comparison of Experience of Teachers of Foster County and of
North Dakota, 1930 and 1934^a

Experience	Foster County		North Dakota	
	Number of Teachers	Per Cent ^b	Number of Teachers	Per Cent ^b
				1930
One year	15	16	1545	17
Two years	13	14	2132	24
Three years	13	14	1890	21
Five years	27	30	1614	18
Eight years	15	16	504	6
Ten years or more	8	9	961	11
Totals	91	100	8856	100
				1934
One year	6	7	899	11
Two years	7	8	912	11
Three years	8	10	1741	21
Five years	9	11	1822	22
Eight years	8	10	790	10
Ten years or more	17	20	1202	15
Totals	84	100	8175	100

^aBiennial Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1930 and 1934.

^bTaken to the nearest per cent.

that on the average the teachers of Foster County have several years more experience than those for the state as a whole. This is probably partially explainable by the fact that a larger per cent of the schools

of the state are one-room rural schools and they, as a rule, have a greater turnover in teachers than do the graded schools, and also that the schools of Foster County may insist on more experienced teachers or may provide longer tenure for teachers employed.¹¹ It is also probable that economic conditions, in late years, have caused teachers to remain in the profession longer. Regardless of the causes, better instruction will probably be the result.

Salaries of Teachers

Table 16 gives teachers' salaries for all classes of schools in Foster County for the years 1930 to 1935. As there is only one rural graded school in the county, it is being included with the town graded schools. It will be noticed that the salaries of the graded groups averaged considerably higher in 1935 from the low year of 1934, while the salaries of the one-room rural schools still continued to decline. The year of greatest decline in salaries for the one-room rural schools was in 1933 when a cut of thirteen and eight-tenths per cent was taken. A year later the graded schools took their greatest salary cut amounting to twenty-one and one-tenth per cent. The total cut in salaries for one-room rural schools from 1930 to 1935 amounted to twenty-seven and five-tenths per cent, and for graded schools to twenty-nine and three-tenths per cent. The somewhat larger decline in the graded schools is probably due to the fact that the administrators of the graded schools, especially in towns, took larger cuts in most cases than did ordinary instructors. The declines just dis-

¹¹W. E. Peik, "The Training of Teachers in North Dakota," Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1930. p. 29.

Table 16
Average Salaries of Teachers for All Classes of Schools in
Foster County^a

Year	One-Room Rural Schools	Graded Schools ^b
1930	88.65	134.98
1931	88.43	112.04
1932	86.06	132.26
1933	74.22	119.75
1934	64.74	94.21
1935	64.28	95.36

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports.

^bThe one rural graded school is included with the town graded schools.

Table 17
Average Salaries for Teachers in All Classes of Schools for
Foster County and North Dakota, 1934^a

Type of School	Foster County	North Dakota
One-room rural	64.74	56.22
Rural graded	86.66 ^b	69.62
Town graded	94.21	113.09
All schools	81.30	73.66

^aBiennial Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1934.

^bThere is only one rural graded school in the county.

cussed were undoubtedly caused in general by the economic depression which has been in evidence over the nation since the fall of 1929, and in particular by the agricultural depression in the state and county.

In 1934, the average salary for all teachers in all classes of

schools in Foster County was over nine per cent higher than for all teachers of the state, as shown in Table 17. However, the average salary for all teachers in town graded schools in Foster County in 1934 was over 17 per cent lower than the average salary for similar schools in the state as a whole. This latter point might be due to the fact that classified high schools usually demand better qualified teachers and pay higher salaries than do other graded town schools. Only one school or twelve and five-tenths per cent of the town graded schools of Foster County are classified, while thirty-five and six-tenths per cent of the town graded schools of the state are classified.¹²

Distribution of Teachers

The total number of teachers in Foster County has dropped from ninety-one in 1931, of which thirty-eight were in one-room schools, three in rural graded schools, and fifty in town graded schools to eighty-two in 1935, of which thirty-five were in one-room schools, three in rural graded schools, and forty-four in town graded schools. There was a total drop of nine teachers or nine and nine-tenths per cent, three teachers or seven and nine-tenths per cent for the one-room schools, none for the rural graded, and six or twelve per cent for the town graded.¹³

Table 18 shows the number and per cent of teachers employed by the various types of schools for Foster County and for North Dakota for 1934, the last year for which data for the state is available. It shows that of the teachers of Foster County, forty-three per cent are

¹²Biennial Report of State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1934.

¹³County Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1931-1935.

Table 18
Number and Per Cent of Teachers Employed by Types of Schools
in Foster County and in North Dakota, 1934^a

Type	Foster County		North Dakota	
	Number	Per Cent ^b	Number	Per Cent ^b
One-room rural	35	43	4,180	52
Rural graded	3	4	491	6
Town graded	43	53	3,382	42
Total	81	100	8,053	100

^aBiennial Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1934.

^bTo the nearest per cent.

Table 19
Pupil-Teacher Ratio in Foster County by Kinds of Schools, 1931-1935^a

Year	All Schools ^b	One-Room Rural Schools ^b	Graded Schools ^b
1931	19.4	12.9	23.8
1932	20.4	14.3	24.1
1933	20.4	14.1	24.0
1934	21.4	15.1	23.6
1935	20.8	13.9	25.1

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1931-1935.

^bTo the nearest tenth.

in one-room schools, four per cent are in rural graded schools, and fifty-three per cent in town graded schools as compared with North Dakota which has in similar schools, as mentioned above respectively fifty-two per cent, six per cent, and forty-two per cent. In other words, Foster County has six per cent more of its teachers in town schools than in rural schools, while the state has sixteen per cent more teachers in rural schools than in town schools.

Pupil-Teacher Ratios

There has been a small increase of one and four-tenths in the pupil-teacher ratio in Foster County from 1931 to 1935, as shown in Table 19. This is quite unusual since for most counties and for the state as a whole pupil-teacher ratios have dropped, especially in the rural schools. The pupil-teacher ratio for all county schools in 1935, is however six-tenths less than for 1934; and although the ratio has increased one per cent for the one-room rural schools of the county from 1931 to 1935, it decreased one and two-tenths from 1934, the high point for this type of school, to 1935. On the other hand, graded schools, including the lone rural graded school, had shown an increase in pupil-teacher ratio from 1931 to 1935 of one and three-tenths.

Pupil-teacher ratios of Foster County and North Dakota for 1934 are compared in Table 20. It is seen that the pupil-teacher ratio for the county is nine-tenths per cent higher than that for the state, in spite of the fact that it is a trifle lower in the case of the one rural graded school in the county and almost the same in the case of the town graded schools. It is in the one-room rural schools that the county has a somewhat greater pupil-teacher ratio than has the state.

Although it is impossible to compare per pupil costs in the various types of schools exactly, because where grade and high school are together costs are not separated, still it is obvious that per pupil costs are greatest where pupil-teacher ratios are smallest. In other words, costs are greater in rural schools, especially in one-room schools.

Table 20

Comparison of Pupil-Teacher Ratio in Foster County and North
Dakota by Kinds of Schools, 1934^a

Kind of School	Pupil-Teacher Ratio in Foster County	Pupil-Teacher Ratio in North Dakota
One-room rural	15.1	14.5
Rural graded	16.3	16.9
Town graded	26.9	26.9
<u>Average all schools</u>	<u>20.6</u>	<u>19.7</u>

^aBiennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1934.

It would seem that the establishment of larger administrative units, resulting in the closing of schools with small pupil-teacher ratios and the increasing of these ratios in the remaining schools should help to reduce our total costs of education and at the same time offer more equal educational opportunities to all.

School Population in Foster County

Enumeration and Enrollment in Foster County and Their Relation.

A school census of each school district is taken annually under the direction of the school board. This census includes all unmarried persons over six and under twenty-one in the district and is used as a basis for distributing state aid.¹⁴ The main difficulty is that in many cases this census is not accurately taken, even though accuracy would mean greater financial return, since aid received from the state is based on it.

Table 21 shows that total enumeration in Foster County increased

¹⁴General School Laws, State of North Dakota, Department of Public Instruction, 1935, Section 129, p. 59, and Section 384, p. 136.

Table 21

Number of Children Enumerated in Foster County^a

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	Defectives
1920	898	905	1,803	1
1925	939	906	1,845	2
1930	1,064	1,038	2,102	1
1931	1,055	1,004	2,059	1
1932	1,055	1,004	2,059	1
1933	1,047	956	2,003	1
1934	1,047	956	2,003	2
1935	991	971	1,962	3

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports.

Table 22

Number of Children Enrolled in Foster County^a

Year	Grades	High School	Total
1920	1,560	204	1,771
1925	1,484	274	1,758
1930	1,400	383	1,783
1931	1,374	394	1,768
1932	1,317	421	1,738
1933	1,274	403	1,677
1934	1,309	424	1,733
1935	1,258	449	1,707

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports.

from 1803 in 1920 to 2102 in 1930. Since then, the decrease has been gradual, until in 1935 there were 1962 enumerated, or a decrease of six

and seven-tenths per cent. An examination of Table 22 shows us that although the total number of children enrolled in Foster County schools has decreased irregularly from 1920 to 1935, only three and six-tenths per cent, the grade enrollment for the same period has decreased a total of 302 or nineteen and four-tenths per cent, while the high school enrollment has increased a total of 245 or 120 per cent. High school enrollment is still increasing.

Table 23 gives us the percentage of those enumerated who are in school. The total enumerated and attending school in 1935 was only eighty-seven per cent as compared with ninety-eight per cent in 1920 and ninety-five per cent in 1925. There has been fluctuation of a few points only from 1930 to 1935. The percentage enrolled in the grades in 1935 was sixty-four with an irregular fluctuation downward since 1930, as compared with eighty-seven per cent in 1920 and eighty per cent in 1925. The percentage of gradual fluctuation upward in high school enrollment reached twenty-three in 1935 as compared with eleven per cent in 1920 and fifteen per cent in 1925.

Fluctuation in Enrollment in Grades and High School

The enrollment in grades one, four, seven, eight, and the total for all grades for the years 1920, 1925, and 1930 to 1935, are set out in Table 24. Total grade enrollment has declined 302 or nineteen and four-tenths per cent from 1920 to 1935 with only a ten and three-tenths per cent decline coming from 1920 to 1930 and a ten and two-tenths per cent decline from 1930 to 1935. During the period from 1920 to 1935, enrollment in grade one declined from 311 to 180 or forty-two and one-

Table 23

Relation of Enumeration and Enrollment in Foster County^a

Year	Per Cent in Grades	Per Cent in High School	Total Per Cent in School
1920	87	11	98
1925	80	15	95
1930	67	18	85
1931	67	19	86
1932	64	24	88
1933	64	20	84
1934	65	21	86
1935	64	23	87

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports.

Table 24

Enrollment in Grades One, Four, Seven, Eight, and Total

Enrollment in All Grades for Foster County^a

Year	First Grade	Fourth Grade	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade	Total Grades
1920	311	159	155	175	1,560
1925	254	194	142	145	1,484
1929	229	176	170	188	1,465
1930	222	170	188	170	1,400
1931	201	178	162	181	1,374
1932	183	164	163	149	1,317
1933	172	167	150	161	1,274
1934	185	166	151	168	1,309
1935	180	148	159	147	1,258

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports.

Table 25

High School Enrollment by Grades and Total High School Enrollment^a

Year	Ninth Grade	Tenth Grade	Eleventh Grade	Twelfth Grade	Total High School
1920	88	52	32	37	204
1925	79	80	58	57	274
1930	125	117	79	62	383
1931	132	96	90	76	394
1932	144	94	82	101	421
1933	117	136	75	75	403
1934	130	95	121	78	424
1935	144	113	78	114	449

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports.

tenth per cent, enrollment in grade four during the same period declined from 159 to 148 or six and nine-tenths per cent, enrollment in grade eight from 175 to 147 or sixteen per cent. Table 25 shows that the enrollment in grade nine has increased from 88 to 144 or sixty-three and six-tenths per cent from 1920 to 1935. Enrollments for grades ten, eleven, and twelve increased respectively 117.3 per cent, 143.8 per cent, and 308.1 per cent.

These figures would be even more extreme if taken for the highest and lowest years rather than for the years 1920 to 1935. They seem to show the tendency for the grades to decrease in enrollment while the high school increases in enrollment and children remain in school longer. The decline in grade enrollment is probably due to a decline in birth rate which if continued will have to be taken into account in providing for

future buildings, equipment, etc. The birth rate declined from twenty-one and five-tenths per cent per thousand in 1929 to nineteen and two-tenths per thousand in 1933.¹⁵ Lower birth rates have already affected grade enrollments, but since it takes eighteen years for the birth rate of any one year to affect the graduating class of the high school, there has been no affect on high school enrollment, as yet, largely because there has been such a great increase in the number of pupils going on to high school and remaining in school longer. It is to be expected that in the future, with little increased enrollment in high school, that the decreasing birth rate will eventually decrease the enrollment in high school also. This will result in smaller pupil-teacher ratios and probably in a decrease in the number of schools in operation. This will probably lead in time to larger administrative units.

Mortality is greater in the first four grades than in the upper grades as shown in Table 24. This is shown by the first grade class of 1929. By 1932 this class had lost twenty-eight and four-tenths per cent of its members. By the seventh year or 1935, it had lost only two and two-tenths per cent more than it had during the first four years. The first grade of 1931 decreased twenty-six and three-tenths per cent by 1935, while the fourth grade of 1931 had decreased only seventeen and four-tenths per cent by 1935. The first grade of 1930 decreased twenty-five and two-tenths per cent by 1934 while the fourth grade decreased only one and two-tenths per cent by 1934.

¹⁵Mortality Statistics of the United States, United States Bureau of Census, 1930 and 1934.

Attendance

North Dakota school law states that, "A pupil is absent when out of school without a legal excuse and a pupil is a non-member when out of school with a legal excuse. Legal excuses for non-attendance are:

- a. Attendance at an approved private or parochial school
- b. Actually necessary to the support of the family as determined by the school board, subject to appeal
- c. Attendance elsewhere at some public school
- d. Physical or mental condition rendering attendance inexpedient, or impractical."¹⁶

The per cent of attendance in all North Dakota schools is determined by dividing the aggregate attendance by the aggregate attendance plus the aggregate absence.¹⁷

Table 26 shows the per cent of attendance by types of schools for the years 1929 to 1935 in Foster County. It will be noted that in no case is the attendance less than ninety-one per cent. The attendance in town graded schools is as a rule a little higher than in the rural schools, but not always since fluctuation is irregular.

It is probable that the somewhat higher attendance in town schools is the result of several conditions: nearness of town pupils to the schools, better qualified teachers, better equipment, and better offerings in town schools which make them more attractive to the pupils, less temptation on the part of parents to keep children out of school to help with the work, and possibly the presence of a superintendent who makes greater efforts to secure good attendance.

It is questionable if attendance is really as good as the figures

¹⁶Teacher's Register for North Dakota, 1931.

¹⁷Ibid.

Table 26

Per Cent of Attendance by Types of Schools^a

Year	One-Room Rural Schools	Rural Graded Schools ^b	Town Graded Schools	Total All Schools
1929	91	91	95	94
1930	92	92	96	95
1931	93	91	95	95
1932	94	97	96	96
1933	92	98	94	93
1934	94	98	96	96
1935	93	94	96	95

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports.^bOne school only.

Table 27

Comparison of Aggregate Non-Membership and Aggregate Absence^a

Year	Aggregate Non-Membership	Aggregate Absence	Average Number of Days Absence Per Pupil Enrolled ^b
1920	59,246	27,727	15.7
1925	49,968	16,544	9.4
1930	30,025	12,907	7.2
1931	28,674	12,279	6.9
1932	31,180	10,509	6.0
1933	30,718	12,694	7.6
1934	30,848	8,694	5.0
1935	35,523	13,239	7.8

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports.^bTo the nearest tenth.

show not only in Foster County but also in the state. Teachers try to make attendance records look as good as possible and as a result tend

to record absences as non-membership whenever possible. They can do this because of differences of opinion as to what constitutes a legal excuse, and also because although they are not held accountable for non-membership, they are held accountable for attendance.

To get a clear picture of the situation in North Dakota schools it is necessary to consider the aggregate non-membership and aggregate absence together as against the actual attendance to understand that the actual percentage of attendance is much lower than it seems. Upon examination, Table 27 shows that for every year aggregate non-membership has been from two to four times as great as aggregate absence. It will also be seen that although the average number of days absent per pupil enrolled has been cut in two from 1920 to 1935, still there has been no regular gain in the last five years, but rather an uneven fluctuation. It seems necessary that something be done to better enforce the attendance laws of the state, since it is evident that the average per cent of attendance over the state is far from good. The situation might be improved by considering illness the only excusable absence and therefore the only possible non-membership, and all other absences be considered in making up the per cent of attendance. If this were done the patrons, school board, and teachers would realize more completely that attendance wasn't what it should or could be, and as a result greater efforts would be made to improve it.

Summary of Chapter 3

Of the nineteen school districts in Foster County, two are special and seventeen are common. Only three districts are not identical with

township lines. There is but one classified school in the county, Carrington; six consolidated schools, one of which is rural; one graded town school; and thirty-five one-room schools. Only two schools in the county have less than nine months of school. They have but eight months. On the average, there are three schools for each of the districts having one-room schools, with enrollments varying from ten to seventeen, but averaging thirteen and nine-tenths in 1935. The pupil-teacher ratios in schools other than one room, vary from nineteen and five-tenths to thirty-nine and three-tenths in the grades and from nine to thirty-two in the high schools. Of this last named group of schools, six offer four years of high school work and one offers two years of high school work, the other one just the first eight grades. Foster County has a smaller percentage of schools with one teacher and a greater percentage of schools with four or more teachers than has the state. The median distance between all grade schools of the county is about three and one-half miles; while between high schools, it is about eight and three-quarter miles.

In 1935, seventy-two per cent of the teachers of Foster County held professional certificates, twenty-five per cent held first grade elementary certificates and only three per cent held second grade elementary certificates. At this time, also, there were still twenty-two teachers in the county that had less than two years of training beyond high school, and two of these had less than one year of such training. On the average, the teachers of Foster County have several years more of experience than have the teachers of North Dakota as a whole. Al-

though, salaries for one-room school teachers decreased by twenty-seven and five-tenths per cent during the period from 1930 to 1935, and salaries for graded school teachers by twenty-nine and three-tenths per cent during the same period, the average salaries for Foster County teachers were nine per cent higher than those of all the teachers of North Dakota.

There has been a decrease of nine and nine-tenths per cent in the total number of teachers in the county from 1931 to 1935, at which time there were but eighty-two; thirty-five of these were in one-room schools, three in rural graded schools, and forty-four in town graded schools. While Foster County had six per cent more of its teachers employed in town schools than in rural schools in 1934, North Dakota had sixteen per cent more of its teachers employed in rural schools than in town schools. A small increase of one and four-tenths per cent in the pupil-teacher ratio of Foster County schools was noted during the period from 1931 to 1935, although there was a slight decrease during the last year of this period. The average pupil-teacher ratio for Foster County is nine-tenths per cent higher than the average for North Dakota.

In many cases, the school census is not accurately taken. It shows, however, that while the total enumeration increased from 1803 in 1920 to 2102 in 1930, it has gradually decreased to 1962 from 1930 to 1935, a decrease of six and seven-tenths per cent. The total school enrollment for Foster County has decreased irregularly from 1920 to 1935 by three and six-tenths per cent. Grade enrollments decreased by nine-

teen and four-tenths per cent, while high school enrollments increased by 120 per cent for the same period of time. High school enrollments are still increasing. The percentage of those enumerated who are enrolled in high schools has been gradually increasing until in 1935, it was twenty-three per cent, while a similar percentage for grade children has been gradually decreasing until in 1935, it was sixty-four per cent. Enrollments have reacted similarly to enumerations, there being a decrease of nineteen and four-tenths per cent in the grades from 1920 to 1935 and an increase in high school of sixty-three and six-tenths per cent for grade nine to 308.1 per cent for grade twelve over the same period.

The decline in grade enrollment is probably due to the decline in the birth rate, whose effects have not yet reached the high school. Mortality is greater in the first four grades than in the upper grades. Attendance records are better in the town schools than in the rural schools. They appear to be very good for all schools of both the county and state, the percentages ranging usually in the nineties. However, if actual absence from school was figured by including non-membership, the percentages would range more commonly from seventy to eighty, since usually non-membership includes about three times as many days as absence. Conditions might be improved by making illness the only excuse for both absence and non-membership.

CHAPTER 4

SCHOOL RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES IN FOSTER COUNTY

Property must be assessed and given a definite value before taxes can be levied and collected. This work is done by assessors whose only necessary qualification is that they must be citizens. Although they are aided considerably by an assessor's manual which is prepared for their benefit, much of the work depends on their own good judgment, which often varies greatly among individuals. As a result, the actual assessment of property is much in need of improvement. It is possible that the situation could be remedied to some extent by creating larger assessment areas, for example - the county, with a county assessor and enough assistants to do the work. The work being in charge of one person, should be done more equally for the entire area than it now is.

An examination of Table 28 will show that a drop of over two million dollars took place from 1930 to 1931, then came a drop of almost four million dollars the next year due to the fact that the law had been changed by an initiative measure in 1932 so that only fifty per cent of the total valuation could be taxed instead of seventy-five per cent as formerly. The decline has continued steadily up to 1935, although it was not so great from 1934 to 1935. It is probable that we are nearing the bottom.

Legal Tax Levy Limitations

It is upon the amount of taxable valuation, as stated in this table, that the general property taxes of the various taxing units are

Table 28
Assessed Valuation of Real and Personal Property in Foster
County, 1930-1935^a

Year	Taxable Valuation	Per Cent Taxable Valuation is of Total Valuation
1928	\$ 12,698,434	75
1929	12,589,561	75
1930	12,564,304	75
1931	10,541,013	75
1932	6,788,820	50
1933	6,398,957	50
1934	5,821,298	50
1935	5,699,185	50

^aCounty Auditor's Records.

based, and since there are legal limitations on tax levies in all taxing units, it is obvious that there will be difficulties when it comes to raising enough taxes during depression times, such as we are now experiencing, to carry on the ordinary functions. Table 29 shows the tax limitations for all taxing units of the state so that school taxes may be compared with those of the other units. School district levies are limited to fourteen, sixteen, and eighteen mills depending on the kind of district, but all of these levies may be increased by fifty per cent when sixty per cent of the people who vote on the question favor it.¹ Exceptions may be made to the ordinary limitations in the case of sinking fund levies which are treated separately. Ordinarily

¹General School Law, State of North Dakota, 1935, Section 410, p. 147.

Table 29

Legal Tax Levy Limitations for All Taxing Units in North Dakota^a

Taxing Unit	Limitations of General Levy in Mills		Exceptions to General Levy Limit
School districts	all schools	14	18 mills if needed for tuition
	two-year standard high schools	16	bond issues
	consolidated schools	16	sinking fund levies
	four-year standard high schools	18	judgments
State	general levy	4	interest on debt
Counties	general levy	8	county tuition gopher extermination grasshopper poison interest
	road tax	2½	
Cities	general levy	14	bonded debt judgment levy limit to five per cent improvement projects
Villages	general levy	10	same as for cities
Townships	general levy	5	bonds sinking fund
Park district	maximum levy	2	interest on debt

^aGeneral School Laws, State of North Dakota, 1935, p. 139-151.

it is not an easy task to get sixty per cent of the voters to favor a fifty per cent increase in tax levy and since valuations have decreased so much, many schools have had to reduce expenses by cutting down standards and also teachers' wages.

Legal Steps in Levying and Collecting General Property Taxes

There are five steps in the levying and collecting of school taxes in North Dakota. They are as follows:

1. Each school board levies the school taxes on the school district on or before the last day of July of each year.²
2. The taxes levied by the school board according to the budget they have prepared, are certified to the county auditor within ten days after the levy is made.³
3. The county auditor calculates the rate of levy.⁴
4. The county treasurer collects the taxes.⁵
5. The tax money is paid to the school district treasurers.⁶

The levy for any one year is not due until nine months have elapsed and then only in part. All of it is not due for eight months more or a total of seventeen months all together goes by from the time the levy is first made until it is all due. This time may be further extended if taxes are delinquent or if property must be sold to collect them. Taxes collected by the county treasurer may be paid at any time to the school districts, but ordinarily they are paid only a few times a year. This results in money being available for school needs at some times during the year; at others it is very scarce. It might be better if taxes could be paid in installments over the years so that the school districts would have more steady incomes.

²Ibid., Section 401, p. 142.

³Ibid., Section 409, p. 146.

⁴Ibid., Section 394, p. 139.

⁵Ibid., Section 416, p. 150.

⁶Ibid., Section 414, p. 150.

Tax Levies and Their Trends

Table 30 shows us the total tax levies of all of the various taxing units in Foster County. There does not seem to be any great uniformity as to rise and fall of tax levies in the group as a whole. School taxes were at their peak in 1928. The big drop in 1929, came as the result of the new law passed requiring the using up of surpluses. The lowest point was reached in 1933. Since then it has again gone up, so that the total drop from 1928 to 1935 was about forty-four per cent. Township taxes reached their peak in 1930 and their low mark in 1933, making a reduction of forty-eight per cent from 1928 to 1935. They have been able to make such a large cut in taxes mainly by giving up all road work, while schools have made theirs largely by cutting teachers' salaries.

Table 30

Total Levies^a of All Taxing Units in Foster County
1928-1935^b

Year	School Districts	Town-Ships	Cities, Villages,	County	State	Total All Levies
1928	\$ 180,984	\$ 40,712	\$ 21,987	\$ 55,711	\$ 43,910	\$ 421,209
1929	160,312	43,609	24,557	53,327	39,832	351,874
1930	171,325	47,451	22,501	60,057	40,331	380,290
1931	153,815	35,192	24,251	81,391	39,845	361,419
1932	112,991	24,685	19,013	57,999	46,427	268,523
1933	74,669	19,709	16,440	53,427	41,934	211,933
1934	101,259	22,575	16,633	58,998	25,384	228,849
1935	101,601	21,161	18,145	59,917	26,762	257,304

^aSpecial park district levies and special assessments not included.

^bCounty Auditor's Records.

Cities and villages reached their high point in 1929 and their low point in 1933, making a reduction of eighteen per cent in their taxes from 1928 to 1935. The county is the only taxing unit which did not make a reduction in taxes from 1928 to 1935. Instead it made an advance of eight per cent. Its high point was in 1931, and its low point in 1929. The main reason why county taxes have gone up rather than down as have those of the other taxing units is that the county has had to carry much of the load of poor relief. The state has been able to reduce its taxes by about forty per cent in the period mentioned partly because it has reduced expenses and partly because it has found new sources of revenue in beer taxes and larger income taxes. The highest point for state taxes was reached in 1932, the lowest in 1934. Taking all taxing units together, for the county, there has been a reduction of about forty per cent in property taxes.

The highest tax year for the entire group was 1928, while the lowest was 1933, the same as was true for school taxes alone. It would seem that teachers' salaries have gone up and down with the tax levy to a very close degree, tending to show that if tax levies stay low, teachers' salaries will also stay low unless other adequate means of support are found on a state wide basis.

Other Sources of School Revenue

The State Tuition Fund is to consist of all net proceeds of all fines and penalties for the violation of state laws, from the leasing of school lands, and from the interest and income from the state permanent school fund. This fund is to be apportioned among the dif-

ferent counties in proportion to the number of school children of school age as shown by the last authorized enumeration.⁷ The state superintendent of public instruction makes a preliminary apportionment of the fund following which the county superintendents make final apportionments for the various counties. Table 31 shows that this fund is not of any great financial importance because of the smallness of the fund. Nevertheless since it is for the purpose of helping to equalize the cost of education in the state, it probably is a good thing. The amount of money received from the fines and penalties paid for the infraction of state laws has been growing smaller for the past number of years, until it no longer is any appreciable sum. It probably would be better if this money were left to the law enforcement groups so as to encourage the enforcement of the law. If this were done, there would still be little loss to the schools since the amount sent to the fund by the enforcement groups is very small.

County Tuition. A tax of one dollar on each elector of the county and a one-half mill tax on the dollar on taxable property in the county makes up the county tuition fund. This money is apportioned in the same manner as for state tuition.⁸ It probably would be a good thing to increase the amount of this levy to the four-mill levy proposed and defeated a few years ago. It would then help materially to decrease the educational inequalities which are now so evident, if used as supposed to enlarge districts, eliminate many of the small unnecessary schools, etc. The amount collected for this fund declined from \$9,272.59 in 1931 to \$6,308.75 in 1935.

⁷General School Laws, State of North Dakota, Sec. 374, p.133.

⁸General School Laws, State of North Dakota, 1935, Sec. 386, p. 137.

Table 31

Total Income from State Tuition, County Tuition, Federal Smith-Hughes Aid, State Aid, and State Equalization Fund, 1931-1935^a

Year	State Tuition	County Tuition	Federal Aid	State Aid	Equalization Fund
1931	\$7,962.07	\$9,272.59	\$	\$3,489.28	\$
1932	8,978.14	7,787.15	183.50	3,497.50	
1933	6,425.93	6,918.95		3,692.70	
1934	6,454.94	6,961.63	249.58	125.70	
1935	6,648.80	6,308.75	719.81		5,238.00 ^b

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports.

^bTaxation for School Purposes, W. P. A. Project No. 828, Emil Dietrich, Supervisor.

Federal Aid. There is only one school in Foster County which receives aid from the Federal Government under the Smith-Hughes Act. This school which is Carrington, has offered home economics for some years but did not introduce agriculture until the fall of 1935, and then it was kept but one year. This in spite of the fact that the county is entirely agricultural. Federal aid has increased from \$183.50 in 1932 to \$719.81 in 1935. No data is yet available for the aid available since Smith Hughes agriculture was introduced in Carrington's school. A number of schools have also received more or less aid from various Federal relief agencies, in their attempt to put men to work.

State Aid. The last year that any money was appropriated by the legislature to be used as state aid was for 1932. Since then the State Equalization Fund has been established and money taken in by the

Sales Tax of 1935 has been appropriated to it. Up to the year 1932 state aid was paid to the various types of schools for the purpose of encouraging them to maintain high standards of excellence in various phases of school activities. Classified high schools of the first, second, and third classes were to receive annually \$800, \$500, and \$300 respectively. If funds were not large enough for this, they were to be pro-rated.⁹ State graded schools of the first, second, and third classes were to receive annually \$100, \$75, and \$50 respectively. These amounts were to be doubled if the districts levied at least seven mills.¹⁰

State rural schools of the first, second, and third classes were to receive annually \$100, \$80, and \$60 respectively. These amounts were to be doubled if the rural schools levied more than four mills but less than seven, and trebled if the schools levied seven mills or more.¹¹

Consolidated schools of the first, second, and third classes were to receive annually \$300, \$250, and \$200 respectively. These amounts were to be doubled if the consolidated schools levied more than four mills but less than seven, and trebled if the schools levied seven mills or more.¹² Only \$3,489.28 was received by Foster County schools as state aid in 1931 as compared with the total tax levy of \$173,359.04 showing that the actual financial aid from the

⁹General School Laws, State of North Dakota, 1935, Section 282, p. 105.

¹⁰Ibid., Section 270, p. 101.

¹¹Ibid., Section 270, p. 101.

¹²Ibid., Section 271, p. 102.

state was very small.¹³ Nevertheless, this aid was very instrumental in encouraging higher standards and probably should be revived in a similar form in the State Equalization Fund. After the legislature had failed to appropriate any money for state aid in 1933, there has been a noticeable lowering of standards especially in the rural schools.

State Equalization Fund. Although a fund was established in 1933, no money was appropriated to it by the legislature. It was not until the legislature passed the general two per cent sales tax in 1935 providing two million dollars or more each year to the Equalization Fund for the aid of the public schools of the state, that the proposed program could be carried out. The money appropriated by the legislature to this fund is to be used as follows:

1. The first \$500,000 accruing to the fund in each fiscal year from July 1 to June 30 inclusive shall be distributed among needy schools as follows: The State Superintendent of Public Instruction is to determine the monthly minimum cost of maintaining each of the various classes of elementary schools.¹⁴ The State Superintendent of Public Instruction then certifies to the State Auditor a list of school districts of the state unable to pay the minimum amount needed for the operation of their schools after a maximum effort to do so, together with a statement of the amount of money needed to meet this minimum standard in each case.¹⁵ School districts just referred are to receive

¹³County Superintendent's Annual Report, 1931.

¹⁴General School Laws, State of North Dakota, 1935, Section 25, p. 27.

¹⁵General School Laws, State of North Dakota, 1935, Section 26, p. 27.

aid for a seven months' term only.¹⁶ The State Auditor issues warrants monthly to school districts certified to him by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. If not enough money is available for this purpose, a pro-rating is made of the sum on hand.¹⁷

2. After setting aside \$500,000 to be distributed according to need, the fund shall pay out to each school district that offered four or more units of standard high school work, the sum of \$1.50 per week of actual attendance for each non-resident high school student who attended the high school during the preceding school year, high school tuition shall be paid also to any school district for pupils who have completed the eighth grade, are living in districts without high schools, in border-line counties, and must attend the nearest high schools or neighboring states as a result. The county superintendent must verify the propriety of each claim and notify the State Superintendent of Public Instruction before July 20, who in turn must certify to the State Auditor before September 1, a list of districts entitled to tuition and amount for each.¹⁸
3. The remainder of the fund is to be distributed to schools on a teacher-unit basis as follows: \$175 per year for each grade school teacher-unit and \$150 per year for each high school teacher-unit maintained by the school district for the preceding years.¹⁹ The State Department of Public Instruction must define the terms "grade teacher-unit" and "high school teacher-unit" on

¹⁶Ibid., Section 28, p. 27.

¹⁷Ibid., Section 29, p. 28.

¹⁸Ibid., Section 32, p. 28.

¹⁹Ibid., Section 34, p. 29.

or before August 1, fixing the number of teachers in each unit and any other limitations necessary. The county superintendents shall be notified.²⁰ Not later than July 20, the county superintendents shall certify to the State Superintendent a list of all public schools of the county and the number of high school and grade units present in each. Not later than September 1 the State Superintendent must certify to the State Auditor a list of school districts and teacher-units maintained by each district. The State Auditor shall then pay the districts with \$150 for each high school teacher-unit and \$125 for each grade teacher-unit. If there is not enough money in the balance of the fund for this purpose, there will be a pro-rating of the funds available for it, by the State Auditor.²¹

The State Auditor will pay money on a basis of need, for high school tuition, and on a teacher-unit basis by warrant on the State Equalization Fund made payable to school districts.²²

Finally after all of the above needs have been cared for, if there still remains a surplus of over \$100,000 the amount over the \$100,000 shall be turned into the General Fund of the state.²³

During the period from May 1 to December 31, 1935, \$1,881,284 was collected through the Sales Tax. Of this amount, \$700,000 went to the State Equalization Fund and from there to the public schools. Of the \$20,211.31 collected through the Sales Tax in Foster County for this same period, \$5,238 of it was refunded to the schools of

²⁰Ibid., Section 35, p. 30.

²¹Ibid., Section 36, p. 30.

²²Ibid., Section 37, p. 31.

²³Ibid., Section 40, p. 32.

the county in the various ways listed above, while \$2,500 of it was refunded to Foster County for welfare work.²⁴ Data for collections since December 1935 are not yet available for study. It is expected though that enough money will be taken in through the Sales Tax and appropriated by the legislature to the State Equalization Fund to care for the school needs, as listed above.

Other Receipts. There are a number of other sources of revenue receipts which furnish approximately \$10,000 annually to the schools of Foster County.²⁵ A widely fluctuating amount is brought into the general school fund of Foster County from non-revenue sources, as the sale of bonds and certificates of indebtedness. These sources are not discussed at this time but are taken up in the next chapter.

Per Cent of Income From All Sources

Table 32 shows us that seventy-four and eight-tenths per cent of the total receipts of the schools of Foster County came from local district taxes, in 1934. It also shows that the County Tuition Fund and the State Tuition Fund furnished about the same amount, six and eight-tenths and six and three-tenths per cent respectively. Aid from the Federal Government under the Smith-Hughes law and from the state from the State Aid Fund, amounted to less than one per cent together, other revenue receipts brought in ten and three-tenths per cent of the total amount, while the non-revenue sources totals only one and six-tenths per cent of the total.

²⁴Taxation for School Purposes, W. P. A. Project No. 828, Emil Dietrich, Supervisor.

²⁵County Superintendent's Annual Reports.

Table 32

Per Cent of Distribution of Receipts of the General School Fund
for Foster County and North Dakota, 1934^a

Type of Receipt	Amount	Per Cent ^b	
		Foster County	North Dakota
District levy	\$76,987.82	74.8	67.2
County tuition fund	6,961.63	6.8	5.6
State tuition fund	6,454.94	6.3	7.1
Federal aid	249.58	0.2	1.0
State aid	125.70	0.1	0.1
Other revenue receipts	10,637.39	10.3	7.8
Sale of bonds			3.7
Sale of certificates of indebtedness	500.00	0.4	5.7
Other non-revenue receipts	1,238.80	1.2	1.7
Total receipts	102,859.93	100.0	100.0

^aBiennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1934.

^bTaken to the nearest tenth.

Receipts from the state as a whole were very similar except that the amount received from local taxes was but sixty-seven and two-tenths per cent while the amount taken in from non-revenue sources amounted to ten and one-tenth per cent (Table 32). The year 1935 shows a much different state of affairs for Foster County mainly because of the building program carried on at Carrington. In that year, the school district of Carrington issued bonds to the amount of \$48,168.67 and received from other non-revenue sources, in this

case the Federal Government, a total of \$23,865.64.²⁶ Nineteen hundred and thirty-five also finds no aid being received from the state from the ordinary source, but instead a total of \$5,238 being received from the State Equalization Fund by Foster County for the period from May 1 to December 31, 1935, one-fifth of which properly belongs to the school year ending June 30, 1935.

Federal aid increased in the year 1935 from \$249.58 to \$719.81. Federal aid has again increased during the past year, 1935-1936 due to the establishment of Smith-Hughes agriculture at Carrington. No figures are yet available on this item. It may be expected that percentages of income from the various sources will probably return to approximately the same levels as found in 1934, except that an income of about ten per cent may be expected from the State Equalization Fund as long as the Sales Tax continues in force. This will probably result in the lowering of the local district taxes by about a similar amount.

Trend in School Expenditures

Total expenditures from the General Fund have declined steadily from 1931 to 1934, a total of fifty-one and nine-tenths per cent, as shown by Table 33. From 1934 to 1935 total expenditures again increased about twenty-six and one-tenth per cent. In other words, the expenditures in 1935 were but sixty and six-tenths per cent of what they were in 1931. Table 33 also shows that the average tax rate in mills dropped from eleven and seventy-five hundredths in 1931 to six and seventy-nine hundredths in 1933, but on account of the law cutting

²⁶Ibid., 1935.

Table 33

Trend in Total School Expenditures in Foster County^a

Year	Total Expenditures General Fund	Average Tax Rate in Mills	Average Cost per Month Per Pupil Enrolled
1931	\$216,983.90	11.75	\$10.36
1932	151,820.26	12.35	9.51
1933	127,400.31	6.79	9.83
1934	104,315.22	13.30	6.49
1935	131,522.49	14.44	6.95

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports.

the taxable valuation from seventy-five to fifty per cent, the tax rate practically doubled until in 1935 it was fourteen and forty-four hundredths per cent. A more accurate record showing the trend of expenditures from the General Fund is shown by the average cost per month per pupil enrolled, also shown by the same Table. This cost shows a decline from \$10.36 in 1931 to \$6.49 in 1934 or thirty-seven and five-tenths per cent. The next year, 1935, shows an increase of seven and one-tenth per cent, probably the result of the building program begun in Carrington in that year.

During a similar period from 1931 to 1934, the average cost per pupil per month enrolled for the entire state declined from \$9.96 to \$6.61 or thirty-three and six-tenths per cent.²⁷ A study of Table 34 which is for the period 1932 to 1935, shows that while total expenditures during this period declined but thirteen and seven-tenths per cent, those for general control declined steadily for a total of

²⁷Biennial Reports, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1932, 1934.

thirty-three and seven-tenths per cent, those for instructional service declined a total of twenty-eight and seven-tenths per cent though there was an increase in 1935, and those for auxiliary agencies declined without a let up a total of twenty-eight and four-tenths per cent. Expenditures for plant operation for the period from 1932 to 1935 declined a total of twenty-six and five-tenths per cent while expenses for maintenance increased five and four-tenths per cent, and those for fixed charges decreased a total of forty-five and seven-tenths per cent, the greatest of all decreases. Except for the small increase just mentioned for maintenance, the only other one was for capital outlay, which had an increase of 2394.81 per cent.

This enormous increase is due to the building program carried on at Carrington beginning in 1935, at which time over \$26,000 was spent for new buildings and equipment. It was this large increase in outlay that made for an increase of seven and one-tenth per cent in total expenditures for 1935, and cut the total expenditures for the period from 1932 to 1935 only thirteen and seven-tenths per cent while most of the other items decreased from twenty-five to seventy-five per cent. Debt service, the last item shown in Table 34, made the greatest decline of all, a total of seventy-seven and thirty-one hundredths per cent. In 1932, the amount spent for instructional service was over sixty-two per cent of the total, while the amount spent for the same purpose in 1935 was only forty-eight and eight-tenths per cent showing that the decline in expenditures has been due largely to the large cuts which have been made in teachers' salaries.

Table 34
Trend in Individual Items of School Expenditure in Foster
County, 1932-1935^a

Item	1932	1933	1934	1935
General control \$	5,161.65	\$ 4,269.89	\$ 3,929.00	\$ 3,420.90
Instructional service	91,109.21	78,909.65	62,196.91	64,914.87
Auxiliary agencies	26,262.93	23,039.00	16,940.92	16,886.54
Operation of plant	17,127.95	14,253.26	13,247.94	12,621.74
Maintenance	3,572.29	2,627.14	2,708.80	3,764.93
Fixed charges	3,852.90	2,671.14	1,603.67	2,090.60
Outlay	1,084.29	1,106.69	536.47	26,995.01
Debt service	3,650.07	533.54	2,951.76	827.90
Total	151,821.29	127,410.31	104,115.47	131,221.49

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports.

Comparison of Classes of Expenditures

An examination of Tables 35 and 36 shows first a comparison of the amounts of the various expenditures and second, a comparison of the percentage distribution of the expenditures for the individual school districts of Foster County for 1935. It will be noted that there are a large number of districts that spent nothing for capital outlay or for debt service, and the sums that were spent for these items were small except in the case of Carrington which spent \$26,775 or fifty-one and four-tenths per cent of its total for capital outlay. This large sum of money went for the new school

Table 35

Comparison of Classes of Expenditures Among School Districts
in Foster County, to the Nearest Dollar, 1935^a

School District	Gen- eral Con- trol	In- struc- tional Service	Auxil- iary Agen- cies	Oper- ation of Plant	Main- te- nance	Fixed Charges	Cap- ital Out- lay	Debt Serv- ice
One-room rural								
Eastman	\$ 154	\$ 1,348	\$ 615	\$ 182	\$ 254	\$ 45	\$	\$
McKinley	123	1,839	931	302	183	141		
Bucephalia	129	2,289	249	289	406	48	1	
Melville	195	2,422	594	401	12	336		3
Long View	110	1,556	558	395	40	63		35
Wyard	102	1,168	1,371	152	246	40		10
Rose Hill	93	2,440	303	273	38	20		10
Haven	97	1,722	357	283	152	22	19	
Campbell	99	1,812	478	212	421	48	4	
Nordmore	94	1,106	309	221	69	60		28
Estabrook	111	2,605	804	430	718	84		
Birtsell	183	1,946	412	316	4	27		
Graded								
Lake George	160	3,810	2,190	970	288	60	193	128
Carrington	931	20,096	261	3,095	443	414	26,775	
Glenfield	163	5,828	241	1,563	165	99		
Melby	246	5,125	2,053	1,351	73	65		
Larrabee	124	3,739	1,947	1,110	37	328	2	53
Barlow	113	1,822	193	282	154	1		
Dewey	139	2,290	2,027	893	60	191		560
Foster County	3,421	64,914	16,587	12,622	3,765	2,091	26,995	828

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports.

building which was built in 1935 at Carrington. It is the usual thing where there are so few schools and so little building that when one or two districts build, especially the larger ones in point of enrollment, the amount spent for capital outlay is out of proportion to the rest of the items for that year. As a result, in 1935, capital outlay made

Table 36

Percentage Distribution of Expenditures Among the School Districts
and of Foster County, 1935^a

School District	General Control	In-structural Service	Auxiliary Agencies	Operation of Plant	Maintenance	Fixed Charges	Capital Outlay	Debt Service
One-room rural								
Eastman	5.9	51.6	23.5	7.0	9.7	1.7		
McKinley	3.5	52.3	26.5	8.6	5.2	4.1		
Bucephalia	3.8	67.1	7.3	8.5	11.9	1.4	0.03	
Melville	4.9	61.1	15.0	10.1	0.3	8.5		0.1
Longview	4.0	56.4	20.2	14.3	1.5	2.3		1.3
Wyard	3.3	37.8	44.4	4.9	8.0	1.3		0.3
Rose Hill	2.9	76.8	9.5	8.6	1.2	0.6		0.3
Haven	3.7	64.9	13.5	10.7	5.7	0.8	0.7	
Campbell	3.2	59.0	15.6	6.9	13.7	1.6	0.1	
Nordmore	5.0	58.3	16.3	11.7	3.6	3.7		1.5
Estabrook	2.3	54.8	16.9	9.1	15.1	1.8		
Birtsell	6.3	67.4	14.3	10.9	0.02	1.0		
Graded								
Lake George	2.1	48.8	28.1	12.4	3.7	0.8	2.5	1.6
Carrington	2.9	38.6	0.5	6.0	0.9	0.8	51.4	
Glenfield	2.0	72.3	3.0	19.4	2.1	0.7		
Melby	2.8	57.4	22.9	15.1	0.9	0.7		
Larrabee	1.7	50.9	26.5	15.1	0.5	4.5	0.03	0.7
Barlow	4.4	71.1	7.5	11.0	6.0	0.01		
Dewey	2.3	37.2	32.9	14.5	1.0	3.1		9.1
Foster								
County	2.6	49.5	12.6	9.6	2.9	1.6	20.6	0.6

^aFigured from data in Table 35.

up twenty and six-tenths per cent of the county's expenditures when ordinarily it would have been probably less than one per cent.

For general control, the amount spent in 1935, varies from six and three-tenths per cent for Birtsell District to one and seven-tenths per cent for Larrabee. The average for the county for this purpose was

two and six-tenths per cent of the total amount spent from the general fund. Ordinarily instructional service takes over half of the entire amount spent from the general fund, but in 1935, four of the school districts, the most important being Carrington, spent less than fifty per cent for this purpose, bringing the county average down to forty-nine and five-tenths per cent of the total. This is largely due to the fact that Carrington which spent about thirty per cent of the total for county instructional service, in 1935 spent only thirty-eight and six-tenths of its total for this purpose. This was not due to a great reduction in teachers' salaries and teachers but to the large sum spent for capital outlay, as already mentioned.

Auxiliary agencies, of which the most important items are tuition and transportation took twelve and six-tenths per cent of the county general fund expenditures, the percentages ranging from five-tenths of one per cent for Carrington to forty-four and four-tenths per cent for Wyard school district. Operation of the plant took nine and six-tenths per cent of the county total spent from the general fund, but although the percentages varied considerably, they did not vary as much as many of the other items. Wyard school district was low with only four and nine-tenths per cent spent for this purpose while Glenfield district was high with nineteen and four-tenths per cent. The main items in this class of expenditures include janitor's salaries and fuel.

Maintenance, an item which would ordinarily be expected to remain fairly constant, varies greatly also. Although the county's

average expenditure for this purpose was two and nine-tenths per cent, Birtsell school district was low with only two-tenths of one per cent and Estabrook was high with fifteen and one-tenth per cent. Of the total amount spent from the general fund for the county in 1935, one and six-tenths per cent was for fixed charges, Larrabee school district was low with an expenditure of only one one-hundredth of one per cent while Bucephalia district was high with eight and five-tenths per cent. As already mentioned, many districts spent nothing for capital outlay or for debt service, while Carrington school district spent an unusually large amount on capital outlay for its new building. Dewey school district spent the largest percentage for debt service, nine and one-tenth per cent of its total. It is still paying for a new building built several years ago.

No data being yet available for the state as a whole on expenditures from the general fund, and 1935 being a rather unusual year because of the new building built at Carrington, it is probably better to compare the state and county for the year of 1934. In that year the percentages for state and county were quite similar. They were as follows, the county being first in each case: general control - three and eight-tenths, and three and five-tenths per cent; instructional service - fifty-nine and eight-tenths, and fifty-four and six-tenths per cent; auxiliary agencies - sixteen and five-tenths, and thirteen per cent; operation of the plant - eleven and six-tenths, and twelve and seven-tenths per cent; maintenance - two and six-tenths, and two and eight-tenths per cent; fixed charges - one and five-tenths,

and three per cent; capital outlay - five-tenths of one per cent, and two and six-tenths per cent; and debt service - two and eight-tenths, and nine and two-tenths per cent.²⁸

Transportation Expenditures

Because transportation plays such an important part in this study, and others of a similar nature, special mention is made of it here. Transportation as it deals with the roads themselves, has already been discussed in Chapter 2, but at this time it is intended to give a more detailed discussion of the amount and cost of school transportation. North Dakota schools may furnish either family or bus transportation. Two different rates of payment are used by districts using the family system of transportation, one for schools that are consolidated and one for schools that are not consolidated. The rate for the former schools is somewhat higher.

Table 37 gives a comparison of the bus and family systems of transportation in Foster County for 1935. The number of districts using the bus system remained practically the same for the period represented, as has also the number using the family system until the year 1935 when the group dropped from twelve to nine, a decline of twenty-five per cent. The number of pupils transported by bus systems has fluctuated somewhat but not a great deal. The number transported in this manner in 1935 was a little over seven per cent greater than the number so carried in 1931. On the other hand, the number transported by the family system has declined gradually since

²⁸Biennial Report, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1934.

Table 37

Comparison of the Costs of Transportation by the Bus and Family
Systems in Foster County^a

System	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
Pupils transported by bus system	308	316	315	296	330
Pupils transported by family system	174	192	188	167	114
Average cost per pupil by bus system ^b	42	36	29	30	28
Average cost per pupil by family system ^b	18	20	18	10	14
Average state per pupil cost by bus system ^b	44	34	29	30	c
Average state per pupil cost by family system ^b	18	18	16	18	c
Rank in per pupil cost by bus system in the state	19	25	26	26	c
Rank in per pupil cost by family system in the state	27	36	34	3	c
Number of districts using bus system	5	5	7	5	5
Number of districts using family system	13	13	13	12	9

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports and Biennial Reports of State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

^bTo the nearest dollar.

^cNo data available.

1932, making a total drop from 1931 to 1935 of thirty-four and five-tenths per cent. This situation is probably due to the fact that the only districts using the bus system during the period mentioned, were consolidated school districts and their enrollments have remained about

the same or even increased a little. The one-room school districts have used the family system throughout the entire period and as their enrollments have been decreasing, the number of children transported by the family system has also declined. The fact that three school districts which had transported their school children in 1934 did not do so in 1935, might mean that the people of these districts gave up this privilege in order to keep their schools open.

Per pupil costs of operation for the family system of transportation have in every case been less than that for the bus system; the difference being from one and one-half to three times as great; average costs per pupil transported by bus declined sharply in 1931 and 1932. Since then, only slight declines have been made. Similar costs for family systems of transportation declined very little until 1934, when a cut of forty-four and four-tenths per cent was made, the cost dropping from eighteen to ten dollars. It rose back to fourteen dollars, however, the next year, 1935. One reason for the per pupil cost of the bus system of transportation being higher is the upkeep of the bus itself, which as a rule must be taken care of by the individual bus driver. Ordinarily when roads are passable for automobiles, any kind of a car is used as a bus sometimes hauling a dozen or more children at one time. When cars cannot run, then canvass covered rigs on either wheels or sleds and drawn by horses are used. Sometimes bus lines are kept running for a very few children, even a few members of one family and that brings the cost per pupil up very high.

Average costs per pupil transported by both bus and family systems for the county have remained very similar to those for the state as a whole, except in 1934, when the pupil cost for family systems of transportation for the county declined over forty-four per cent while those for the state rose over twelve per cent, making the cost per pupil for the county only eighty per cent of that for the state as a whole for that year. The rank of Foster County among the fifty-three counties of the state in per pupil costs for bus system transportation has remained much the same from 1931 to 1935, fluctuating only from nineteenth to twenty-sixth place. On the other hand, the rank of the county for family transportation systems fluctuated from thirty-sixth place in 1932 to third place in 1934, due to the great drop in Foster County per pupil costs for transportation systems in 1934.

Table 38 gives a comparison of all school transportation costs taken together, both bus and family systems, in Foster County and the state as a whole. The number of pupils transported in the county has declined from 482 in 1931 to 444 in 1935, a total of almost eight per cent. During the same period, the per pupil cost for Foster County declined from thirty-three dollars in 1931 to twenty-four dollars in 1935, an amount equal to twenty-seven and three-tenths per cent; while the per pupil cost for the state of North Dakota declined from twenty-six dollars in 1931 to twenty-four dollars in 1934, or a percentage of seven and nine-tenths per cent. These declines were not always steady and unvarying, sometimes increases occurred also. Actual costs per pupil remained practically the same for both county and state for the

Table 38

Comparison of the Total Cost of All Transportation in Foster County^a

	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
Pupils transported	482	508	503	463	444
Per pupil cost ^b	33	30	26	23	24
Average state per pupil cost ^c	26	31	25	24	d
Number of districts transporting pupils	18	18	20	17	14
Rank in the state ^c	40	33	40	28	d

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports.

^bTo the nearest dollar.

^cBiennial Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

^dNo data available.

greater part of the time. The number of districts transporting pupils by all means in Foster County in 1935 was fourteen as compared with eighteen in 1931, a decrease of twenty-two and two-tenths per cent, while the rank of the county among the counties of the state fluctuated from highs of fortieth place in 1931 and 1933 to a low of twenty-eighth place in 1934.

Summary of Chapter 4

School incomes have been greatly lowered in the period from 1930 to 1935, not only by declining property valuations, but also by the reduction of the taxable valuation base from seventy-five to fifty per cent by the initiative law of 1932. School taxes reached their peak in 1928, in Foster County, then declined up to 1933 and have since gone up, so that the total drop from 1928 to 1935 amounted to about forty-four per cent. The greatest part of this decline was

absorbed by a reduction in teachers' salaries. The State Tuition Fund which is to be apportioned by counties according to the enumeration of children of school age has been of very little aid to the upkeep of schools due to the smallness of the fund.

It might be better for this money to be left with the law enforcement officers who collect it and use it for law enforcement. The County Tuition Fund is also too small to be of great aid. It might be a good thing for the mill levy to be raised from one-half mill to four mills, as was proposed and defeated several years ago. This fund would then be of value in doing away with some of the educational inequalities. Federal aid has not been an important factor in Foster County, as only Carrington has received any aid under the Smith-Hughes Act for their home economics department and their agriculture department which they kept but one year, 1935-1936. A number of schools have received aid from various federal relief projects. State aid, received up to the passage of Sales Tax in 1935 from which the Equalization Fund was to receive money, was of considerable value in encouraging the raising of standards, but not of much real financial assistance.

Up to the end of the year 1935, over five thousand dollars were received by the school districts of Foster County from the Equalization Fund, on the basis of need, teacher-unit, etc. Two or three times as much will probably be available from this source when it is fully in operation. As a result, it is estimated that about twenty-five per cent of the total school costs will be borne by the state. Other incomes to the total sum of about ten thousand dollars are received annually from various sources. In 1934, local

district taxes furnished seventy-four and eight-tenths per cent of the total receipts of Foster County schools. In 1935, Carrington issued about \$48,000 in bonds and received a grant from the Federal Government of almost \$24,000 to be used for a new building, and because Foster County is so small, its total receipts, debts, etc., for 1935 were greatly affected by the action of this one school district.

Total expenditures from the general fund in 1935 were but sixty and six-tenths per cent of what they had been in 1931. Average costs per pupil per month declined thirty-seven and five-tenths per cent from 1931 to 1934, but increased again in 1935 by seven and one-tenth per cent, probably as a result of the Carrington building program. Except for expenditures from the general fund for maintenance increasing slightly and expenditures for capital outlay increasing over 2,000 per cent, all of the other items decreased from twenty-five to seventy-seven per cent, with debt service making the largest decrease. Ordinarily instructional service takes over half of the entire amount spent from the general fund in Foster County, but in 1935, the situation was changed due to the fact that Carrington which usually spends thirty per cent of the entire amount for instruction in the county, spent so much for capital outlay that the total for instructional service was reduced to thirty-eight and six-tenths per cent.

Other items of expenditure from the general fund were similarly affected. The number of children transported by the family system has declined thirty-four and five-tenths per cent from 1931 to 1935; while

the number transported by the bus system has increased by a little over seven per cent for the same period. This is probably due to the fact that the bus system was used only by consolidated schools whose enrollments have not declined while the family system was used by one-room schools whose enrollments have declined. Three school districts gave up the bus system in 1934, probably to enable them to keep their schools open, since the per pupil cost is less for the family system. The average per pupil cost for transportation in Foster County declined from thirty-three dollars in 1931 to twenty-four dollars in 1935, an amount equal to twenty-seven and three-tenths per cent. During this same period, a similar decline for the state as a whole amounted to only seven and nine-tenths per cent.

CHAPTER 5

SCHOOL INDEBTEDNESS IN FOSTER COUNTY

Of the three types of indebtedness allowed by law in North Dakota for school districts, bonds is the most important. All school districts may issue them to buy, build or improve school buildings and teacherages and to buy land for grounds or buildings. Bonds may also be issued to equip buildings with heat, light, ventilation and other necessary apparatus.¹ Bonds may be issued by any school district in the following manner: (1) The school board may propose the bond issue or one-fourth of the legal voters of the district may sign and present a petition to the school board proposing the issue.² (2) Sixty-six and two-thirds per cent of the legal voters of the district must approve the bond issue in an election held for that purpose.³ (3) The bonds must be advertised for sale.⁴ (4) After the voters have approved the bond issue, the school board must levy a tax to pay both interest and principal. This tax cannot be repealed until the bonds have all been paid for.⁵

School districts may issue bonds in any amount up to five per cent of the assessed valuation of the district, but with the approval of a majority of the voters, this amount may be increased by five per cent more, or a total of ten per cent all together.⁶ According to a law passed in 1921, all bonds issued must be serial

¹General School Laws, State of North Dakota, 1935, Section 441, p. 163.

²Ibid., Section 444, p. 165.

³Ibid., Section 442, p. 164.

⁴Ibid., Section 454, p. 170.

⁵Ibid., Section 449, p. 167.

⁶Ibid., Section 440, p. 161.

maturities, the first installment to fall due not more than three years after the date of issue and the last installment not more than twenty years after the date of issue.⁷

Certificates of indebtedness are used for the purpose of keeping school districts running on a cash basis. They are an agreement on the part of the district to pay a stated sum of money on a definite future date or before a special date not more than twenty-four months in the future together with interest, not exceeding seven per cent per year.⁸ The certificates must be certified by the county auditor to the effect that their total amount is not greater than the amount of uncollected taxes which have been legally levied for the present year plus uncollected taxes of the four preceding years, and which have not been set aside for the payment of other certificates of indebtedness pursuant to Section 2079b1.⁹ Up to the time the law of 1923 concerning certificates was passed, districts commonly issued unlimited amounts of warrants.

A third and final type of indebtedness which school districts may incur is the interest bearing warrants. They may be issued only when a district cannot sell its certificates of indebtedness. Warrants may be issued in excess of cash on hand for current expenses but not for more than the total amount of uncollected taxes, which must also be not otherwise encumbered.¹⁰ Up until 1924, districts were allowed to issue unlimited amounts of warrants.

⁷General School Laws, State of North Dakota, 1935, Section 452, p. 168.

⁸Ibid., Section 2079b1., p. 153.

⁹Ibid., Section 420, p. 152.

¹⁰Ibid., Section 432, p. 157.

The establishment of sinking funds is for the purpose of retiring bonds. The county treasurer acts as custodian of these funds except in the case of cities, school districts, and park districts, that have a population of over 4,000.¹¹

Individual School District Indebtedness in Foster County

Table 39 gives the amounts of the three types of indebtedness for each district of Foster County for the school year ending June 30, 1935. Almost ninety-four per cent of the total indebtedness was in bonds, almost six per cent was in certificates of indebtedness and less than one per cent was in outstanding warrants. About eighty-seven per cent of the total debt is being carried by the graded school districts of Foster County. This is to be expected since almost all building in recent years has been carried on by the graded schools and these same districts have also probably made a greater effort during recent bad economic years to keep up their standards of teaching, equipment, etc.

Per Capita Debt of School Districts in Foster County

Table 40 gives the per capita bonded debt and the total per capita indebtedness for each of the school districts of Foster County as of June 30, 1935. The per capita bonded debt ranges from none at all for nine school districts of the county to \$87.66 for Lake George School District. The average for all the schools of the county was \$25.15. The total per capita debt of the county ranges from none at all for six school districts to \$88.94 for Lake George School District followed quite closely with \$79.23 for Dewey School District.

¹¹General School Laws of State of North Dakota, 1935, Section 427, p. 156.

Table 39

Total School Indebtedness for Individual School Districts of Foster
County as of June 30, 1935^a

School Districts	Net Bonded Indebtedness	Certificates of Indebtedness	Interest Bearing Warrants	Total Indebtedness
One-room rural				
Eastman	\$	\$	\$	\$
McKinley	3,000			3,000
Bucephalia	500			500
Melville	6,000		0.55	6,000.55
Long View		1,565		1,565
Wyand				
Rose Hill				
Haven			4.92	4.92
Campbell				
Nordmore				
Birtsell	10,000		24.10	10,024.10
Graded rural and town				
Lake George	27,000		393.58	27,393.58
Carrington	53,000			53,000
Glenfield	6,500			6,500
Melby	20,000	3,000		23,000
Larrabee	13,000	1,500		14,500
Estabrook		1,878.56	36.81	1,915.37
Barlow				
Dewey	20,500	2,000		22,500
Total all schools	159,500	9,943.56	459.96	169,903.52

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Report, 1935.

Ratio of Indebtedness to Valuation in School Districts

The ratio of net bonded indebtedness of the school districts of Foster County to the total (100 per cent) valuation of all assessable property in 1935 is shown in Table 41. Nine of the nineteen school districts of Foster County have no bonded debt at all so no percentage can be shown for them. The others range from one-tenth of one per cent for Bucephalia school district to four and six-tenths per cent for Lake George school district. The average per cent for all school districts of the county is one and four-tenths per cent.

Table 40

Per Capita School Debt in Foster County, June 30, 1935^a

School Districts	Popula- tion of District ^b	Net Bonded Debt	Per Capita Bonded Debt	Total Indebted- ness	Total Per Capita Debt
One-room rural					
Eastman	179	\$	\$	\$	\$
McKinley	229	3,000.00	13.10	3,000.00	13.10
Bucephalia	201	500.00	2.79	500.00	2.79
Melville	263	6,000.00	22.81	6,000.55	22.82
Long View	178			1,565.00	8.79
Wyard	193				
Rose Hill	203				
Haven	208			4.92	0.02
Campbell	199				
Nordmore	226				
Birtsell	228	10,000.00	43.86	10,024.10	43.96
Graded rural and town					
Lake George	308	27,000.00	87.66	27,393.58	88.94
Carrington	1,949	53,000.00	27.19	53,000.00	27.19
Glenfield	409	6,500.00	15.89	6,500.00	15.89
Melby	470	20,000.00	42.55	20,000.00	42.55
Larrabee	320	13,000.00	40.62	14,500.00	45.31
Estabrook	169			1,878.56	11.12
Barlow	125				
Dewey	284	20,500.00	72.18	22,500.00	79.23
Total all schools	6,341	159,500.00	25.15	169,866.71	26.79

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Report, 1935.^bCounty Auditor's Office, 1935 Census.

Comparisons of Indebtedness of School Districts
with Other Taxing Units

Table 42 gives a comparison of bonded indebtedness for school districts of Foster County and of North Dakota as of June 30, 1934. It shows that the county had an average per capita bonded debt of \$17.55 compared with that for North Dakota of \$17.31, or twenty-four

Table 41

Ratio of Net Bonded Indebtedness of School Districts of Foster County
to the Assessed Valuation in 1935^a

School Districts	Assessed Valuation 100 Per Cent	Net Bonded Indebtedness	Per Cent
One-room rural			
Eastman	\$ 467,922	\$	
McKinley	454,080	3,000	.007
Bucephalia	478,216	500	.001
Melville	622,906	6,000	.010
Long View	376,508		
Wyard	711,596		
Rose Hill	460,660		
Haven	362,652		
Campbell	552,006		
Nordmore	492,452		
Birtsell	474,002	10,000	.021
Graded rural and town			
Lake George	592,950	27,000	.046
Garrington	2,051,396	53,000	.027
Glenfield	811,998	6,500	.008
Melby	620,760	20,000	.032
Larrabee	794,672	13,000	.016
Estabrook	510,196		
Barlow	227,492		
Dewey	580,030	20,500	.035
Total all schools	11,642,596	159,500	.014

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Report, 1935.

cents less for the state as a whole. However, both as per school enrollment and as per thousand dollars of valuation North Dakota had a larger debt than had Foster County. The bonded debt per school enrollment was for the county \$64.34 and for the state \$73.36; while per thousand dollars of valuation, the bonded debt for the county was \$8.71 as against \$11.42 for the state as a whole.

A comparison of total school district indebtedness with that of other taxing units of Foster County as given in Table 43, shows

Table 42

A Comparison of Bonded Indebtedness of School Districts of Foster County and North Dakota as of June 30, 1934^a

Item of Comparison	Foster County	North Dakota
Per capita ^b	\$17.55	\$17.31
Per school enrollment	64.34	73.36
Per thousand dollars of total (100 per cent) valuation	8.71	11.42

^aBiennial Report, Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1934.

^bPer capita figures from 1930 Census.

Table 43

A Comparison of Indebtedness of the Various Taxing Units of Foster County, as of June 30, 1935^a

Taxing Units	Certificates of Indebtedness	Bonds	Interest Bearing Warrants	Total
School districts	\$ 9,943.56	\$159,500.00	\$459.96	\$169,903.52
Townships	8,898.33	3,000.00 ^b		11,898.33
Villages and cities	585.14 ^c	67,410.00 ^d		67,995.14
County	35,000.00			35,000.00

^aCounty Auditor's Records, 1935.

^bBordulac Township only one having bonds outstanding.

^cOnly McHenry village.

^dOnly McHenry village and Carrington city (including \$1400 Park District Bonds.)

that although the county itself has more certificates of indebtedness outstanding than all other taxing units together, still the school districts have a much larger amount of bonds outstanding than all the other units together and also the school districts are the only taxing units having interest bearing warrants outstanding. Of the total debt of \$284,796.99 for all taxing units of Foster County, the school districts have \$169,903.52 or fifty-nine and six-tenths per cent.

Table 44
Trend in School Indebtedness in Foster County^{ab}

Item	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
Bonds					
Issued during year	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	\$	\$	\$48,000
Redeemed during year	8,500	14,500	7,500	11,100	1,000
Outstanding on June 30	139,000	131,100	123,600	111,500	159,500
Certificates of indebtedness					
Issued during year	5,290	4,600	5,700	500	6,600
Redeemed during year	4,790	10,100		1,324.08	3,532.36
Outstanding on June 30	10,500	5,000	8,700	7,876	9,944
Interest bearing warrants					
Issued during year	216,984	151,820	127,400	104,315	131,522
Redeemed during year	217,234	151,991	126,365	102,645	131,863
Outstanding on June 30	587	416	1,009	3,337	460
Sinking and interest fund					
Amount added to fund	13,612	13,692	10,189	12,413	9,154
Amount paid out of fund	12,363	21,066	14,504	17,994	7,988
Balance on June 30	63,803	56,430	52,115	44,873	47,700
Total school indebtedness	150,087	136,516	133,309	122,713	169,904

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1931-1935.

^bTo the nearest dollar.

Trend of School Indebtedness in Foster County

Table 44 shows the amounts issued and redeemed during the year

and the amount outstanding on June 30 for the years 1931-1935. Upon examination, it is seen that the amount of bonds outstanding on June 30 has been gradually lessening from 1931 to 1934, for a total of twenty per cent. In 1935, however, the amount jumped up by \$48,000, due to the fact that Carrington began a new building program.

The amount of certificates of indebtedness outstanding dropped fifty-five per cent from 1931 to 1932, rose seventy-four per cent the following year, dropped by about a thousand dollars in 1934, and rose again by about two thousand dollars in 1935, so that from June 30, 1931 to June 30, 1935 there has been a drop of five and three-tenths per cent in the amount outstanding. School districts in Foster County have not been issuing many certificates of indebtedness in the five years referred to above and in the year 1935, only two districts - Estabrook and Melby, issued more than they redeemed.

From June 30, 1931 to June 30, 1935, the amount of interest bearing warrants outstanding dropped from a sum of \$587 to a sum of \$460 or about twenty-one and six-tenths per cent. However, there was considerable fluctuation during this period, the amount being seventy-one and nine-tenths per cent higher in 1933 than in 1931 and being 468.5 per cent higher in 1934 than in 1931. This type of indebtedness plays a very small part in the total amount of indebtedness, being less than three-tenths of one per cent of it.

The amount in the sinking and interest fund was gradually reduced from June 30, 1931 to June 30, 1934 by twenty-nine and seven-tenths per cent, but rose the following year so that the total reduction from 1931 to 1935 was twenty-five and two-tenths per cent.

Total school indebtedness in Foster County has dropped gradually from 1931 to 1934, but rose in 1935 due to the large bond issue by the Carrington school district for its new building. Total indebtedness on June 30, 1934 was eighteen and two-tenths per cent less than on June 30, 1931 but rose the following year so that it was thirteen and two-tenths per cent greater on June 30, 1935 than it was in 1931. Generally speaking, the debt situation in Foster County school districts is not bad; and is not likely to become so, as long as fair crops are obtained so that running expenses can be paid for out of taxes. Only two schools have issued any bonds for building purposes during the years 1931-1935. Dewey school district issued \$7,500 in 1932 and Carrington school district issued \$48,000 in 1935. It is not likely that there will be any more building in the near future unless caused by some fire or other unforeseen event, since all school districts are now quite well supplied with satisfactory buildings.

Summary of Chapter 5

In 1935, almost ninety-four per cent of the total indebtedness was in bonds, almost six per cent in certificates of indebtedness, and less than one per cent in outstanding warrants. Only about thirteen per cent of the total debt was being carried by the one-room schools of Foster County, the graded schools being the ones that did most of the building in recent years. The per capita debt ranged from none at all for nine of the school districts of the county to \$87.66 for Lake George school district. The average per capita debt for all county schools was \$25.15 in 1935, while the average ratio of

bonded indebtedness to the total assessed valuation for the county was one and four-tenths per cent.

The school districts of Foster County in 1935 had more bonds outstanding and more total indebtedness than all of the other taxing units in the county together, or a percentage of fifty-nine and six-tenths. Up to the year 1934, the net bonded indebtedness had decreased by twenty per cent from that of 1931. In 1935, however, the amount jumped up by \$48,000, due to the building begun that year at Carrington. The amount of certificates of indebtedness outstanding in Foster County school districts decreased with several fluctuations by five and three-tenths per cent from 1931 to 1935. The amount of interest bearing warrants, after several fluctuations, dropped from 1931 to 1935 by twenty-one and six-tenths per cent. This type of indebtedness plays a small part, however, since it makes up less than three-tenths of one per cent of the total. Sinking and interest funds were reduced with one fluctuation by twenty-five and two-tenths per cent during the same period.

Total indebtedness increased by thirteen and two-tenths per cent from 1931 to 1935, due to the building programs of Lake George and Carrington school districts. It is not likely that any more building, on a large scale, will be done in the near future. Generally speaking, the debt situation in Foster County is not bad and is not likely to become so, as long as fair crops are obtained so that current expenses can be paid out of taxes.

CHAPTER 6

ABILITY OF FOSTER COUNTY TO SUPPORT EDUCATION

Because the greater part of school income in this state comes from taxation on property, ability to support schools must largely be estimated through assessed valuations. Other sources of income, such as federal, state, and county will not be considered because they would be available regardless of what plan of property taxation was in effect.

Distribution of Assessed Valuation by Districts

A discussion of assessed or taxable valuations in Foster County has already been made in Chapter 4. There is a great discrepancy among the various districts in assessed valuations (Table 45). While three districts have an assessed valuation ranging from 100,000 to 200,000 dollars, another one, Carrington, has a valuation of over \$1,000,000. These are the extremes, but among the other fifteen districts the variation is very great, also sometimes ranging from two, three, or four times the lower valuations. These discrepancies can only mean that much higher taxes and much greater efforts will have to be made by some school districts in order to equal the buildings, teachers, subjects, etc., offered by the others. The only other alternative is lesser educational opportunities for the districts with the lower valuations.

Taxable Valuation Per Child Enrolled

Although knowledge of the taxable valuation for each district is helpful, a true and complete picture is not obtained until

Table 45
 Distribution of Assessed Valuation by Number of Districts
 1931-1935^a

Valuation in Dollars	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
\$ 50,000 - 99,999					
100,000 - 199,999		1	3	3	3
200,000 - 299,999	1	9	8	10	10
300,000 - 399,999	3	4	4	4	4
400,000 - 499,999	8	4	3	1	1
500,000 - 599,999	2				
600,000 - 699,999	2				
700,000 - 799,999	2				
800,000 - 899,999					
900,000 - 999,999					
<u>1,000,000 - or over</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

^aCounty Auditor's Records.

we know the taxable valuation for each child enrolled in each of the various districts. This is shown along with the maximum amount which can be raised per child at the highest possible property tax levy (Table 46). The taxable valuation per child varies from \$1,928 in Melby School District to \$7,943 in Nordmore school district. The first mentioned district has a four-year high school while the latter has two one-room schools. The only classified high school in the county, Carrington, which also has the highest taxable valuation, has almost the lowest valuation per child enrolled. It is only \$1,939.

Table 46

The Taxable Valuation Per Child Enrolled and the Amount That Can
Be Raised at the Maximum Rate of Taxation, 1935^a

School District	Taxable Valuation ^b	Children Enrolled	Taxable Valuation Per Child ^b	Maximum Amount That Can Be Raised Per Child
four-year high school (18 mills)				
Lake George	\$ 296,475	130	\$2,281	\$41.06
Glenfield	405,999	162	2,506	45.11
Melby	310,380	161	1,928	34.70
Larrabee	397,336	112	3,548	63.86
Dewey	290,015	83	3,494	61.89
Carrington ^c	1,025,698	529	1,939	34.90
graded and consolidated (16 mills)				
Barlow	113,746	32	3,555	56.88
Estabrook	255,098	39	6,541	104.66
one-room rural (14 mills)				
Eastman	233,961	34	6,881	96.33
McKinley	227,040	42	5,406	75.68
Bucephalia	239,158	41	5,833	81.66
Melville	311,453	55	5,663	79.28
Long View	188,254	46	4,092	57.29
Wyard	355,798	34	5,537	77.52
Rose Hill	230,330	40	5,758	80.61
Haven	181,326	43	4,217	59.04
Campbell	276,003	40	6,900	96.60
Nordmore	246,226	31	7,943	111.20
Birtsell	237,002	53	4,472	62.61

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Report, 1935.

^bTo the nearest dollar.

^cTwo one-room rural schools in same district with city school.

None of the four-year high schools have as high a taxable valuation per child enrolled as have the graded and consolidated schools not having four years of high school or the one-room rural schools.

It would seem then as if the rural school districts should be the best able to support their schools and have also better educa-

tional facilities. This is not the case, however, for various reasons. For one thing, the four-year high schools have a considerable number of tuition students from other districts who are not supported by the high school district, except possibly to a small extent. Also it is usually cheaper to do things on a larger scale, which is usually the case in the four-year high school districts. It seems as if the rural school districts have been hit a little harder by the present economic depression than the town districts and as a result taxes have not been as well paid. All of these points taken together show to some extent why rural school districts, in spite of their higher per child valuation, have not found it easier to support their schools. Nevertheless, when economic conditions are normal, it would seem that districts with higher taxable valuations should be able to support their schools with less effort than the others.

The maximum amount that can be raised per child enrolled, corresponds with the taxable valuation per child. A good idea of the difficulties of offering equal education without unequal effort is seen by an examination of the last column of Table 46. In the case of four-year high schools, McHenry and Carrington can raise about an equal amount per child, \$34.70 and \$34.90 respectively, while Dewey and Larrabee can raise \$61.89 and \$63.86 respectively, or almost twice as much. In graded and consolidated schools not having four years of high school work the two schools, Barlow and Estabrook, also have a ratio of almost one to two, since Barlow can

raise \$56.88 per child while Estabrook can raise \$104.66 per child. In the one-room rural group, Long View can raise but \$57.29 per child enrolled while Nordmore can raise \$111.20, again a ratio of almost one to two. As long as children and property are not proportionately distributed, it will be impossible to offer equal educational opportunities without much greater effort on the part of some people.

Comparison of Land Farmed by Owners and Renters

Renters farm more acres and more individual farms in Foster County than do owners (Table 47). However, the value of the land and buildings farmed by full owners and part owners together is greater than the value of similar property farmed by tenants. The significance of this is in the fact that schools, and the effort made to support them, depend on the people living around them. People vary greatly in their feelings and interest toward enterprises depending on whether or not they consider them their own. The owners being the ones to pay most of the property taxes sometimes are reluctant to progress, but usually they will, in the long run, build up better institutions than will renters who come and go and feel no real ownership in them.

Tax Exempt Land Owned by the State and County

Publicly owned tax exempt land deprives the school districts affected of much needed revenue. Six and fifty-eight hundredths per cent of all land in Foster County is so owned and therefore pays no

Table 47

Number of Farms, Farm Acreage, and Value of Land and Buildings by
Tenure of Operator, for Foster County, North Dakota, 1935^a

Item	Full Owners	Part Owners	Managers	Tenants
Number of farms	192	162	6	458
All land in farms, acres	69,576	110,754	4,930	193,371
Crop land harvested, acres	17,712	29,660	1,399	46,360
Crop failure, acres	22,684	32,600	1,502	64,333
Idle or fallow land, acres	9,337	15,891	760	26,134
Value of land and buildings	\$1,554,635	\$1,960,200	\$113,000	\$3,013,250

^aDepartment of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Agriculture,
1935, Washington, D. C.

property tax (Table 48). Two school districts, Glenfield and Barlow, have no tax exempt land while Dewey has 15.62 per cent of all of its land owned publicly and therefore tax exempt, and Larrabee has 16.14 per cent of its land similarly owned. Whenever any land is publicly owned, it follows that the remainder must bear a heavier burden because there is less land left to levy on. It might be well for the state to make contributions to school districts and other taxing units in proportion to revenue lost through inability to tax this land. In order to make this possible, an amendment to the constitution would have to be passed. It is obvious then, that those school districts having a large percentage of tax exempt land may not be able

Table 48
 Number of Quarters of Land Owned by State and County and
 Tax Exempt, 1935^a

School District	Number of Quarter Sections Held by State and County	Number of Quarter Sections Held by State and County	Per Cent Held by State and County
Eastman	4	144	2.78
McKinley	4 ^b	144	2.78
Bucephalia	5	144	3.47
Lake George	3	144	2.08
Melville	13 $\frac{1}{4}$ ^b	144	9.20
Longview	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	144	6.59
Wyard	7 ^b	144	4.86
Carrington	3	144	2.08
Rose Hill	9 ^b	144	6.25
Haven	11 $\frac{1}{4}$	144	7.81
Campbell	16 ^b	144	11.11
Glenfield		144	
Melby	17 $\frac{3}{4}$ ^b	144	12.32
Larrabee	23 $\frac{1}{4}$ ^b	144	16.14
Nordmore	15 ^b	144	10.61
Estabrook	6	128	4.69
Birtsell	1	128	.78
Barlow		32	
Dewey	22 $\frac{1}{2}$ ^b	144	15.62
Foster County	170 $\frac{1}{4}$ ^b	2,592	6.58

^aCounty Auditor's Records, 1935.

State Land Commissioner's Records, 1935.

The Bank of North Dakota, Collection and Land Department's Records, 1935, Bismarck, North Dakota.

^bApproximately correct to the nearest 1/16 of a section.

to support schools as good as other school districts, and if they do do so, it will be only with extra effort on their part.

Distribution of Railroad Mileage in Foster County

Railroad taxes have been paid regularly and have been of great help in keeping schools going in many places. However, not all school districts are fortunate enough to have railroad property in their areas. There are great inequalities in the number of miles of railroad in the various districts (Table 49). Five school districts have none at all, most of the rest have from less than one to more than six miles of railroad within their borders, while one district has from eleven to twelve miles and another has from eighteen to nineteen miles. Carrington school district which is the highest classed school in the county, has the greatest number of miles of railroad also, but three of the other graded and consolidated schools have less than four miles and none of them over seven miles of railroad. Wyard school district has over eleven miles of railroad and supports two one-room rural schools while Dewey having but four miles of railroad supports a four-year high school, showing that those school districts having the greatest railroad mileage don't in all cases support the better schools. The great inequalities in taxable valuations in the various school districts already mentioned in this chapter are due in large extent to the unequal distribution of railroad and other public utility property which in 1934 paid 14.84 per cent of the entire tax bill of the state.¹ An

¹Biennial Report of the North Dakota State Tax Commissioner, 1934.

Table 49

Distribution of Railroad Mileage Among School Districts by Types
of Schools, 1935^a

Miles of Railroad	Number of Districts Maintaining		Total
	One-Room Rural	Graded and Consolidated	
None	5		5
0.0 - 1.0	1		1
1.1 - 2.0	1		1
2.1 - 3.0	1		1
3.1 - 4.0		3	3
4.1 - 5.0	1		1
5.1 - 6.0	1	2	3
6.1 - 7.0		2	2
11.1 - 12.0	1		1
18.1 - 19.0		1	1

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Report, 1935.

equitable distribution of these taxes among the various districts regardless of where the property is located should be brought about, and if so would help to convince the public that larger units for school support would be advisable.

Tax Delinquency in Foster County

Even if a school district does have enough taxable valuation to support a good school without too great an effort being made by the people, there is the problem of getting the taxes paid. This has been a very serious problem in late years and can only be removed by an improvement in economic conditions. The average per cent

Table 50

Average of the Total Taxes Levied for All Schools in Foster County,
Average of the Total Amount Delinquent in November of the Following
Year, and the Average Per Cent of Delinquency, 1931-1935^a

School District	Average of School Taxes Levied in July	Average Taxes Uncollected November 30 of the Following Year (17 months after levy)	Average Per Cent of Delinquency
Eastman	\$ 3,559	\$ 1,223	34.36
McKinley	3,573	1,417	39.66
Bucephalia	3,953	1,456	36.83
Lake George	10,050	3,725	37.06
Melville	5,429	1,505	27.72
Long View	3,100	1,462	47.16
Wyard	4,184	998	23.85
Carrington	25,670	6,706	26.12
Rose Hill	1,879	776	41.41
Haven	2,819	1,187	42.11
Campbell	3,304	1,263	38.23
Glenfield	10,030	3,873	38.61
Melby	10,707	3,258	30.43
Larrabee	10,559	4,060	38.45
Nordmore	2,355	945	40.13
Estabrook	4,432	1,375	31.02
Birtsell	4,013	1,719	42.83
Barlow	2,193	629	28.68
Dewey	9,559	3,672	38.41

^aFigures compiled from the County Auditor's Tax Register, 1931-1935.

of delinquency over a period of five years, 1931-1935, varied from 23.85 for Wyard school district, which, by the way, has the greatest

number of miles of railroad in proportion to the kind of schools it supports to 47.16 for Long View school district which has no railroad mileage at all. (Table 50). Tax delinquency results in a still greater burden being placed on those who do pay their taxes, as well as a lessening of badly-needed school income.

Summary of Chapter 6

There is great variation of assessed valuations among the school districts of Foster County, the poorest district having about one-sixth of the value of the wealthiest one. Taxable valuations per child enrolled also vary greatly, being in some cases, in the ratio of three to one. In every case, the taxable valuation per child enrolled for districts having four-year high schools is less than for the districts having one-room rural schools.

More farms and more acres in the county are run by tenants than by owners; however, the value of the land and buildings farmed by owners and part owners is greater than the value of similar property farmed by tenants. Tax exempt land owned by the state and county greatly lowers the taxable valuation in a number of the school districts. Although in two districts there is no tax exempt land at all, in some others more than fifteen and sixteen per cent is tax exempt. The state probably should make contributions to the districts and other taxing units in proportion to revenue lost for this reason.

Railroad mileage is very irregularly distributed in Foster County. Five school districts have none at all, and one has over

eighteen miles. Taxes on public utilities probably ought to be distributed equally among the school districts of the county, so as to help equalize school support, since the location of such property is one of the chief reasons for unequal taxable valuations.

In late years, tax delinquency has been a serious problem in school support. While some districts had an average delinquency from 1931 to 1935 of over twenty-three per cent, another had as much as forty-seven per cent. Such delinquency results in a still greater burden on those who do pay taxes, and a lessening of income for school support. All of the above mentioned points help to bring about unequal support of schools and unequal educational opportunities for children.

CHAPTER 7

EFFORT OF FOSTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS

In Chapter 6 a discussion was made of the varying abilities of Foster County school districts to support schools. It is now necessary to inquire into the effort made by these same districts to support their schools, if a complete picture of the situation is to be given. Comparison of efforts will be made on several bases - the average expenditures per child enrolled, the ratio of average expenditures to the average assessed valuation, the average tax levies to the type of school maintained, and the ratio of net bonded indebtedness to the assessed valuation.

Total Average Expenditures and Expenditures per Child Enrolled

Average expenditures for the various school districts of Foster County varied greatly (Table 51). They are not a worth while measure of effort, however, since some districts were larger than others, had greater valuations, etc. Column three of this table gives us a good basis for comparison, from one point of view, in that it lists the average expenditures per child enrolled; although no comparison is made, at this time, of their ability to make these expenditures.

The amounts ranged from sixty-eight dollars per child in Nordmore school district in the one-room school group to \$123 per child in the same group, the second amount being eighty-one per cent greater than the first. In the four-year high school group the amounts ranged from seventy-two dollars per child for both

Table 51

Total Average Expenditures and the Average Expenditures Per
Child Enrolled, 1931-1935^a

District	Total Average Expenditures	Average Enrollment	Average Expenditures Per Child Enrolled
four-year high school			
Lake George	\$13,535	123	\$110
Glenfield	10,844	151	72
Melby	11,379	157	72
Larrabee	9,449	110	86
Dewey	8,920	95	94
Carrington ^b	40,548	522	78
Total	94,675	1158	80
graded and consolidated			
Barlow	3,129	35	89
Estabrook	5,814	53	110
Total	8,943	88	102
one-room rural			
Eastman	3,120	30	104
McKinley	4,255	44	97
Bucephalia	4,134	44	94
Melville	6,128	61	100
Long View	3,429	44	78
Wyand	4,554	37	123
Rose Hill	3,393	35	97
Haven	3,029	41	74
Campbell	3,631	43	85
Nordmore	2,508	37	68
Birtsell	4,592	63	73
Total	42,773	479	89

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1931-1935.

^bTwo one-room rural schools in same district with city school.

Glenfield and Melby school districts to \$110 per child for Lake George school district, the second figure being fifty-three per cent greater than the first. The average amount expended per child in the four-year high schools was eighty dollars, with half of the schools exceeding

this amount and the other half not equaling it. The average amount spent per child in the two schools which are graded and consolidated but which have less than four years of high school was \$102; while the average amount expended by one-room rural schools was eighty-nine dollars per child, with six districts exceeding this amount and five districts not equaling it.

Ratio of Average Expenditures to the Average Assessed Valuation

The ratio of total average expenditures to the average assessed valuation, by types of school districts, was used as the second basis for comparing effort (Table 52). In the four-year high school group, Lake George school district was making the greatest effort with a ratio of one to fifty-nine, while Larrabee school district was making the least effort with a ratio of one to 101. The average for this group was a ratio of one to seventy-one, with the number of districts evenly divided. The average of the two graded and consolidated schools having less than four years of high school work was one to 103. In the one-room rural group, Birtsell school district was making the greatest effort with a ratio of one to 127 and Nordmore was making the least effort with a ratio of one to 235. The average ratio for this group was one to 164, with five schools making a greater effort and six a lesser one. Taking all of the school districts together, the ones having four-year high schools were making a much greater effort than were the one-room rural schools and with one exception greater than the two graded and consolidated schools.

Table 52
Ratio of Average Expenditures to the Average Assessed Valuation
for the Period, 1931-1935^a

District	Average Expenditures	Average Assessed Valuation	Ratio of Expenditures To Valuation
four-year high school			
Lake George	\$13,535	\$ 799,236	1 - 59
Glenfield	10,844	994,316	1 - 92
Melby	11,379	774,343	1 - 68
Larrabee	9,449	958,439	1 - 101
Dewey	8,920	699,581	1 - 78
Carrington ^b	40,548	2,453,797	1 - 61
Average	94,675	6,679,712	1 - 71
graded and consolidated			
Barlow	3,129	294,628	1 - 94
Estabrook	5,814	627,549	1 - 108
Average	8,943	922,177	1 - 103
one-room rural			
Eastman	3,120	580,598	1 - 186
McKinley	4,255	631,446	1 - 148
Bucephalia	4,134	656,748	1 - 159
Melville	6,128	834,808	1 - 136
Long View	3,429	484,620	1 - 141
Wyard	4,554	937,941	1 - 206
Rose Hill	3,393	565,770	1 - 167
Haven	3,029	457,297	1 - 151
Campbell	3,631	683,176	1 - 189
Nordmore	2,508	588,884	1 - 235
Birtsell	4,592	582,310	1 - 127
Average	42,773	7,003,598	1 - 164

^aCounty Superintendent's Reports, 1931-1935.

^bTwo one-room rural schools included in same district.

Comparison of Tax Levies to Type of School Maintained

The total levy in mills by type of school district was used as the third basis for comparison of effort (Table 53). The mill

Table 53

Comparison of Average Tax Levies of the School Districts of Foster
County to the Type of School Maintained, 1931-1935^a

Type of School	Levy for General Fund in Mills	Levy for Interest and Sinking Fund in Mills	Total Levy in Mills
four-year high school			
Lake George	16.17	6.72	22.89
Glenfield	16.33	1.29	17.62
Melby	18.00	6.49	24.49
Larrabee	17.03	2.26	19.29
Dewey	17.21	6.71	23.92
Carrington ^b	18.00	0.38	18.38
Average	17.12	2.98	21.10
graded and consolidated school			
Barlow	13.58		13.58
Estabrook	13.08		13.08
Average	13.33		13.33
one-room rural school			
Eastman	10.43	1.55	11.98
McKinley	9.40	1.49	10.89
Bucephalia	10.35	0.33	10.68
Melville	10.31	1.15	11.46
Long View	12.34		12.34
Wyard	7.55		7.55
Rose Hill	6.62		6.62
Haven	11.21		11.21
Campbell	8.75		8.75
Nordmore	7.43		7.43
Birtsell	8.88	4.23	13.11
Average	9.39	0.80	10.19

^aComputed from County Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1931-1935.

^bTwo one-room rural schools included in the district.

levy ranged from 17.62 for Glenfield school district to 24.49 for Melby school district in the four-year high school group. The fact that these school districts did maintain a four-year high school is

a reason in itself to conclude that they were making a greater effort than those districts which did not maintain a full high school or those that had none at all. The average levy for the general fund of this group was 17.12 mills, which was ninety-five per cent of the maximum allowed by law. The average total levy for this group was 21.10 mills.

The two graded and consolidated schools with less than four years of high school had practically the same levy for both the general fund and the total levy, there being no levy at all for interest and sinking fund. The average levy was 13.33 mills which was eighty-three per cent of the sixteen mill levy allowed by law for this group. The total average levy for this second group was but sixty-three per cent of the same levy for the first named group which shows that a much greater effort was being made by the first group.

Probably the greatest range of effort was found in the one-room rural school district group. While Rose Hill levied but 6.62 mills for all school purposes, Birtsell levied 13.11 mills or almost twice as much. The average general fund levy for this group was 9.39 mills which was sixty-seven per cent of the fourteen mills allowed by law. The total average levy was 10.19 mills which was but seventy-six per cent of the total average for the graded and consolidated schools and only forty-eight per cent of the total average levy made by districts supporting four-year high schools. Seven of the one-room school districts levied more than the average for the group

while four of them levied considerably less than that. It is very apparent that the one-room rural school districts made a much smaller effort as a group than did the other two groups, especially the first one.

A distribution of the total tax levies of all the school districts of Foster County for the school years ending in 1927, 1932, and 1936 shows that the median for the year 1927 was the same as that for the year 1932, it being from 10.00 to 11.99 mills; but that the median rose in 1936 to from 14.00 to 15.99 mills. This was an increase of about forty per cent (Table 54).

Ratio of the Net Bonded Indebtedness to the Assessed Valuation

A fourth basis for comparison of effort made by school districts of Foster County, as presented here deals with the bonded indebtedness in relation to the assessed valuation (Table 55). Nine school districts, seven of them having one-room rural schools and the other two graded and consolidated schools with less than four years of high school, had no bonded indebtedness at all while Lake George school district had 4.55 per cent which was the largest for all the districts. The average percentage for the four-year high school group was 2.56, that for the graded and consolidated group zero, and that for the one-room rural group thirty-six hundredths of one per cent. This also seems to show that the four-year high school group was making a greater effort than any of the other groups.

Table 54

Distribution of Total Tax Levies of Various School Districts of Foster County for the Years 1926, 1931, and 1935^a

Levy in Mills	Number of Schools Levying		
	1926 ^b	1931 ^b	1935 ^b
None		1	1
01.00 - 3.99	1	1	1
04.00 - 5.99	1	3	
06.00 - 7.99	4		2
08.00 - 9.99	1	4	
10.00 - 11.99	4	4	1
12.00 - 13.99	4		2
14.00 - 15.99	1	2	3
16.00 - 17.99	1		2
18.00 - 19.99	1	3	2
20.00 - 21.99			1
22.00 - 23.99	1	1	1
24.00 - 25.99		1	1
26.00 - 27.99			2
28.00 - 29.99			

^aCounty Auditor's Records, 1926, 1931, and 1935.

^bTaxes raised from the levies here listed were used for the school years ending in 1927, 1932, and 1936.

Comparison of Effort as Shown by a Combined Ratio and General

Fund Mill Levy Relative Position Table

Another comparison of effort, using the table developed by Ivar Knapp in his thesis, "A Financial and Population Survey of the School

Table 55

Ratio of the Net Bonded Indebtedness of the School Districts of Foster
County to the Assessed Valuation, 1935^a

School District	Assessed Valuation	Net Bonded Indebtedness	Per Cent
four-year high school			
Lake George	\$ 592,950	\$ 27,000	4.55
Glenfield	811,998	6,500	0.80
Melby	620,760	20,000	3.22
Larrabee	794,672	13,000	1.87
Dewey	580,030	20,500	3.53
Carrington ^b	2,051,396	53,000	2.58
Total	5,451,806	139,500	2.56
graded and consolidated			
Barlow	227,492		
Estabrook	510,196		
Total	737,688		
one-room rural			
Eastman	466,922		
McKinley	454,080	3,000	0.66
Bucephalia	478,316	500	0.10
Melville	622,906	6,000	0.96
Long View	376,508		
Wyard	711,596		
Rose Hill	460,660		
Haven	362,652		
Campbell	552,006		
Nordmore	492,452		
Birtsell	474,004	10,000	2.11
Total	5,452,102	19,500	0.36

^aCounty Superintendent's Annual Report, 1935.

^bTwo one-room rural schools in the same district.

Districts of Williams County, North Dakota," was made by combining the ratio of expenditures to valuation and the general fund levy.¹ This

¹Ivar Knapp, A Financial and Population Survey of the School Districts of Williams County, North Dakota, Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of North Dakota Library, 1936.

two-way table gives a very complete picture of effort made by the various school districts of the county. Those districts that are placed at the right and top of the table have made the greatest efforts, while those at the bottom and to the left, made the least efforts.

Three school districts, all with four-year high schools, Melby, Carrington, and Lake George, have put forth the greatest efforts in the years from 1931 to 1935, while Nordmore school district supporting two one-room schools made the least effort (Table 56). Larrabee school district made the least effort of the four-year high school group, while Birtsell made the greatest effort of the one-room rural group. The two graded and consolidated schools having less than four years of high school work made about as much effort as the lowest of the four-year high school group, and a considerably greater effort than any of the one-room rural school group. Comparisons of any of the other school districts may be made by locating the positions of the districts on the table with reference to each other.

Comparison of Ability and Effort to Support Schools

The ability of the various school districts of Foster County to support education was developed in the last chapter, while in this chapter an attempt has been made to establish some conclusions as to the effort made by these districts to use their abilities. A comparison of the two, which is after all more or less of an estimate, is made in Figure 4. The ability rankings are arrived at by using the taxable valuations per child enrolled (Table 46); while the effort rankings are

Table 56

Distribution Table of Effort Put Forth by the School Districts of
Foster County on the Basis of Effort Ratio and Average
General Fund Levy

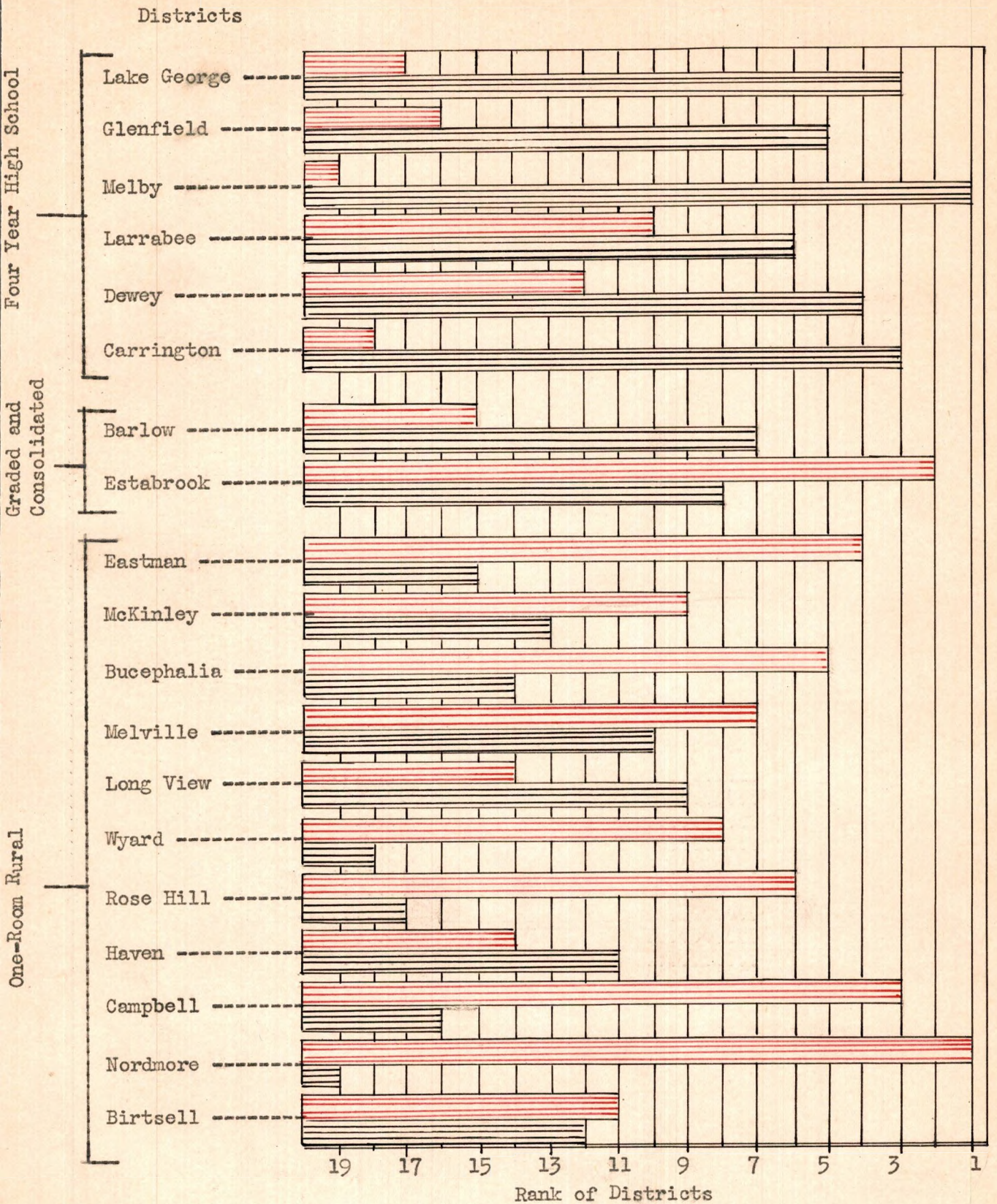
Ratio of Expenditures to Valuation	6-7.9	8-9.9	10-11.9	12-13.9	14-15.9	16-17.9	18
1 - 50-59						#4	
1 - 60-69							#15, #10
1 - 70-79						#22	
1 - 80-89							
1 - 90-99				#21		#14	
1 - 100-109				#19		#16	
1 - 110-119							
1 - 120-129				#20			
1 - 130-139			#5				
1 - 140-149		#2		#6			
1 - 150-159			#3, #12				
1 - 160-169	#11						
1 - 170-179							
1 - 180-189		#13	#1				
1 - 190-199							
1 - 200-209	#9						
1 - 210-219							
1 - 220-229							
1 - 230-239	#18						

Name and Number of School Districts of Foster County

Eastman.....# 1	Campbell.....#13
McKinley.....# 2	Glenfield.....#14
Bucephalia.....# 3	Melby.....#15
Lake George....# 4	Larrabee.....#16
Melville.....# 5	Nordmore.....#18
Long View.....# 6	Estabrook.....#19
Wyard.....# 9	Birtsell.....#20
Carrington.....#10	Barlow.....#21
Rose Hill.....#11	Dewey.....#22
Haven.....#12	

arrived at by combining the ratio of expenditures to valuation (Table 52) and the general fund mill levy (Table 53). The conclusions arrived at by the two-way check (Table 56) were also used to determine the effort put forth by the districts to support

Figure 4. COMPARISON OF ABILITY AND EFFORT OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF FOSTER COUNTY TO SUPPORT EDUCATION



Legend



Ability



Effort

their schools. These bases were used rather than the others mentioned because they were considered to be more accurate and complete.

In general, ability and effort varied inversely, that is, those making the greatest effort seem to have had the least ability and vice versa (Figure 4). The four-year high schools were making greater efforts than the rest of the schools, but had less ability to support their schools. On the other hand, the one-room rural school districts, in general, had greater ability but were making much less effort. There were also great variations among the various schools of the same groups. For instance, in the one-room rural group, Nordmore school district was first in ability but nineteenth or last in effort while Wyard which was fourteenth in ability was ninth in effort. Also in the four-year high school group, Melby was nineteenth or last in ability and first in effort, while Larrabee was tenth in ability and sixth in effort. In other words, there were great variations among the districts in ability to support and effort to support education, as well as, in the quality and completeness of the education offered the children who attended these schools. What was true for this county was also true for other counties of the state as shown by other surveys which have been completed. It is therefore a state-wide problem and should be treated as such. An effort should be made to get more state and national funds to help equalize the situation.

Summary of Chapter 7

Efforts of school districts to support their schools varied greatly as shown by the following bases of comparison: expenditures

per child enrolled, ratio of average expenditures to average assessed valuation, comparison of tax levies to type of school maintained, and the ratio of the net bonded indebtedness to the assessed valuation.

The average expenditure per child enrolled varied from sixty-eight dollars for the lowest district to \$123 for the highest district, the second amount being eighty-one per cent greater than the first. The district making the greatest effort on the basis of average expenditure to average assessed valuation was doing so at the ratio of one to fifty-nine, while the district making the least effort on this basis was doing so at the ratio of one to 235. Taking all school districts together, the ones having four-year high schools were making a much greater effort than the ones having one-room rural schools. While the districts offering four years of high school work were levying ninety-five per cent of the maximum allowed by law, the districts with graded and consolidated schools not having four years of high school were levying eighty-three per cent of the maximum allowed by law, and the districts having one-room rural schools were levying but sixty-seven per cent the maximum allowed by law, and but forty-eight per cent of the average levy made by districts with four-year high schools.

The ratio of bonded indebtedness to the assessed valuation, although not as good a basis for comparison of effort as some of those just discussed, does give us some idea of the effort made in regard to buildings, etc. Nine school districts had no bonded indebtedness at all while one had 4.55 per cent. Here again, the districts having four-year high schools seem to have made greater efforts than the rest of the school districts of the county.

A final and the most complete basis for comparison to discover which school districts have made the greatest efforts to maintain their schools was made by combining the ratio of expenditures to valuation index and the general mill levy index (Table 56). Here again as in all of the other comparisons, the four-year high school districts have made the greatest efforts and the one-room rural districts have made the least efforts.

A comparison of the ability and effort of school districts to support their schools in Foster County, showed that they vary inversely. Ranking the school districts in ability according to the taxable valuations per child enrolled, and in effort according to an average of the ratio of expenditures to valuation and the general mill levy, showed that while districts having four-year high schools had the least ability, they were making the greatest efforts; and while districts having one-room schools had the greatest ability, they were making the least efforts. These factors along with others already mentioned resulted in unequal educational opportunities for children of Foster County; and it is this condition which must be remedied sooner or later.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study, as stated in the introduction, was to make a general investigation and study of the school situation in Foster County with the intention of bringing to light the good and bad features of the system; and to suggest possible changes which might eliminate the bad ones, as well as to give others similarly interested a basis to work on.

It was found that Foster County, with but eighteen townships and located in the west-central part of the eastern third of North Dakota was entirely rural and agricultural. The transportation facilities were better than the average, it being well-supplied with both railroads and roads, so that almost any conclusions arrived at would not be upset because of poor transportation. It was found in 1930, also, that about eighty-eight per cent of the slowly increasing population were native-born whites, and that only one per cent of the total population was illiterate.

In general, the school situation in Foster County in 1935, was found to be somewhat better than in many counties, but still much in need of improvement. School terms were nine months long in all but one school district, in which the two one-room schools had but eight months. Pupil-teacher ratios averaged 13.9 for the one-room rural schools, varied from 19.5 to 39.3 for the grades and from 9 to 32 for high schools in towns. Of the eighty-two teachers, seventy-two per cent had professional certificates and twenty-five per cent had first

grade professional certificates. Salaries for Foster County teachers averaged nine per cent higher than for North Dakota teachers in general. However, while the eighty-two teachers had to take cuts in salary averaging about twenty-eight per cent during the period of 1931 to 1935, the ninety-nine school officers of the county reduced the sum of their salaries and expenses by about only one-half of one per cent during the same period.

While high school enrollments increased by 120 per cent from 1920 to 1935, grade enrollments decreased by 19.4 per cent or a total decrease for all students of three and six-tenths per cent. The declining grade enrollment was probably due to the declining birth rate, whose effects had not yet reached the high school. Attendance records, although apparently very good for all schools, were better for the town schools. A truer picture might have been gained if nothing but illness were allowed as an excuse for either absence or non-membership.

School incomes had been greatly lowered in the period from 1931 to 1935, by declining property valuations, and by reduction of the taxable valuation base from seventy-five to fifty per cent. The greater part of the forty-four per cent drop in school taxes from 1928 to 1935 was absorbed by reductions in teachers' salaries. The state tuition fund and the county tuition fund were both too small to be of much financial aid to the school districts. State aid formerly encouraged higher standards, but was stopped in 1933. It was begun again in 1935 under the equalization fund which together with other state helps is expected eventually to bring the total of state aids up to about twenty-five per cent of the total school income.

Total expenditures from the general fund in 1935, were but 60.6 per cent of what they were in 1931, with debt service making the largest decrease, and capital outlay the largest increase, amounting to over 2,000 per cent, due mostly to the building program of the Carrington school district. This program also caused an increase in per pupil costs per month in 1935, after they had declined by 37.5 per cent from 1931 to 1934. The number of children transported by the family system had declined while the number transported by the bus system had increased, probably due to the fact that the former system was used by one-room schools whose enrollments had declined while the latter system was used by consolidated schools whose enrollments had not declined. Three school districts gave up the bus system of transportation in 1934, probably to enable them to keep their schools open. The average per pupil cost for transportation declined from 1931 to 1935 by about twenty-seven per cent.

In 1935, almost ninety-four per cent of the total indebtedness of Foster County school districts was in bonds, with eighty-seven per cent of the total debt being carried by schools other than one-room. The average per capita debt for all county school districts was only \$25.15. Net bonded indebtedness decreased by twenty per cent for the schools of the county from 1931 to 1934, but due to Carrington's building program, it again increased by \$48,000, or 43.5 per cent in 1935; or a total increase of 14.7 per cent from 1931 to 1935. Since Foster County is so small and since Carrington has the largest school in it, it is possible to understand how the building program of only one school district in the county can change the debt situation of the entire county so materially.

The amount of certificates of indebtedness outstanding had decreased, with several fluctuations, by five and three-tenths per cent from 1931 to 1935, while the amount of interest-bearing warrants outstanding decreased during the same period by 21.6 per cent. The fact that the two latter forms of indebtedness play such a small part in the entire debt picture, and the fact that they have decreased in amount when in many counties of the state they were increasing greatly, must mean either that the school districts of Foster County were quite well off financially, with most of the taxes being paid, or that their was not as great an effort being made to support their schools as in some of the counties. The latter supposition is probably the truer of the two. Although total indebtedness increased over the period referred to above due to the large bond issue on the part of the Carrington school district, it was unlikely that any more such issues would be made in the near future, due to the fact that no more buildings were really needed. Generally speaking, the debt situation of the county was not bad and was not likely to become so, as long as crops were good enough to enable taxes to be paid and current expenses thereby met.

There was great variation of assessed valuations among the school districts of Foster County, as well as, of taxable valuations per child enrolled. As a result, the tax rates were much higher in some districts than in others and even then the educational advantages offered the children were not at all equal. When the tax rate was high, it was generally taken for granted that the school district was spending

a large amount of money, but this was not necessarily true. For instance, while Melby school district was levying the legal limit of eighteen mills for its general fund and 6.49 mills for interest and sinking fund or a total of 24.49 mills, it was spending but seventy-two dollars per child per year, or next to the lowest in the county. On the other hand, Wyard school district with a general fund levy of 7.55 mills and a total levy of the same number of mills, was spending \$123 per pupil per year or the largest amount in the county. Melby school district supported a four-year high school, while Wyard had but two one-room rural schools.

Tenants farmed more land in Foster County than owners in 1935, but the value of the property they farmed was less. School districts populated by a majority of tenants may, for a time, apparently progress faster in various educational ways, but eventually districts with a majority of owners living in them who intend to remain and therefore wish to build up their community in general and their schools in particular, will bring about more permanent advancement. Tax exempt land, which varied from none to sixteen per cent of the total in some districts, greatly lowered the taxable valuation. Railroad and other public utility property was unequally distributed about the county, causing even more unequal taxable valuations and unequal tax delinquency; or in other words, unequal ability on the part of the school districts to offer equal educational opportunities to the children.

Because some school districts, for various reasons, had more ability to support their schools, it did not follow necessarily that they did so. The average annual expenditure per child enrolled varied from sixty-eight dollars to 123 dollars, the second amount being eighty-

one per cent greater than the first; while the ratio of expenditures to assessed valuation varied from one to fifty-nine to one to 235. Greatest efforts were made by school districts having four-year high schools, followed next by districts having graded and consolidated schools but not four-year high schools, and finally by the districts having one-room rural schools. These efforts, rather than corresponding to the abilities of the school districts to support education, varied inversely, for the most part. Districts having four-year high schools had the least ability to support their schools but were making the greatest effort; while districts having one-room schools only, had the greatest ability and were making the least effort. Naturally this situation resulted in many educational inequalities.

In general then, the following conclusions in regard to the school system of Foster County, may be drawn from the data gathered by this study:

1. Comparatively speaking the school situation is fairly good, but still in need of much improvement largely because of unequal educational advantages being offered in various school districts.

2. There is duplication of educational offerings in many places some due to unwise policies on the part of the school boards and people and some due to laws which are out of harmony with present needs.

3. The greater part of school support still comes from local sources, but material help is being received from county and state in various types of aids.

4. There are great differences in the ability of the various districts to support their schools.

5. The debt situation of the county school districts is relatively good.

6. Much greater efforts must be made by the people of some school districts to support education, and sometimes it is impossible even then to equal educational offerings of neighboring school districts.

7. School districts with the greatest ability did not put forth the greatest effort to support their schools.

Recommendations

The ideal school organization for Foster County is one which would equalize educational opportunities for all children, as well as, equalize the tax load, so that property wherever found would pay its fair share. Since the county is so small and regularly shaped it would probably be possible to organize on the county plan, which would equalize educational opportunities in the county. This would still leave inequalities between the counties and between the states which could only be done away with by a large measure of both state and national support. The ideal would be quite well approached if half of the support for schools could be received from local sources and half from the sum of state and national sources, such as is now partly received from the state under the equalization fund and was suggested for the nation in the proposed Harrison-Fletcher Bill. The local support could well come partly from a four mill county tax and partly from the enlarged local district. Railroad and other public utility property should be taxed for the benefit of the entire county regardless of where found. A return of tax exempt land to the rolls

through some form of state reimbursement for revenue so lost, is also a necessity. Although a large amount of coordinating power would need to rest in the hands of a central county agency, the running of the school in general could still remain in the local district.

Districts should be enlarged until they are more or less identical with the larger community areas. These districts would need very flexible boundaries so that children could attend school where it would be most convenient for them. Such organization of districts would necessarily overlap county lines, which would necessitate a state planning agency with power to organize school districts on the best possible state-wide scale. Reduction in the number of districts would result in fewer and larger schools, which in turn would mean more adequate educational offerings for all children, as well as, lower costs. The latter would be brought about partly by lessening the number of school officers, lessening overhead expense in upkeep of buildings, etc., and by buying supplies on a larger scale. Lowering of costs would be somewhat counteracted by increases in transportation expenses.

It is suggested that one large school be established at Carrington, the county seat, which is not only the largest city but also the most centrally located. It has one federal and three state highways coming into it from all sides, as well as, a number of good county and township roads; so there would be little difficulty with transportation. A large part of the western half of Foster County already send their high school pupils to Carrington, so the change would not be so hard to bring about. Such a school would do away with all high

schools, all one-room schools, and most of the town grade schools of the county.

All high school and junior high school students could be transported to Carrington, while the schools now found at Bordulac, Juanita, Grace City, Glenfield, and McHenry could be used for children attending the lower grades, thereby closing all one-room schools and the two graded and consolidated schools at Barlow and Estabrook. If necessary, another county high school might be established at Glenfield or McHenry or possibly both, since although they are but eight miles apart, they have quite large outlying territories in neighboring counties. This latter suggestion would depend considerably on the school organization in the neighboring counties.

Such a county reorganization of school districts as suggested above would eliminate many small expensive schools, and bring about many savings due to increased efficiency; but even if the savings thus made were largely used up by extra transportation expenses, still the children of the county would be receiving better and more equal educational opportunities than they now are, and the wealth would be taxes equally wherever found. The rough plan of school organization here presented is not intended to be complete or final, but is merely a suggestion to the people of Foster County, in general, and any especially interested individuals, in particular, as to how the present school situation with its obviously unequal educational opportunities and its inadequate and unfair means of support, may possibly be improved.

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