

scription of each plant. My description when I took the cabbage-plant would be almost identical with my description of the turnip. I would make the children curious to observe, and they would say, "These plants are like each other, for the same words were told us about each." They begin to see from the words used that there are family likenesses, and they get interested. Carried on a little further, it is being applied in this way: A road-side plant is taken and the teacher says, "I would like you to bring such-and-such a plant." The child brings it on a certain day, and it is made the subject of a lesson. He knows where it grows; afterwards it is pressed in the drawing-book, and it is painted on the opposite page exactly to nature by applying the brush. I could have brought some books to illustrate this kind of work. This is nature-study applied to school study, and it is training the children to do and to observe, and observation to my mind is the root of all knowledge, as it gives power to do.

16. How many hours per week would you give to this in country districts?—At least two hours a week, but you could extend the time. In the first instance we are encouraging it. At the present time we have to foster and encourage this form of work in our schools.

17. I want to arrive at the possibilities of teaching in the primary schools, and to ascertain your idea as to the number of hours per week which could be devoted to this special branch without interfering with the other work?—You can give two hours a week without any inconvenience at all—even three. If you applied it a little way further on when the children begin to do plasticine, you could so dovetail the work as to make one subject run into and help the other; and instead of having the so-called object-lessons without objects you would have the whole material before the children for observation and instruction.

18. Then, in connection with teaching in a particular branch in a technical school, could reading-lessons in any way be devised bearing upon the subject which is being taught—that is to say, instead of reading about the Battle of Crecy, could there be a reading-lesson on cress?—Certainly, further on. I would not take that in the lower classes, although at the present time there are some suitable readers edited by Buchanan and Gregory, published by Macmillan, but they are adapted to England. There is, however, the same type of book issued by Whitcombe and Tombs for country schools. These books are called Nature Readers. Even in England adaptation is setting in. The authorities are beginning to see the necessity of adapting their reading-books to environment. A child gets accustomed to what he sees, and his attention is directed to the more particular points in connection with those things which his own ordinary observation simply sees and passes by.

19. I am taking it that your answer is that there is no reason why interesting reading-lessons should not be taken upon any technical subject?—I only want the observational foundation, and then to widen the child's experience by reading. Show him that what is within his immediate surroundings has its likenesses elsewhere, and you can widen and enlarge upon it in the mind. All actual knowledge is gained in that way.

20. In teaching children—always remembering the short time they have in school—if you taught them reading by lessons on technical subjects would you dwarf their general knowledge, or their knowledge of history, for instance?—Certainly not. You could encourage reading a little further on.

21. Then, in the rural schools, I suppose that not more than fifty per cent. of the children could be termed followers of agriculture in any shape. The remainder would be the children of engineers, carpenters, plumbers, and so on. Could you then in a primary school differentiate the technical training at all without interfering with the whole syllabus of the school?—No; you could not have a perfect system in an imperfect community. You want to get the nearest you can to environment. The point is to get the nearest you can to the actual wants of a district—that is, to meet the greatest number of needs in a district. You must have exceptions in everything.

22. Then, you think that practically there would be no difficulty in establishing in a primary school a system of teaching that would suit the locality?—It could be done without any great change in our syllabus to-day, because under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act science is fostered; but it is impossible with our syllabus to do all the subjects satisfactorily, and that is my reason for saying that our syllabus ought to be so arranged that the compulsory subjects should be merely arithmetic and English, including, of course, reading, writing, drawing, and composition. These should constitute the foundation of all our final work so far as mechanical preparation is concerned. I would then allow every district to select the subjects, say, two, or three, or four, or five, as the case may be, best adapted to a district.

23. Taking a school with this environment and this special syllabus, how would that affect the pupils who were not going to develop on the lines of their immediate environment?—They have the elements, or the foundation, according to environment, and when they go into another district it is simply a modification. There are similarities, whether you take the flora or the fauna, or the soils, there are similarities in the different districts.

24. *Mr. Foulds.*] At present a good deal is being done in the schools along the lines you have indicated?—They are beginning to work along those lines.

25. And the main thing is the more complete training of the teachers?—That is what I desire to see.

26. *Mr. Buddo.*] Do you think there is any room in our present syllabus for any further special subjects?—I have just answered that question for Sir William Russell in this way: Our syllabus is so extensive that the difficulties under the Manual and Technical Act of introducing the subjects required under it are so great that I fear the result—I am not satisfied as to the result. The pressure is too great.

27. You consider, then, that the taking-up of further subjects would be a matter of great delicacy?—That is where the difficulty is at present.

28. Would you approve, then, of studies in nature, we will say, being taken up other than as a pastime or reading-lesson?—I think you should do a great deal more than as a pastime. I