

attended by girls provision is made for instruction in one or more subjects pertaining to domestic life; but controlling authorities have recently had urged upon them the strong desirability of extending facilities for instruction in these subjects, and it will in future be compulsory for junior free pupils (girls) to receive such instruction. Likewise, fuller provision for the instruction of boys in subjects of a practical nature is being insisted upon as an urgent requirement.

As might be expected, a scrutiny of the subjects taken by pupils of the secondary departments of district high schools reveals the fact that subjects of immediate practical benefit have a more important place in the curriculum than is the case in secondary schools of the type referred to above. For instance, only 46 per cent. of the pupils learn Latin, and 17 per cent. French. On the other hand, 59 per cent. of the boys and 37 per cent. of the girls receive instruction in agriculture or agricultural science, 25 per cent. of the pupils learn dairy science, 33 per cent. take commercial work, 48 per cent. of the boys learn woodwork, and 56 per cent. of the girls receive instruction in one or both of the subjects needlecraft and cookery. The various branches of science receive adequate attention; chemistry and physics are taken by 57 per cent. of the pupils, botany by 37 per cent., elementary science of common life by 29 per cent., and domestic science (so definitely designated) by 15 per cent. of the girls.

It is interesting to notice in connection with the above figures the proportion of the population of the Dominion occupied in the various pursuits of life. The census of 1911 (the latest available) shows that of the male population 34 per cent. are engaged in agriculture, 31 per cent. in industrial work, 15 per cent. in commercial work, 10 per cent. in transport and communication, 5 per cent. in professions, 3 per cent. in domestic work, and 2 per cent. in indefinite occupations; while of the female population 37 per cent. are engaged in domestic work, 22 per cent. in industrial work, 14 per cent. in commercial work, 15 per cent. in professional work, 8 per cent. in agriculture, 3 per cent. in indefinite employments, and 1 per cent. in transport and communication. It would be dangerous to draw hasty conclusions from these figures, but there seems to be little doubt on two or three points. Even allowing that secondary schools are to supply the followers of all the professions, too many boys, especially, appear to be taking the general or professional course. It also seems clear that more attention might profitably be devoted towards giving some special preparation to the large number of boys destined to become agriculturists or superior industrial workers, and to the girls, a large proportion of whom will eventually take up domestic duties.

At the instance of the Minister special inquiry was made during the year into the amount of attention devoted in secondary schools to such subjects as writing, English, reading, correct speech, and arithmetic. The report on the written work, especially of boys taking the modern or commercial course, is not very favourable, and it is pointed out that if such pupils, who have ample time for the purpose, do not learn the value of neatness and method, the course they are taking becomes of little educational value. With reference to the teaching of English, it is found that pupils are frequently unable to apply the rules and theory of grammar to their own composition or reading-matter. Many teachers of secondary schools complain of the difficulty of teaching language to the pupils who come from the primary schools with very little knowledge of formal grammar. Reading and recitation receive less attention in secondary than in primary schools, one reason being lack of time for the purpose. The necessity of teachers themselves being capable of setting a good model in this respect is urged, and the same remark applies to the matter of correct enunciation, pronunciation, and speech generally. More regular practice in the production of vowel sounds in the lower forms of secondary schools especially is recommended. The modern and more practical aspect of the subject of arithmetic appears to be receiving more attention than hitherto.

Information respecting the subjects of instruction taken up in technical high schools will be found in the section "Technical Instruction."