

them an aptitude and taste for handicrafts, in facilitating the acquisition of a trade, and possibly in shortening the period of apprenticeship, or of the preliminary training which in so many occupations takes the place of it. . . . People often talk and write as if school time should be utilised for teaching those things which a child is not likely to care to learn in after-life, whereas the real aim of school education should be to create a desire to continue in after-life the pursuit of the knowledge and skill acquired in school. In other words, the school should be made as far as possible a preparation for the whole work of life, and should naturally lead up to it. The endeavour of all educators should be to establish such a relation between school instruction and the occupations of life as to prevent a break of continuity in passing from one to the other. The methods by which we gain information and experience in the busy world should be identical with those adopted in schools. It is because the opposite theory has so long prevailed that our school-training has proved so inadequate a preparation for the real work of life. The demand for technical instruction both in our elementary and in our secondary schools is a protest against the contrast which has so long existed between the subjects and methods of school-teaching and the practical work of every-day life."

The contention is often put forward that the time of the school is fully required for the ordinary school subjects. I have already urged a modification of the present syllabus, so that one half-day may be devoted to manual and domestic subjects. The evidence, however, of Sir Swire Smith, one of the Royal Commissioners on Technical Instruction, states that "the half-time children of the Town of Keighley, numbering about two thousand, although they received less than fourteen hours of instruction per week, and are required to attend the factory for twenty-eight hours per week in addition, yet obtained at the examinations a higher percentage of passes than the average of children throughout the whole country receiving double the amount of schooling." This surely is a sufficient answer to those who state that sufficient time is not given for ordinary subjects, and proves that the combination of practical work combined with literary work has the best possible influence upon school life.

The development of manual instruction in Britain during the last few years has been of rapid growth, and I am glad to say is of a permanent kind. In every district visited classes were in operation, and the work is, I understand, carried on in every county in England. The larger centres visited—viz., London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Glasgow—give instruction to the whole of the upper-standard boys, and the general opinion expressed was that the work had succeeded far beyond the expectations of the most sanguine. The headmasters and teachers generally spoke in the highest terms of the system, and in reply to my inquiries at each school as to whether they would if permitted revert to the old system of purely literary work, the answers were very decidedly in favour of the manual system.

There are, of course, slight differences in method, but in no case did I find the Sloyd system adopted. The system is that of English wood-work; and for general information I give the course of work adopted in (1) London; (2) Manchester; and (3) Birmingham; as well as (4) a Parisian primary school.

There is one very important difference relating to the drawing of the exercises worked—namely, in some centres it is done at the school previous to attending the workshop. I made a careful examination of the two methods, and unhesitatingly recommend the drawing being done at the workshop, small drawing-boards, &c., being provided, the instruction being in wood-work or metal-work, as the case may be. In London and Manchester drill in the use of the various tools formed a marked feature of the instruction. In every centre visited the whole of the appliances and material were provided by the various Boards.

The two principal centres in metal-work visited were Thomas Street School, London, and Rea Street School, Birmingham, the syllabus of both schools being given. In Birmingham there are three metal- and five wood-working centres.

In every case I find manual-instruction centres are established, generally in connection with one of the schools, a shed being erected in the playground, the boys attending in classes of either twenty or forty from the various schools, thus greatly economizing the expenditure in appliances as well as in instructors. The method of registration is that of having duplicate registers at the manual class, one of which is returned either by the senior scholar or by post. In London the day-school register is marked thus, O, against a boy at a manual class, and upon receipt of the duplicate manual register the letter M is marked within the circle—in red if punctual, in black if unpunctual. The manual instructor reports to the head teacher any boy committing any act deserving of punishment.

I would suggest, therefore, that centres for manual work be created wherever possible for the purpose of giving the necessary instruction daily, two hours' instruction being given to each class, to include the drawing exercise. I would further recommend that the class teachers should accompany the scholars, and generally assist in carrying on the work. The difficulty of mixed classes would not affect this suggestion, as the girls would at the same time be in attendance at the domestic-economy centre. An illustration is given of one page of the drawing-book used in class-work under the Manchester School Board, which will no doubt prove a useful guide. Tests should frequently be made in the power of using tools, and interpreting a drawing, or making one. Such exercises should, however, be capable of completion within the time allowed for the exercise or inspection, if by a public officer. The tests given by the Manchester School Board for 1897 are reproduced.

I have no doubt the people of New Zealand will soon appreciate (as the people of England now do) the fact that the industrial training of their children is the foundation of their future prosperity, impressing a child as it does with a taste and love of work.

(1.) MANUAL INSTRUCTION UNDER THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD.

The following syllabus has been previously issued by the Education Department; in order, however, that the report may be used for reference, I include the syllabus of wood- and metal-work:—