

The problem of general secondary education and the problem of university education must be kept quite distinct. It is the former that is the pressing problem of this generation, and it must be dealt with in and for itself. When we have laid the foundations of a general secondary-education system we shall realize both the reforms which our elementary schools require and the true value of a university education. But until such a system has been created all educational endeavour on other lines would be more or less futile.

Primary Education.

Though it has been shown that secondary-education problems form the pivot of the education question, primary education will always be of prime importance as the necessary foundation of all education for every child in the Dominion. We have to admit that by all evidences we have not in the past acted up to this conviction. If we compare the area of playgrounds, size of schools in comparison with number of scholars, size of classes per teacher, equipment and furnishing of buildings as between primary schools on the one hand and secondary and technical schools on the other, we are struck with the relative poverty of the former. Yet the same children now pass through both types of school. It would be absurd to state that the same children from the age of five to thirteen may properly be provided with smaller play-areas; poorer lighting, heating, ventilation, and seating; more dingy rooms; much more crowded classes; less individual attention; and a much poorer type of building than they are to be provided with when they pass at the age of thirteen into the secondary and technical schools. Though such a stated policy would be ridiculous, we unfortunately see no incongruity in acting as if it were seriously defensible.

Types of Secondary Education.

There are four types of secondary education which seem to be necessary to meet the new requirements—(1) The university course leading to the skilled professions; (2) the general secondary or general vocational course on modern lines; (3) the continuation or special vocational course; (4) the country secondary course.

The basis of selection of pupils for these courses should not necessarily be one of mere intellectual ability. Of course, only the really capable pupils should be allowed to take up the first course, and failure to realize expectations should mean a transfer to one of the other groups. Yet equally bright pupils should find full scope in any of the courses, and pupils in one course would not necessarily be of inferior calibre to those in any other.

Further, a considerable portion of the course in all groups should be of much the same nature, because all the pupils are to be future citizens and have certain common human possibilities and needs. English of a thoroughly literary type, history and civics of a character calculated to give a sound basis for patriotism and desire to serve one's country, practical geography, some form of applied science, and some form of manual work for all boys, with domestic education for all girls, must be adequately taught in all secondary schools. The difference would be largely in the material on which the instruction would be based, and the completeness to which the requirements of the course would permit the study to be carried.

This initial general training cannot be dispensed with in a democracy where equal opportunities are claimed for all. There is no justification for giving the good start, the broad vision, to a few, and condemning too many to a narrow unenlightened existence. Not all will fully profit by this opportunity; but all have a right to it; and the opportunity should be held open for a reasonable length of time, even though there are those who seem slow in taking advantage of it. The thing to do is not to take away the opportunity, but to open the eyes of those who are missing what they might have.

(1.) *University Preparation Course.*—Subject to such reforms as the University could be induced to make possible, course (1) would be the same as the present Matriculation course, with a condition that such essential subjects as English, writing, spelling, oral and written expression must be kept up and improved to a far greater extent than at present. I have found reason to complain of the sad neglect of these common though essential subjects in high schools. A more thorough type of secondary-school inspection will need to be instituted.