

# Standardization of Badges

by Robert Baden-Powell

In view of a very elaborate curriculum that was recently drawn up by one authority for standardizing the test for badges, I was obliged to criticize it in the sense:

"I hope that the compilers are not losing sight the aim and spirit of the Movement by making it into a training school of efficiency through curricula marks, and standards.

"Our aim is merely to help the boys, especially the least scholarly ones, to become personally enthused in subjects that appeal to them individually, and that will be helpful to them.

"We do this through the fun and jollity of Scouting; by progressive states they can be led on naturally and unconsciously, to develop for themselves their knowledge.

"But if once we make it into a formal scheme of serious instruction for efficiency, we miss the whole point and value of the Scout training, and we trench the work of the schools without the trained experts for carrying it out.

"We have to remember that Scoutmasters are voluntary play leaders in the game of Scouting, and not qualified school teachers, and to give them a hard-and-fast syllabus is to check the ardor and their originality in dealing with their boys according to local conditions.

"I could quite imagine it frightening away many Scoutmasters of the right sort.

"The syllabus as suggested seems to go a good deal beyond what is prescribed as our dose in Scouting For Boys; and if the proportions of the ingredients in a prescriptions are not adhered to you cannot well blame the doctor if the medicine doesn't work.

"Our standard for badge earning -- as I have frequently said -- is not to attain a certain level of quality of work ( as in school ), but the AMOUNT OF EFFORT EXERCISED BY THE INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATE. This brings the most hopeless case on a footing of equal possibility with his more brilliant or better-off brother.

"We want to get them ALL along through cheery self development from within and not through the imposition of formal instruction from without."