

(13) In recent years the secondary and the technical schools have come closer together in many ways. The introduction of practical subjects into the secondary schools, on the one hand, and, on the other, the welding of the diversified subjects of the technical schools into strong and unified courses have reduced the gap between them. The new regulations for post-primary instruction apply equally to both types of school, and the new salary scale introduced in 1944 is the same for secondary and for technical teachers. As mentioned above, grants will be made to secondary and technical schools on the same basis in 1946. I predict that in the not very distant future the two systems will tend to coalesce, but that the six or seven biggest technical schools will in time break away from the post-primary system as such and become senior technical colleges catering for the growing needs of industry and business for highly trained technicians and workers. The introduction of daylight training for apprentices and young workers generally would accelerate the process.

Rural Education

The Government's policy has always been to give to every country child educational facilities as nearly as possible equal to those open to the city child, whilst still providing for rural areas a type of education that fits children for happy and useful life in the country. The combining of these two purposes is by no means easy, particularly in the small district high school which finds difficulty in providing staff and facilities for teaching both the academic subjects needed by children going on to higher education and also the more practical subjects required by those who intend to go directly into rural pursuits. Advances made in the past ten years have pointed the way to at least partial solutions of this problem:—

(1) Between 1935 and 1939 the policy of consolidation of small schools was pressed forward strongly where the local communities were agreeable. In many cases this enabled district high schools to be established, and in others it brought existing secondary Departments to a size sufficient to justify specialist staffing and more optional courses. The war temporarily slowed down consolidation.

(2) Largely as a concomitant to consolidation, the system of school conveyance has been greatly extended for both primary and secondary children. In 1935, £94,457 was spent on school conveyance by rail or by road; in 1945 the amount was £407,187.

(3) In 1937 the boarding-allowance for children who have to board away from home to attend school was increased from 5s. to 7s. 6d. a week; in 1944 it was raised to 10s.

(4) As previously stated, secondary-school bursaries of £40 each were instituted to help country children to secure fuller secondary education.

(5) The number of secondary departments of district high schools increased from 85 in 1935 to 104 in 1945, and the rolls rose from 5,331 in 1935 to 8,034 in 1945. This gives some measure of the additional facilities provided for secondary education in the country. The special grants, already referred to, for physical education and science equipment have been made available for all district high schools.

(6) Agricultural club work has been strongly encouraged. In 1935 there were about 3,000 projects in the schools; in 1945 there were over 33,000.

(7) There has been a marked increase in the number of manual-training centres attached to country schools.

(8) Part-time teachers in commercial subjects were reintroduced into district high schools in 1939.

(9) New hostels have been provided at some post-primary schools and additions made at others. As soon as conditions permit many more hostels will be built.

(10) The scale of primary teachers' salaries introduced in 1938 made country positions relatively more attractive than town ones in order to draw highly graded teachers into rural schools.