

higher subjects in primary schools. The present constitution of district high schools under "The Education Act, 1877," does not, in our judgment, sufficiently meet the requirements of the case. The provisions of this Act do not encourage, even if they permit, the teaching of subjects beyond the primary-school course in schools which, though not worthy of the distinction involved in the title of District High School, are yet quite able to afford a useful measure of secondary instruction. At the same time an inducement is held out to such schools to endeavour to acquire prematurely the status of district high schools. There is reason to fear that, since no provision is made in the Act for the maintenance of the higher work in district high schools, except so far as such maintenance is derived from funds more properly applicable to the purposes of primary instruction, the staff will usually be inadequate to the work expected of it. The headmaster, who receives a high salary professedly in acknowledgment of his responsibility for the conduct of the whole of a large primary school, is tempted to confine his energies almost entirely to the instruction of a small number of advanced pupils. We have given very careful consideration to this matter, and have agreed to make the following proposals:—

1. That, in any primary school, permission be granted to give instruction in subjects not included in the standards, on condition (*a*) that the extra subjects shall be specifically defined in each case by the Board, upon evidence that the master is competent to give instruction in them; (*b*) that the extra classes shall be taught outside of the legal school hours; and (*c*) that reasonable fees, to be fixed by the Board, may be received by the teacher from the parents or guardians of the children to whom the extra instruction is given. 2. That for every school in which a certain number of children have passed the fourth standard—the number to be fixed by the Minister of Education after correspondence with the Board of the district concerned—a sum of at least £100 per annum be granted by the Government to the Board towards making provision for strengthening the staff of the school, in order that the elements of a secondary education may be imparted without endangering the efficiency of the primary education in the school. We suggest that to entitle a school to this aid it should have about fifty children in the fifth and sixth standards, and that schools receiving the subsidy be called "middle schools." We further recommend that this aid be not granted to primary schools in the immediate neighbourhood of secondary schools, nor in any case until a scheme for the organization of the middle school—which scheme ought to provide for the payment of fees—has been approved of by the Minister. 3. That it be made illegal for a district high school, or middle school, even in a district which has no secondary school, to receive the winners of Board scholarships.

Provision for teaching higher subjects in primary schools.

As the primary-school work overlaps the secondary, so the latter in its turn overlaps the work of the junior classes of a University college. The cases, however, present no further analogy. We have seen that it is desirable that the pupil should leave the primary school in order to begin his secondary course as early as possible. It is on the other hand highly undesirable that he should leave the secondary school before the conclusion of the course, in order to commence his University studies. A parent, observing that the work of a junior college class covers the same ground as the closing years of a secondary-school course, might be tempted to conclude that much time would be saved by transferring his son as soon as possible to the college. It cannot be too strongly represented that this can only be done at a sacrifice of the true aims of education. At that stage of a boy's course, his mind is best fitted for the slow, detailed, and painstaking processes of the school work, a kind of work very different from that of the junior classes of a University college; although the latter may provide a rapid and closely-condensed preliminary course for those whose early education has been neglected, but who come to the work with more matured powers and stronger determination and perseverance than can be expected of schoolboys.

Relation of the secondary school to the University.

We now proceed to review the present condition of the principal grammar schools. We will take up first their financial position, stating in each case the proper income of the year from endowments and from fees, and also the expenditure in salaries, interest, and contingencies.

Financial condition of the secondary schools.