

their opinions when he said that they believed that the principle on which the syllabus was founded was calculated to give the average citizen a very sound education. He had watched the effect of the changes in the last four years. His own opinion was that the syllabus was excellent in the main, although he thought it be might well to reconsider some portions of it, and he also thought the time allotted to some of the subjects should be redistributed. It was said by some that the syllabus was too diffuse—its vagueness was urged against it. He thought that its width was its strength. The more intelligent their teachers became, the less difficulty there would be in mapping out their schemes of work, and teaching what they knew best themselves. He hoped the day would not come when the freedom of the teachers would be curtailed. It was the administration and working of the system—that was the difficulty. Any one who thought over the matter would see that during the last few years teachers had been intrusted with the promotion of their own pupils, and had been given freedom of classification. Prior to that time such work had been done under authority. Many teachers had been unable—some from diffidence—to catch the spirit of the syllabus and deal with it in the spirit in which it was conceived. He thought that was one of the causes of diffuseness, and it resulted in some measure of desultory teaching; but it was a standing testimony to the teaching in our schools that there had not been under this tentative scheme greater weakness shown than there had been. The wonder was that their young teachers had done so well as they had done. In school-organization and in formulating schemes of work they wanted to help teachers more than they did. He had two well-defined ideas as to how that could be done. The position in that respect was recognized in other countries. In Germany, for example, after a six-years course the teacher had two years' teaching under supervision. Despite the excellent work done by our Inspectors, the lack of such supervision was the weak point in our small schools and in the case of our young teachers. Many of those who went out at the present time gained their experience at the expense of their pupils. This was more noticeable under the present syllabus than under the old one. Despite the criticism that had been levelled against the new syllabus during the four years it had been in force, the children they had been turning out were more resourceful—and were likely to be more resourceful citizens—than those taught under the old system, because they had to deal more with things than with words and books as in former days. In some of the best schools in England they had an organizing teacher—who should be experienced and skilful in teaching—and it was his business to co-operate with the Inspectors and teachers in the mapping-out of the schemes of work and in making the young teachers suitable for their work. He thought such a system would be a good one to adopt, because the schools to which our young teachers were sent were constantly changing their teachers. An organizing teacher could prevent a great deal of loss and make the teaching more efficient. He thought that a want at the present time was a set of "Suggestions" for the consideration of teachers, such as those issued by the Education Department at Home. Any one who read those "Suggestions" would agree that they contained the concentrated common-sense of men well worth listening to on any educational topic. These "Suggestions" should be a corollary to our present education syllabus. It seemed to him that the teachers would then do better work. The "Suggestions" would be for the consideration of teachers in the working of the syllabus. They might deal with the drawing-out of schemes of work, and with the syllabus generally. They would form a fitting corollary, and would make our education system infinitely more efficient and economical than it was at present. But if he thought those "Suggestions" were going to put a new syllabus within a syllabus, he would say "Hands off." The "Suggestions" of the English Education Department were simply suggestions; they were not binding on teachers. He thought they should do more in the way of character-building in our schools than was done at the present time. He did not mean to say that our children did not in the main turn out good citizens, but he would like more definite attention given to character-building. They might turn out boys resourceful and mentally alert and splendid in physique, but they should also turn out boys imbued with the highest ideals of life and service. He thought the latter was most essential, and it required more consideration in our syllabus. Reference had been made to English. He thought the composition in our schools now was a more real thing than it was in times past. The composition taught now was the child's own thoughts expressed in his own way, more than a mere artificial exercise in the reproduction of other people's thoughts. Composition and the time given to English were two factors that commended themselves to him in the new syllabus.

Professor KIRK thought that Professor Thomas was perfectly right in saying that many of the students came to the University colleges not bearing the imprint of the secondary schools, or so slightly that it was not worth noting. It was an undesirable state of things, but it was one of the subjects they could better consider when they were dealing with the secondary schools. He would like to say something with regard to the teaching of English in the primary schools. He did not think the teaching of formal grammar improved the composition in the least. The English child did not speak the English he learned from any set book of grammar, but the English he heard spoken at home and to a less extent what he heard at the school—to a much less extent the English he heard at the school, because the teacher was so much engaged in the management of the class. The English that he heard generally, and the English that would remain with him, was the English of the home. There were many men who could give you a grammatical rule, yet whose English was execrably bad. He had no doubt that Professor Haslam and Professor Gilray could give instances of classical writers whose works had survived to this day who, if they could come before them for examination in formal grammar, would be "ploughed" hopelessly. We lived amongst a race of native people who were really a race of orators. These men knew no formal grammar, yet they spoke their language perfectly because they always heard it spoken correctly. That was a sufficient indication that a man could speak his own language well if he always heard it spoken well, and he could do so without the help of grammar. In our primary schools he feared that the time of the pupils that was devoted to formal grammar was very largely wasted. In secondary