

Where, as in New Zealand, one examination only is held for matriculation, each student must necessarily be required to take only a comparatively few subjects, or, alternatively, the standard must be kept low. In a well-balanced curriculum of secondary education there are several subsidiary subjects which are very necessary in the earlier stage of the secondary school, but can be dropped after a couple of years' study of them. In New Zealand the curriculum of secondary schools which receive financial aid from the State must include provision for singing, drawing, physical exercises, manual work, and, in the case of girls, instruction in home science. If, however, a school is working under strong pressure to secure examination results, there must be a great temptation to concentrate during the whole course upon those subjects which will ultimately be taken at the public examination, and the "balance" of the curriculum therefore suffers. Schools which are closely supervised by the inspecting officers of education authorities may be kept up to the mark by this means, but the temptation will always exist, and though the subjects appear on the time-table, they may receive very perfunctory attention. The dual examination removes this temptation, for the lower examination must be passed before the higher one may be attempted. Where a system of junior high schools exists, or where secondary education begins for all pupils at about the age of twelve years, the first examination may be taken at about the age of fifteen years.

Advantages of two examination stages.

Such a system of school certificates would be appreciated by the general public, and would take the place of the present Matriculation Examination Certificate. The certificates should be based upon generously planned school curricula, admitting of many options and thus suited to the occupational needs of different groups of pupils. At the same time it could be provided that in certain subjects or groups of subjects, both at the earlier and later stage, passes must be gained in order to qualify for matriculation. We feel assured that with the steady improvement in the quality of secondary education which would result from greater co-operation between the University and the Education Department in such matters as the better organization of the education and training of secondary teachers, and in the supervision of such special branches of school-work as the teaching of science, the day would not be far distant when, as is done in other countries, a school leaving certificate would be accepted with little or no restriction, as a satisfactory guarantee of fitness to enter upon degree courses.

Greater freedom to adapt school curricula.

The permanent residuum which a boy takes from a good secondary school is to be looked for in certain intellectual and moral qualifications, the possession or absence of which makes or mars his university work. The university teachers are not concerned so much with what a freshman knows in certain subjects as whether, in addition to a sound general knowledge gained by a full course of secondary education, he has developed the power to think clearly and express himself accurately, and whether he has been trained to work purposefully and diligently and to take pleasure in intellectual exercise. External examinations, fixed syllabuses, and indispensable preliminary subject requirements are founded upon distrust of teachers.

Not knowledge only, but mental and moral qualifications needed.

It is well to remember that secondary teachers and administrators are to-day as never before, studying with vigour and earnestness the problems which condition their work, and that recent years have seen a marked change of opinion in regard to the necessity for professional training. With every improvement in the quality of the teaching it will be found as practicable, as it is desirable, to free the schools and the teachers from many restrictions now imposed upon them, and to take without question the finished product of their work. University teachers rightly claim for themselves freedom from external control affecting their teaching. Other earnest and capable teachers may as rightly claim the same freedom. The matter resolves itself into the question, "What is the quality of your teachers?"

Training for secondary teachers now becoming the rule.

As to the propriety of raising the standard of university entrance requirement, as suggested above, and of lengthening the school course, we feel that no other alternative is possible if worthy standards of university work are to be secured. We have been impressed by the unanimity with which witnesses have condemned the present standard of the New Zealand Matriculation Examination. To allow a boy or girl to enter upon a university course at sixteen or seventeen years of age with the minimum entrance requirement is a very doubtful privilege. Before a

High standard of preliminary work and maturity of mind essential.