

efficient. Another improvement that should be effected in our education is a drawing together of the various branches. The course in every secondary school, vocational, classical, or technical, should be based on the primary course, and great care should be taken to see that there is no loss of efficiency through contradictory methods. That this is so I will suggest to you by one illustration. Generally speaking, the handwriting in our primary schools is careful, laborious, and of good form. Judging on several years' experience of students and others who have passed through secondary schools, scribble is tolerated in them, and the result is disastrous. The primary school, in failing to develop speed and aiming too much at caligraphy, sent on to the secondary school a pupil ill-equipped to apply his writing readily to the work required. The secondary school, looking upon writing as a primary-school subject and one not counting towards scholarship results, hurried the pace unduly, and ignored the result. To my mind, this illustration is very suggestive that different objectives on the part of the two schools in other subjects also may be leading to disastrous results. If this is true, how shall we gain greater unity of effort? (1.) Bring the two grades more into touch through their Inspectors. There has been no overlapping in the inspection. Let some Inspectors be responsible for continuity of effort in certain directions throughout the school-life of the child. (2.) To make this practicable and effective, make one Board responsible for the whole course of the child's training in primary and secondary schools. I will close my remarks with a few suggestions called for by clause 9 of the order of reference—"In what respects school instruction can be improved and made of more practical value in equipping pupils for their future careers." I would suggest first that we reduce the amount of arithmetic and develop greater facility in the simple arithmetic of every-day life. In saying that, I appreciate the improvement that has been made already in the arithmetic. I think the trend is in the right direction, but I think we want to go still further. In regard to geography, I would transfer to the secondary schools most of the theory work, and, if possible, I would lay greater emphasis, even greater than the syllabus lays at present, on observation work. I think you cannot overemphasize the importance of training a child in his early years to observe. I think that is thoroughly sound, scientifically. If we introduce theory work too soon into our schools I am afraid the effect is to kill interest and to prevent the child afterwards working out reasons for himself. I would say that as soon as a child is sufficiently interested by his observation to begin questioning the teacher as to why certain things are, then has the ideal time arrived for the teacher to suggest in as simple a way as possible the lines of thought which would lead the child to the full comprehension of the subject. As to history and civics, I would force these subjects into greater prominence. I am inclined to think the best way to do that would be absolutely to set a certain number of hours in excess of the present number required, as the minimum time which should be given to the subject. I am not prepared to advocate it as an examination subject, which is another way to draw very prominent attention to it, but I think a minimum time should be fixed for this important subject. As to drawing, I would say that this must be more and more applied. I think the time is coming when we shall have to give up purely freehand drawing. We shall rely more and more on drawing from nature and memory. Drawing is the outcome of observation. The mere copying of the work of others is falling more and more into the background, I notice in my reading on education. I recognize that the syllabus is suggesting that, but I would urge it to go still further and suggest that a practical course in drawing should be outlined from the primary classes right through to the standard classes, and that this should be based entirely upon objects. As to nature-study and science, I would say that the suggestions for this work are already admirable. If these suggestions are to be carried out, the size of the classes in many schools must be reduced. That is the only way to make the course more practical. When we find, as we occasionally do, one teacher in charge of a very large class, it is pitiful to see that teacher making strenuous efforts to teach nature-study on modern lines. We find in subjects like this the very strongest argument in favour of a more reasonable staffing of schools; and when I say the staffing of schools is not anything like what it should be to make the work effective I do not ignore the great improvements in recent years, and the fact that we still stand comparatively well compared with some other parts of the world. Of course, the cost must be considered on the one side against the ultimate good to the State resulting from a more practical and thorough training of its childhood and youth on the other. As to English, I would make the course more definite, and insist on much practical work. I think English should be taught as thoroughly and practically as arithmetic, which I think stands first as the subject most effectively treated in our schools. I think the course in English has been too wide, and that a good number of our teachers have not been able to take full advantage of the opportunity open to them to draft out a thorough course and put that into execution. I think English is such an important subject that where experience has shown there has been a weakness it might be well to revert to a very definite plan of work indeed. I would insist more and more on simple written language. I would not try to get pretentious work in composition, but would try to get every child to express his thoughts in as simple language as possible. The result of my experience as an assistant teacher is quite clear. I found that the smaller the class the better the written English, because I was able to give more work and correct more work, and I found that nothing but repeated practice would knock out of the child's written language those errors which appear to us as errors of carelessness—faults which are quite natural to any one who is not writing often. We must start early with a child and try to get him day by day to express his thoughts in simple written language, just as we now get him to work in the exercises of arithmetic. I do not for a minute suggest that the oral work should be ignored. I value most highly the suggestion of the syllabus in the direction of oral composition, and I think since that syllabus came in there has been a very marked improvement in training children to express their thoughts simply. In spelling I would allow the use of the dictionary in all examinations. I would continue word-building, but largely with the idea of helping the vocabulary. I should train children in the habit of using dictionaries, and insist on that as part