

The Conference divided on Mr. George's amendment.—Ayes, 28; Noes, 19: majority for, 9.—Amendment agreed to.

Mr. GEORGE moved, as a further amendment, 'That all the words after "fifteen years" be omitted, and the following be inserted: "and that beyond that age it is desirable that all boys and girls not receiving full-time instruction at secondary or other schools should attend continuation classes until they reach the age of seventeen years."'

Seconded by Mr. Braik, and carried.

The motion, as amended, was then put, and carried on the voices.

The Work of Secondary and Technical Schools.

The CHAIRMAN announced that the next subject for discussion was "The work of secondary and technical schools." He had already tried to define what was the work of technical and secondary schools. A very important part of secondary and technical work was now carried out in country districts. Some district high schools and one or two high schools were making a beginning, which he was very glad to see. He did not think there was any harm in naming at least one school that was doing very good work. The Stratford District High School had been very successful in that respect—in making the work of the secondary department vocational, and yet they were also giving a good deal of educational training in the mother-tongue and training in scientific method applied to the every-day life of the children of the district. The particular work of science they took there—the particular practical work they took up—was dairy-work, and associated with it was the growth of fodder. Milk-testing was carried on there. The cows were milked by the children, the milk being taken into the laboratory, and was there tested in every way, and the results were recorded. Samples of milk were also brought by the children from their fathers' farms, and those samples were tested also. He felt very keenly that science should be properly and really taught, as far as it could be taught, in every school. He was told of several instances where, from the evidence obtained from the school tests, farmers had dispensed with unprofitable cows and had replaced them with profitable cows. The work done at that school was extremely good. The work done in botany was distinctly good. It was part of the school course. They were not made farmers. It was not trade instruction. That would come at a later time. It ought to come at a later time. He believed that if strictly technical classes for farmers followed on that, those pupils would make a good set of farmers. A good part of the instruction in that school consisted of English and arithmetic and other subjects. He was not one of those who believed that because a thing was useful you could not make it educational. He believed that if a thing was useful it was easier to make it educational than otherwise. The strongest argument for teaching English was that it was making us good citizens, and he thought they could make that a strong argument for a preliminary agricultural instruction in our rural schools: not a substitute for it, but what would lead up to it. He wished to see our district country high schools doing something of the same sort in the future. He would ask Mr. Alexander, Director of Lincoln College, to address the Conference on the question of agricultural education.

Mr. ALEXANDER said the question of agricultural education had occupied many minds in many countries, and apparently with very little success, because such education in many countries was very far from ideal—in fact, was very poor indeed. He had fairly definite views as to what agricultural education should be. Lincoln College was supposed to occupy the status of an agricultural college. They had many difficulties in their way. Arguing backwards, he would deal with what might be the form of agricultural education given in the primary schools. At the present time at Lincoln College they were handicapped in several ways. The first was that the students they got were not properly grounded in English. What he meant was this: that the great majority of the students were not able to put their views clearly on paper. If they were set a simple examination they were not able to convey their thoughts on paper in an intelligent manner. He did not know who was responsible for it. The second difficulty was that they had very little idea of mathematics, arithmetic, or simple calculations. He did not know whose fault it was. He could give instances of students with secondary-school certificates who were so deficient. There must be something wrong with our primary and secondary education when that was so. The next thing they had to complain of was that there seemed to be a want of thoroughness about the method of the new students in doing their work. Who was to blame for that he did not know—probably the boys' parents, not the teachers. If boys were taught method in their youth they were generally methodical all their days. He thought that the aim of agricultural education in primary schools should be to develop habits of observation. You could not specialize too early. He was very glad to hear the Chairman express his views so clearly in regard to the science of applied agriculture—that it could be useful and educative at the same time. He wished to outline the system of agricultural education that was being worked at the present time successfully. He did not wish to say anything further about ordinary education: he would leave that for the Education Department to settle. The present Conference did not seem to be able to settle it—they did not seem to be agreed as to who was to blame. He would outline a system of education that was supposed to lend itself to agriculture. In the primary and secondary schools they could not teach agriculture. In the first place they were not fitted to do it, and in the second place it could not be done. In some districts in England they had tried a system of teaching elementary horticulture—not simply theoretical teaching, but by means of a number of small plots of ground attached to the school. On those small plots they grew a few vegetables, flowers, &c., and they tried to encourage the children to make collections of weeds. Beyond that they did not try to go. They simply tried to interest the children by growing a few vegetables which they could eat afterwards. The plots were differently treated in order to show the children the results of different plant-food. He thought that was a thing we ought to do a little more of in this country. There was one thing that he noticed probably more than anything else when driving through some parts of this country for the first