

These subjects are common to all. Other subjects treated more or less commonly are commercial work, history, geography, drawing in various forms, woodwork for boys, and cookery or dressmaking for girls. In seven of the schools German is taught to small classes of pupils, and in three Greek is reported as a subject of instruction. Advantage is taken in most cases to provide a commercial course, in which book-keeping and commercial correspondence and geography, or book-keeping and shorthand, supply the alternative. In general all but a few pupils take French; in Latin the proportion pursuing the study varies very greatly in different schools, but probably not less than 60 per cent. of the aggregate enrolment are Latin pupils. In science the branches commonly observed are, for boys, physics (elementary physical measurements, electricity and magnetism, heat) and chemistry, with physiology in some cases; for girls, botany or physiology and elementary physics. In nearly all the schools adequate attention is bestowed on physical instruction, and the usual games are entered into with zest.

Except in the substitution of needlework, cookery, or dressmaking for some other form of manual instruction (or, in some instances, in lieu of a second language), in the less frequent provision of an alternative course for commercial work, and the selection made of science subjects, the curriculum in girls' schools cannot be said to differ in a marked degree from that found in schools for boys only. In conformity, however, with the trend of public opinion, indications of a wider differentiation in the future are not wanting, and encouragement is given to the tendency by the inclusion of a course in domestic science, with its various practical applications, among the subjects serving to fulfil the conditions under which free places may be held. In mixed schools, where of necessity the staff is numerically small, the problem of the differentiation of courses must always retain a special difficulty; where girls alone are to be considered the problem is simpler. Marked differences in vocational aims notwithstanding, for which provision must always be made, there should be no very serious obstacle in such circumstances to the adoption of full alternative courses of instruction, in which a training in the domestic arts should take the foremost place, in conjunction with a good scheme of general education.

As regards the science of boys' schools, in one or two cases only does it appear that the science is chosen with a definite view to its bearing on agricultural or horticultural study. It would be well if there were more. In schools with suitable environment there seems to be no study that could be more profitably pursued or that could more worthily occupy the attention or enlist the enthusiasm of teachers with benefit to both boys and girls alike.

*District High Schools.*—The course of instruction usually followed in the secondary departments of the district high schools of the Dominion is drawn up largely with a view to prepare pupils for the Civil Service Junior, Matriculation, and Education Board Scholarship Examinations, and in a few schools the curriculum reaches up to the Civil Service Senior and Junior University Scholarship standard. The course includes English, Latin or French (generally the former), mathematics, geography, commercial work, science, and one or more branches of manual training. Optional courses, one on the old grammar-school lines, and the other a modern programme, are now open to most of the pupils in our district high schools. The line of demarcation between these courses depends chiefly on the inclusion or exclusion of Latin or a modern language by the pupils, and, as a total of from four to five hours a week—roughly, a fifth of the time—may be regarded as a reasonable amount of time to be given to this subject, it will be seen that the inclusion or exclusion of a language apart from the mother-tongue is of great importance in arranging any course of instruction. In too many cases the curriculum itself and the methods of teaching are dominated by examination results. The true aim of education is lost sight of, and everything is subordinated to securing high marks in competitive examinations, and a large percentage of passes in non-competitive ones.

In some cases, however, an earnest effort is being made to solve the problem which confronts the various district high schools—namely, to arrange the programme in such a way that each school shall confer the maximum benefit on the majority of its pupils. As these schools have been established mainly in agricultural districts, it is obvious that in these cases the course of instruction should include subjects dealing directly or indirectly with the products of the soil. When these schools are established in mining districts the subjects chosen should have a bias towards mining