

An example in illustration of this may be given from the practice of some universities in no longer requiring for the preliminary examination qualifying for entrance to some of the science courses a school course in French or German, and in providing, at a later stage, instruction designed to give the student a good reading knowledge of the language for a definite practical objective. We believe that this practice is a sound one.

Example from
Harvard University.

As far back as 1898 President Eliot reported to the Board of Overseers of Harvard University: "The ultimate principle on which Harvard College tends to act in the matter of admission requirements is this: The College inclines to count for admission any subject which is taught in the secondary school long enough and well enough to make the study of it a substantial part of a training appropriate to the child's capacity and degree of maturity. The future attitude of the College is likely to be, not continued insistence upon certain school studies as essential to preparation for college, but insistence that the gate to a university education shall not be closed to the candidate in consequence of his omission, at school, of any particular studies, provided that his school course has been so composed as to afford him a sound training."

University should
demand preliminary
education over full
secondary course.

The solution of the problem will come more readily if there is close co-operation between the university and the secondary-school authorities in the endeavour to find a way out, which will allow the schools to secure their objective while entrance to the university is carefully safeguarded. One of the difficulties of such a solution in New Zealand lies in the fact that the Matriculation Examination is taken too early, and that the standard is too low for its avowed purpose of university entrance. If the community could be trained to appreciate the fact that a full secondary-school course up to the age of eighteen years is the only satisfactory preparation for the university on the one hand, and on the other for many occupations requiring a good preliminary education, a much more satisfactory organization of the public examinations would be possible. This may, of course, raise other difficulties, and many secondary schools may find it impossible for the present to undertake the higher work. Here the opinion of the London University Commission may be again cited: "If the universities of the country were to agree to require the higher school examination as a condition of matriculation we have little doubt, with the experience of Scotland before us, that the schools would very soon reach the necessary standard."

Evils of popular
examination.

The evils of a low entrance qualification and an examination conducted with great publicity are well summed up in a recent bulletin of the Bureau of Education, Washington, "The Trend of College Entrance Requirements": "Attention is centred on study as something not particularly worth while in itself, but merely something with which to get something else. So the pupil learns to look upon his secondary education only as a means of entering college. When he gets into college he in turn looks upon college-work merely as a means of obtaining a college degree. The result is that he is inclined to seek both ends at the minimum of time and energy, and to the extent that he is not doing his best, to that extent he is being miseducated."

System of public
examinations
involving two tests
at different stages
recommended.

We are of opinion that the interests of the schools, and incidentally of the university, demand a leaving-certificate and a matriculation qualification taken in two well-marked stages. The secondary school of to-day is usually organized on the basis of a broad cultural common course for all pupils up to the age of sixteen years at latest. Following this comes a period of two years' further study devoted to a much smaller number of subjects involving specialization. If, then, a system of school examinations provides for a test at about the age of sixteen years, it affords evidence of the successful completion of the first stage. As experience shows that a large number of secondary-school pupils leave the school at about this age in order to enter employment, the lower certificate is valuable for them. The first examination is taken in a comparatively large number of subjects, but in the second examination the number is restricted by the necessity of studying them at an advanced stage. Naturally those pupils who look forward to university entrance, and have now definitely chosen their objective, will select subjects necessary for the requirements of the course they propose to take.