

time, and that was that very little attention was given to making the surroundings of the home attractive. He very rarely, if ever, saw any flowers growing round the home. If a child was taught to love flowers in the primary school he would carry that love within him through his life. If the children were encouraged—and they were encouraged in some schools—to make collections of weeds, they then got to know a good plant from a bad plant. Beyond that you could not go. He did not see why in a primary school such elementary teaching should not be given, and a part of a day taken once or twice a week to do the cultivation that was necessary. Labels might be put on each row of plants, and plots could be treated with different chemical manures, and the treatment could be indicated at the end of each row. In that way the children would gain a great deal of knowledge which would be useful to them afterwards, and they would also be interested in their surroundings. There was no mental trouble attached to such study. The child thus easily gained knowledge that would stick to him afterwards. He would not confine such teaching to rural districts. The children in the towns could be taught to have a love of plants. It was a good thing for the children to have healthy employment in the open air. With regard to the secondary schools, they went a little further, but they still continued the cultivation of the school plots, and made collections of weeds, &c., and studied the results of giving different manures to the plants. They were asked, in addition, to do some elementary science in the schoolroom in connection with agriculture. Some biology, chemistry, and physics they might also be asked to do. That was the programme that had been carried out. A special instructor who had taken a horticultural course was employed in connection with this instruction. It was his duty to go round and help the schoolmasters with the management of the plots in the hope that the schoolmasters would be fitted to impart the instruction in the course of a year or two. You had to go further if you wanted to give agricultural teaching. Then there were continuation and extension classes. They were not night-classes, but day-classes, taken also by special teachers after the boys had left school and before they came to manhood. The special instructor gave lectures in agriculture, and in science relating to agriculture. This instructor must be a qualified agricultural instructor—i.e., one who has had a complete course of training in agricultural science. It was more applied work than purely scientific work. There was also seed-testing. Simple chemistry was taught, which must be purely theoretical. Seed-testing should be done in every extension school, and it was done in most cases. Then there was the surveying taught, which would be useful to the farmer. These classes went on from six to twelve weeks, for three days a week, and as a rule for four hours a day. The students could go back for a second or third year and take more advanced courses. The system had worked very satisfactorily indeed. The system he had outlined had been adopted, at any rate, in one part of Ireland. After such a course of instruction the practical work of the young men on farms became much more interesting to them than it would otherwise be. After the courses of instruction he had outlined there would, in our case, be the higher agricultural training and teaching given in the Lincoln Agricultural College. There was every facility at that College for pupils obtaining the higher branches of agricultural teaching and training. The system he had outlined would coincide with the views he held. Probably it would not coincide with the views of many persons in this country. He did not think they could teach agriculture in the secondary schools. You could not teach agriculture unless you had the practical work going on side by side with it, and until the students were fully matured—say, from seventeen to eighteen. For those two reasons he contended that neither in primary nor in secondary schools could you teach agriculture, nor could you prescribe text-books for agriculture in those schools.

The CHAIRMAN said he would like to ask Mr. Alexander one question. This matter had been a subject of conversation between them before. In our primary schools and in our secondary schools they had courses which Mr. Alexander did not call "agriculture." They were really nature-study, with some practical work leading up to agriculture—a preparation for it. Probably those present would agree entirely with the views Mr. Alexander had expressed as to the teaching of technical agriculture in any of these schools. What was called "agriculture" in our primary schools was really only a preparation for it. It was just what he had said should be taught; but still, for all that, they would want teachers trained for it—teachers who would teach it in such a way that it would be profitable educationally, and profitable from the point of view of those who were going to teach pupils in our rural schools. In other words, they wanted teachers in our ordinary rural schools—both primary and secondary—capable of handling nature-study; but they also wanted specialists of the kind that Mr. Alexander had indicated. His idea was this: Let those people have two or three years' as complete instruction as possible in an agricultural college, but let them have one year at least, in a training college, in actual training in the methods of teaching. He thought a good deal was gained by giving those who were going to teach nature-study some insight into the actual working of agriculture—as was done at the Agricultural College at Hawkesbury, N.S.W. Classes of teachers attended that College every year. It was also done in Canada. He would like to ask Mr. Alexander how he would propose to teach the ordinary teacher so as to make the instruction he gave such as would lead the pupil up to something more definite; and then, how would he train the specialist?

MR. ALEXANDER said his idea was to give them a course in horticulture by having a horticultural school attached to the College. If they spent two years under those conditions they should be able to teach the horticulture required to be taught in the schools afterwards.

Overlapping of Commercial and Domestic Work.—Grants for Scholarships.

The CHAIRMAN asked for the opinion of the Conference on the following questions: "(1) The overlapping in case of commercial work and domestic work between the technical day-schools and the secondary schools; and (2) whether the time has not come to consider the question of competition for scholarships, and the further question of restricting the scholarship grant to children living in country districts."