

In Ontario we have free Public Schools. An ideal system would be free High Schools and a free University also—a continuous system, modified at different points to meet the necessities of those who drop out before completing the whole course of state-supported education.

Fifth Book and Continuation Classes.

So much for the general question. Let us now consider some of the difficulties that have met us in Ontario as the result of the theory that our High and Public Schools are not continuous parts of one system. Some years ago, in many places, the question of the maintenance of Fifth book classes was a fruitful source of irritation. Time, however, has worked a partial cure. In those localities where there are no High Schools, the number of Fifth book classes, or, as they are also called, Continuation classes, has largely increased. No one who understands the situation and views it unselfishly, can wish such classes anything but the fullest measure of success. Although known by a different name, most of them are simply a lower grade of High School. In the process of evolution, however, their position has become an anomalous one. Many of them attempt the same work as the High Schools, but they are not subject to the limitations which have been imposed upon the High Schools to secure their efficiency. In the coming revision of the Regulations, it will evidently be the duty of the Education Department to adjust the Continuation classes properly to their place in the system. Most certainly, if they are to undertake any part of the work for the departmental examinations for teachers, this adjustment will become indispensable. In their equipment and the qualifications of their staffs such schools must be co-ordinated with the High Schools.

The conditions are, of course, different where the Public School is in the same locality as the High School. What shall be done with those Public School pupils who have completed the fourth form work and intend to remain at school only a year or so, should be, in my judgment, under proper conditions, wholly a question of expense. It is not material whether their education is continued in special forms in the Public Schools, as in Ottawa, Hamilton, and Toronto; or in a special building in connection with the High School, as in London; or, again, in special forms or with special provision in the regular forms, as is, in most cases, the present system of organization. But, if such pupils are transferred to the High Schools, at least the first form should be free and a suitable course of study