

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

(See also E. 5, Report on Technical Education.)

GENERAL.

The steady growth of the interest taken by the youth of the Dominion in technical instruction appears to be shown by the increased attendance of students at the technical schools. In 1916 the returns showed a falling-off in the number receiving instruction at classes other than classes at technical high schools, but the normal increase appears to have been maintained during 1917. This is most gratifying, in view of the fact that the majority of the students voluntarily attend school after a day's hard work—many of them to satisfy a strong desire for a knowledge of the principles underlying their trade, to which end they are prepared to sacrifice both rest and recreation. The time is past for questioning the value to the State of a large body of intelligent, well-trained craftsmen, but the question of when this training should be given appears to be a long way from being settled. Generally speaking, on the one hand a strong opinion prevails that it should be given in the employee's time; on the other hand, the opinion is voiced that if in the acquisition of skill that is to benefit the State a sacrifice is demanded, then the sacrifice should be made not wholly by the employee, but should be equally shared by employer and employee. The total number of students receiving instruction at all schools and classes was 20,747, an increase of 1,056 on the previous year. Taking all things into consideration, this total cannot be regarded other than as very satisfactory. Of the total number of students in attendance at all schools and classes, 7,842 were holders of free places or holders of local scholarships—an increase of 268. The practical interest taken by local bodies, industrial organizations, and others shows a slight abatement, but this, in the face of the abnormal demands that have been made on the pockets of the community, is to be expected. The contributions in money from the above sources, and on which Government subsidy of £1 for £1 was paid, amounted to £2,959 for the year, a decrease of £1,241 as compared with the previous year.

CLASSES OTHER THAN CLASSES AT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS.

Classes were held in 154 centres, three more than last year. The number of classes and the number of individual students in attendance were as follows :—

Description of Class.	Number of Classes.		Number of Students.	
	1916.	1917.	1916.	1917.
Conducted by Education or High School Boards ..	1,058	1,107	10,169	10,619
Conducted by Technical School Boards or by Managers ..	678	675	6,699	7,070
Conducted by University Colleges .. .. .	179	180	718	711
Totals .. .. .	1,915	1,962	17,586	18,400

The following are some particulars of the age, sex, and occupations of students :—

	Seventeen Years of Age and under.		Over Seventeen Years of Age.		Totals.	
	1916.	1917.	1916.	1917.	1916.	1917.
Males .. .. .	4,620	4,673	3,991	3,996	8,611	8,669
Females .. .. .	4,007	4,106	4,968	5,625	8,975	9,731
Totals .. .. .	8,627	8,779	8,959	9,621	17,586	18,400