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COMMERCIAL EDUCATION  
IN 1924-1926

By

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SPECIALIST IN COMMERCIAL EDUCATION  
BUREAU OF EDUCATION

[ Advance Sheets from the Biennial Survey of Education  
in the United States, 1924-1926 ]



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# CHAPTER IX

## COMMERCIAL EDUCATION

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CONTENTS.—Introduction—Tendencies in enrollments—Trend of objectives—Trend toward standardization of business occupations—Development of closer cooperation between education and business—Commercial occupation surveys—A new conception of office practice—Developments in the junior high schools—Progress in the high schools—Status of supervision—Contests in commercial subjects—Commercial education conferences—Tendencies in commercial teacher training—The private business schools—Higher education for business—Conclusion

### INTRODUCTION

There is a growing consciousness of the importance of definite preparation for business occupations. People are realizing more than ever that better preparation for these occupations usually results in greater vocational efficiency and contributes to vocational and social happiness. Business men have recently taken a greater interest in commercial education because they appreciate the relation of vocational efficiency to the efficiency of the business community. Educators have given increased attention to this phase of education in order to develop a balanced program that will meet the best interests of the individual, the business community, and society.

The purpose of this bulletin is to set forth briefly the progress of commercial education during the biennium 1924-1926. The term "commercial education" is used to include that education and training which prepares specifically for an understanding of the relationships and the performance of activities in business. A survey of educational and business literature, including reports pertaining to statistics, researches, courses of study, conferences, school systems, universities, and business men's organizations, reveals a greater interest and activity in this phase of education than during any similar period. Some of the important developments pertain to increased enrollments, definite vocational objectives, course of study revision, and research.

### TENDENCIES IN ENROLLMENTS

An outstanding development in commercial education has been the increase in the number of men and women preparing to enter business occupations. Statistics were compiled during the biennium

which reveal the recent trends pertaining to enrollments, and the number of schools of different types offering commercial curricula. The statistics in the table are of men and women who are majoring in the commercial curricula by taking the various subjects designed to prepare them for business occupations. Similar statistics are not available for 1925-26.

*Enrollments in commercial curricula in different types of schools, 1914-1924*

Years	Public high schools		Private high schools and academies		Private business and commercial schools		Colleges and universities		Total
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
1914	68,600	92,650	9,717	7,740	85,432	82,631	(1)	(1)	418,920
1915	92,226	116,379	9,360	8,346	94,870	88,416	9,323		464,454
1916	105,142	138,043	9,056	8,172	99,134	93,254	11,653		608,666
1918	104,418	173,657	9,157	14,644	96,440	193,130	14,029	2,982	
1920	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	139,551	196,481	29,585	7,270	
1922	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	37,084	8,272	
1924	143,991	286,984	6,269	11,941	68,247	120,116	40,734	6,818	685,100

<sup>1</sup> No data.

<sup>2</sup> Data not separated by sexes.

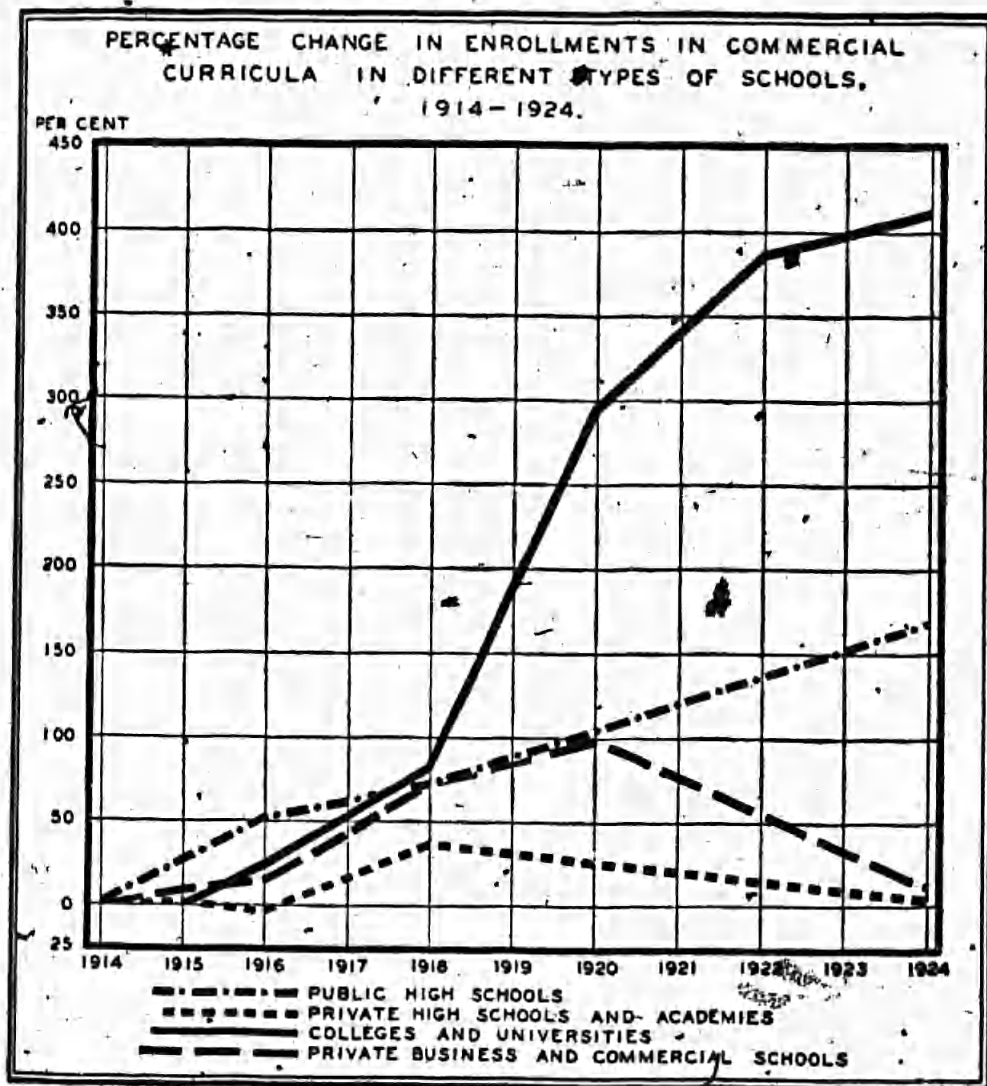
The highest percentage of increase in enrollments in the commercial curricula from 1915 to 1924 is in the colleges and universities, as shown in Figure 1. During this period these enrollments increased from 9,323 to 47,552, an increase of 410 per cent. The number of schools offering these curricula increased from 58 to 129, an increase of 124 per cent. Since 1918 the number of men in these curricula increased from 14,029 to 40,734, an increase of 190 per cent, and the number of women increased from 2,982 to 6,818, an increase of 128 per cent. Eighty-three per cent of the students enrolled in commercial curricula in 1918 and 85 per cent of those in 1924 were men.

The greatest increase in the number of pupils enrolled in commercial curricula in the different schools from 1914 to 1924 is in the public schools. The number of these pupils increased from 161,250 in 1914 to 430,975 in 1924, which is an increase of 167 per cent. During this period the number of men in these curricula increased 109 per cent and the number of women increased 210 per cent. The number of high schools offering commercial curricula increased from 2,191 to 3,742, an increase of 70 per cent. In 1914, 58 per cent of the pupils enrolled in the commercial curricula in the high schools were women. By 1924 the percentage had increased to 67. Figure 2 shows that, of 685,100 pupils and students preparing for business occupations in 1924, almost two-thirds were enrolled in the public high schools.

The enrollment in commercial curricula of the private high schools and academies, as well as the number of these schools offering commercial curricula, increased only 4 per cent from 1914 to 1924. There

was an increase of 54 per cent in the number of women enrolled and a decrease of 36 per cent in the number of men enrolled.

During the 10-year period the private business and commercial schools had a net increase of 12 per cent in enrollments and 5 per cent in the number of schools reporting. These schools, along with other types of schools, increased their enrollments in commercial curricula immediately before and during the World War. Due to



the large number of ex-service men rehabilitated in these schools, the enrollments continued to increase until 1920. Since that date the trend of enrollments has returned to a pre-war basis. During the school year 1919-20 a total of 336,032 pupils were enrolled in the day and evening classes of 902 schools. By 1924 the number of enrollments had decreased to 188,363, a decrease of 44 per cent; the number of schools reporting had decreased to 739, a decrease of 38 per cent; and there was a reduction of 40 per cent in the number of

day-school pupils and a reduction of 51 per cent in the number of night-school pupils. In 1914, 58 per cent of the pupils enrolled were men. By 1924 the percentage had decreased to 36.

In the schools of less than college rank the number of women has increased more than the number of men. There are many reasons for this general trend. There is less prejudice against women in business. The evolution of much of the work in offices and stores makes possible the employment of more women. The commercial courses

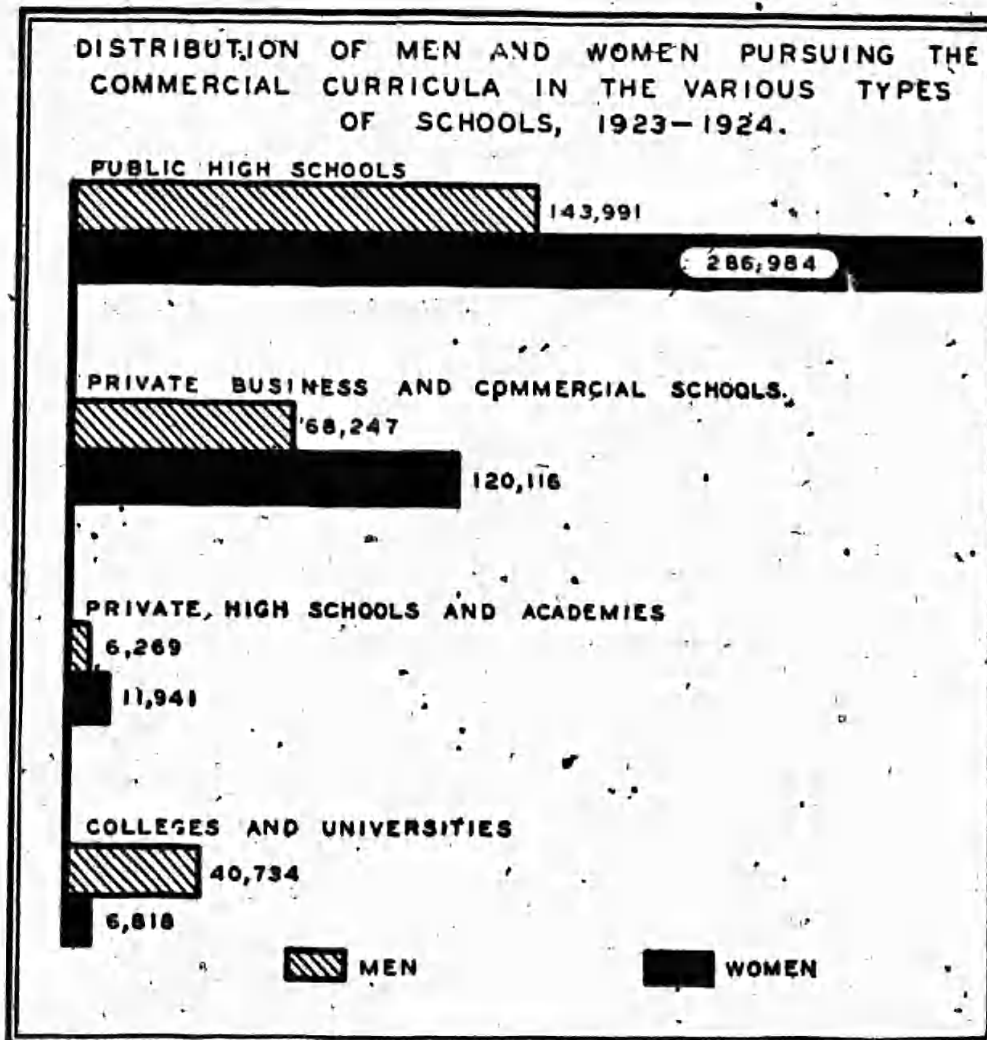


FIG. 2.

in the secondary schools are generally more appropriate for women than for men. Changes in the commercial curricula of the secondary schools have not been made as rapidly as changes in the requirements for office and store occupations, particularly for those occupations in which boys find initial employment.

The number of men in colleges and universities preparing for business occupations has increased more than the number of women. This is due chiefly to the fact that a greater number of men than women seek careers in business and therefore find it necessary to

obtain a more thorough preparation. The colleges and universities, however, have made remarkable progress in meeting the needs of education for business. They are offering a definite vocational education, not only for a larger number of business occupations but for the lower and intermediate as well as the upper levels of these occupations.

### TREND OF OBJECTIVES

Much progress has been made during the biennium toward the development of definite and worthy objectives for commercial education. Clear and convincing distinctions have been made between remote economic objectives for society and immediate vocational objectives for the individual. The remote objective, which pertains to the development of business in harmony with the best interests of society, has received much attention by the leaders in business and by the leaders in university education for business. More progress has been made than in any similar period toward removing the confusion that has characterized the immediate objective—preparation of individuals with different interests, aptitudes, and abilities for appropriate levels of vocational opportunities in business.

As the disciplinary objectives for commercial subjects declined in popularity there was a tendency throughout the country to substitute the social science objectives. The new objectives were welcomed for those subjects pertaining to the laws and principles of commerce. Due to the traditional prejudice against vocational objectives, the social science objectives are frequently urged, even for the subjects pertaining to definite business training.

Many factors have contributed to the confusion between the social-science and vocational objectives. First, there is a need in the social sciences for more economic and business content.<sup>1</sup> Second, in the selection of content for the commercial subjects it is necessary to begin where the social sciences cease. Adequate preparation for office and store positions requires considerably more content bordering on the social sciences than is ordinarily included in the core of those subjects. Preparation for commercial occupations requires the application of much of the social-science content to the performance of specific duties. Third, there is much similarity between many of the vocational activities and those of everyday life. Some of the vocational content and common skills taught in the commercial subjects have everyday utilitarian and social values, but these values are incidental by-products due to the nature of preparation for commercial occupations instead of arbitrary planning. It is

<sup>1</sup> Harap, Henry. *Economic Life and the Curriculum*. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1927.

obvious that the present problem of differentiating social-science content from the vocational content is fully as important for the social sciences as for commercial education. A solution of the problem is essential to permanent progress in commercial education.

The most promising development to overcome the present emphasis on the social-science objectives as primary objectives for the commercial subjects is scientific curriculum revision. A clearer understanding of the criteria for the selection of the social-science and vocational content is removing some of the confusion. Many believe that those phases of economic and business content essential on the different school levels for good citizenship are or should be incorporated in the core of the social sciences. Preparation of all to be intelligent and appreciative consumers of the services and products of modern business is the objective of the business content in the social sciences.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, they believe those additional bodies of knowledge, attitudes, and skills found necessary or desirable in the various local office and store occupations are or should be incorporated in the commercial subjects. Preparation of specific groups of pupils according to individual interests and aptitudes for efficiency in the respective occupations is the objective.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the earlier concept of the dual responsibility of definite vocational subjects toward both vocational and social-science objectives is passing. The composite of responsibilities for the activities of life, including occupational activities, must rest with a balanced curriculum.

This shift of responsibility to the curriculum<sup>4</sup> emphasizes the need of a better understanding of the place of commercial education in the general education program. As a part of this latest development, there is an effort to emphasize that, although the specific and immediate bases and principles of commercial education pertain to the adjustment of the pupil to the requirements and opportunities in local business occupations, the general bases and principles are identical with those of general education; that commercial education is an integral part of the latter; and that the latter obligates commercial educators to make and interpret scientific investigations of social and occupational needs in the light of the best educational theories.

As the principles of education are applied with renewed vigor and result in additional worthy investigations of the requirements and opportunities on the successive levels of each of the various business occupations, many of the survivals of earlier concepts will be discarded. Such vexing problems as education versus training, prepara-

<sup>1</sup> Harap, Henry. *The Education of the Consumer*. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> Prosser, C. A., and Allen, C. E. *Vocational Education in a Democracy*. The Century Co., New York, 1925.

<sup>3</sup> *Social Studies in the Secondary Schools*. A report by a commission of the Amer. Assoc. of Collegiate Schools of Business. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill.



tion for immediate and known versus remote and probable vocational opportunities, and preparation for the welfare of the individual versus the welfare of the employer will not entirely disappear. A better understanding of individual differences and of the needs of business and an appreciation of the fact that there is an ultimate coincidence of the best interests of the individual, business, and society will continue to clarify and harmonize the various points of view. Thus, a functional, balanced, and continuous program for commercial education will be developed on a fact basis.

#### TREND TOWARD STANDARDIZATION OF BUSINESS OCCUPATIONS

During the past two years occupational studies have revealed a definite trend toward standardization of office and store occupations or trades. The evolution of these occupations has been due in general to the constant operation of the laws of economy. The rapid development of this trend is due to such factors as recent developments in the division of labor in the offices, a renewed emphasis on the introduction of modern office appliances, and increased use of tests and measurements. Efficient operation of business organizations necessitates efficient performance of the many tasks, and the various means of obtaining increased efficiency tend toward standardization.

Some phases of the present trend are becoming more distinct. The division of labor which has proved helpful in increasing production generally is now applied to the offices. One theory is that as work is divided into many activities, each person with special interests, aptitudes, and opportunities may devote his entire time to the work for which he is best fitted. Through repetition of comparatively few tasks great dexterity and skill are acquired. As a result commercial occupations which were complete units are divided into a series of related and subsidiary office trades and professions. For example, the work of the bookkeeper is frequently divided into occupations, including invoice clerk, journal clerk, ledger clerk, machine bookkeeper, cashier, bookkeeper, and junior, senior, public, and certified public accountants.

The new trades and the profession vary in occupational importance, and there are many levels of duties and responsibilities in each of the new occupations. These levels can be objectively determined. Lower, intermediate, and higher levels are easily distinguished. For example, in a clerical occupation there are low levels where the tasks are routine, such as classifying, filing, and recording under supervision. There are intermediate levels, which require initiative, judgment, skill, and perhaps supervision of the work of others. Then there are the higher levels, requiring high degrees of skill and specific bodies of knowledge.

The process of breaking up the commercial occupations into various levels of a large number of office and store trades tends to standardize them. It makes them more specific. Specialized training for these trades is encouraging this tendency. Job sheets made to facilitate the handling of the personnel have added another element of definiteness. As the duties become fixed, there is a tendency to establish definite standards of occupational efficiency for entrance, retention, or promotion within particular companies. Inventories of the duties and traits have facilitated the establishment of standard pay-roll titles, and of standards for the various levels within occupations. Tests and subsidiary devices have resulted in additional objectivity in the selection and promotion of workers by grading and classifying them.

A phase of the tendency toward standardization pertains to the upgrading of business occupations. In this process, better trained workers have replaced others on all levels.<sup>3</sup> Considering the rather limited supply of trained commercial workers of two and three decades ago, the office and store workers belonged to what was practically a noncompetitive class of workers. Increased facilities and higher standards for commercial education in the public schools have removed office work from the noncompetitive situation. Competition has reduced the advantage to the worker, and has emphasized standards.

The trend toward standardization on the upper levels of business occupations is creating business professions. Efforts are made constantly to raise the standards. Public accountants are examined and certified by State boards in every State. Nineteen States license real-estate brokers and real-estate salesmen. Many business men's organizations cooperate with colleges and universities in establishing definite curricula for professional training in particular fields. J. H. Willits, in his address before the American Economic Association in 1924, stated that preparation for leadership in the business world was taking on professional characteristics for the following reasons:

(1) The recognition that business consists of a body of fact and principle, much of which can be taught; (2) the increasing encouragement of science, the increasing use of the results of science, and the increasing dependence upon the scientific method; and (3) the increasing emphasis upon the goal of service to society under terms formulated by a code of ethics.

Standardization has distinct advantages for the worker. To the same extent that there is an element of increased definiteness in the requirements for particular levels in the commercial occupations, the worker will have a better understanding of what he must do for

<sup>3</sup> Douglas, Paul H. "What is happening to the white-collar-job market." Report of study conducted at University of Chicago, in *System*, December, 1926.

an initial position or promotion. The means of transition to higher levels are clarified and made possible on the basis of certain known bodies of knowledge, skills, and traits. He is in a position to plan his future educational and business career with a minimum of lost time and energy. Those who do not have the ambition and ability to progress to higher levels will not in any sense suffer; in fact, analyses will have been made for them.

It is increasingly important that commercial teachers endeavor to retain desirable mobility in commercial occupations and the economic advantage of standardization. However, a balanced and continued program of commercial education must be developed to prevent the formation of a static society of office and store workers more or less stratified in distinct levels.<sup>6</sup> Definite preparation in the curriculum to meet the standards of business offices is essential for initial employment. Due to the lack of correlation between the specialized office trades and between the levels of particular office occupations, those workers who wish to progress should have the opportunity of continuing their education to meet the standards of higher occupational levels.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF CLOSER COÖPERATION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND BUSINESS

Much progress has been made in the past two years in developing cooperation between commercial teachers and business men. The present trend is toward developing the marginal responsibilities. The school is broadening its responsibility to include vocational guidance, training, placement, and extension education. Business is giving more attention to selection, training, breaking-in, promotion, and other personnel problems. Just as commercial education is endeavoring to make closer adjustments of the pupils and students to actual occupational requirements, so business is endeavoring to adjust its personnel most efficiently to the given tasks. Successive analyses of the problems have resulted in a better understanding and have caused educators and business men to realize that they are complementary to one another in the process of vocational-commercial education. The objective of facilitating the transition of the pupil or student from school to his chosen occupation with satisfaction to himself and his employer is worthy of closer cooperation.

Some of the outstanding agencies for closer cooperation are the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, American Council on Education, the National Association of Office Managers, American Management Association, National Real Estate Board, National

<sup>6</sup> Wiesner, J., and Fieck, K., Education for Business in Czechoslovakia. The Journal of Political Economy, vol. 84, No. 2, pp. 141-180, particularly p. 163.

Retail Dry Goods Association, National Retail Hardware Association, National Retail Grocers Association, similar organizations, and offices of the Federal Government. The kinds of cooperation have ranged from freer exchange of ideas through conferences and literature, cooperative researches concerning various problems, and cooperative guidance and training programs to actual correction of errors in textbooks. The most recent development of national significance is the plan of cooperation between local chambers of commerce and schools under the joint guidance of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States and the American Council on Education.

The National Retail Hardware Association conducted a unique research study to improve the quality of textbooks in commercial arithmetic. In the past many textbooks for this and other commercial subjects have been prepared by authors whose business experience, if any, was not sufficient to enable them to record accurately the practices in business. In spite of this fact, these textbooks have been used as though they were prepared by specialists in particular fields. Considering the educational and vocational importance of accuracy in textbooks, it is essential that the commercial textbooks conform to the customs and practices in business. The study included the examination of 110 arithmetics, and 90 of them contained inaccurate statements. As a result of the research, 4,560 corrections were made and reported to the 26 publishers of the texts. The responses from the authors and publishers have proved the worthiness of business men's efforts to put commercial education on a fact basis.

There are other interesting examples of cooperation in higher and secondary education. The preparation of appropriate sequences of subjects in real estate by the National Real Estate Board for the universities and the local chapters is an excellent service. Financial assistance in the establishment of chairs, curricula, and research bureaus has been rendered to the universities. The Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, was made possible by financial assistance received from a number of companies operating in the Western States. Additional assistance in the form of scholarships for students who are working on research in particular fields and for an exchange of foreign students in commerce has been announced. Some of the universities have offered short intensive courses in different kinds of business and other types of extension work for business men, and have conducted many research studies of business problems. Many commercial organizations have educational committees to counsel with workers in commercial education.

There was a commendable example of cooperation in Boston, Mass., during the past year. The educational directors of department stores arranged for courses in retail selling and store management

to be given by selected store executives to the teachers of retail selling. The courses were given under the auspices of the Retail Trade Board and were supervised by Boston University for university credit. In this connection, the Federal Board for Vocational Education reports that about 600 department stores are cooperating with schools in the training of sales people.

During the biennium, voluntary part-time cooperative training has been urged particularly for commercial pupils who were approaching the completion of their courses. In some instances, wide varieties of employment, were obtained for the pupils; prior to the biennium the voluntary classes had been limited almost entirely to retail selling. In some instances the pupils received pay for their work, but in others it was believed that greater cooperation could be obtained by not requiring reimbursement. Such items as credit and effect upon the length of time required for graduation have varied. Some of the recent experiments with the voluntary part-time cooperative classes for the various groups of secondary commercial pupils have been successful, but others have been found unsatisfactory and have been discontinued.

There is an increased willingness to try out different plans that promise to be improvements over existing types of organization. The present plans, particularly for cooperative training, should be fostered, although some are still in the experimental stages. The possibilities of greater social and economic efficiency, whereby the loss of time and effort and mistakes of unguided learning may be avoided in preparing for business occupations, rest chiefly with the further development of cooperation between business and schools.

#### COMMERCIAL OCCUPATION SURVEYS

Recent commercial occupation surveys and researches contributed more than all other factors to the progress of commercial education during the biennium. The facts obtained merely from the surveys have resulted in a better understanding of the needs of those who are preparing for business occupations. These studies have given direction not only to the program of commercial education and training, but to the programs of guidance, placement, follow-up, and extension education. The United States Bureau of Education, the Federal Board for Vocational Education, and other agencies have encouraged these studies.

The surveys of the Cleveland Foundation, of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce, and the junior and senior commercial occupation surveys in a large number of cities removed the vagueness about the distribution of the workers in the various commercial occupations.

Facts began to replace opinions regarding the numerical importance of preparation for particular vocations. The concept of the traditional curriculum as a complete and satisfactory means of preparation for business occupations began to weaken. It was evident that the requirements for these occupations had been changing, but commercial teachers and administrators had made little effort to revise the commercial courses.

An abstract of the 40-page statistical report of the senior commercial occupation survey conducted in St. Louis, Mo., was reported in the June, 1924, issue of Vocational Education Magazine. The purposes of the study were to obtain a fact basis for the reorganization of the curriculum by gathering data on the distribution of commercial workers according to occupations, sex, age, number of years out of school, education in day and evening schools, etc., and to study the correlation between progress in business courses and accomplishments and needs in business occupations. The survey revealed that 66 per cent of the 2,100 commercial workers studied were in occupations not basically stenographic or bookkeeping. The study shows that 5.8 per cent of these workers were bookkeepers and that 10 per cent were stenographers. The need of clerical training courses was strongly emphasized. The survey was supplemented with a study of positions open during the six-months period in that city. The latter study showed that 51 per cent of the help wanted was of sales people.

"Fitting the Commercial Course of the High School and Junior College to the Needs of the Community," published in the May, 1926, Education Research Bulletin by the Board of Education, Pasadena, Calif., is a report of a survey of 4,040 commercial workers in that city. The primary objective of the study was to find out what subjects should be included in the commercial curriculum and what the content of these subjects should be. The report contains most helpful tables showing certain kinds of data not ordinarily collected in such studies. The sections pertaining to labor turnover in commercial occupations, to initial and subsequent salaries, to personal qualifications of employees, and to office equipment are of particular interest. In this study 10 per cent of the workers were classified as doing work in bookkeeping and accounting and 11 per cent as doing secretarial work.

One of the most valuable reports issued during the biennium was the report of a survey of 8,200 women in clerical and secretarial positions in 191 business establishments in Minneapolis, Minn. The study was conducted in 1924, and the report was published in 1925 by the Woman's Occupational Bureau in that city. A unique feature of this study is that it was sponsored by a group of civic profes-

sional, educational, and commercial organizations. The report is filled with data that stimulate thought about many vital problems in commercial education. For example, it revealed that there was a very general indifference on the part of employers regarding experience in many types of office work. Most of them felt that a person without extensive experience was as valuable to them as one with experience. More than 58 per cent did not require experience, 31.8 per cent indicated some experience was required, and the remainder required certain minimum amounts of experience. It is important in this connection to know that there was found to be very little actual advancement for office workers except those in executive and secretarial positions. The survey revealed the small amount of effort that is put forth by the public schools to find employment for the drop-outs and graduates. Less than 11 per cent of the commercial workers in that city were placed by the public schools, and more than 30 per cent were placed by the commercial employment agencies.

The divisions of vocational education of the University of California and of the State board of education published in 1926 a report entitled "A Study of Vocational Conditions in the City of Fresno." The report contains a chapter on education and employment in business. The purpose of the survey was to find out the amount of employment in commercial occupations, the requirements for the different kinds of positions, opportunities for promotion, the extent to which the present program was meeting the local needs, and to make recommendations accordingly. The findings regarding the clerical, stenographic, and bookkeeping positions are most interesting. For instance, the report shows not only that the promotional opportunities for men are greater than for women, but that the promotional opportunities are very limited for the latter in some clerical positions.

Very few attempts to follow up the drop-outs and graduates from the commercial departments of particular schools were made during the past two years. The two outstanding studies were conducted by the division of research, Board of Education, Cleveland, Ohio, and by Mr. J. T. Giles, State high school supervisor, Department of Public Instruction, Madison, Wis. The latter study of 4,918 graduates from commercial departments of 108 Wisconsin high schools, 1921-1925, indicates that the commercial curricula in Wisconsin high schools are better adapted to the needs of the girls than of the boys. Seventy-three per cent of the graduates from these curricula are girls. Thirty-eight per cent of the girls who graduate hold positions requiring a knowledge of stenography, and only 13 per cent of the boys hold such positions. Of the graduates from high schools employing more than 20 teachers, 9 per cent of the boys and

57 per cent of the girls hold positions requiring knowledge of stenography. The report shows also that the commercial course is better adapted to large schools than to small ones. Forty-five per cent of the graduates of the larger schools hold positions calling for stenography, while in the smaller schools only 16 per cent of the graduates hold such positions. About 20 per cent of the graduates in schools employing less than 20 teachers hold positions requiring a knowledge of bookkeeping, and 34 per cent in the schools employing more than 20 teachers held such positions.

Many other surveys have been made and additional ones are in progress. Occupational studies are reported in progress in Elizabeth, N. J.; Huntington, W. Va.; Grand Rapids, Mich.; Madison, Wis.; and Allentown, Pa.; and a state-wide study in Connecticut. Related studies, such as office-equipment surveys, indicative of the training needs, have been made in Boston, Mass.; New Orleans, La.; Grand Rapids, Mich.; and Philadelphia, Pa. More than 1,500 business firms cooperated in the office-equipment survey in Philadelphia. Surveys of commercial occupations have been made also for the purpose of studying remuneration and other factors. The most worthy related studies are "Clerical Salaries in the United States, 1926," published by the National Industrial Conference Board, New York City, and "Salaries of Office Employees in Boston, Mass.," published by the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industry in 1925.

Undoubtedly some mistakes were made in the occupational studies, but the fact that there is much similarity in the findings of these studies in communities comparable in size and type obligates the acceptance and use of these data until refinements are made. Efforts have been made to refine these data by determining the initial employment and promotional opportunities and requirements. Very little has been done, however, toward studying business biographies and job analyses to find out the crucial factors more or less common for promotion, whether pertaining to general education, trait development, or technical education and training. Nevertheless, much credit is due the workers who conducted these and other studies to put commercial education on a fact basis.

#### A NEW CONCEPTION OF OFFICE PRACTICE

A great contribution to secondary commercial education is the study of clerical training needs by F. G. Nichols, associate professor of education, and others, at Harvard University, in cooperation with the National Association of Office Managers. A preliminary report of this study was made at the American Vocational Association convention held at Louisville, Ky., in December, 1926. The purpose of



the research as stated in the questionnaires distributed late in 1923 and compiled during the biennium was:

To determine certain things with reference to general clerical work in the hope that the information obtained may be made the basis of the development of a suitable type of general clerical business training and of vocational guidance that will insure for the more numerous general clerical positions a supply of specifically picked and fundamentally trained workers. It is believed that such a program as is contemplated will work to the mutual advantage of employees and employers, the former securing training for employment and the latter securing better qualified employees.

For many years some of the outstanding problems of commercial education have pertained to vocational training of clerical workers. This study of Mr. Nichols, which was based upon reports from 54 office managers and 6,050 clerks, was a comprehensive effort to clarify and solve some of these problems. The authors show that definite preparation for the clerical positions is a vital problem to employers and to a large percentage of the employees; that neither a stenographic nor bookkeeping training alone is a satisfactory preparation for clerical duties; and that the few courses in office practice in the high schools are totally inadequate to meet the present office requirements. To aid in the organization of clerical courses, the clerical occupations were classified into primary and secondary office trades, and general clerical positions. The elaborate data concerning general education, business training, and requirements in these occupations develop a new conception of office practice. The report presents a fact basis for supplementing the stenographic, bookkeeping, and retail selling curricula with units of clerical training, and for the development of a suitable clerical training curriculum. The suggested content should result in immediate improvement of commercial education in the regular high schools, part-time schools, and evening schools. By providing for intensive clerical training, more of the pupil's time can be devoted to general education. Such a program should provide for success in specific occupations and better background for promotional opportunities.

The report contains 31 clear and convincing conclusions that should challenge commercial teachers to provide for the training of clerical workers, which is a neglected phase of commercial education. Among the significant conclusions are: That closer cooperation between business men and commercial teachers is essential to real progress in the solution of business training problems; that the general clerical training courses should be based on duties performed instead of on pay-roll titles; that specialization in clerical training should be possible if time limitation, individual interest, and local needs make more intensive training desirable; that all or part of a

secondary school education is desirable for office work; that training should be offered in the high schools because business men give preference to trained applicants; that teacher-training institutions should prepare teachers of clerical training; and that additional investigations into other clerical training problems should be made. The outstanding recommendations for further study pertain to the organization of local surveys to measure the local need for clerical courses and office equipment; to the duty and trait analyses of clerical workers for vocational guidance and course of study revision; to the educational and business biographies of clerical workers to determine crucial factors for promotion; to the objectives for the related vocational commercial subjects and how best to achieve these objectives; and to the present and prospective status of boys in business occupations and the best type of training to meet their needs.

#### DEVELOPMENTS IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The outstanding movement in secondary commercial education has been toward scientific curriculum revision. The most encouraging feature of it is that it requires the making of objective studies which will clarify and harmonize the various points of view. The findings of these studies are gradually becoming the most potent factors in the selection and organization of content on the junior and senior high-school levels.

The reorganization of commercial education in the junior high school in accordance with the accepted objectives of the school has been one of the greatest improvements in commercial education. The outstanding features of the new content ordinarily called "junior business training" pertain to: General business information and thrift training for all pupils; guidance by means of orientation and try out; appropriate training to meet the needs of those who drop out; and a preview and excellent vocational background for those who pursue the major vocational courses in the senior high school.

There are three distinct stages of adapting business education to the junior high school. This development began earlier and has been more rapid in some communities than in others. In the earliest stage, senior high-school subjects were introduced in the junior high school in response to a rather vague desire for some commercial work. These subjects were taught very much as in the senior high school, frequently with the same textbooks, and by senior high-school teachers. As closer analyses were made, considerable effort was required to effect desirable changes. In the second stage, a variety of subjects persisted. The chief contribution was that the content was more appropriate for the junior high-school level. Much progress was made in deferring the major vocational courses.

In the third stage, the need developed for a single course to bring together the various phases of appropriate commercial education on a functional basis. In some places the content is little more than a fusion of penmanship, spelling, and arithmetic under a single title. In other places, these subjects supplement the general business information and clerical training. Efforts have been made to coordinate the content. Formal drill in the tool subjects is replaced by an emphasis on their proper functioning in the new subject. This development was frequently a matter of necessity in the school program. In Philadelphia and a few other cities where the directors of commercial education were in charge of the supervision of penmanship, this program was developed rationally. Objective studies revealed that penmanship, arithmetic, and spelling could be taught efficiently when fused with the new core content.

The increased appreciation of the worthiness and appropriateness of junior business training is resulting in a rather general introduction of the subject. The emphasis on the different objectives for the course varies in the respective schools. In those instances in which the emphasis is on subsidiary guidance objectives or on general business information that should be common to all pupils, the elementary portion of the subject is frequently required of all pupils in the seventh or eighth grade. In addition to the amount of the subject that may be required of all pupils, many schools offer the advanced portion of the subject as an elective clerical-training course. The tendency is toward increasing the number of semesters of the subject from one and two to three semesters in order to meet the different objectives. The time necessary for a universal introduction of the junior business training content has been materially reduced by the excellent contributions of the past two years.

An outstanding contribution to commercial education in the junior high schools was a report entitled, "The Junior Commerce Curriculum," by a committee of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association. This report was published in the 1926 yearbook of that organization. It contains most worthy statements of objectives and suggestions for improvement on this level. Other leading contributions of the past two years are: "Course of Study in Junior Business Training," published by the Board of Public Education, Philadelphia, Pa., in 1925; "Commercial Education, Course of Study for Junior and Senior High Schools," Department of Education, Baltimore, Md., 1925; "Commercial Course of Study for Grades 8 and 9," St. Louis Board of Education, St. Louis, Mo., 1925; "Commercial Studies" (Course of Study Monograph, No. 28), Board of Education, Los Angeles, Calif.; "Commercial Education in the Junior High School," James M. Glass, in the November,

1926, issue of the *Balance Sheet*; "Commerce for Grades 7, 8, and 9" (Course of Study Monograph, No. 6), Board of Education, Denver, Colo., 1924; "Syllabus in Commercial Subjects," State Department of Education, Albany, N. Y.; and "Vocational Guidance and Junior Placement," Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C.

### PROGRESS IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

More progress was made in applying the findings of research and in conducting additional investigations to improve the organization and instruction in commercial subjects in the high schools than in any similar period. The traditional concept that courses in stenography and bookkeeping were the only complete and satisfactory means of preparing for office and store occupations was replaced with an increased eagerness on the part of commercial teachers and administrators to obtain a better understanding of and to prepare pupils for the requirements of local business occupations. Occupational surveys have emphasized the fact that the immediate bases of commercial education pertain to the adjustment of the pupils to their initial and subsequent occupations. The literature that appeared during the biennium made the vocational objectives clearer and showed the necessity of a balanced and continuous program of commercial education. Distinctions between the junior and senior commercial occupations, and the replacement of senior vocational courses with junior business training on the junior high school level, have facilitated the development of more appropriate commercial courses in the high schools.

Heretofore there has been a tendency to imitate in the small high school the program of commercial education in the larger communities. Many leaders have urged that commercial teachers in the small communities determine the requirements of local business positions open to the high-school pupils and study the need of bookkeeping for farmers and the economic and business factors for good citizenship in the rural communities. Investigations of the problem of commercial education in the small communities have been made in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa, and are under way in other States. A session of the National Association of High School Inspectors of the National Education Association meeting held in Washington, D. C., in 1926, was devoted to this topic. Attention was given to this problem also at the research conferences on commercial education called by the State University of Iowa and to some extent in other recent conferences. An interesting feature of the course of study bulletin issued in 1925 by the State Department of Free Schools, West Virginia, was the endeavor to set up specific commercial subjects for schools in communities of various sizes.

Worthy attempts have been made in a few cities to introduce clerical training and machine-operating courses to prepare pupils for a wider scope of vocational opportunities. Outstanding examples are those courses organized at Philadelphia, Pa., Boston, Mass., and New Orleans, La. In the orientation courses organized in Philadelphia in 1925 each pupil is assigned job sheets for a few recitation periods at each of the office appliances. Pupils may specialize on some office appliance in the evening school. As a result of a survey conducted by the office equipment survey group of the Boys' High School, New Orleans, La., equipment was obtained for the office practice courses. Other surveys completed during the biennium and in progress will probably speed up this development.

Although the city school systems have been slow in the past in introducing practical courses in retail selling, much progress was made during the biennium. The number of cities offering instruction in salesmanship to regular day-school, evening-school and part-time pupils has greatly increased. The most encouraging developments are found in the large cities, particularly in New York, Boston, and Los Angeles. Philadelphia, Pa., and Washington, D. C., recently organized such courses. The Chamber of Commerce of the United States, the American Management Association, the National Retail Dry Goods Association, local merchants' organizations, the Bureau of Education, and the Federal Board for Vocational Education have been active in promoting these courses. In this connection, the New York University school of retailing is conducting, in cooperation with local merchants, an investigation which has as its objective the analysis of retail-store positions open to high-school graduates to determine the educational content available for class instruction and the pedagogical organization of the material for teaching purposes.

The following shows the present status of salesmanship courses in Boston, Mass., and is quoted from the 1926 annual report of the superintendent of schools of that city:

The merchandising classes conducted in the Boston schools have always included practical experiences in the mercantile establishments. At least 15 days must be spent in actual work. This may be done on Saturdays, every day for one, two, or three weeks before Christmas, and possibly a week at Easter. The pupils are paid for this work, and many earn individual totals of \$200 or \$300 in this way. There are nearly 1,500 pupils, boys and girls, enrolled in these courses, and there are 15 full-time teachers giving instruction. After the pupil has left school, the follow-up work is done by the vocational guidance department, and we find that a large per cent remain in the line of work for which they are trained.

Although the development of retail-selling courses in Boston has far surpassed that of most cities, the commercial coordinator in that

city reports that only half as many of the 1926 high-school graduates are trained in salesmanship as are trained in stenography, and that there are twice as many retail-selling positions as there are stenographic positions in Boston.

There has been more activity in course of study revision for commercial subjects in the past two years than in any similar period. In comparatively few instances, however, have there been concerted efforts toward compiling and studying researches, surveys, and investigations that have been made in order to make maximum contributions in the selection and organization of the content and methods of instruction. The State Department of Public Instruction in New York, and the local boards of education in Baltimore, Denver, Los Angeles, Cleveland, and St. Louis have made most worthy contributions. Many cities, including Chicago, Ill., San Francisco, and Oakland, Calif., and Grand Rapids, Mich., and the State of Wyoming are revising their commercial courses. State-wide studies of commercial education have been or are being made in Connecticut, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, and Vermont which will undoubtedly lead toward further revision. Surveys of commercial education were made also in Reading, Pa., and Racine, Wis.

An interesting feature of Standards for Graded Elementary and High Schools, which was issued in August, 1925, by the commissioner of education of Minnesota, was the prescription regarding vocational, commercial, and academic credits. It prescribed that, of the 16 credits necessary for the high-school diploma, a maximum of 3 in commercial subjects would be permitted. Representations were made to the State department that this limitation would prevent the schools in the larger cities from adequately preparing the pupils for office and store positions. The original limitation has been rescinded, and the pupils are now permitted to present 5 commercial credits to apply on the 16 necessary for the high-school diploma.

The most encouraging developments for immediate improvement of instruction have been the job analyses, researches in methods of instruction, and the development of tests. The job analyses and trait studies are necessary for intelligent vocational guidance and for the construction of achievement tests based upon office standards. Some of the recent contributions are: Various vocabulary studies and their application to the training of stenographers; analyses of stroke sequences in typewriting; "A method of teaching typewriting based on scientific analysis of experts," by J. C. Coover, in *Addresses and Proceedings of the National Education Association, 1924*; "Pupil activity curriculum in stenography," *Educational Research Bulletin*, April, 1926, College of Education, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.; "Typewriting survey," Board of Education, St. Louis, Mo.; "Job analysis in bookkeeping," Lloyd L. Jones,

in *Research Studies in Commercial Education*, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa; "Analysis of secretarial duties and traits," W. W. Charters and J. B. Whitley, Williams and Wilkins, Baltimore, Md.; "Bookkeeping and the high-school curriculum," Benjamin Strumph, New York University; "Handwriting survey to determine finishing standards for the Philadelphia public schools," John G. Kirk, March-April, 1926, issue of the *Journal of Educational Research*; and the report of a survey in selected high schools to ascertain average transcription ability of pupils, by Clay D. Slinker, in the June, 1926, issue of the *American Shorthand Teacher*.

#### STATUS OF SUPERVISION

The lack of an adequate number of city and State directors or supervisors of commercial education is the greatest hindrance at present to the development of coordinated programs in the secondary schools, universities, and teacher-training institutions. The necessity for able leaders primarily interested in this field is obvious. The number of pupils enrolled in the commercial curricula exceeds the number in any other curriculum except college preparatory. The enrollment in the public high schools by courses of study, 1923-24, reveals that the enrollment in the commercial courses exceeds the combined enrollment in all the following courses: Agricultural, home economics, industrial or trade training, and technical or manual training. Nevertheless, there is a larger number of supervisors in each of these fields than in commercial education.

New York is the only State employing a supervisor of commercial education. Twenty-one cities in 18 States employ city-supervisors in this field. Some of these supervisors have classroom, general administrative, or penmanship responsibilities to such an extent that they have little time for improvement of this phase of education. Leadership has been developing also in the commercial-teacher-training institutions, in the 18 high schools of commerce, in commercial teachers' organizations, in schools of commerce and education, and in cooperative endeavors with business organizations. In many States the commercial-teacher-training institutions and commercial teachers' organizations have assumed the responsibility for making state-wide investigations for the improvement of commercial education.

During the past two years there has been very little increase in the number of supervisors for commercial education in the United States. The position in the State Department of Public Instruction in Pennsylvania has not been filled. In the State of New York and in the city of Chicago the supervisory positions were vacated, and new appointments were made. Supervisors have been appointed in Oakland, Calif., Rochester, N. Y., St. Louis, Mo., and Miami, Fla.

The director of commercial education in Philadelphia, Pa., added to his staff a supervisor of commercial education in the junior high schools. In Boston, Mass., a commercial coordinator was appointed. Recent legislation in California makes possible the appointment of a supervisor of commercial education in the department of public instruction of that State.

The reports on the progress of commercial education in the cities and the one State having directors of commercial education are sufficient evidence of what can be accomplished with leadership primarily interested in this field. Undoubtedly, adequate supervision of this important phase of education would be an economy. The most comprehensive reports on the achievements in any city were made by the division of commercial education in Philadelphia, Pa. for the years 1925 and 1926. Local developments have been outlined in the annual reports of superintendents in the cities of New York, N. Y.; Chicago, Ill.; and Baltimore, Md.; and in the State of New York.

#### CONTESTS IN COMMERCIAL SUBJECTS

The renewed interest manifested in sectional and State contests in commercial subjects is a phase of the increased interest in the general testing program. The outstanding developments have been a more general participation, an increase in the number of subjects in the contests, a tendency toward standardization and refinement of test material, and greater uniformity in rules governing the contests.

Frank disapproval has been made of some of the objectives and the organization of the contests. At the same time efforts have been made to replace the emphasis on contests with an increased emphasis on various measuring devices for the improvement of instruction. The teaching device that emphasizes the participation of all pupils pursuing a subject is more beneficial in many ways than the plan of grooming a few students for a contest to the detriment perhaps of others. The criterion for judging the stimulating effect of contests is the increase or decrease in the teaching efficiency as indicated by the accomplishments of all pupils in the classes. In order to achieve this broader and basic objective, the contests must motivate the teachers to study the efficiency of their methods of instruction and the use of prognostic, diagnostic, and achievement tests.

The tendency is toward standardization nationally of the contest material and rules. The typewriting tests have been the first to approach standardization. Almost without exception they are conducted in accordance with the international rules and with uniform, standard material furnished by the typewriter companies. Improvement can be made in the selection of content, rules for eligibility



to graded contests, and the selection of dates for sectional, State, and National contests. Efforts were made to standardize the shorthand contests in 1926 by the free distribution of printed standard tests, together with a copy of the National Shorthand Reporters' Association rules for grading transcripts. The outstanding possibilities for improvement of the shorthand contests, in addition to those mentioned for typewriting, pertain to the length of the tests and the system of marking and grading. The vocabularies for the shorthand and typewriting contests should be based upon scientific vocabulary studies in business, and the subject matter should pertain to business. Definite plans have been announced in the December, 1926, issue of the American Shorthand Teacher for the standardization of shorthand contests in 1927. The 1925 and 1926 bulletins on contests in commercial subjects published by the Colorado State Teachers College, Greeley, Colo., and the State Normal School, Whitewater, Wis., will be of interest.

Contributions have been made by Paul Carlson, State Normal School, Whitewater, Wis., by the preparation of bookkeeping tests. With the inclusion of bookkeeping and other subjects in the contests, the basis for this contest material should be actual job analyses. The problems of bookkeeping and clerical content are modified by different approaches to the subject and by city and State syllabi designed to meet local needs. Assistance in solving these problems should be found in such studies as those conducted by the bookkeeping committee in Cleveland, Ohio; the cooperative endeavor between Harvard University and the National Association of Office Managers; and by Benjamin Strumph, New York University. The preparation of the contest material presents an opportunity for cooperation with such organizations as the American Management Association, the National Association of Office Managers, or one of the societies of accountants.

#### COMMERCIAL EDUCATION CONFERENCES

The conferences of the past two years have been devoted very largely to reports of investigations, experiments, and research in commercial education. The national and regional associations, as well as a larger number of the sections of the State teachers' associations, have found it necessary to offer more worthy programs seeking improvement in organization and methods of instruction. The interest and attendance have materially increased. Appreciation of the value of the programs is evidenced by the demand for published copies of the addresses. Outstanding contributions to the literature in the field are found in the published reports of Eastern Commercial Teachers' Association, the department of business education

of the National Education Association, and the commercial education sections of such conferences as those held under the auspices of the larger universities.

In some States, which had been holding sectional teachers' meetings, efforts have been made recently to organize the commercial teachers within the respective States into one association. Under this plan one annual meeting, instead of a number of sectional conferences, would be held. The commercial teachers of Kansas have adopted this plan. Similar action is contemplated in Ohio, New York, and other States. One factor in this development has been the desire to organize the commercial teachers of the respective States into groups for affiliation with the new national organization of vocational teachers, the American Vocational Association.

The most significant feature of the joint convention of the Vocational Education Association of the Middle West and the Western Vocational Association at Des Moines, Iowa, in March, 1925, was the adoption of the new constitution merging the former association into the American Vocational Association. The commercial education program at the 1926 meeting of the American Vocational Association was an excellent one, devoted to retail selling and the report of the recent research study by F. G. Nichols and others.

The University of Iowa held its first conference devoted exclusively to research in commercial education at Iowa City, Iowa, March, 1926. The purpose of this conference is thus stated in the published report:

It is hoped that from these conferences there will be developed to a greater extent than existed before a feeling of the need for research, a willingness to foster it, and a desire to participate in it—all to the end that training for the essential business activities of everyday life and training for business occupations may steadily be improved.

The addresses and proceedings were published by the university as an extension bulletin. Arrangements have been made for a similar conference in 1927.

The meetings of the department of business education of the National Education Association held in Indianapolis, Ind., in 1925, were devoted to discussion of the coordination of business education with vocational opportunities. The 1926 meeting, held in Philadelphia, Pa., was devoted to the significance of recent researches for the organization of commercial education and improvement of methods of instruction. Places on the program were restricted to those who had conducted worthy researches or studies.

At the 1926 meetings of the Southern Commercial Teachers Association and the National Commercial Teachers Federation, research committees were appointed. The latter association has offered

a prize for the best research report. The Eastern Commercial Teachers Association also had a research committee during the biennium. This association is planning to issue a series of three year-books. A unique service of the New England High School Teachers' Organization is that it distributes annually to its members a report on new books of interest to commercial teachers. Similar services were proposed at the 1925 meeting of the Southern Commercial Teachers Association. The latter association considered establishing permanent headquarters and employing a full-time secretary to assist and advise with its membership. The North California Commercial Teachers Association appointed a committee in 1926 to investigate the possibility of appointment of a supervisor of commercial education for that State. The first general meeting of the International Association for Commercial Education was held in Zurich, Switzerland, on September 25, 1926. The objectives of this new association will be to work for the promotion of commercial education in all countries by the following means:

Establishing closer ties between the various national associations for commercial teaching, commercial schools, chambers of commerce, private and public institutions, firms, companies, corporations, and educational authorities; organizing international congresses; organizing international courses for commercial expansion and for the study of languages; discussion of questions of general interest and their relations to commercial education; organization of a central office of information on questions of commercial education; issuing of a review and other publications dealing with commercial education; contributing to newspapers articles and reports on the progress of commercial education in various countries; organizing and encouraging excursions and stays abroad for the study of economic conditions and commercial education in other countries; collaboration with other associations and public institutions for the promotion of commercial and technical education and the study of languages.

#### TENDENCIES IN COMMERCIAL-TEACHER TRAINING

There has been a general awakening in the past two years regarding the importance of commercial-teacher training. The leaders have urged that the key to the improvement of commercial education on a long-term basis is a better program for commercial-teacher training and certification. The State departments of education and the larger universities have taken a greater interest in the preparation of commercial teachers, and a number of investigations have been made to show the present status of commercial-teacher training.

Recent developments in commercial education of the secondary schools have emphasized the urgent need for improvements in teacher training to keep pace with and make possible further progress in development of local programs. This has been particularly evident in the difficulty of obtaining teachers for the introduction of new courses, such as junior business training, clerical training,

machine operating, and retail selling. Inadequate preparation of commercial teachers is the chief reason for the failure to apply with dispatch the clear and convincing findings of research. As the statistical data are accumulated indicating what is wanted from commercial education, the teacher-training curriculum should be revised accordingly. Passive tolerance is replaced by the desire to make possible closer adjustments to immediate needs and to permanent progress by providing for a constant and adequate flow into the profession of well-prepared commercial teachers, research workers, and leaders.

A stimulating factor for the improvement of the commercial-teacher-training program is the increased interest in it manifested by the larger colleges and universities. Some encouraging developments have been made at New York University, Harvard University, Columbia University, University of Chicago, University of Iowa, University of Michigan, and many of the leading normal schools. Although the universities generally have been slow to provide for this need, many of them are interested in establishing four-year curricula from which recognized degrees may be obtained. Some universities recently entering the field have instituted programs of research. Their facilities for graduate study in the problems of commercial education are utilized more than ever before. In fact, the university as an educational center, with its possibilities for general as well as the necessary specific content and methods courses, is becoming more popular. Concentration of commercial teacher training in the larger universities of the various States is a possibility.

During the past two years many studies of the present status and needs for commercial-teacher training have been completed and others have been started. An investigation of the needs for commercial teacher training in New Jersey was made by the Bureau of Education in connection with a survey of Rutgers University in 1926. The report of the study by Miss Elizabeth Briggs, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, appeared in the October and November (1926) issues of the *Journal of Commercial Education*. R. G. Walters, Grove City College, Grove City, Pa., conducted a study in that State, which is reported in the December (1926) issue of the same magazine. The latter reveals that more than half of the commercial teachers of that State were assigned to teach subjects concerning which they had no experience. P. O. Selby, State Teachers College, Kirksville, Mo., reported a study entitled, "Preparation of Commerce Teachers for Missouri High Schools." John W. Edgemon, director of commercial subjects, Oakland, Calif.; A. E. Bullock, director of commercial education, Los Angeles,

Calif.; and others conducted a study of commercial-teacher training in that State. A report of this study was made by the former at a conference called by the State superintendent of public instruction for the heads of teacher-training institutions and deans of the universities. Other studies were made in Oklahoma and Texas.

The following is quoted from a study of the comparative status of commercial and other teachers in selected counties in New Jersey, by Paul S. Lomax, New York University:

Two things at least seem inevitable in the educational preparation of commercial teachers: First, such teachers must be as well equipped as English, mathematics, and science teachers, which means at least four-year college graduation; and, second, the preparation of commercial teachers will tend more and more to take place in an educational center which has an acceptable college of arts and science, college of commerce, and college of education, or equivalent facilities. The normal school is usually as inadequate to prepare high-school commercial teachers as it is to prepare high-school English, mathematics, and science teachers. The private business school is likewise inadequate to perform such a service. Both these educational institutions have played a most important part in the development of commercial education, for which all commercial teachers should feel most grateful; but, as four-year college preparation is increasingly demanded of commercial teachers, the normal school and private business school will inevitably become less and less an important factor.

E. G. Blackstone, University of Iowa, conducted a study of commercial teacher training in 59 institutions. The report was published under date of February 1, 1926, in University of Iowa Extension Bulletin No. 141. The following criticisms of commercial teacher training are quoted from the report:

Lack of practice-teaching facilities; lack of competent college instructors; lack of definite objectives in the planning of teacher-training courses; lack of coordination between high schools and colleges; too much emphasis on methods and too little emphasis on subject matter; too much time devoted to teaching subjects such as shorthand; too low standards for graduation; too little attention given to specialization and too much to trying to make all-round commercial teachers; too great a tendency to feel that the student is prepared to teach when he has had subject-matter courses but no pedagogy or psychology; granting credit for such subjects as penmanship and spelling.

As a result of the kind of studies mentioned above, many of the States are increasing the length of the training courses. Efforts have been made recently in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, New York, and Colorado to raise the standards for certification of commercial teachers. Following the enactment of the certification law of 1923 in Colorado, the department of public instruction, in cooperation with a committee for commercial education, established higher requirements for the certification of commercial teachers in that State.

Recommendations of the revision committee for an upgrading of the requirements for the certification of commercial teachers of the State of New York, published in the 1925 report of the State department of education, are in part as follows:

There should be a decided upgrading in the certification requirements for commercial teachers. \* \* \* Not later than August 1, 1927, special certificates in commercial branches should be denied to those who are not graduates of a commercial-teacher-training department of a recognized three-year normal school or college or who have not had a satisfactory equivalent training. \* \* \* No complete private registered business-school commercial-teacher-training curriculum should be approved unless such curriculum is given in a separate commercial-teacher-training department and only high-school graduates are accepted for it.

The emphasis on the vocational aspects of commercial education has developed a tendency toward requiring actual business experience of prospective commercial teachers. There is no doubt that such a requirement would be a tremendous factor in the immediate improvement of preparation for business. No other single development could be more beneficial toward obtaining appropriate content, motivation in methods, an appreciation of office standards, and ultimate efficiency of the worker. No teacher can be expected to do the best teaching of a particular skill or activity who has no experience in that activity other than that which was gained in a classroom and perhaps only in the lower semesters of the subject. Six months of business experience are required of all commercial teachers for certification in Pennsylvania except for those obtaining a partial certificate. Ohio requires eight hours' work a week for one semester. Ten cities are endeavoring to hold to the requirement of business experience. Some give bonuses, such as higher classifications on the salary schedules. Some of the normal schools are endeavoring to require successful teaching experience before granting the diploma to commercial teachers. The advantages are so obvious that the trend toward requiring actual business experience will undoubtedly continue.

A noteworthy event in the improvement of commercial-teacher-training programs on a nation-wide basis was the organization of the National Commercial-Teacher-Training Association at a recent conference on research in commercial education called by the University of Iowa. The purposes of the association as stated in the constitution are:

To improve the program for training of teachers of commercial subjects; to elevate the standards for the certification of teachers of commercial subjects; to promote research in commercial education; and to develop a proper recognition amongst school men of the significance of commercial education.

Eligibility for membership is limited to those institutions which are recognized by the major secondary and collegiate accrediting associations. Considering the present lack of uniformity and the lack of commercial teacher training and certification programs based upon actual needs, the National Commercial-Teacher-Training Association has excellent opportunities.

### THE PRIVATE BUSINESS SCHOOLS

There has been a tendency during the past two years for many of the private business schools, particularly the larger ones, to seek independently and by groups the approval of State departments of public instruction, State teachers colleges, legislatures, and accrediting agencies. Many of them have been permitted to grant degrees. It is interesting to note in this connection that the largest number of these schools are found in States in which they are permitted to grant degrees, are recognized as commercial-teacher-training institutions, or have their work approved by the State departments for credit toward a high-school diploma. There is a definite tendency in these schools to establish at least a department or curriculum that has some approval or recognition by the State or accrediting agencies in order that the work will have a definite relationship to that of other institutions.

Inasmuch as closer adjustments to the needs are made in the public secondary schools, and inasmuch as few higher institutions offer technical training during the first two years, many of these schools are adjusting themselves to this gap or break in public education for business. This tendency will undoubtedly continue among the larger schools pending further development of the junior college and technical courses in the first and second years of the college curriculum. Many of the better schools are now offering courses of two or more years in length in which business subjects are taught intensively. That there is a demand for this kind of intensified effort is definitely established by the generous patronage accorded to such schools. Other schools, not so well equipped but maintaining some classes for high-school graduates, have endeavored to follow in the wake of those that aspire to collegiate standing. In this connection many of these schools have dropped the words "business" and "commercial" from their titles. There is a tendency also to adopt such titles as "college," "university," "school of commerce," and "college of commerce." It is doubtful, however, if the rank and file of these schools will immediately follow this lead.

B. F. Williams, president of the National Association of Accredited Commercial Schools, reports:

Among the most recent achievements is the effort toward cooperation which has been made by various organizations. Through the efforts of these organiza-

tions many bad practices have been eliminated, standards of achievement have been raised, and physical betterment has been secured. While this struggle on the part of the private business schools has been voluntary, it has been none the less effective.

There are now five accrediting associations among the private business schools. During the biennium, the Southern Accredited Business College Association was organized.

In July, 1926, the Better Business Bureau of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World called a meeting for the regulation of the advertising of correspondence and private business schools. The official organ of the National Association of Accredited Commercial Schools reports:

The fundamental purpose of the conference was to make school advertising more effective by making it more believable. Obviously, any school advertising that smacks of exaggeration or any other type of misrepresentation brings discredit upon all school advertising and decreases the value of every dollar so spent.

#### HIGHER EDUCATION FOR BUSINESS.

The commerce curricula in the universities have been developed ordinarily by the gradual addition of new courses, instead of by careful planning as was done at the University of Chicago and in a few other institutions. As a result, the schools of business present an extremely varied pattern in the make-up of their curricula. Urban universities ordinarily set up objectives to meet the peculiar needs of their immediate communities, whereas the outlying institutions have adhered to a general, broad basis. In the endeavor to meet the respective objectives, some schools have subordinated and others emphasized technique. So long as business was defined as a pecuniary system, forms, processes, and methods were emphasized. When, however, the newer concept gained dominance that business was an evaluating process, the elements of administration and management were stressed and the educational objectives were focused on business judgment.

The deans and instructors in the schools of commerce have devoted much attention in the past two years to the objectives, organization, and content of higher education for business. A number of surveys and investigations were completed and others were undertaken to obtain more facts about the actual needs of business. A study of the occupational histories of 2,100 graduates of eight representative schools of business was conducted by the American Management Association in 1924. Dr. C. S. Yoakum, of the University of Michigan, is studying the business biographies of accounting students. The bureau of business research at the same institution is cooperating in the survey of the occupations of 50,000 business and professional



women. An accumulation of such studies should harmonize the present narrow technical and broader educational objectives. An outstanding contribution of the past two years which pertained to the objectives, principles, and organization of an ideal school of commerce, was "The collegiate school of business at Erehwon," prepared by Dr. L. C. Marshall and published in the June, 1926, issue of the *Journal of Political Economy*. Other contributions to higher education and business were published in the various issues of this journal in 1925 and 1926.

During the past two years much progress was made in providing better facilities. Many buildings have been erected for schools of commerce, including those at New York University, Northwestern University, and University of Illinois. Schools of commerce were organized at a number of the universities, including the following: State universities of Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, and Wisconsin, and Stanford University. A four-year college of commerce was organized at the University of Southern California to replace the former two-year school of commerce. Beginning in the fall of 1926, the school of commerce at New York University has required four instead of three years for the degree of bachelor of commercial science. Arrangements have been made for the school of business administration at the University of Maryland to be taken over by the Johns Hopkins University, and the Johns Hopkins evening courses have been extended to offer as wide a range of business subjects as has been offered by the University of Maryland. The Lincoln and Lee University, of Kansas City, Mo., is organizing a school of commerce. New developments are under way in many other institutions.

The development of graduate courses and research in these schools has been prominent. There is an increase in the number of graduate courses offered. Stanford University, in October, 1925, opened the first graduate school of business in the West. It is the only graduate school of business which has been set up in a university which had no definite organized instruction in business. Some of the schools of commerce, including those in Indiana University and the University of Michigan, organized bureaus of business research. The number of research projects completed and in progress has increased rapidly. In this connection the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business at the 1925 meeting held in Columbus, Ohio, authorized the appointment of a permanent committee on research with the following functions:

- (1) The assembling and disseminating of information regarding the research projects completed, in progress, and definitely undertaken by the research agencies represented in the association.

(2) The exerting of such influence as may appear proper and feasible to see that the result of research as procured by members of the association shall be comparable from one project to another.

(3) The dissemination of information regarding research methods, so that the membership of the association may be kept informed of any improvements or any particular experience which has proved especially valuable.

Among the schools organizing departments of commerce extension in 1925 were the University of North Carolina and Ohio State University. The program at the latter is in striking contrast to that which has characterized the extension courses in commerce of most of the State universities: First, it is regarded as part of a broad educational policy closely integrated with the residence program of undergraduate training; and, second, it is limiting its offerings to courses that are distinctively of university grade, no effort being made to feature courses of instruction that are either of a secondary or popular nature. The department of commerce extension is one of the agencies of the college of commerce and administration to maintain close coordination of the work of the resident departments and the bureau of business research with the business interests of the State.

In addition to the regular conferences on higher education for business held by the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business, other conferences made worthy contributions and developed closer cooperation between business men and the schools of business. The conference at the University of Illinois was held in connection with the dedication of the new commerce building in 1926. The proceedings of the conference on personnel administration in college curricula, held under the auspices of the American Management Association, contained a survey of college courses in personnel administration and were published by the association in 1925. A three-day conference at Stanford University in 1926 was devoted to the discussion of the status of business education and problems facing the new graduate school. The underlying purposes of the conference as reported in the proceedings published by the university were:

To advance the standards of university education for business through thoughtful discussion.

To direct discriminating thought to some of the problems of business education, especially with respect to purposes, content, and methods of a graduate course in business.

To bring the graduate school of business at Stanford to the attention of educational and business leaders in the West in such a way as to promote fruitful cooperation.

Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1926, No. 11, contains a report on the residence and migration of university students of business. A résumé is given of the number of business students residing in each

State compared with the number of business students who are enrolled in colleges and universities in each State. Montana has the largest and Kentucky the smallest number of business students residing in the State in proportion to the population. New York has more than twice as many residents pursuing courses of study in commerce as has the next highest State, and Nevada has the smallest number. In seven States 90 per cent or more of the residents who are enrolled in business curricula are in institutions located in their respective home States. Ten States in the Union, including New Jersey, were reported as not providing curricula in commerce and business in 1922-23. The Bureau of Education survey of Rutgers University, New Jersey, made in 1926, recommended the development of business curricula in that institution.

### CONCLUSION

The most encouraging general development in commercial education during the biennium is the increased interest manifested by the people, educators, and business men. An outcome of this increased interest is the tendency toward scientific curriculum revision. The various researches and the different points of view represented by these groups are making the objectives clearer and more definite. With the development of greater emphasis on the vocational objectives of commercial subjects, there is an increased demand for a balanced commercial curriculum which will prepare adequately for the variety of activities of life. Slowly but gradually efforts have been made toward cultivating a full appreciation of the potential contribution of commercial education to good citizenship.

The clear and convincing findings of researches and investigations are contributing a fact basis for this phase of education. They are revealing the urgent need of preparation, not only for a wider scope of business occupations, particularly in selling and clerical work, but for a larger number of occupational levels. Corresponding to the resultant stress that is laid on the importance of preparation for initial vocational opportunities on the various occupational levels, there is developing a most worthy program of continuous education for business to meet the specific needs of those who seek the higher occupational levels. It is becoming more evident that, as one enters and progresses in his business career, additional education is vital to more effective service in the vocational and other phases of life. Although various types of extension and part-time education made much progress in the past two years, these services are worthy of further immediate development.