

It is pleasing to be able to record a considerable increase in the number of classes in subjects related to agricultural and pastoral pursuits. In 1909 sixty classes were held at forty centres. In 1910 111 classes were held at sixty-one centres. In addition to classes for wool-sorting instruction was also given in sheep-shearing, dairying, veterinary science, agriculture, horticulture, bee-keeping, and farm carpentry.

In the past the efforts of controlling authorities to provide some opportunities for instruction in subjects bearing on rural pursuits have been attended by results of a decidedly negative character; there now appear to be signs of some response on the part of those in whose interests these efforts have been made.

Continuation classes or classes for general education have not, so far, been as widely held or as well attended as they should be. The opinion is expressed that a good deal might be accomplished in the direction of providing attractive and at the same time educative courses of general instruction at subcentres in connection with technical schools, in the larger centres especially, utilizing for this purpose the buildings used during the day for public-school purposes. Such courses to be successful should be short, and confined to the winter months. It is not improbable that a considerable number of young persons would on the termination of their public-school course be willing to attend suitable classes of the kind indicated, especially if these were held in connection with their own schools. The establishment of such classes, which are, it may be mentioned, already to be found in some districts, should have the important effect of linking more closely than is at present the case the public schools with the technical schools.

Reference has been made in previous reports to the increase every year in the proportion of students who take up definite courses of instruction involving attendance at classes on two, three, or more evenings a week. With the object of encouraging attendance at grouped courses of related subjects, and in view of the fact that classes for advanced work in art, science, and technology cost more to maintain and are usually much smaller than elementary classes, the Education Act was amended last session so as to provide for the payment of capitation at higher rates in the case of students who take up in any year a group of related subjects or who go through a graded course extending over a period of years. It is hoped that the scale of payments, ranging from 1½d. to 9d. per hour-attendance, now in operation will enable controlling authorities and managers of classes to improve and extend the arrangements already made for graded courses of instruction.

While the attendance at evening classes generally, though entirely optional, continues to be well maintained, and is in the case of a large number of students very satisfactory, the fact remains that too large a proportion of young people do not on the completion of their primary-school course proceed either to secondary or to technical schools. Further reference to this matter will be found under the heading "Secondary Education" (see page 51 of E.-1).

The problem of the further education, control, and discipline of adolescents is to-day engaging the attention of progressive nations throughout the world. As stated in last year's report, the Education (Scotland) Act of 1908 imposes on School Boards the duty of taking fuller cognizance of the period of adolescence and of making suitable provision for the further instruction of young people over fourteen years of age who are not otherwise receiving a suitable education. It is gratifying to know that many of the School Boards are realizing their responsibilities in the matter and are exerting themselves to meet as far as may be the requirement of their respective districts. It need hardly be said that they are proceeding cautiously. Every means short of compulsion is being used to foster a movement for the better use of the years of adolescence as a preparation for adult life. It is significant that the first proposals, in the shape of by-laws, for compulsory attendance at continuation classes should come from rural Boards. This, however, must not be taken as an indication that the urban Boards as a whole are inactive. On the contrary, several of them, notably the School Boards of Edinburgh and Glasgow, are showing an ever-increasing interest in the matter. They prefer, however, to exhaust all other available means before applying compulsion. Conferences with employers and employed have been widely held, while a large amount of what may be termed missionary work has been accomplished. Searching inquiries have also been instituted with the view of ascertaining how far young people are profiting by