

and convenient means of communication, there would appear to be no reason why technical schools in the larger centres of population should not, as parent schools, arrange for classes at convenient sub-centres. In any case it would seem to be desirable from many points of view for what may be termed the central technical school in a district to be closely in touch with such classes as may be established in adjacent townships. A good deal of well-meant, but, it is to be feared, wasted effort would probably be saved, and better results in other ways achieved thereby.

Over eighteen hundred junior and senior free places were held at technical schools during the year, an increase of about two hundred. The proportion of junior free pupils qualifying for senior free places, entitling them to three years' additional free education, continues to be comparatively small, the total number of senior free pupils last year being only 146. The demand on the part of free pupils for instruction in commercial subjects continues to be as marked as in previous years, nearly 60 per cent. of the pupils selecting commercial courses in preference to courses relating to industries, trades, or professions such as engineering. Day technical classes attended chiefly by free pupils who have passed thereto direct from the public school were held at several of the larger centres. The range of instruction at these classes is, generally speaking, secondary in character, and many of the subjects of instruction are such as may properly, and in many cases do, find a place in the curriculum of secondary schools. It is a question, in view of the youth of most of the pupils and of other considerations, whether the end in view would not be better attained by a preliminary course of instruction, without specialisation, at a secondary school in the case of those pupils who purpose following commercial or domestic pursuits.

The number of recognised classes in operation during the year was 5,851, as against 5,012 for the previous year. Of these classes, 4,459 were classes for instruction in various branches of handwork in connection with over a thousand primary and secondary schools, while 1,392 were technical and continuation classes for instruction in various branches of science, art, and technology. Of the latter, 791 were special classes under an Education Board or the Board of Governors of a secondary school as controlling authority; 487 were associated classes, conducted by managers representing the controlling authority, local bodies, and others contributing to the classes; while 114 were college classes under the governing body of a university college as controlling authority. Technical classes were held at over a hundred different places, an increase of nearly thirty.

Instruction in various branches of handwork is now a feature of the curriculum of most public and secondary schools. Cookery and woodwork among other subjects are now being taught in every education district. During the year 327 cookery classes and 280 woodwork classes were in operation. These classes continue in most cases to be conducted on the central system. In certain districts increasing attention is being given by controlling authorities to instruction in science on practical lines. Grants have been made by the Government for the erection and equipment of laboratories for individual practical work, with the result that a not inconsiderable number of laboratories are now available for the instruction of pupils attending district high schools and secondary schools.

Instruction in elementary agriculture was given in nearly four hundred schools during the year. In several districts this important branch of elementary education is in charge of itinerant instructors, who, in addition to supervising school gardens and experimental plots, also conduct training classes for teachers as well as classes for persons engaged in agricultural and pastoral pursuits. In three districts instruction was given in the principles and practice of dairying in addition to work in connection with school gardens. Altogether the progress made in the districts in which special attention is being given to agricultural instruction by controlling authorities cannot be regarded as other than satisfactory. Many of the classes have received valuable help in the way of voluntary contributions from local bodies, agricultural associations, and others interested in the work.