

## HIGH SCHOOL WORK IN THE MISCELLANEOUS SCHOOL.

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The School Law of Nova Scotia decrees that, "The High School subjects to be taught in a rural, or incompletely graded high school, shall be determined by the school board in agreement with the principal, with an appeal to the Inspector and from him to the Council in case of disagreement or dissatisfaction."

In the larger and better class of incompletely graded high schools, this matter has, apparently, been settled in a manner to produce the best results, but in the greater number of rural schools, the reverse of that happy condition certainly obtains.

In these rural schools, some with large, some small registration, are found pupils in all the common school grades I to VIII inclusive, to which are often added grades IX and X and occasionally grade XI.

To teach successfully a school of this kind — if indeed it be not impossible — would require a teacher possessing the very highest qualities in every respect — physical, mental, moral and pedagogical. When it is attempted by a teacher of average ability and attainments, there can be but one result.

The unreasonably large number of grades included in these schools is bad for the high school students, for the pupils of the under grades, and for the teacher herself.

Many of the smaller rural schools employ untrained teachers of class C or D, with a certificate of scholarship one degree above their license, and it is not uncommon to find such a teacher attempting to teach the work of her own grade. Her students, if they succeed in passing the Provincial Examinations, in their turn become teachers, with no training save that of their home school, thus making an endless chain of inefficiency. Or perhaps, they go to the Normal College, where their lack of preparation is a serious handicap to the work of that institution.

It is sometimes urged that high school students in country schools, being obliged to depend largely upon their own efforts, develop a resourcefulness and independence of thought not shown by those who have more constant attention and

assistance from the teacher. As a matter of fact, in most cases, they manage to acquire sufficient knowledge to secure a pass mark at examination, while many important points requiring some explanation are never grasped by them at all.

But quite naturally, the pupils of the lower grades are the greater sufferers, from the overcrowding. With so many classes, when can the teacher find the time for necessary drills in arithmetic, English, and other subjects so important to beginners? Small wonder that one hears such bad English in some of our communities. It is perhaps a more natural cause for wonder, that under such conditions a child ever gets through the work of the common school grades sufficiently well to be admitted into a high school grade.

As for the teacher who essays advanced high school work in connection with a miscellaneous school — she must expect to have her physical and nervous strength put to a severe test. She will be expected to stay hours after school with her classes, and in consequence of having attempted the impossible, will be forever goaded with the thought of work half done. When thus overworked she becomes tired and nervous and incapable of her best effort.

Suppose the teacher learns by experience or otherwise, that these statements are in the main true. What can she do about it?

Of course the proper time for the agreement upon the number of grades to be taught, is when the teacher is engaging with the section. But suppose the matter is left for later settlement, and school opens with the common school grades well represented and with one or two pupils in each of grades IX, X and XI. The teacher probably learns that later in the season some large boys from the farms will be taking partial grade IX or X work during the winter months, when they can be spared from home work. These can be arranged for, as their attendance will be at a time when, perhaps, many of the smaller children will be kept at home by bad weather. But what is to be done about the others?

Several courses are open to the teacher. If she flatly refuses to teach the advanced classes, she may make enemies, and give the impression that she is deficient in scholarship. By talking