

In a very real sense the efficiency of the secondary schools reacts upon both primary and university education. Under present-day conditions all of the recruits to the teaching service come from the secondary schools. If those who are to teach in primary schools have had a full secondary course (and not, as at present, a partial one) under capable and inspiring teachers, the Training College and the University can make much more of them than they do now. And, if the University is to raise its standard without prolonging its courses still further, it must be able to build upon a sure foundation of sound secondary training. It is a reproach to the secondary schools that in some subjects which receive great attention in secondary schools, as, for example, the science subjects, many university teachers assert that they must begin their work *de novo*. In a well-ordered system each grade of education—primary, secondary, and university—should be properly related, and there should be no need to repeat work which should already have been completed at an earlier stage. The first step towards the accomplishment of this desirable end is a better education and training for the secondary teacher.

Reaction of secondary education upon primary and university education.

The proposal to extend the training of secondary teachers and of some primary teachers to four years will probably be objected to on the grounds that already the cost of training is very great. But it is open to serious question whether this expenditure is in the right direction. The cost of the training of teachers during 1924 was no less a sum than £167,814. Of this amount £133,578 was incurred in respect of allowances to students, while only £34,236 was spent upon their instruction.

Cost of Training Colleges.

We are aware that the allowances to students were increased in order to attract recruits for the service, and to cope with the competition of the Public Service for young students, but we are not convinced that it is good policy to pay such liberal allowances, if, by doing so, the period of training for special courses is kept at too short a period, and if money is not forthcoming to provide the most efficient conditions for training. We have one suggestion to offer in respect of the present two-year period of training. Under present conditions many students enter the college without having secured a full secondary education. Accordingly, the Training College endeavours to supply this deficiency, and assumes, in addition to its function as a professional school, the function of a high school. Now, if it were proposed to give to pupils at a high school allowances ranging from £80 to £115 per annum, there would be a public protest. Would it not be desirable to insist upon a full high school course before entrance to the training college, with the object of shortening the course for many students? These students will be quite efficient for all practical purposes, if after a really good secondary education, they are well grounded in the leading principles of education, and in the method of the subjects of the primary school. There are in the school service hundreds of girls who in the nature of things will not remain in the service for more than five to ten years. Experience has shown that such girls can be made very effective teachers by the course above described. If the period of training for such teachers is shortened there will be less difficulty in providing for a great extension of the training of others.

Allowances to students discussed.

On the question of liberal allowances to student teachers our views have had a remarkable reinforcement in the Report of the Departmental Committee on the Training of Teachers for Public Elementary Schools, just published, April, 1925.

English opinion on the subject of allowances.

“The evidence which we have heard, and more particularly the evidence from witnesses representing organizations of teachers, has urged upon us that the only sound principle for securing an adequate supply is the principle which relies upon the attractions of the profession itself. They urge that this is the natural principle, common to the professions generally, and that it takes account of the importance of giving free play to the factor of personal inclination; that methods based on any other principle are artificial, and must lead, as they contend, to the presence in schools of teachers who find themselves unsuited for the work and discontented with it, who are there not because they were attracted to it as a calling, or chose it deliberately for what it offered, but because as boys and girls the way into teaching was made for them and their parents a far more open path to a livelihood than the way leading anywhere else. They suggest, too, that this highway makes a peculiar appeal to the less vigorous and enterprising spirits. The witnesses who have urged these views point out that in elementary school teaching interest and conviction are essential, and that the teacher’s character and personality are continuously exercising profound and largely unconscious effects. Men and women, therefore, whose temperament is unsuitable, and who are out of tune with their environment, must be very undesirable teachers. It is also suggested that a calling to which admission is made easy by