

known to our pedagogues, we knew no better than to maintain the same class-room administration in these grades as that to which we were accustomed in the preceding six; but now that we do in a small measure understand through what a complex phase of his life the child is passing, it does not seem right to be content to pursue the educational by-ways of fifty years ago.

Secondly, the present High School system, excellent as it is in some respects has, if we consider it in the light of the broadest definition of education, "A preparation for life," a number of serious defects. In speaking of these we can admit with perfect truth that the general education the student has received on leaving High School in no way prepares him for a definite position on leaving. In other words the present High School system does not pretend to be vocational, it holds too closely to the requirements for matriculation, and we all know the very small percentage of pupils to whom that will be of use. Except in the larger towns absolutely no trade instruction is given and even in our cities we have, in the High School, only one year of work in Domestic Science and Manual Training, giving some skill in handwork and considerable useful knowledge no doubt, but what is its practical value in dollars and cents?

This serious lack cannot be remedied under our present system of an inflexible course of study. I say "inflexible" advisedly, for although in Nova Scotia there are in Grade IX eight subjects from which to choose six, and in Grades X and XI, ten, in how many small schools do we find any languages taught, while the teaching of Greek and German is found only in the County Academies and the Journal of Education. Therefore, what choice there is must needs be limited.

Again, speaking of the subjects from which the course may be selected, we find occupying prominent positions such names as Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry, not to mention Latin and Greek, of which we have spoken above. Will the stenographer need to know the solution of quadrate equations? Will the fact of having safely passed the Pons Asinorum assist the teller when he balances his pass-books? Will the value of the cosine at A instinctively aid the trained nurse at her first operation? Where are the courses in Book-keeping, Business, English, Physiology? Can we not conclude from this brief observation that whatever of mental discipline our present

course of study may contain, however it may tend to broaden and deepen the thought processes of the human mind, in this modern, utilitarian world it fails in the one great essential, it is *not practical*.

Having conceded this main point, let us pass quickly over some of the lesser defects of our system. May we say that, according to the latest and best educational theories, our methods of instruction are unpedagogical; that the principle of promotion entirely by means of provincial examinations is unfair; that, due to our too large classes and over-crowded curriculum, our backward and superior pupils do not receive their just share of attention; that in other places it has been proved that many so-called High School subjects can be begun with profit much earlier; that due to lack of equipment and time there is too little hand-work and, lastly, that due to the inefficiency of the whole method of organization, we are frustrating the first principles of education because we cannot prevent fifty per cent of our boys and girls from leaving school before the end of Grade IX.

In trying to better the present Public and High School systems, the following methods of organization have been conceived and tried out in various parts of the United States, each with considerable success.

The first and most conservative idea is to introduce into Grades VII and VIII many of the principles of education used in the high schools; for example that of departmental teaching, where the child is brought under the influence of varied personalities; in beginning the study of French and perhaps Latin in Grade VII; in permitting a limited choice of subjects to be pursued and in introducing some elementary ideas of self government. In other words, this method would fairly effectually break away from the cast-iron discipline, subject matter and methods of presentation in the elementary grades. This system has been tried in many of the smaller towns of the United States and, although at best, it is but a makeshift, is economical, easily carried out, and far better than no change at all.

Secondly, in some places it has been found more practicable to bring Grades VII and VIII into the High School building, organized as one unit with the High School. This has worked well in towns of larger size, is more efficient than the preceding idea but is also found to be more expensive.

Lastly and preferably, Grades VII, VIII and IX