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TRANSFER PUPILS SEMIYEARLY

[Continued From First Page]

risburg one the yearly basis, but throughout the country the half-year basis is the standard.

Dr. Downes deals exhaustively with this subject and quotes from the report of Allegheny's school superintendent, Dr. Samuel Hamilton, an authority and advocate of the subject.

Dr. Downes also refers to the advisability of installing domestic science in the grade schools and suggests that such equipment as may be provided for the high school at this time, be transferred to grade buildings when a new high school and consequently new equipment is provided. The Rev. Dr. Yates advocated domestic science in the grades when the special com-

mittee on installing that course in the high school reported.

Need Night Schools
Dr. Downes, among other things, discussed the need for night schools for young white boys and girls, the possibilities of night high school work, a third school for the mentally deficient, and an eight year course for the grades.

Dr. Downes' report in part is as follows: "On the assumption that the school should give to every pupil the ability to speak well, read with facility and expression, write freely and legibly, spell words within their ordinary vocabulary correctly, and perform with reasonable dexterity and accuracy the fundamental operations with numbers, our efforts in supervision have been directed during the year, particularly to the accomplishment of these ends. It is our belief, no matter to what extent modern educational ideas may have effected modifications with the elementary curriculum, that, aside from the matter of morals and civic righteousness, the three R's are

still entitled to first consideration and emphasis.

"Physical exercise and fresh air have received special attention throughout the year. And, not by any means least, a sincere effort has been made, in connection with all forms of school work, to direct pupils into right thinking and right conduct and along lines which make for the upbuilding of substantial character."

Manual Work
"For a number of years there has been considerable local agitation with reference to the introduction, in connection with our school work, of certain forms of practical manual work for girls. Attention has frequently been called to the fact that equal provision for both girls and boys has not been made in the high school grades. It has been pointed out that while our boys have had opportunity for ten years past to pursue, through high school election, various forms of useful manual work, our girls have had no alternative as to high schools and no opportunity whatever for manual work, excepting in the subject of drawing."

"It must be confessed that we have been unduly conservative, if, indeed, not neglectful in this particular. Of course it is a well known fact that lack of room has been the principal excuse for delay in this regard. Until the been reasonably legitimate. Until the past year, under the single session plan of operation, it would have been impossible to provide these facilities, but with the inauguration of the double session plan, opportunity has come whereby this manifest need of our high school girls can be supplied."

"The decision of the board, therefore, to equip quarters for the teaching of the subjects mentioned, in connection with the new course in household economy in the Central high school, would seem to be wise. The plan is entirely in accord with the recommendation of the superintendent and high school principal that these household subjects be taught in a real home under real conditions, but it doubtless will be considerably more economical than the plan originally recommended, even though in certain particulars it might not be quite as satisfactory. The principal object, at least, will be realized, namely, the making provision for the pursuit, along well established lines, of certain forms of practical manual work for our girls. Upon the completion of a new high school the equipment may be transferred to the new building, or it may be used in connection with the equally if not more important work of organizing similar courses in the grammar grades."

What Might Be Done

"In this connection it is gratifying to record the appointment of special committees of the board to investigate and report on the matter of available accommodations for manual training centers in the elementary grades and on the question of cost of their equipment. I have for some time been desirous of seeing some definite movement in this direction. It might be well for the board to seek information as to what is being done along this line in practically all of the educationally progressive cities of the country. Courses in sewing and cooking for girls and wood-working and mechanical drawing for boys are the established manual subjects in the grammar grades. In all new buildings accommodations for this work may readily be provided, but the fact that many older buildings do not contain these accommodations, has led to the common establishment of manual training centers in which the work may be conducted."

"I have never been brought to the point of conviction that a large part of the elementary school day should be devoted to manual training. I am not particular whether very much if any time be devoted to it in the first four or five grades. After all, the main function of the school, aside from the broad purpose of training up the generations into good citizens, is to give pupils the fundamental things connected with an academic education; and neither manual training nor any other subject, in the earlier years of school when these fundamental things are being taught, should be allowed to creep into the extent of interfering with their acquirement. In the higher grades, however, some time might reasonably be devoted to a few forms of practical manual work, without detriment to other studies. In fact, they might be substituted for certain other work not so practical or essential which is now being given. I believe, for example, that our boys of the grammar grades might substitute mechanical drawing for freehand drawing and profit by the exchange."

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Time could be found, I am certain, in these grades, for all of the few forms of manual work which have been suggested.

More Night Schools Needed

"An additional evening school for colored adults was established during the year, making a total of four evening schools maintained by public funds. Three of these are for the colored and one for foreigners. They have all been doing good work, though neither the average attendance nor the percentage of attendances has been all that might have been expected. The total enrollment in these schools is less than 150, which is unusually small for a city of the population of Harrisburg. Quite frequently inquiries have been made regarding our evening schools, by native adults, and we have been compelled to state that no evening schools are maintained for them. In my judgment this condition ought not to exist. I question the wisdom of waiting for a demand for evening school facilities, on the part of those particularly interested, for the reason that those who would be interested are doubtless widely separated geographically and unacquainted with one another, and could not, therefore, by petition to the board, or by other means, unite in a common cause or request. I believe it to be a part of our duty to create an interest in evening educational work. This could be done by securing the names of those interested, through public announcement, or by first actually providing the necessary facilities and afterward giving wide publicity to the fact that they have been supplied."

"Several hundred boys and girls between the ages of fourteen and sixteen are compelled to leave school each year to go to work. In many cases they possess the mere rudiments of an elementary education, being barely able to read and write the English language sufficiently well to legally entitle them to employment certificates. Furthermore, in many instances, it happens that these children prefer to remain in school. They are forced out, through stress of family circumstances, to aid in supplying the needs of the home. If we can give these boys and girls, especially those who want it, opportunity and encouragement through evening schools to acquire a little education beyond what they possess, it would seem to be our duty to do so. In this connection, evening high school work might be mentioned, or, rather, special work in high school subjects. Our Technical high school is admirably equipped to work of this kind, in shop, laboratory and classroom, and it seems wasteful that such complete facilities are used only a few hours a day. I do not doubt that many would seize such opportunities if they were but thrown open to them. A study of other cities in our own as well as other States, indicates that we are not doing the work we ought to do along these lines."

"Open Window Schools"
"I do not think it will be necessary for some years to come to increase the number of open air schools where two teachers are employed and where pupils are practically fed, clothed and transported, at a considerable added expense over and above the expense of the ordinary school. But I commend to your consideration the advisability of making provision here and there for a few open window rooms to take care particularly of such as need open air treatment but who do not require the careful professional attention given in the more elaborate type of open air school."

"In order that the opening of the new Shimmell building may bring full relief and provide against congestion in the near future in a part of this section of the city it will probably be found necessary to bring together all of the higher grammar grades into the Forney building thereby making

room in certain buildings affected by the transfer, for the increasing enrollment in lower grades.

"A year or two ago the attention of the board was called to the advisability of adopting an eight year course of study in the elementary grades. The principal arguments in favor of this plan of grading are, the saving of a considerable annual expense, the saving of time to the pupil, and the fact that the eight year course is standard throughout the country."

"If the board should think favorably of the change suggested and will authorize me to proceed, I shall be pleased during the coming year to reconstruct the course of study on an eight year basis, with a view to having it become effective in the Fall of 1915."

"Closely connected with the question of length of course is that of the length of class intervals. In St. Louis pupils are regularly promoted four times a year. In most cities the class intervals is a half year. In still others, including Harrisburg, it is a full year. This is a subject which also has been discussed in my previous reports, but which, doubtless for some good reason, has not received the attention which I feel sure it deserves. Semi-annual promotions are now standard throughout the country. Our present course of study was constructed with a view to complying with the provisions of the school code on this point, and it would not be difficult to take the matter into consideration in connection with the proposed change

as to length of course. Both plans could readily be worked out together and adopted at the same time."

"A third school for the mentally defective ought to be organized somewhere in the lower section of the city. The vacant room in the Harris building would probably be a suitable location. We would then have one school in the

upper part of the city, one in the Allison Hill section, and one about midway between to meet the needs which the other two cannot supply. Upon the completion of the Shimmell building I would recommend that the special school now located in the Melrose building be transferred to a more central location on Allison Hill."

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