

MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.
Manual Instruction in Schools.

Instruction in various branches of elementary handwork, such as modelling, brush-drawing, free-arm and blackboard drawing, paper and cardboard work, treated sometimes as separate subjects, but more often correlated with other subjects of the syllabus, as well as in the more specialised forms of handwork, such as woodwork, cookery, and elementary agriculture, was given in about 60 per cent. of the public schools during the year. Some particulars are given below :—

TABLE I.—SUBJECTS OF AND NUMBER OF CLASSES FOR MANUAL INSTRUCTION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1908.

Subjects of Instruction.	Number of Classes.					
Elementary handwork	2,198
Drawing and design	682
Woodwork	270
Agriculture	460
Dairy-work	38
Elementary science	57
Physical measurements	94
Cookery	330
Dressmaking	72
Swimming and life-saving	103
Physiology and first aid	51
Totals	4,355

The number of public schools in which handwork was taught was .. 1,200
The number of pupils under instruction was .. 112,952
The percentage of total roll-number under instruction was .. 76·6
The payments by way of capitation, grants, and subsidies in aid of classes was .. £20,191 14s. 5d.
The average cost per pupil was .. 3s. 6·9d.

The instruction in cookery and woodwork in most districts was given at specially equipped centres, of which there are now nearly fifty.

Increasing attention continues to be given to instruction in elementary agriculture. School gardens, experimental and observation plots, and, in many cases, suitable laboratory practice, form special features of the instruction, which in several districts is supervised by special itinerant instructors. The number of classes in operation during the year was 460, an increase of 63. In addition, dairy-work was taught in three education districts, the number of classes being 38. In not a few of the schools attempts are being made to bring the curricula into closer touch with local conditions, by giving greater prominence to subjects bearing on rural life and pursuits.

Practical instruction in various branches of elementary science was given to 57 recognised classes. In this connection it may be noted that there are now about twenty well-equipped laboratories available for instruction in science in connection with primary and district high schools. In the case of several of the latter schools laboratory-work forms an important part of the course of agricultural instruction.

In schools where laboratories are not yet available, courses in elementary physical measurements such as may conveniently be carried out in ordinary class-rooms are found to afford excellent opportunities for individual practical work. Such courses were taken by about 90 classes.

As in previous years, several classes received assistance in the way of voluntary contributions in money and in kind from local bodies, agricultural associations, members of the farming community; and others. Such contributions carry a Government subsidy of £1 for £1.

Recognised classes for manual instruction were also held during the year at about twenty secondary schools. The subjects of instruction included woodwork, cookery, and various branches of science. Some particulars relating to the classes are as follows :—