

In many parts of the United States they pay much more attention to handwork than we do. I saw in some of the schools there pottery-work, woodwork, metal-work, and electrical work better than anything I have seen in our schools.

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS.

In view of the discussions that have taken place in our Dominion over the advisability of bringing the elementary course to a conclusion at an earlier age than at present, I made very full inquiries into the work done by schools of this type.

Ontario has not yet done anything in this direction, but the Minister of Education there told me that the junior high school was coming. Manitoba has several such schools, but they were in recess when I passed through, and I was not able to retrace my steps so far to see them in operation later.

The junior high school, or "intermediate school," as it is sometimes called, is being very rapidly developed in the United States. Ten years ago there were only some half a dozen in the whole country. There are now more than one thousand, and these are being added to almost daily. I visited quite a number of schools of this type, looked into their programmes of work and methods of teaching; and I inquired, as fully as I could, into the reputation they are making for themselves. Though the schools that I visited varied considerably, in my opinion, in the quality of their work, and though it seemed to me that several had been established without any well-thought-out plan of action or definite idea of aim, I found everywhere the greatest enthusiasm with regard to the schools and to the work that they are doing. I met with practically no hostile criticism at all. Localities that at present have no junior high schools are preparing to establish them as soon as possible. I was again and again assured that these schools are justifying their existence because—

- (1.) They bridge the gap between the elementary and the ordinary high school :
- (2.) They provide better educational opportunity for a very large number of children :
- (3.) They have considerably increased the number of pupils continuing through the full high-school course :
- (4.) It is better for children of the early adolescent period—say, from twelve to fifteen years of age—to be taught together :
- (5.) The system usually followed in junior high schools of promoting half-yearly and of promoting by subjects permits of the more rapid progress of the quicker children, while, if the slower ones have to repeat a half-year's work, it is not a long delay :
- (6.) By means of its "shop" courses the junior high school makes better provision than the ordinary high school can do for individual differences in pupils, and gives them an opportunity of "trying out" and discovering their own particular aptitudes, interests, and capacities ; thus saving loss of valuable time at a later period.

In several junior high schools that I visited provision was made for the admission of rather older boys and girls of lower educational attainments—pupils who would probably never complete the academic course in the elementary school, but for whom the "shops" of the junior high school offered an opportunity to develop on other lines. The general testimony was that pupils of this type did surprisingly good work when given the fuller opportunities of the junior high school.

Junior high schools of several distinct types exist through the States : *e.g.*, I visited some that consisted of an additional "grade" added to the ordinary elementary school—this would be the same as the addition of Standard VII to our elementary school, Standards V, VI, and VII, then forming the junior high school. In other cases a transference of the classes corresponding to our Standards V and VI had been made to the high school, these classes, with the lowest form at that school, then constituting the junior high school. More frequently, however, the junior high school was organized as a separate institution, and it was this form of school that was almost always recommended to me. In Montclair, N.J., I had the advantage of seeing these three types working side by side, and Dr. Bliss, the Superintendent of Education in that city, was very pronounced in declaring, as a result of his experience, in favour of the separate-unit system. He declared it to be his intention to alter types 1 and 2 and to establish them as separate institutions at the earliest opportunity.

I made careful inquiry into the courses of study offered in the junior high school. These varied considerably in different localities, but the following may be taken as a sort of general average of what I saw. (N.B.—The junior high school usually has eight forty-minute work-periods per day ; some have nine such periods.)

Grade 7 = our Standard V.

COMPULSORY.

	Periods per Week.
English	5
History and geography .. .	5
Arithmetic .. .	5
Health, physiology, &c. .. .	3
Physical education .. .	2
Music .. .	2
Manual work .. .	5