

*District High Schools.*—The course of instruction usually followed in the secondary departments of the district high schools of the Dominion has, hitherto, been drawn up largely with a view to prepare pupils for the Civil Service Junior, Matriculation, and Education Board Scholarship Examinations. In too many cases the curriculum itself and the methods of teaching have been dominated by examination results. It is, however, gratifying to note that in several education districts an earnest endeavour is being made to bring the course of instruction more into harmony with local conditions by providing suitable rural courses, based generally on the suggestive programme issued by the Department last year. Such courses, admittedly tentative in character, are now in operation in four districts, and there are indications that similar courses will be provided in other districts as soon as ways and means permit. The course for boys is not intended to fit them for carrying on agricultural and pastoral pursuits, but is intended to give them a knowledge of the scientific principles upon which the successful practice of these pursuits depends. Similarly, the course for girls is intended to fit them for the work which they, as members of families engaged in such pursuits, may have to perform or superintend. It is worthy of remark that it has been found possible, not only to provide reasonably full courses with a distinct bias towards rural and domestic pursuits, but also to secure adequate opportunities for pupils preparing for the various public examinations. The special payment of £5 10s. per annum provided by the Government for each pupil in the secondary department of a district high school taking an approved rural course has enabled Education Boards to augment the available teaching-staff by the addition thereto of specially qualified itinerant instructors to teach the significant subjects included in the course.

While it is too early yet to judge of the effect of this departure from old-fashioned methods of secondary education, it will be a matter for surprise if it is not found to be altogether beneficial from the point of view both of the schools and of the pupils. It should at least have the effect of prolonging the period of secondary education in rural districts.

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