

retarded the movement in others. Just one-half of the schools attended by boys taught woodwork in 1928, and about one-fourth of these also taught metalwork. Drawing, usually both instrumental and freehand, is taught in all schools but three. Music or singing has so far been attempted in only a little over one-half of the schools.

So far as vocational training is concerned there is no difficulty whatsoever in obtaining sufficient support for commercial courses, especially in the girls' schools. Typewriting and shorthand may have but very little educational value, but as secondary school subjects they have come to stay. Home life or domestic courses have been established in several girls' schools and have also met with satisfactory support. Agriculture, however, continues to present the same perplexing and somewhat discouraging features as it has done for the past ten years at least.

It is well to point out that no effort has been spared by educationists in this country to encourage the study of agriculture and its allied subjects. For a quarter of a century nature-study has occupied a place on the primary-school syllabus; for a like period agriculture has been one of the subjects prescribed for teachers' certificate examinations; for twenty years it has been recognized as a subject of instruction for free place pupils; for fourteen years it has been, along with dairy science, a compulsory subject for all boys in secondary departments of district high schools with a roll of less than seventy pupils—the compulsion applying in some cases to localities where the chief or only primary industry is fishing or mining; and finally, for some twenty years from 40 to 60 per cent. of our boys' secondary schools have provided agricultural courses in their curricula. Some of these courses were planned on generous lines; large experimental areas, much too large in a few instances, were attached to the schools, and in the majority of cases instruction was also given in such vocational subjects as wool-classing, farm carpentry, &c. In 1916, the first year for which the records are readily available, thirteen out of the twenty schools attended by boys taught agriculture, and 48 per cent. of their boys learned the subject. In 1928 sixteen out of twenty-eight such schools provided agricultural courses, but these were followed by only 23 per cent. of the boys on their rolls.

It is somewhat disappointing to learn that though the number of schools teaching the subject has increased in the period under review—only five of the boys' or mixed schools outside the four centres do not now teach it—yet the proportion of boys taking the agricultural course has been reduced by more than one half. A few secondary schools have been led to abandon the course through lack of support, in one case after very determined efforts indeed to retain it; one school at least has been deterred from proceeding with a proposed course owing to lack of response from the parents; a few others are carrying on with but very meagre encouragement. In some instances the mediocre scope of the course or the unsympathetic attitude of the Principal or staff has been a contributing factor to non-success. There are schools, on the other hand, which offer not only dairy science and agriculture, but also woodwork and metalwork as well as wool-classing, herd-testing, and farm accounts, and where the work is undertaken by a specially qualified and competent teacher, and yet the percentage of pupils taking agriculture in these schools is usually under twenty. In two of the schools that have concentrated most on their agricultural courses it was only twelve in the one case and sixteen in the other in 1928. Rangiora, it should be noted, had as high as 26 per cent. After so long a recognition of the undoubted desirability of an agricultural bias in our education, both primary and secondary, and after so much effort on the part of educationists and teachers, it is disconcerting to realize that agricultural courses have not become popular, and that there is no pronounced demand from parents for them.

The bearing of the economic situation in this country upon the question of agricultural education has been referred to in previous reports and there is no need to elaborate the point again. Suffice it to say that so long as farm-lands are procurable only at the prevailing high prices the boy whose parents have but moderate means will not contemplate taking up farming; he is not attracted by the prospect of working as a farm labourer for say fifteen years at least in order to scrape together enough capital to acquire a holding of his own; the prospects in other vocations appeal to him much more strongly, especially if he has brains. Though the root of the trouble is apparent, the removal of the disturbing factor is beyond the control of educationists; in the meantime, however, our efforts to encourage increasing numbers of our young people to look towards the land for their life work must continue unabated.

The position with regard to the training of secondary-school teachers remains substantially the same. The time will ultimately come when a separate training college for secondary teachers must be established, and along with it a practising secondary school with a specially selected staff. Owing to the peculiar distribution of our population that time is probably many years distant. In the meantime, therefore, the present voluntary co-operation of the city secondary schools should be encouraged in every way. During 1928 nearly twenty training-college students were afforded opportunities of observation and practice in secondary schools and about another twenty in district and junior high schools. As the average number of new entrants into the secondary service (exclusive that is, of the beginners on technical and district high school staffs) has latterly been about sixty-five per annum, it is obvious that wider scope for practice is still a matter of urgency. So far as our own last year's entrants are concerned the situation is not without its redeeming features. Of the forty-two men only three were without either training college or previous teaching experience, and 79 per cent. had actually passed through a training college course. The figures for the women teachers were very similar, but somewhat lower owing to the inclusion of several commercial teachers and physical instructresses. It is to be remembered, too, that though home-science teachers as a rule do not take a training college course, both their diploma and their degree courses at Otago include a period of practice in teaching at a manual centre.

It is gratifying to note, in conclusion, the spirit of co-operation that exists between the secondary schools and the Department, and on behalf of my colleagues and myself, I have to express recognition of the friendly and frank attitude of the Principals towards all members of the Inspectorate.

I have, &c.,

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The Director of Education.