

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS.

Legislative provision was made in 1924 for the establishment of junior high schools which should form a connecting-link and trying-out field between the primary school and the secondary school. Such schools provide a three-years course for pupils who have qualified for attendance by gaining a certificate of competency of Standard IV of the primary-school course—*i.e.*, the curriculum is intended to cover what has ordinarily been the last two years of the primary course and the first year of a secondary course. All pupils in the junior high school are required to take, for approximately half the school week, the same instruction in the subjects of the primary-school syllabus; for the remainder of the school week the pupils take, according to the decision of the Principal after consultation with the parent and the head teacher of the school previously attended, a supplementary course of instruction taken from the following: Academic, manual, commercial, agricultural, art, or other approved course. Provision is made for change of course. It is not intended that the supplementary course shall be vocational in character, but rather that it shall be designed to discover the special aptitudes of pupils, with a view to their transfer from the junior high school to a suitable calling, or to an appropriate higher educational institution, at the end of the three-years course. One such school is being established at the present time in a country district, but no information is yet available as to the character of the course in rural science which will doubtless be a leading feature of its curriculum. A junior high school may be placed under an Education Board (and School Committee) or under a High School or Technical School Board.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION.

In addition to the junior high school, three classes of full-time post-primary schools are provided for under the Education Act—namely, district high schools, technical high schools, and secondary schools.

A district high school is a public school having a primary department in which primary instruction is given and a secondary department in which secondary instruction is given. A district high school is governed by the Education Board and School Committee. District high schools are established mainly in rural centres where only a moderate demand for secondary instruction exists. The headmaster manages both secondary and primary departments, and receives extra salary on account of the secondary department, in which special secondary assistants are employed. A district high school may be established where there are at least twenty prospective secondary pupils.

Technical high schools are full-time day schools providing secondary instruction, including vocational and technical courses. A technical high school is not usually established unless at least one hundred secondary pupils are qualified and willing to attend. Such schools are usually under the direct management of a Technical School Board, which may be under the general control of the Education Board of the district.

The term "secondary school" is restricted to schools of more academic type, usually possessed of special endowments, and governed by an independent Board of Governors. Substantially the same qualification for free admission is required in all post-primary schools, the minimum qualification being a Sixth Standard certificate of proficiency or its equivalent, which entitles the holder to free secondary education for two or three years, according to circumstances, while at the end of two years the pupil may qualify for a further period of free tuition up to the age of nineteen years.

About two-thirds of all the pupils in Standard VI in the primary schools proceed to free tuition in post-primary day schools under these conditions. The courses in secondary schools and district high schools are usually taken in preparation for the Public Service Entrance and Matriculation Examinations, and preponderance is given to the more academic types of studies. In the country district high schools, however, provision is made by regulation that all boys holding junior free places—practically all boys in the first two years—shall take practical agriculture and dairy science for at least two hours weekly, unless equivalent instruction of a vocational character is otherwise provided. In most of the secondary schools also provision is made for training in elementary agricultural science, and in many cases practical work is also done in the field. In some of the technical high schools, particularly in country districts, prominence is given to the agricultural course (the Feilding Technical High School, for example, definitely calls itself the Feilding Agricultural High School).

The course in agriculture in all post-primary schools is usually under the direction of instructors who have specialized in agricultural science and possess either a degree or a diploma in agriculture. In the district high schools the work is supervised, and often largely done, by the itinerant instructors in agriculture appointed by the Education Boards to take charge of the supervision of nature-study and elementary science in the primary schools. There are, however, some sixty-eight district high schools, and about 2,570 primary schools, while the number of itinerant instructors in agriculture employed by the Education Boards is only about twenty-five, so that in the main the science and agriculture must be taught by the permanent staff with, in many cases, little or no personal assistance from the itinerant instructors in agriculture except by way of rare visits, and during refresher courses held from time to time, sometimes at a State farm, where the instructors under the Department of Agriculture are also available.

In the secondary schools and technical high schools the subject is in the hands of specialists with training in farm practice and agricultural science, several of whom hold the Bachelor of Science degree in addition to a degree or diploma in agriculture. The agricultural course is not at present popular, being taken by a comparatively small proportion of boys in post-primary schools—not probably by more than one in ten—in spite of the fact that over 30 per cent. of boys leaving secondary schools go farming. Even in technical high schools, where courses in preparation for vocations are specially