

velopment in them of executive capacity. Hence a considerable amount of time is spent in various forms of handwork in the lower classes, while, in the upper, physical measurements, practical drawing, woodwork, and cookery are taken at town schools, and at rural schools dairy-work and elementary agriculture, or both. This work is not left to chance; it is part of a well-directed and well-understood educational policy, and it is almost entirely in the hands of highly trained experts. Lastly, there is to be mentioned the chief aim of our primary schools, which is to lay a foundation broad, and firm, and sure for further educational progress, whether at the secondary school, the technical school, or the school of experience. Whether we are successful here has, with some justification perhaps, been seriously questioned. But we must not deceive ourselves by a figure of speech. Does the process of education, after all, resemble the building of a fine symmetrical building? Does it not rather resemble the growth of a plant, the roots of which must adjust themselves to environment? This is but the substitution of one figure of speech for another, so we must examine a little further.

It is a question of educational values, which may be best determined by considerations of public utility. Is it better that in process and result the education of our children should resemble the formation of a crystal—to use another illustration—which is formed from without; or, after the analogy of a plant, be developed from within, responding and accommodating itself to environment? The former method is formal, the latter real. Both are essential; the question is, which, in the development of the average child, should predominate? Seeing that in the case of the great majority of children the primary school leads directly to employment, there can be but one answer: Our aims and methods must, in the main, be practical. In giving our school-work a practical bent we have of necessity declined from former standards of excellence. Every one knew that it would be so. Hence it has come about that from one end of the Dominion to the other the secondary schools have scented mischief, and the quality of the scholarship passing from the primary school to the secondary has been denounced in unmeasured terms; on the walls of the former, indeed, "Ichabod" has been writ large. We may admit at once that neither the syllabus nor the method of carrying it out is perfect; perhaps very far from perfect. The Board has already recognised this, and, in a representation to the Department as the result of a consideration of the North Canterbury's Board's memorandum, wrote as follows: "When the syllabus was revised, real studies very largely displaced formal studies, which have to do with words and their relations rather than with things. The study of English grammar, history, and political geography was subordinated to studies having more direct reference to practice and experience. Every one admits that the change in the syllabus has been beneficial, but at the same time every one admits that, as it has turned out, it was altogether too much in the one direction." That, surely, is an ample concession to the secondary position. It remains that we should clear our minds of possible misconceptions. (1) The primary schools do not exist solely or mainly for the sake of the secondary schools; (2) it is but a small number—too few, alas!—of our primary pupils that find their way to such schools. It is impossible that the primary pupils should take to the secondary the same quality and character of scholarship as formerly; when the syllabus was revised much that is essential to success at the secondary schools was withdrawn, and much that is non-essential—from the secondary point of view—included. (3) With the ample staff of highly qualified junior assistants that the secondary schools now possess it should be possible for them, upon receiving intelligent pupils from the primary schools, to build their own foundation, and to build it better than could have been done at the primary schools. (4) It is evidently assumed that the primary pupils spend as much time as formerly on such subjects as arithmetic, grammar, geography, and history, whereas at least four hours per week have been appropriated for the study of practical subjects. One cannot extend the area of school-work and have it in depth too. Other factors not inherent in the present primary system have militated against the formation of the type of mind desiderated by the secondary schools. It is stated, for example, that the children's memories are not trained. Now, the primary-school system requires on the part of pupils some not inconsiderable efforts of memory, recognising in it a great factor in mental development, if not a crowning mercy at a university examination. But reasons for the present lack of robust memories are to be found outside the primary schools: home lessons have been practically abolished; games of many kinds monopolize much of the time formerly given to study; and more attention is paid to such matters as music, drawing, and social amenities. To sum up, shortcomings are admitted, and the course of study is not perfectly balanced. The primary school must lay a foundation for progress, but for progress in more than one direction; and within certain limits the primary and the secondary school must each work out its own destiny.

SUBSIDIARY AGENCIES.—We should put it on record that the Board's efforts on behalf of the teachers have not been fruitless. Mr. Seaward's art lessons in September were greatly appreciated. The Saturday classes in drawing, painting, woodwork, cookery, nature-study, and biology were fairly well attended. Why so few attended the chemistry classes, however, is simply incomprehensible. The Travelling Scholarship was keenly competed for. Boxes of stereos continue to be circulated; and boxes containing books on education and on the teaching of handwork subjects have also been put into circulation. Teachers have largely availed themselves of the Board's library of educational books. There is one phase of educational work that might as subsidiary receive more attention from teachers. We refer to museums, in which not merely nature specimens might be shown, but also specimens of the best work done by the pupils for new generations to mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—The reports on these schools show that on the whole satisfactory work is being done. Two serious shortcomings may be referred to: (1.) Arithmetic, not excellent in any of the schools, is in several distinctly uneven, not to say inferior, in quality. The teaching of the subject must be kept going briskly. (2.) The Department's Inspector calls attention to the want of neatness in many of the pupils' written work, a timely intimation that reformation