

ance, especially in technical work. He was pleased to say that he found as a general rule that the pupils who came to the technical school possessed good powers of description.

Mr. HUNTER said he was in a position to speak as one who had been a primary-school teacher until recently, and latterly as a secondary-school teacher. During the last three years of his primary-school teaching he was in charge of the Fifth and Sixth Standards. He found the Fifth Standard arithmetic a big bill to fill. There seemed to be a want of proper distribution in regard to arithmetic between the Fifth and Sixth Standards. He differed from Mr. Howell in regard to boys starting their secondary-school education at eleven years of age. He was a great believer in the foundation that was laid at the primary school. He thought that a good foundation was laid there. He agreed as to the want of knowledge of formal grammar among boys and girls at the secondary schools.

Miss MARCHANT said, as the member of the Conference who first took charge of a free high school, she might speak with a certain amount of authority on the product of the primary school in the way of work. For the last six years they had practically none but free pupils at the Otago Girls' High School. She was sorry to say that her opinion agreed with that of Professors Gilray and Haslam, and Mr. Bevan-Brown, and the other secondary-school teachers who had spoken as to the lack of formal grammar and the general weakness in arithmetic. These told very heavily on the high-school work. She was inclined to think that the State had gained very much indeed by the alteration and broadening of the primary-school syllabus, but the high schools had not gained. The primary schools had very large numbers of pupils who never went to secondary schools, and, of course, the majority of the pupils must be considered. But she thought they must also consider those 40 per cent. who wished to go to higher work. They must do their best, and not sacrifice the interests of the latter class of students. In regard to the raw material the high schools had to deal with, her experience was exactly similar to that of Mr. Bevan-Brown. One hardly knew how to begin teaching Latin to many of the pupils who came to the secondary schools from the primary schools. If the Conference could throw any light on that subject, and bring any improvement in that respect, it would be strengthening secondary education, and eventually University education.

Mr. VERNON said he would like to know what percentage of Standard VI children went on to the secondary schools. If a large percentage went forward, that large percentage should be catered for. If the percentage was large, he would certainly say that it should be a function of the primary school to get the children as well trained as possible to continue their work at the secondary school. He had always been of opinion that they got the children too late for the secondary schools. His school was largely made up of free-place pupils. The average age of the pupils entering his school was thirteen or fourteen, and by the time they had been two years there they were beginning to think of leaving the school. He was perfectly certain that, if they took three or four years with their Latin that was now taken in two years, it would be better for the students. In the Old Country Latin was commenced much earlier than it was taken here. There was not the slightest doubt that many of the students knew very little about formal grammar when they came to the secondary schools. But, as Mr. Firth had said, that was also the case long ago. It had been a weak point for a long time, the want of formal grammar. If the primary schools could find out which pupils were going on to the secondary schools, and taught those pupils some formal grammar, it would be a good thing.

Mr. GOYEN said he had been greatly disappointed with the inadequacy of the treatment of the subject of grammar by the previous speakers. He really did not understand what they meant by "formal grammar." Did they mean grammar simply of form—of form and not of function? Was the English sentence so structureless, so absolutely wanting in form and structure, that they might call the grammar of their language a mere matter of form? The thing was absurd, he thought. What did grammar imply? It implied this, among other things: that a person should realize that words had certain functions, and that they could not discharge their functions unless they were placed in certain positions. That was a very important thing in grammar. It was not a formal thing at all. It was a part and parcel of the language and the structure of the sentence. The writer must know that the verb had a certain function, that the noun and adjective and other parts of speech had certain functions, and that in order to discharge their functions adequately they must occupy certain places in the sentence. It was not a matter of guesswork. There was just one place, and one place alone, in which a word could do its work most effectively. In his opinion, those who considered that grammar was to be taught only as part of composition took a very inadequate view of the subject. In what other way was grammar of use? They were for the most part occupied in interpreting the spoken and written speech of others, and he did not think anybody could, except in a vague sort of way, interpret the speech of others who did not know exactly how one word depended upon another, how phrase depended upon phrase, clause upon clause, and paragraph upon paragraph. That was the grammar he thought they ought to concern themselves with. It was not a formal thing at all. It lay at the root of all literary study. It was not everything. There was an imaginative and a purely literary element. He attached great value to that, and regretted that greater prominence was not given to it in the training of the teacher. In his view, they could not teach a child his own language, to say nothing about other languages, without thoroughly grounding him in its accidence and syntax—that is, in the forms words must take, and the places words, phrases, clauses, and sentences must occupy, to express adequately the thought they are intended to convey. Nothing merely formal could wed thought and language in this way. To him formal grammar had no existence. He knew from experience that grammar could be taught in a formal way, but he did not believe that there was any such thing as formal grammar.

Mr. WATKINS said he gathered from some of the speakers that morning that in some parts of the Dominion pupils passed from the primary schools to the University. He did not know of any part of the Dominion where that took place.