

Physical education on modern lines has developed strongly since 1945. The process has been more rapid in girls' schools than in boys' schools, where the older gymnastic tradition, the war shortage of trained instructors, and the greater proportion of time given to organized games have had some retarding effect. The health-education section of the syllabus has so far been shared between the teachers of general science and home subjects and the physical instructors. The arrangement is frequently unsatisfactory, and more specific organization appears to be necessary. The institution of a University School of Physical Education should, within a few years, raise physical education in the schools to a high level.

There is some instability in the position of agricultural courses. They have, in general, declined in district high schools. It seems that, except for the prospective student of the University Agricultural College (who, in any case, prefers to concentrate at the post-primary school on a course based on the pure sciences), most pupils interested in agricultural subjects desire a brief course stopping short of School Certificate. The increase in the number of rural high schools may be the solution of the problem.

The sciences, both in their general and their specialized aspects, retain a very strong position in the schools, and in girls' courses have increased their influence. This increase is due partly to the emphasis on and the interest in biology, and partly to the necessity for providing a sound foundation for the Sixth Form and University science and allied courses, which have been attracting so many boys and girls.

In the trades and industrial courses there are now more pupils remaining at school till the School Certificate year, and it appears that the number taking the subjects of these courses as School Certificate options will grow steadily. The same comment applies to the home and commercial courses. In the full trades course, however, offered by a number of schools, the multiplicity of subjects required is making it rather difficult to give sufficient time to the four or five School Certificate options for these to reach the necessary standard in three or four years. The new commercial subject, commercial practice, has proved very popular and is now an integral part of many general courses as well as of most revised commercial courses.

The study of foreign languages declined sharply when the new curriculum was first introduced. Present indications suggest some recovery in the case of French, an increased interest in other modern foreign languages, and the stabilizing of Latin at the existing or a somewhat lower level of numbers.

The annual refresher courses instituted in 1945 have had a most valuable effect in modernizing the curriculum and in stimulating teachers to examine their teaching methods and the content of their subjects.

(12) THE SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

The year 1947 was the second year of the new examination, and, considering the magnitude of the examination (there were, for example, 8,319 candidates who sat in English alone), everything ran very smoothly. Except in one subject, there were few criticisms of the papers, and these were of little moment; in English, only one, and that from a person not a post-primary teacher; in bookkeeping, only one, an isolated point; in general science, only one, and again from a person not a post-primary teacher; in embroidery, criticism from one school owing to a misunderstanding; in commercial practice, a criticism from one school which, in the opinion of the Inspectors, is devoting too little time to the subject; in French, a criticism from one source that the paper was long and unduly difficult, not, however, confirmed by the marks returned by the examiners, the medians of whom ranged in the case of six examiners from 52 to 57, and in the case of the seventh was 48. In history there was a spate of criticism. The history paper was, however, set by an experienced teacher in close touch with classroom and text-book conditions, and the moderating of the paper was carried out by officers of the Department also in close touch with school conditions, who tried to ensure that in a period of text-book difficulties and transition in syllabus there were questions