

classes are held in general subjects up to about the Matriculation standard. In most cases the pupils consist of those who have had either a complete course at a high school and who have sat for Matriculation and completely or partially failed, or those who have withdrawn from school to go into industry before completing their secondary courses. The diversity of aim and difference of standard among the pupils of such classes makes effective teaching very difficult, and it is much to be doubted if in many cases the results obtained are commensurate with the time and effort involved.

For pupils holding junior free places compulsory English and arithmetic classes are provided. In very few cases is effective work being done. Too often the old methods which have produced nothing but distaste for such studies are exclusively employed, and the pupils are confronted with studies in formal grammar and commercial arithmetic such as they had probably hoped to have left behind for ever. It is not sufficiently realized that in leaving the primary school and going out into the world as wage-earners the pupils in our evening schools have jumped quite suddenly out of childhood into adolescence. They need special treatment, sympathetic teachers, and a rich and broad curriculum adapted to their special needs. Without these provisions positive harm is in many cases being done, and I am strongly of the opinion that it would be better to forego such compulsory subjects altogether than to have them treated in a non-liberal spirit. The crux of the whole matter, of course, is to be found in the personality of the teachers employed for this work.

Domestic arts, such as dressmaking, stitchery, and millinery, remain, as before, very popular subjects, and the excellent instruction given in many classes throughout the length and breadth of the Dominion must be having a very positive effect for good in the lives of the rising generation.

It is to be regretted, however, that cooking as a subject for adults in evening classes is on the whole poorly supported. There is now an excellent supply of well-trained teachers and well-equipped kitchens, but advantage is not taken of the facilities available to anything like the same extent as is done in the case of, say, dressmaking.

Manual Training.—This work has been carried on with considerable vigour and enthusiasm, and everywhere attempts are being made to get the greatest possible educational return from the time that is being spent at these occupations. It is being more and more realized that full educational advantage can only be obtained when the work is closely correlated with the ordinary school-work of the child with his special needs as a pre-adolescent or adolescent, as the case may be. It is becoming a usual rather than an exceptional thing for the manual-training teacher and the class-teacher to come together for the discussion of problems involved in correlation and subdivision of the necessary preliminary work. At these discussions the special traits of individual pupils are also reviewed, and much good has resulted therefrom. In some cases models have been made illustrating the class-work—say, geography, arithmetic, science, and agriculture—whilst in others toys and small pieces of apparatus for use in infant-rooms have been constructed and have proved to be very useful. Into certain centres equipped primarily for woodwork a certain equipment of simple metal-working tools has been introduced so that models and objects requiring the use of metals such as tinplate or sheet brass as well as wood may be used. This gives an added power to the pupil, and has been responsible for stimulating interest and industry to a marked degree in those centres where the practice has been adopted. There are two manual-training centres equipped primarily for metal-work—one in Auckland and one at Westport—and, while some good results have been obtained at both of these centres, experience goes to show that, at any rate for little boys, wood is the more suitable material for the earlier constructions.

It can be said that in almost every case the greatest care is taken of the equipment provided so as to keep it in the best condition for use. Many instructors spend much out-of-school time in repairing, sharpening, and making tools, models, and appliances for the better teaching of their pupils. During the year a comprehensive system of examination for teachers of handicraft was discussed by the Department and authorities and teachers concerned, and finally approved. This course has been rendered necessary by a change in the programme of the City and Guilds of London Institute, which had hitherto conducted such examinations and granted universally recognized certificates for teachers of handicraft, whereby the necessary conditions could no longer be fulfilled by candidates resident in New Zealand.

The scheme which has been adopted and which will be put into operation immediately provides for organized courses of study and examinations over a period of three years, covering not only the actual craft to be taught, but ensuring at the same time a good standard of general education in related and cultural subjects and the general theory of education. It is confidently expected that by this means teachers of handicraft well equipped for their special work and having also a sympathetic understanding of the whole range of the work of the schools will become available in greater numbers as time goes on. In this way their professional status will be raised and a further step taken in securing unity of purpose in the teaching in primary and post-primary schools.

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