

THE HISTORY, ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF A FRENCH COLLEGE

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INTRODUCTION

It is my purpose in this article to give as careful a study of the actual history and operation of a French College as space will permit. During the year 1922-1923 the writer held the position of teacher of English at the College de Garçons, at Thonon-les-Bains, France. The French government had arranged with the Institute of International Education to have 12 instructors sent from the United States to teach English to the French boys and it was my good fortune to be one of the twelve. It was while actually experiencing the daily life of a teacher in a French College that the following notes and statistics were accumulated. The subject will be treated after the following order:

1. The setting, location, and historical origin.
2. The creation of the College; laws relating to its foundation.
3. The clientele, with observations as to the number, social class, and occupations of the parents; the age and classification of the students.
4. Buildings and equipment.
5. Administration, including the treatment of finances; the managerial and teaching staff.
6. The instruction, which will include programs of study, pedagogical methods, discipline and the degree obtained.

In order to make this account understandable to one not acquainted with the French educational system, it seems best to begin with some general observations with respect to the manner in which the French Government handles the whole question. At basis the French plan is simplicity itself; everything is controlled by the central government in Paris. Neither the Department, which corresponds to our State, nor the local school boards have the slightest say as regards the curriculum. A boy in a public school college or lycée, for example, who lives in the extreme north of France will have exactly the same studies and the same number of hours of study as a boy in the south. The *Ministre d'Instruction Publique* (Minister of Public Instruction) proposes certain broad bills to the French parliament and if they are passed he puts them into operation throughout France. In order to make these policies effective, the Minister can issue certain decrees and instructions from time to time. Some of these instructions would seem somewhat minute to us. For instance, a recent ministerial instruction informs the teacher that he must not dictate any of his work, a direction which would seem to us an undesirable interference with the teacher's discretion. Is it any wonder that a Frenchman watches with breathless interest the bills with regard to education that are presented by the incoming Minister of Education, when he realizes that every public school boy or girl in the land is to be directly affected by the action? Can we wonder that discussion was hot and furious during the past summer when the Minister of Public Education carried his program through the Senate and Chamber of Deputies and as a result made every single college boy take six years of Latin and at least two years of Greek?

The purpose of all Colleges, Lycées, Catholic Institutes, even private tutoring, is directed toward one end; the fitting of the student to pass the baccalaureate ex-

aminations, usually taken by the candidate at the age of seventeen or eighteen years.

The government, in order more easily to carry out its educational programs, has divided France into several large educational divisions called, interchangeably, either Universities or Academies. To an American these expressions are very confusing. We think of Academies and Universities, the first as preparatory schools, the second as great institutions with diverse courses and fields of study, all housed in large and imposing buildings. One must completely change one's ideas of the meaning of these terms from a French point of view. To a Frenchman these two expressions mean exactly the same thing, and have nothing to do with buildings or courses of study. The terms are used interchangeably for large educational administrative units. The proper term for University as we use it, is in French, *Faculté*. True it is that these so-called Universities or Academies have offices, but no one goes to them for studies; they are simply bureaus from which the directions to schools within the district are sent out, inspections made and results of examinations filed. For example, if a Frenchman says that such and such a college or lycée is associated (*appartenant*) with the University (or Academy) of Grenoble, it does not mean at all that the College or Lycée has relations with that ancient and distinguished institution in Grenoble at which many American students have studied and which they have erroneously named the University of Grenoble. No indeed, that venerable institution is properly denominated the *Faculté* of Grenoble. A Frenchman means by that expression that the College or Lycée is inspected and supervised by the educational administrative unit whose offices are in Grenoble. As a matter of fact the *Université* or *Académie* bureau is situated in the *Mayorie*, or City Hall, entirely apart from the *Faculté*.

The question is often asked "What is the difference between a College and a Lycée?" There is practically no difference between them. Both have exactly the same courses leading to the baccalaureate examinations. There is this slight difference however: that the large Lycées are usually placed in the cities and are entirely financed by the government, while the Colleges are more frequently to be found in the smaller municipalities, being partly financed by the government and partly by the cities in which they are placed. The lycées also attract the professors who have higher diplomas, the Agrégés, while the Colleges, paying lesser salaries, must content themselves with those holding diplomas of Licenciés.

I have attempted in the above paragraphs to indicate the broad lines of educational administration in France and to explain confusing terms; I will now turn to the consideration of the particular College of Thonon, the special subject of this study. Many of the colleges and schools of France can trace their origin back into the Middle ages. The College of Thonon is no exception and in the opening pages I will trace its roots far back into the sixteenth century. Naturally, as the growth and support of the college depends on the wealth and nature of the community in which it is placed, I will also treat that angle of the subject in the beginning.

THE SETTING, LOCATION, AND ORIGIN

Thonon-les-Bains, seat of the College, possessing a population of 7042 inhabitants, is a small sous-prefecture¹ of the department of Haute Savoie. It is situated on the south bank of Lake Lemman, generally known as Lake Geneva, being close to the watering place of Evian

¹ A smaller administrative unit. Prefects and Under Prefects are appointed as administrative representatives by the Central government in Paris following the historical arrangement made by Napoleon Bonaparte. There, officers represent the government in the dealings with the departmental units.

and opposite the Castle of Chillon, made famous by Byron's poem. It is hardly necessary to add that situated as it is, on the lake and surrounded by the Alps, the city occupies an unusually beautiful and healthful site. There are numerous prosperous farms near at hand. Timber cut on the mountain sides, is brought into Thonon to be sawed. Herds of cattle, grazed on the mountain sides, furnish much milk and cheese for the surrounding cities. Tourist travel in the summer also adds considerably to the general level of wealth.

From a religious point of view the department is profoundly Catholic. This religious situation harks back to the fifteenth century, to the period of the religious wars. Saint François de Sales founded on the south shore of Lake Geneva a series of schools intended to combat the disruptive tendencies of Calvin's teaching at Geneva close at hand. In the enthusiasm for this work of Saint François de Sales, Calvinism was repudiated and Savoy saved for the Catholic faith. Since the time when Saint François de Sales founded his "Sainte Maison" or schools for Catholic teaching at Thonon, Thonon has been a center for other schools, both monastic and lay in nature. Of later years, although the monasteries have been suppressed, the tendency to keep Thonon an intellectual center has continued. The following is a rapid résumé of the history of Primary and Secondary education to date:

Primary Teaching

Prior to 1860, the date of the annexation of Savoy to France, primary teaching was confined to the "Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes," for boys, while the girls were trained by the "Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul." These two orders began their work about 1830. In 1860 after Savoy had broken from Italy to join France, these two orders were allowed to continue. But in 1881 the strong

anti-Catholic sentiment in France demanded that these schools be made lay schools with lay teachers. In 1882 an École Primaire Supérieure for boys was created with the purpose of giving advanced teaching along lines of primary education. Later this school was housed under the same roof as that of the College we are about to study. Commercial and industrial sections have been added to the École Primaire Supérieure from time to time.

Numerous girls' schools have paralleled this development with Primaires Supérieures for girls, with sections for lace making and domestic science. In addition to the public schools, the Catholics too have managed to hold their grip on a number of parochial schools, by conforming outwardly to certain requirements laid down by a hostile government; adherence to the law requiring lay garb being exacted by the government. Even the Jesuits are back now in Thonon, possessing a thriving school, although it should be noted that this liberal attitude toward that order has only been taken by the government since the Great War in which French Jesuits supported the government devotedly. The Jesuits administer both primary and secondary schools, preparing some to take the baccalaureate examinations while others are trained to become priests.

Secondary Education

Secondary Education in Thonon dates as far back as the sixteenth century, to the Sainte Maison of Saint François de Sales, a College founded in 1599, which was only suppressed during the French Revolution in 1793. Following this, Napoleon Bonaparte established a College in 1805 which was closed in 1850. The work of St. François de Sales was resumed by the order of the Maristes in 1870 and such was the industry of that order that a considerable College was created. However, the

Republic became hostile to education resting in the hands of the Catholic orders. In consequence, hostile laws passed in 1895 caused the Maristes to abandon their work at Thonon. The inheritor of the work of this order was the College which we are about to study; for on the retirement of the Maristes, the College continued the work. The College grew in numbers and built the handsome new buildings which it now occupies. One might say then that the present College has its roots back in 1593. How the change from the Maristes to the present lay administration was made, will be seen in the following pages.

2. CREATION OF THE COLLEGE: CIRCUMSTANCES OF ITS FOUNDATION

We have seen that the College de Garçons is the successor of the religious Society of Maristes. The steps in the transformation are worth consideration. On the 23rd of January, 1892, the Superior General of the Society of Maristes wrote to the Mayor of Thonon:

"I have the honor to recall to you that the convention arranged between the City of Thonon and the School of the Maristes, authorized by the Minister of Public Instruction, will expire on the 1st of next October. For grave reasons the Society expresses the regret that it can not authorize Monsieur the Abbé to renew the convention."

The Municipal Council at once expressed grave regrets and hastened to send a deputation to Paris to confer

NOTE:—In speaking of the educational advantages of Thonon one should not overlook the picturesque "Académie Chablaisienne," an organization which meets in the ancient Convent of the Ursulines at monthly intervals. It is at these meetings that certain nobles who still occupy their castles on the shores of the lake, come together to study the history of their ancestors. Numerous Catholic priests, well versed in medieval latin, assist. It is not uncommon to hear readings from manuscripts of the 13th century at these meetings.

with the Superior of the order. Several days after the return of the delegation the final response of the Superior came. It stated that in consequence of laws directed against the orders, military laws, scholastic laws, fiscal laws and the like, it was imperative that their work at Thonon be closed.

The military laws rendered keeping open of the Mariste schools particularly difficult, for the law of 1883 called the young priests to the colors for their required period of military training.

These young priests were especially necessary to hold the positions of répétiteurs, positions which combine supervision of the study and play of the young pupils. This shortage seriously affected the success and existence of these church schools. In order to save their work in France, the Council of the Maristes decided to cut down the number of schools, to transfer their available teachers and répétiteurs to their large institutions and to let the smaller colleges go. The College Stanislas in Paris was saved in this way, as well as certain others at Bordeaux and Nice, but the other Colleges in the small towns, like Thonon, had to be sacrificed.

The Municipal Council of Thonon hated to see a nice college of 24 teachers and 150 pupils removed from the city and tried to compel the order to continue its work by resorting to law, but the attempt failed.

Another solution had to be found in order to keep the College going. M. Vernaz, a former instructor, was now fortunately mayor. At this time there was a request on the part of the director of the École Primaire Supérieure that a chair of Latin be founded. M. Vernaz transformed that project into the addition of the College to the École Primaire Supérieure, with the necessary creation of the additional chairs. The pupils, who were largely inherited from the former College de Maristes, proceeded to study under the same roof with the boys of the École Primaire

Supérieure, a situation that lasted until 1910 when the present handsome College was constructed and the two schools housed together under its roof.

In French towns and cities all business is carried on through the Municipal Council and the Mayor takes on a degree of importance unknown in our towns. Every kind of problem is swept before the attention of the Municipal Council. This body then had to attend to the financing of the new College. Financing was done by a series of treaties, renewed at five year periods. These treaties are made with the *Ministre d' Instruction Publique* who accords subventions to the College.

The main clauses of the original treaty are as follows:

The City agrees to maintain the College during a period of ten years.

Both State and City agree to furnish 6500 francs each, a total of 13,000 fr. The city is to furnish the buildings; the students are to pay the largest part of the lodging and food while the state subvention is to go for the "externat," the expenses of professors, salaries, and the like. Any augmentation of the teaching staff found necessary is to be paid for exclusively by the state.

The course was only to be completed through the third year. (Thus originally the college covered only half the work required by the standard colleges, which are required to have a six years' course.) Small children are taken care of in the preparatory.

The state is to furnish a number of scholarships (*bourses*). These scholarships are given to the children whose parents are now or have been in government employ, the sons of deceased or living veterans, for example. Other scholarships are open to bright children who can pass the examinations but whose poverty keeps them from being able to meet the regular College fees.

The personnel is to comprise a principal, a professor of French, one of the classic languages, one of sciences, one of mathematics, one of living languages, one of design, one of singing, an instructrice¹ for the small children, an aumonier (priest attached for religious instruction), a surveillant general who sees to the order, and a concierge.

This treaty with the State was signed on the 6th of April, 1895, at Paris. Since that time the treaty has been changed at five year periods. The financial plan, however, is about the same as outlined at its inception. For new buildings the city pays half and the state half. Thus when the College outgrew its housing room in the École Primaire Supérieure the present fine structure was built at an expense of 480,000 francs, half of which was borne by each party. The State usually pays 80% of the externat, that is, the salaries of the personnel. With the sums received from students and scholarships, the expenses of food, heat, water, light, and laundry are taken care of.

3. THE CLIENTELE

The newly created college commenced in 1895 with 31 pupils and since that time has risen to 186 pupils, there being a slight fluctuation or retardation in the normal growth during the period of the war, when many children were kept at home to help, in the absence of the parent away at the front. Of course it must be understood that in speaking of the College we are speaking strictly of that one branch of education. Loosely used, the term College of Thonon also comprises the École Primaire Supérieure and the School for training hotel employees, numbering altogether 334 students, of which

¹ Instructrice: lady teacher in charge of the little tots, both boys and girls, in the preparatory. Boys and girls in France go to school together only until the age of ten or eleven years.

the 186 mentioned above are those taking strictly College work. Of these, 90 are in the preparatory of the College, little boys and girls. This leaves only 96 pupils in all six classes of the College.

The limited number in the College proper is a source of distress to those in authority. It means that the number of classically trained minds sent to take the Baccalaureate Examinations each year is very small, not more than eight or ten. The causes of this lack of increase and the very limited number taking College work are fundamental, and not far to seek: The *Écoles Primaires Supérieures*, which train the child along practical lines, appeal to most of the parents. These *Écoles Primaires Supérieures* are entirely free; while the expense for College education is considerable. Then too the College education is regarded as undemocratic, as tending to produce a favored class. The *Écoles Primaire Supérieures* throughout France are getting better every year and many feel that the advantages of the classical education are not worth the additional expense. Thonon also has to face other factors which lessen the attendance; these are the existence of strong Catholic schools at the very doors, as well as other technical schools that draw away the students.

This difficulty of the *Écoles Primaires Supérieures* monopolizing the students of the Colleges is a serious condition throughout France. During this last year (1923-24) the College Courses have been made especially classic by law. Now, little fellows of ages 11 to 17 learn Latin during all six years, and Greek part of the time. It is thought that this making the College courses so distinctly classical will tend to strengthen them, but it seems to me probable that in Savoie, where the minds are intensely practical, that more students will be diverted to the *Écoles Primaires Supérieures* and that the

College of Thonon will have difficulty in maintaining its purely Collegiate department.

The parents of the College students are drawn largely from the well-to-do Bourgeois class: 48% are sons of men engaged in commerce, 18% are the sons of government functionaries and 12% are sons of school teachers. The rest are scattered among the military, proprietors, and independently well to do. Very few come from the agricultural class, the sons of farmers usually going to the Écoles Primaires Supérieures, as might be expected.

The average age of the student when he enters College from the Preparatory is 13 years and when he graduates he will be between 17 and 18 years old.

The aim of the College is to turn out beautifully rounded, refined, classical minds, to fit certain choice scholars to take the Baccalaureates successfully.

By Ministerial decree, M. Leon Berand has recently made the Colleges profoundly classical in their training, making the distinction between the Écoles Primaire Supérieure and the Lycées or Colleges very wide. His recent decree calls for Latin during all four years of the First Cycle and in all courses but one in the Second Cycle. All students receive at least two years of Greek and, in certain of the courses, four or five years of Greek.

The French program is divided into two cycles. The first extends from the sixth to the third class, inclusive. (The French educational system counts their classes in

NOTE:—There exists a certain rivalry between the Catholic and Public Schools that sometimes finds expression in schoolboy desire for action. The boys of the rival schools sometimes pass each other in long files, shepherded by their Répétiteurs. In general they are well behaved, but there is a tendency on the part of the college and public school boys to shout, "Corbeaux" at the Catholics—this means "crows" and refers to the black garb that the priests are supposed to wear concealed under the lay costume required by law. These exchanges have several times bordered on minor religious wars. However, during the Great War the schools buried the hatchet and took part in joint entertainments. Since then the students have behaved very well.

the reverse order from ours, the sixth class is the lowest and the first the highest.) The boys in the sixth class are usually about eleven years old and are fifteen before they pass into the Second Cycle. A hard examination occurs at the time of passing from the second to the first cycle and as a result of the examination and other causes, only about a fourth are left to go on for the last two years, i. e., the second and first classes. Above the first class there is a sort of one year post graduate course. At the conclusion of the Second Cycle the student takes the first part of his Baccalaureate and if he passes it, he returns to the college to prepare the same subjects, but on broader lines, for the second part of the Baccalaureate. He also takes philosophy. This extra year after the conclusion of the Second Cycle really amounts to a seventh year in the College.

The students come from the ancient historical region of Bas Chablais, close to Lake Geneva. Haute Chablais, away from the influences of Calvin and Geneva, back up in the mountain valleys, remained profoundly Catholic. To this day scarce a student comes from that region. Of course the largest part of the students at the College come from Catholic families, but there is this difference, —they do not come from the practicing Catholic families, but from those who prefer to back the Republican institutions rather than to remain under the scholastic guidance of priests. These liberal-minded Catholics send their sons to the College. The great advantage of exchange also causes the Swiss to send their children to the College. There is a colony of 34 Swiss students from Geneva and many from Lausanne. Paris sends 11 and Evian 10, the rest are from the neighboring towns.

Among the students are boursiers, 7 national ones, sons of soldiers to whom these bourses or scholarships are awarded. The Department also has its favored sons, and the city has made contributions for certain ones. These bourses are used to help bright students, to at-

tract the brilliant minds that may make fine classical scholars away from the practical Écoles Primaires Supérieures. At present there is little attraction; the amount of the scholarship is not large enough and sometimes the positions are not filled, there being no applicants to take the required examinations to obtain the scholarship.

During the war the enrollment was swelled by the addition of sixty refugee boys from Servia. I was shown a folio of letters from the parents and Servian students, and their contents present the most tragic pictures of mental and physical suffering in their journeys across Albania to get out of the reach of the Austrians and Bulgarians. These sixty made excellent students, though they were inclined to be a bit overbearing in relation to their benefactors. They eventually became very happy in their new surroundings and the thoughtful French celebrated Servian holidays at the College for the sake of their refugees.

4. THE BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT

The College is situated on the main highway which extends along the southern shore of Lake Lemman in the direction of Geneva. The College consists of a large wood and stucco building of two stories. In the center is a tower with a clock above the main entrance. The color is white and the general appearance cheerful, the style of the building being distinctly Swiss. Within this edifice are contained the College in the center, the École Primaire Supérieure on the left wing and the École Hôtelière on the right wing. Separated from the École Primaire Supérieure are two work shops, one for wood and one for iron work. On the left wing are three class rooms belonging to the École Primaire Supérieure. On the same side are five other class rooms for general use and one studio in which the students learn to do the excellent artistic work for which the French are well known. To

the north are seven more class rooms and a special hall for geology, one for physics, and a library for professors. In the center is the office of the *Surveillant General* who has charge of discipline. There is also the place for the *Concierge*, a parlor full of athletic trophies and the office of the Principal. On the right are five halls where the *Répétiteurs* hold forth, watching, and guiding the students as they sit on long rows of forms, studying. Then there are two dining rooms seating 110 pupils each, and the last addition to this long, three-sided structure is a combined gymnasium and hall for dramatic affairs. On the second floor are five dormitories arranged to receive 38 pupils each. There is an infirmary containing eighteen beds, a special hall for contagious troubles, four beds, and above the center are the apartments of the Principal.

The building of the College of Thonon is considerably different from most lycées and colleges of France which are pretty generally gloomy in appearance with dark stone and cloistered courts. This college is a cheerful one, built with great attention to ample light and air and with an exceptionally large court for play in the center. Each part of the building is arranged especially for the department interested. The art class room is especially cheerful with its many statues and exhibitions of marvelous work done by artistic boys. The reception room is also good and the new theater attached will be adequate as soon as the moving picture machine is set up. Of course, judged from American standards, the building and equipment would not be considered particularly good; but for the French with their very limited means, the building is an exceptionally good one for a small town.

5. THE ADMINISTRATION

The College is administered by the Principal, having under his orders a business Manager (*Econome*) a *Sur-*

veillant General (Disciplinary Officer), an under director for the École Primaire Supérieure and a directrice for the Hotel School. Then there are 14 professors, and 6 Répétiteurs who supervise the students' study. There are a chef, a concierge, two cooks and ten domestics.

Controlling the general policy of the College, appointing the principal and inspecting the quality of the work, is the "Conseil d' Administration." The personnel of the Conseil is fixed by law: 1. The President of the Council is the Academic Inspector who comes from the Educational District of which Grenoble is the center. 2. The Mayor of the City of Thonon. 3. The principal, who is the acting secretary. 4. The President of the Alumni Association. 5. A Professor chosen by his Colleagues. 6. Two delegates chosen by the Minister of Instruction from among the leading commercial and industrial men of Thonon.

This council arranges the budget and keeps close tab on the expenses; it prepares the financial treaties with the Minister of Education at Paris, sees about the bourses, or scholarships, and in general acts in an advisory capacity. A glance at the way in which this council is chosen is sufficient to indicate its merits.

A word about the different officers as they exist to-day will give more life to this dispassionate discussion of facts. The Principal, M. Servittaz, Doctor of Science, has to control the daily administration of all the departments. He has great tact; his scientific bent is shown in his encouraging the installation of ateliers for iron and wood work. There is a tendency to encourage science rather than the classics. He receives 1275 francs a month salary (1922-23). The Under Director controls the École Primaire Supérieure. He has acted in that capacity since the foundation in 1886. He is a disciplinarian. He receives 11,000 francs a year.

The Under Directrice has had control of the Hotel School for two years. She is original in her methods

and imparts to the boys a strong training in the type of conduct expected of the best type of hotel assistants. (13,000 francs a year salary).

The Surveillant General has the heavy task of watching over the discipline of over three hundred boys. He also lays out and assigns the tasks of the Répétiteurs who supervise the boys during work and play. It is a position that requires great tact, his motto is "Just and Severe." He sticks to both ends of that motto.

The Inspector descends on the College at surprise intervals and checks over everything to see if the numerous laws, ordinances and ministerial letters are being followed. He prepares the reports for the general Council of the Department of Haute Savoie and for the Rector of the Academy of Grenoble, on which the College depends.

The Professors are almost all Licentiates; there are no Agrégés,¹ as the large Lycées attract these by their higher pay. There are several with special certificates in their fields, as English, Italian, Design and Art, and Music. There are two lady teachers to look after the little boys and girls in the preparatory. The salaries for professors run from 790 to 1129 francs a month. The professors are all well trained in their subjects; if one may say that the French College is equivalent to our high schools, a comparison that is far from exact, one could say that the French professors have a profounder grasp of their subjects than the average high school teachers in this country. Almost all of them were mobilized during the late war and several show the effects of severe injuries.

Probably the most difficult task lies with the bachelor Répétiteurs, who supervise the students' studies and

¹ Professeurs Agrégés. These are the choicer minds who after passing their Licentiates, spend two additional years or more in preparation and then take a competitive examination of a severe nature given by the government. Success opens the doors to the higher paid teaching positions.

have to be with the scholars in play and work day and night to see that nothing happens. This continual association with large numbers of students with little rest requires the strongest nerves. The salary is 333 francs a month and board and lodging.

The chef receives 600 francs a month. A dissertation of this kind has to be conservative in nature—but he ranks among the world's greatest chefs. The domestics have room and board and about 110 francs a month.

During the past ten years the French government has adopted the policy of having an Englishman to assist in teaching the correct pronunciation in the English department. Two years ago, as a result of the solicitation of the United States branch of the Bureau of International Education, twelve positions were opened each year to teachers from the United States. I was one of those appointed during the past year. It is a fine experience for the American instructor; it gives him a chance to learn French. Its benefit to the French boys depends largely on the instructor. A lack of French at first makes it difficult to conduct the lessons, but after a few weeks he can get the boys to pronouncing English words in an understandable way. Reading, reciting of poems and little plays help greatly to form a pronunciation.

6. PROGRAMS OF STUDY

The way in which the courses are divided and the number of hours devoted to each follows:

Sixth class (first College year, boys about 11 years old)

French and Latin	10 hours a week
A Modern Language	5 hours
History, Geography	3 hours
Calculation	2 hours
Natural Science	1 hour
Art, Design	2 hours

23 hours a week total

Fifth class (second year in College, age about 12)

French and Latin	10 hours a week
Modern Language	5 hours
History, Geography	3 hours
Calculation	2 hours
Natural Science	1 hour
Art, Design	2 hours

 23 hours a week total

Fourth class (third year in College, age about 13)

French and Latin	10 hours a week
Modern Language	4 hours
History, Geography	3 hours
Mathematics	2 hours
Natural Science	1 hour
Art, Design	2 hours

 22 hours a week total

Third class (fourth year in College, age about 14 to 15)

French and Latin	11 hours a week
Modern Language	4 hours
History, Geography	3 hours
Mathematics	3 hours
Art, Design	2 hours

 23 hours a week total

It should be noted that up until the year 1923-1924 there was a very popular scientific course, Division B, which substituted mathematics and physics for Latin. But the influence of M. Leon Berard, Minister of Education, and the desire to make the Colleges very classical in the education they give, have caused this scientific division to be dropped. Greek has been added in the fifth and sixth classes.

SECOND CYCLE

After the student has passed a stiff examination he is admitted into the Second Cycle. In this he has an opportunity to follow any one of three courses. As a result of the examination most of the inferior students are weeded out, leaving those who seriously intend to prepare for their Baccalaureate.

Since the ministerial decree of Leon Berard, which went into effect last October and which superseded the system laid down in 1902, this cycle has also become profoundly Classical and Section D which did not contain Latin, but continued the scientific division of the first cycle, has been abolished. As matters stand now, a new section designed to continue the study of Greek, section A, will have to be installed at the College of Thonon. This section A, Latin-Greek, existed in most large Colleges and Lycées but did not at Thonon, due to the small number of pupils that cared to take both Latin and Greek. It seems that under the new ruling provision must be made for section A.

Second class (fifth year in College, boys about 16 years old.)

Latin and Greek		Latin—living languages		Two living languages	
<i>Section A</i>	<i>hours</i>	<i>Section A-1</i>	<i>hours</i>	<i>Section B</i>	<i>hours</i>
Latin and Greek	7	Latin, French	6	2 Modern Lang.	6
French	5	Hist., Geog.	3	French	4
Hist., Geog.	3	Modern Lang.	2	Hist., Geog.	3
Modern Lang.	3	Physics, Chem.	3	Physics, Chem.	5
Mathematics	4	Design	2	Design	2
Art, Design	2	Mathematics	4	Mathematics	4
		Practical Science	2		
	<hr/> 24		<hr/> 23		<hr/> 24

First class (sixth year in College, boys a little over 17 years of age). This is the class preparing for the first part of the Baccalaureate. For those who fail, it is the end of the College course. If they pass this first part of the Baccalaureate they come back to prepare on wider lines for the second part—a sort of post-graduate course.

First class (sixth year in College, boys about 17 years old)

<i>Section A</i>	<i>hours</i>	<i>Section A-1</i>	<i>hours</i>	<i>Section B</i>	<i>hours</i>
Latin and Greek	7	Latin, French	6	No Latin or Greek	
French	3	Hist., Geog.	3	2 Modern Lang.	6
Hist., Geog.	3	Modern Lang.	2	French	4
Philosophy	3	Physics, Chem.	3	Hist., Geog.	3
Modern Lang.	3	Design	2	Physics, Chem.	5
Mathematics	4	Mathematics	4	Design	2
Art, Design	2	Science	2	Mathematics	4
	—		—		—
	25		23		24

NOTE:—I have had to make a personal estimate as to the number of hours in the case of the First and Second Classes, for the exact number of hours devoted to each was not given in the report of M. Berard's recent changes but I have had the assistance of M. Georges Quesnel, French scholarship student at the University of Delaware, and with a few minor changes in the schedule of 1902 we have made room for the additional Greek and Latin required by the Minister of Education. Our arrangement is probably very nearly correct.

CONCLUSIONS WITH REGARD TO PROGRAMS

One finds that the programs call for 22 or 23 hours of class work each week, with extremely long study periods. Thus the French boy has to do considerably more studying than American boys of the same age. The French boy gets a couple of hours off in the afternoon for exercise and has to be in bed by 8.30, but he has to work from 6 to 7 in the morning. The rest of his time is carefully supervised, with the exception of a short "gouter" in the middle of the morning, when he plays for half an hour and gets a piece of bread to eat.

Savoy is a very practical sort of department, giving much attention to mechanical problems, such as harnessing the water power from the Alps to electricity, consequently the parents do not have the reverence for the classical education that is so prevalent in other parts of France. Since the Scientific sections have been dropped from the programs of College study by the recent ministerial decree, it seems probable that parents will send their pupils to the École Primaire Supérieure instead where they will have scientific training without Latin or Greek.

During the past years there was a tendency to send pupils to the College for refining purposes, for the reputation of being college students. As the college was small there was a tendency to nurse along the weak ones, so as to keep the College numbers up, and one found classes in which the backward students did not recite at all—they simply sat there. Unlike our own system where there is an attempt at keeping a level among all, French teachers abandon the weak students to their fate and put their time on the bright ones. There tended to be, therefore, in classes a very low level and a very high level. Our own schools have been criticized in that our system of teaching seems to demand a level of mediocrity with the bright students held back, and the weak ones pushed ahead. The French system shoves ahead the bright ones as far as they can go; but the classes as a whole are cluttered up as ours are, with the mediocre. As a result of the ministerial decree of last October, issued by M. Berard, this situation is to be changed. A severe examination is to take place between the second and first Cycles, by which all the weak students are to be weeded out and the College is to be solely the place for the choicer minds. The Scholarships are to be increased in value and the brilliant but poor students are to be attracted away from the primary education into the lofty fields of the classical secondary education.

The methods of instruction are nearly like our own, although not usually so dynamic. The recitations are usually confined to three or four pupils each time, they frequently being called in front of the professor's desk where they make connected discourses, and are questioned by the professors. The method is not one of the quick question and answer, as in this country, where frequently the lively teacher manages to ask a question from each of a class of thirty or more during the period of an hour. No, the French method is less dynamic, more reflective in character. As to which method is better, that is rather difficult to determine. Personally, I think that the rapid form of questioning in the Socratic manner gives much more life to a recitation. However, the French system turns out a few students of mature, reflective minds, and this too at a surprisingly early age.

DISCIPLINE

Since the 15th of November, 1811, corporal punishment has been abolished in French schools. The absence of the rod renders other kinds of moral persuasion necessary. With French fondness for exactitude these punishments are listed in the following order. 1. A low mark for deportment on the reports. 2. The pupil kept in to do a special task during the recreation period. 3. Task assigned during the period of the long walks and outings. 4. Students sent to the Surveillant General for special disciplinary instruction—a powerful and severe lecture. 5. The student deprived of permission to go to see his parents on certain holidays. 6. Exclusion from the school for several days or definitely.

The actual application of the law is interesting. If a student is disobedient he is sent in the company of another student who carries a note to the Surveillant General. This note states the nature of the student's fault, prescribes the nature of the task to be done. The

Surveillant General attends to the rest. At Thonon the Surveillant General seems ideal for the situation. The boys all like him and yet are afraid of him. He can wear a look like the executioner at the inquisition, sufficient to frighten the most hardened and yet he can be kindness itself. He occupies room number 17 and a boy that goes to that room returns with a chastened spirit.

The Répétiteurs, young men supervisors of studies and play, also aid the Surveillant General day and night. They keep a careful list of offences, and the child's whole record is known in complete detail. The children are mischievous; almost never is there any case involving moral turpitude. Each student has a little money box beside his bed and is allowed to carry with him a few francs; yet stealing is practically unknown. The cloak-room thefts that trouble our high-schools are unknown. Professors and students will leave things of value around and no one thinks of touching them. Curiously, cheating in lessons has developed into a regular business. A French boy, I verily believe, cheats for the pleasure of getting the better of his instructor, even though he does not have to. The professors sadly admit this fault, but excuse it as being a sort of game. They have to watch their students every minute. I found that point of view distressing, but no one seemed to think much of it.

The average of discipline at the College of Thonon was below that of most of the lycées and colleges, but even at that, would compare favorably with most of our better disciplined schools of a non-military nature. If, however, one wants to see high-class discipline one should go to the Catholic schools where it is a matter of pride. The Catholics like to point to their schools as models of what the Catholic religion can do in the way of training, and to compare them with the public schools. It is a sight to see a Catholic school on promenade, with its band and flags at the head, and the boys in military formation. The Catholic buildings do not show the rough

wear and tear that the public schools show, the priestly attendants in their lay garb see to that.

The law against corporal punishment is slightly winked at in much the same way it is in our country. The little fellows who are too obstreperous are frequently placed, "sur les genoux" (on the knees) in the corner to make them think of their sins, and sometimes a boy that is too "fresh" may receive a good strong slap in a tender, but non-dangerous, part of the anatomy. The Principal of the College and the under directors may modify or increase the punishments accorded by the Répétiteurs, as they see fit, and may even in rare cases change the punishment meted out by the Surveillant General.

DEGREES OBTAINED, OTHER RESULTS

The completed product of the College is the student who has succeeded in passing both parts of his Baccalaureate. The College of Thonon seldom presents more than a dozen students. The results, however, have been gratifying. Of the number presented during recent years about 75% have passed, as contrasted with the general average for other Colleges and Lycées in Haute Savoie of about 59%. The examinations are very difficult. The requirements call for examinations both oral and in writing, and cover practically all the subjects in the courses that I have shown in the programs given on pages 22, 23 and 24 of this thesis. After passing the Baccalaureate, the way is open for the student to attend the higher institutions of learning, like the Facultés at Grenoble and Paris. Those who have specialized in Latin and Greek (Section A), more frequently become the professors and doctors, while division C (now division A-1) for young men whose training has been a shade less classical, enter business, banking and the like. The old Section D, now abolished, scientific in nature, produced

clerks, customs and R. R. employees, and in general was looked down upon as not producing men of the highest calibre.

Of those that fail to pass, some enter technical schools, for example the Hotel Schools, where they are trained for all types of hotel service. A generalization would say that two-fifths of those who drop by the way are apprenticed, one-fifth enter other schools, two-fifths return to their families.

In conclusion, one can safely say that for a College of such limited numbers, the instruction has been uniformly high, as shown by the high per cent of students who have passed their Baccalaureate Examinations.

Just how good the training is, may be judged by the fact that a boy who has passed the second part of his Baccalaureate Examination, probably at the average age of 18, is in condition to enter the Sophomore classes of our Universities in the United States. If he be unusually bright he may be fit for our Junior classes. In general he will be found to be endowed with a scholarly, precise and reflective type of mind.

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