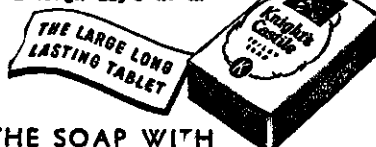




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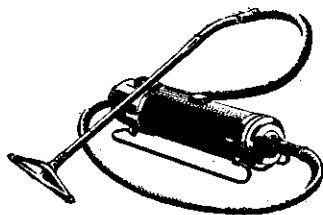
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# EDUCATING OUR ADOLESCENTS

## Minister Asks For A Report On Secondary Schools

*IN November, 1942, the Minister of Education appointed a Committee of 14 men and women to review the curriculum of post-primary schools. Last week, the Committee issued its Report—a book of 94 pages. Since this is likely to colour secondary education for another generation at least, we reprint some of the more important recommendations.*

### GENERAL AIMS

**W**E have set out to ensure, as far as possible, that all post-primary pupils, irrespective of their varying abilities and their varying occupational ambitions, receive a generous and well-balanced education. Such an education would aim, firstly, at the full development of the adolescent as a person; and secondly, at preparing him for an active place in our New Zealand society as worker, neighbour, home-maker, and citizen. Up to a point one aim implies the other; and such qualities as strength and stability of character are fundamental to both.

### MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

**B**EFORE giving in detail suggested syllabuses for the "Core" studies and examination prescriptions for the optional subjects, we wish to state our major recommendations in a formal manner. We recommend:—

(1) That up to the School Certificate stage the curricula of all full-time pupils in post-primary schools include a core of studies and activities, comprising English Language and Literature; Social Studies (preferably an integrated course of history and civics, geography, and some descriptive economics); General Science; Elementary Mathematics; Music; a craft or one of the Fine Arts; and Physical Education. For girls, Home Crafts is regarded as satisfying the requirements of "a craft."

(2) That optional studies and activities, from which a choice could be made to suit individual needs, be provided for at appropriate stages according to the resources of each school.

(3) That the approved list of optional subjects for the examination be as follows:

(1) Animal husbandry. (2) Applied mechanics. (3) Biology. (4) Book-keeping. (5) Clothing. (6) Chemistry. (7) Commercial practice. (8) Dairying. (9) Drawing. (10) Electricity and magnetism. (11) Embroidery. (12) Engineering shop-work. (13) Field husbandry. (14) French. (15) General science. (16) Geography. (17) German. (18) Greek. (19) Heat, light and sound. (20) Heat engines. (21) History. (22) Homecraft. (23) Horticulture. (24) Latin. (25) Maori. (26) Mathematics. (27) Music. (28) Shorthand and typewriting. (29) Technical drawing. (30) Technical electricity. (31) Woodwork. (32) Approved foreign languages other than those mentioned above.

### THE COMMON CORE

*THE substance of the "Core" permits of wide interpretation, and we expect it so to be interpreted. It contains what any intelligent parent might expect his son or daughter to be given at school (apart from studies indicated by special vocational needs or personal talents). A parent might reasonably ask that his child should have a course of physical education so that he may preserve good bodily health; that he be able to participate freely in games; that he have an adequate command of the mother tongue, and be able to enjoy something of its literature; that he continue the study of his social environment in time*

*and space—in other words, that he understand in their main outlines the social studies of history and geography, and be introduced to the current problems of his country and his time; that he have a knowledge of the mathematics required for ordinary non-school purposes and be conversant in at least an elementary way with the methods and achievements of science; that he be able to listen intelligently to music, perhaps to sing or to play a musical instrument; and that he have acquired a reasonable degree of skill in an art or craft. An intelligent parent would wish a daughter to have, in addition, the knowledge, skill, and taste required to manage a home well and make it a pleasant place to live in.*

In what follows in this section we have taken the "Core" studies and activities one by one, stated what we believe to be their general aims and significance, and made suggestions as to approach and content. It should be particularly noted that none of our more detailed recommendations is intended to be binding on any school.

### ENGLISH

**O**UR attitude to the teaching of English here in New Zealand has been much influenced by British developments in theory and practice, and by the progressive changes in the text-books which have come to us from overseas. We have passed through the stage where formal grammar was regarded as the principal part of the syllabus in English, and where detailed parsing and analysis, correction of sentences, and rules and exceptions learnt by rote in isolation from composition occupied almost all the school time devoted to the subject. To-day, though English is not yet regarded as "the foundation on which all the intellectual life of schools and scholars is based," the methods which we here recommend, with similar objectives, are being used by the best of our teachers of English. In many schools a more rational and vital course is now being given in the subject than ever before. The committee hopes to see such teaching encouraged and extended to all schools.

### Aims

It will be agreed that the primary aims of teaching English are to develop:

- The power of expression in speech and writing.
- The ability to understand the spoken and written thoughts of others.

The two aims are not, of course, separate or separable, but there is good authority for the division of the processes of communication into *expression* and *comprehension*, just for the purpose of emphasising that it is a two-way process. Expression serves the most simple

(continued on next page)