

town or district. An exaggerated importance, however, is still in some schools attached to the passing of external examinations, such as Matriculation and Public Service Entrance, as an end in itself, and in such schools the curriculum of the general course is necessarily limited and confined strictly to the requirements of these examinations, while able pupils are naturally encouraged to take the course and add lustre to the school by their success in their examinations. At the same time it is satisfactory to note that in at least one school which has been very successful in presenting candidates for matriculation this objection loses some of its force in that a fair number of pupils stay on after matriculation and study for the higher leaving-certificate, while others sit for professional examinations in accountancy, engineering, and teaching.

A very wide range of subjects is taught in technical schools under varying conditions, and the Inspectors offer the following remarks and criticisms upon certain aspects of the work:—

*Languages.*—Here the teaching of the mother tongue is rightly regarded as a matter of the first importance, and great improvements have of recent years taken place in the teaching of this all-important subject. The more formal work in English grammar has been reduced to moderate limits, and more attention is being paid to forms of self-expression and to becoming acquainted with some of the best of our vast heritage of literature, both of poetry and prose. Here again the tendency is to be too conservative, and all teachers would do well to read the very excellent “Report on the Teaching of English in England,” published by the English Board of Education, and to consult more recent books which have obviously been inspired by that report. A large amount of debating and dramatic work is also undertaken in various schools, and it is pleasing to note with what facility children practised in such methods are able to express themselves orally and in writing. As far as Latin and French are concerned, these are in most instances wisely taught only to pupils who appear able to profit by studying them and who are likely to stay at school sufficiently long to be able to gather more than a mere smattering; but, even so, it cannot be said that the standard attained or the methods of teaching employed are for the most part any more than fair.

*Mathematics.*—As is to be expected, this is one of the subjects to which great attention is devoted and which is, on the whole, well taught. Traditional methods, however, are very strong, and are perpetuated by the text-books in use, which for the most part exercise the ingenuity of the student in manipulations and transformations without giving him any real grasp of principles or of facility in using the mathematical tool. It is suggested that large parts of arithmetic, algebra, and geometry as ordinarily taught could well be cut away, and the time so gained used in such a way that no boy who had completed, say, a two-years course should be unaware of the nature and use of logarithms and the slide-rule; further, during the third year he should be able to become acquainted with the fundamental processes of the differential and integral calculus. The traditional arithmetic which is often given to girls taking home-science courses might with advantage be replaced by the teaching of a simple system of household accounts and book-keeping.

*Agriculture* is a subject taught in nearly all schools, in some, indeed, being made the main subject in the curriculum for boys. Opinions differ as to the amount of field-work that it is advisable to give and the size of plots or gardens required. While some schools would be in favour of farms of many acres, others are in favour of small experimental plots, and others again are satisfied with giving experimental work in the school laboratory. All are agreed, however, that a good general education is the necessary preliminary for the sound training for the future scientific farmer, and deprecate too early specialization in the education of the would-be farmer.

*Engineering.*—The number of boys entering the engineering courses has shown considerable fluctuations in recent years, but in the large centres, at any rate, the tendency has been to increase at a fairly steady rate. The word “engineer” is very loosely used—it is popularly applied to the artisan or mechanic, whereas it should be retained for the professional engineer of University or equivalent standing. If a boy wishes to become a tradesman his needs would probably best be met by a two-years course of post-primary instruction, including such subjects as English, history and geography, mathematics, drawing (both mechanical and free), woodwork, metal-work, &c., so as to give him as good an all-round education as can be secured in that limited time, followed by an apprenticeship the length of which would be regulated according to his standard on entry. If he intends to become a professional engineer he will need a full secondary course leading to matriculation and the University. There is the further case of the marine engineer, for whom there exists a steady demand in New Zealand, whose needs would have to be met by a special course not coinciding entirely with either of those outlined above. Such special courses would naturally be held in the schools of seaport towns.

In the matter of engineering equipment and machinery considerable sums have been spent in providing new machines, chiefly to replace older ones. The question here arises as to whether the technical schools of the Dominion should have examples of specialized machinery as used in various trades, and to what extent, if any, or whether simple tools demonstrating fundamental processes only should be installed. The same question, of course, has arisen in more acute form in England, America, and elsewhere, and the complete answer has not yet been found. While in America the technical schools are often lavishly equipped with specialized machinery, in England this has not generally been done; such specialized instruction is regarded as the function of the employers themselves, who have not been loath to undertake it. Most large engineering-works in England now have their “instructional bays,” where the specialized machines and processes are demonstrated to the learners and apprentices by instructors provided by the firms themselves. The whole question of supply and replacement of tools and machines for engineering in technical schools in