

The question of scholarship regulations can hardly be considered apart from the whole question of the link between secondary and primary education. In any case, the differences in the scholarship regulations in the several districts do not seem to be based on differences in the children or in the conditions of life, but upon circumstances that, for want of a better word, can only be described as accidental.

The question of teachers' certificates brings up the questions of teachers' examinations and of the marks awarded for efficiency; but it also suggests at once a far more important question—namely, that of the training of teachers. I take the liberty of quoting from the last report of the Department. Under the heading of "Training-schools" we read: "It will become a question for consideration in the near future whether definite training for all teachers should not be provided by the State. In the case of the four large centres it will be possible to co-ordinate this with the work of the university colleges; at the smaller centres those who cannot by scholarships or otherwise find admission to the four chief normal schools should likewise have the opportunity of undergoing a regular course of training." I would point out that secondary-school teachers need training as well as primary-school teachers; that it ought to be our object to get for our teachers the best material available; that we ought not, therefore, to make such arrangements as tend to exclude those who have had a secondary education, but should encourage as many as possible of our future teachers to get as thorough a secondary training as possible. Each training-college should have a model school in two sections, or rather two model schools, in connection with it—say, one with thirty to forty pupils, and one with 100 to 150 pupils. The students should not merely look on, but practise continuously under close supervision in these model schools for part of each day. Practice in the manipulation of larger schools could be gained by more occasional practice in associated schools. The director of the training-college should be lecturer also in psychology and in the history of education, both of which subjects should be broadly but not exhaustively treated, with a view to their influence in the making of intelligent and thoughtful teachers. The director also should have full control, by means of capable assistants acting under his direction, of the model schools, and be in constant communication with the head-teachers of associated schools.

These remarks are intended merely as suggestions to arouse discussion. An obvious question arises at once, Would it be better that these main training-colleges or normal schools should be under the Boards, or be colonial in character?

The next subject on the list, "Higher instruction in primary schools and district high schools," deals with a most important question—that of the co-ordination of primary and secondary education. The present system of scholarships only partly, and in a rough-and-ready way, solves that question; in fact, it leaves it unsolved for a very large number of children whom it would probably pay the State to educate more thoroughly than it at present educates them.

We have to consider the cases of boys or girls whose day-school course should be extended and can be extended beyond the primary course (all other boys and girls should, I consider, be found in the continuation schools). These cases are not all alike:—

(1.) These boys or girls who ought to receive (are worth, so to speak) a secondary education may be found in a small primary school, where they are too few to form a class under a separate teacher. The cleverest of them may obtain scholarships, and, boarding away from home, attend a high school in a larger town. Do we meet the needs of the others by giving them a little Latin grammar and a nodding acquaintance with algebraical symbols? Should not a more rational programme with choice of suitable subjects be drawn up for such cases?

(2.) In a recent circular on district high schools the Minister has already dealt with schools large enough to be able to have a separate secondary class under a separate teacher. I should point out in this connection that, as there is no limit to the number of free places for which the extra £4 per annum will be paid, there is no reason why all the district high school education should not be free, if it were expedient to make it so. The subjects named are not necessarily subjects that would be suggested by the department as suitable; as a working basis for the present year the subjects now actually being taught in district high schools have been named. How far is it expedient that district high schools should attempt to imitate fully staffed high schools and model their programmes on an implied but false assumption that the majority of their secondary pupils intend to proceed to the university? (No doubt a very similar question might be asked in regard to many of the high schools proper.) In other words, what should the district high schools teach? The Minister is inclined to favour the establishment, where suitable conditions exist, of district high schools, rather than the establishment of high schools too small to be stable either in staff or numbers.

(3.) We have lastly the case of those boys and girls who live in large towns having fully equipped high schools, who have passed Standard VI. and are ready to continue their school course. Some of them may stay for one year, others for two or three years.

Assuming that it is desirable to provide a Standard VII. for the former, what is the best course to pursue in regard to the latter? Provide a secondary education free for them in the primary school and you cripple the high schools; you introduce an expensive overlapping, for the State has already endowed these high schools to do the work. Yet you are faced by the question of the fees that have to be paid at the high schools, except by a comparatively small number of scholarship-holders. In short, are district high schools to be established in towns where fully equipped high schools exist? Or is secondary work to be done in Standard VII.? Or are more scholarships or free places to be made in high schools? What subjects should be taught in Standard VII.?

The recently gazetted regulations under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act will, I think, clear up many of the questions that have been suggested from time to time in connection with handwork in schools and with continuation schools.