

Let it suffice to say that the students are first familiarized, by an exacting discipline, with the more difficult branches of applied commercial arithmetic. These initial difficulties mastered, the pupils are given a carefully graded series of problems so designed as to illustrate the normal operations of a firm engaged in extensive foreign trade. It is at this point—in the selection of what Monsieur Eugène Léautey, in his admirable book on Commercial Education, calls "*les opérations de commerce fictif*"—that the heaviest demand is made upon the good sense and educational skill of the teachers. Of these details of their work I am not myself able or competent to speak, but I can only report that others, possessing the necessary knowledge and authority, have passed high commendations on the way in which this difficult task has been fulfilled.

At the time of my visit to the "Bureau of the first year," the course was still near to its beginning. The class met in a large room, plainly furnished with office desks. Of 50 students enrolled for this class, 43 were present. Each year's batch of students is divided into two halves for the Bureau. The one I visited was confined to Belgians, the foreign students being taught in a parallel division where there was more dictation. The problem was concerned with a purchase of San Domingo coffee, the purchase being supposed to have been made in New York. It involved a number of complicated factors—commission, insurance, freight, etc. Other problems followed. After a few words of lucid explanation, the students were set to work out the calculation for themselves. Subsequently, the professor gave an admirable analysis of the problem in clear and logical language, the

students following him with the closest attention. They did the work in pairs, but this is not permitted in the actual examinations. The professor kindly showed me one of the note-books of one of the students in the second year. I was struck by the range of work which it covered. The aim of his first year's teaching, he told me, is to compel the young men to reckon in an exact, rapid, and practical manner. In the latter part of the course, the simulated operations become more complex and difficult. Each of these lessons in the Bureau lasts for two hours, and evidently calls for hard work on the part of the students. I subsequently heard a lesson on commercial products given to the second-year students of the "Bureau." It was on jute—a careful lesson fully illustrated by specimens and diagrams.

The teaching is not all done in the class-rooms. The visits paid by the students to docks and factories, under the guidance of the professors, and with other expert assistance, are said to be very useful. These visits are not confined to Antwerp, but embrace a number of the important centres of Belgian industry. Exhibitions are also used for an educational purpose, and no one who has visited the more important recent exhibitions in Germany and elsewhere can fail to have been struck by the way in which their admirably classified contents lend themselves to this kind of use.

It will be seen by a glance at the curriculum of the Institute, printed in the appendix to this paper, that the course of study comprises a great number of different subjects. On this point, I gathered in conversation with some of the students that some dissatisfaction exists. Those with whom I talked considered that there were too many subjects in each year's work. The