

was expressed at the fact that greater interest was being taken in the beautifying and improving of school-grounds, and it is pleasing to report that this awakened interest is being well maintained. Unfortunately, in some cases the dearth of labour prevented more being done in this direction. That the facilities afforded by the Department in the way of securing assistance by way of subsidies on contributions are becoming more widely availed of is evidenced by the fact that during the year contributions towards improvements to school gardens and grounds were received to the amount of £619. There are still however, it must be admitted, too many schools in which little or nothing has been done in the way of improving the surroundings and rendering them attractive to the children who have to spend so much of their time there. In the hands of the enthusiastic teacher backed up by an energetic Committee there is no reason why the school-grounds should not become the show place of the district. That they can become such we know already from splendid examples, but their number, alas, is all too small. Once again the Board has to express its indebtedness to the local manure-merchants for liberal donations of fertilizer for distribution amongst schools receiving instruction in agriculture. Ever since the first appointment of an agricultural instructor the Board has had the services of such instructor for only four days per week for primary-school classes. It is becoming more and more evident, however, that to maintain efficient supervision over the work being carried on throughout such a scattered district it is essential that the full time of the instructor should be devoted to this work; but as practically all eligible schools have already included this subject in their curricula, and only with difficulty can the present expenditure in this connection be met out of the capitation earned, it is clear that to meet the increased outlay that would be entailed by employing a full-time instructor the capitation upon which the income from the classes depends must be materially increased, or in lieu thereof a special grant should be received sufficient to cover all reasonable expenditure.

*Physical Measurements.*—Classes in this subject were conducted at nine schools, the average attendance being altogether 324.

*Swimming and Life-saving.*—In only one school did a class in this subject complete its course. Other classes commenced but were unable to complete because of adverse weather conditions. In this connection, as far as town schools are concerned, the lack of baths of any description where swimming can be indulged in is a serious drawback. Were such facilities available town and suburban schools at least would be independent of the weather, and practically every boy and girl would be only too eager to become proficient in an art that has so much to commend it.

The following table shows the number of schools at which classes were held in the various subjects, together with the average attendance for each :—

Subjects.	Number of Schools.	Average Attendance.
Agriculture .. .. .	109	1,538
Woodwork .. .. .	74	992
Cookery .. .. .	74	940
Handwork .. .. .	175	9,233
Advanced needlework .. .. .	43	794
Standard needlework (special instructors) .. .. .	13	118
Physical measurements .. .. .	9	324
Swimming and life-saving .. .. .	1	15