

curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of the individual. The main objective of the work is to cultivate whatever skill or aptitude the child has, in order to fit him for some occupation; and, in addition to this, no efforts are spared to develop in each child a spirit of independence, self-respect, and industry. The tangible results of the work are very fine. The leather-work, basketry, and other forms of hand-work bear testimony to the excellence of the methods in use. In order to ensure the well-being of ex-pupils of special classes, associations of voluntary workers are being formed in the larger centres, and, under their direction, investigations are being made to ascertain what avenues of employment are open to these children, and what is able to be done in affording them effective guidance and help through the most critical years of their lives.

*Retardation (Retardates and Accelerates).*—"We expect that the introduction of the new syllabus will have the effect of encouraging teachers to promote pupils in their strong subjects, and we hope that pupils will no longer be made to mark time in the English subjects until the arithmetic is brought up to what has been regarded as the corresponding standard. So far as the bright pupils are concerned, we are of opinion that the best time for these to cover two years' work in one year is generally in the classes up to Standard IV, not in Standard V. As the course in Standard V-Standard VI has been enriched, it is well worth while for a pupil to spend two years on that part of the programme, which from its cultural character may fairly be considered to be essentially secondary education. It should often be possible for a bright pupil, however, to finish in one year the work—e.g., of Standard I and Standard II, or of Standard III and Standard IV—and thus to commence secondary work a year earlier than the average. As a result of the introduction of the new syllabus, we hope to see, on the one hand, an elimination of avoidable cases of retardation, and, on the other, a definite acceleration of the progress of the brightest pupils."—(*Canterbury*.)

"A considerable amount of retardation is still apparent—quite enough, indeed, to call for the continuation of the measures already adopted. We are pleased to record, however, that the steps taken by the teachers have resulted in an appreciable reduction in practically all classes and over the district as a whole."—(*Otago*.)

*Probationers.*—"Probationers are now coming forward much better equipped as regards attainments for their work as junior teachers. A corresponding advance is noticeable in the teaching ability which they display early in their careers. Most of them make quite a pleasing appearance in front of a class, and present their lessons in workmanlike style. As a majority are fully or almost fully qualified by examination for entrance to the training college before they enter upon their probationership, the task of coaching them for their examinations is a comparatively easy one for the head teachers under whom they are placed. Consequently it is reasonable to expect these head teachers to devote special attention to instructing their probationers in the art and practice of school method. This, we regret to notice, is not always conscientiously done, and we not infrequently have to draw attention to the fact that an insufficient number of special lessons has been given by the probationers during their teaching year."—(*Auckland*.)

*District High Schools.*—"The secondary department of district high schools continue to render effective service. The steadily increasing roll number is sufficient evidence of the appreciation with which the courses of study provided are regarded in the rural centres where the schools are situated.

... We have found no lack of enthusiasm in the young ex-trainees who elect to take up secondary work, but we have found a decided lack of ability to teach successfully the subjects of the post-proficiency courses. The first year is, unfortunately, too often spent in groping for experience at the expense of the pupils, most of whom have just left the hands of the most highly skilled teachers in the primary schools. This undoubtedly accounts for the fact that in their first year in the secondary department the pupils often appear to make little progress, and cases are not unknown where the work has in certain respects deteriorated. The larger and better-staffed schools are finding little difficulty in introducing the diversified courses of instruction. In a number a threefold course is provided—a professional, a general, and a commercial; but these are not rigidly adhered to, every endeavour being made to cater for the individual needs of the pupils. Admirable as this may be within limits, it is necessary to sound a warning note. Occasionally this desire to accommodate individuals has led to a complexity of organization, resulting in a diffusion of teaching-power that cannot make for effectiveness. Where there is more than one teacher on the staff the desirability of utilizing to the full the special aptitudes of the teachers has been impressed. Much of the success of our larger schools is due to the successful operation of this system of specialization."—(*Auckland*.)

"In nearly all the secondary departments commercial courses were instituted during the year 1928. At Levin the large numbers of pupils desiring instruction in book-keeping, typewriting, and shorthand warranted the appointment of an assistant with special qualifications. The parents in country districts appear to view this course as having visible practical value."—(*Wellington*.)

"The rural course is taught in all country district high schools. Where there are two secondary assistants a certain amount of specialization is being introduced, and in several schools commercial subjects are being added to the curriculum. In some cases outside teachers have been appointed to take these subjects. This is not an ideal arrangement, as the discipline is sometimes unsatisfactory and the best efforts of the pupils are not secured. It is to be hoped that the secondary teachers will endeavour to equip themselves to give instruction in these subjects. It is gratifying to find that in some schools the curriculum has been enriched by the inclusion of such æsthetic subjects as drawing and singing."—(*Otago*.)

I have, &c.,

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