As regards what may be termed the more specialised forms of handwork—namely, cookery, woodwork, dressmaking, swimming, and elementary agriculture, we have to report that satisfactory progress continues to be made in the various education districts in connection with arrangements for the establishment of classes for instruction in these subjects. In the case of cookery and woodwork, the initial cost of providing the necessary accommodation and equipment has compelled controlling authorities to adopt the central system, whereby classes from several schools are enabled to receive instruction at a conveniently placed centre. While this system has much to commend it, it has its drawbacks, not the least of which are — (1) a tendency to dissociate the work of the class from the general work of the school, and (2) the time lost by classes in getting to the centre, and the consequent disturbance of the school arrangements. The first drawback can be got rid of to a large extent by having the classes taught by instructors who are either on the regular staff of the school or who have themselves been school-teachers. There seems to be no reason why this drawback should not in time disappear almost entirely. As regards the second, it is not so easy to suggest a remedy. Up to the present, in spite of the attendant difficulties, a number of schools in the vicinity of centres have managed to arrange matters so that the upper standards have been able to take advantage of the instruction provided thereat. The difficulties to be met and overcome are surely outweighed by the resulting benefit to the pupils.

The true place of woodwork in relation to the public-school curriculum appears to have been realised by most of the instructors. In some cases, however, the work at the bench is not so closely connected with the drawings as it might be. Not only should the bench-work be carried out directly from the pupils' own drawings, but the completed exercises and models should themselves be utilised wherever possible as objects from which pupils may be taught how to make freehand dimensioned sketches, and isometric and pictorial views. During the year 129 woodwork classes were recognised in connection with fifteen centres and schools, as against 100 classes and eleven centres and schools during the previous year.

There has been a corresponding increase in the number of cookery classes, 156 classes having been recognised in connection with fourteen centres or schools. The numbers for 1903 were 131 and eleven respectively. As regards the character of the instruction, it may be said that there is evidence that more attention is being given to instruction in the principles of cookery, though there is still room for considerable improvement in this respect. Pupils are too often taught how to prepare this or that dish without being also taught the reasons for the various operations involved in its preparation No doubt the various methods of preparing food, the economics of cookery, marketing, the use and care of the range, &c., have their proper place in a course of cookery, but a cookery course that treats only of such matters fails as a factor in the all-round education of the child, inasmuch as it does not give sufficient scope for the training of habits of observation and clear reasoning. If an instructor once realises that the school kitchen is something more than a kitchen, that it is a laboratory in which certain investigations and experiments with the view of testing a recipe or demonstrating a principle may be carried out, it is tolerably certain that the pupils of her class will benefit accordingly, even if they cannot at the end of the course emulate their elders in the preparation of what are called dainty dishes. Classes for instruction in elementary agriculture have practically been confined to two or three education districts. We hope next year to be able to report a considerable increase in the number both of districts and of schools in which this important subject is being taught. There are indications that an effort is to be made, in some districts at least, to provide suitable preparatory courses for teachers. One of the chief hindrances of the present time to the establishment of classes on this subject is the almost total absence in the past of opportunities for teachers to obtain the necessary training. It may be mentioned here that it is doubtful whether a teacher who has not been trained to observe, and who has not been trained in scientific method, is likely to benefit to the fullest extent from a course of instruction in rural science. In the circumstances such a course must necessarily be all too short—too short, that is, from the point of view of the training of the untrained teacher. For after all it is method, not matter, that is all-important, and a knowledge of method cannot be acquired in a few lessons. It seems, then, that the best that can be hoped for now is to provide for practical instruction in rural science in schools where there are teachers who have been trained, or who by virtue of a natural bent have trained themselves, not only to observe, but also to draw proper conclusions from their observations. At the same time opportunities should be provided whereby the younger teachers would receive the necessary training to enable them to take up the subject in the schools. In such a colony as ours, where pastoral and agricultural pursuits must always take a pre-eminent position, it is imperative that there should be afforded opportunities in our rural schools for the systematic study, as far as may be, of the subjects that relate to those pursuits. At the same time it seems necessary to emphasize the fact that a knowledge of rural science alone will not tend to keep the country-born in the country. An all-round education is just as necessary, if not more so, for the would-be farmer as for the town-bred lad. Agriculture is as much a business as a science. The person who is not a good business man is not likely to become a good farmer, however much he may know of science. The farmer, to be successful, must know not only how to grow, but how to sell. On these grounds it would appear that the chief purpose of the curriculum of primary schools, district high schools, and secondary schools in country districts should be (1) to give a general education, including a training in habits of observation, so that pupils may have an intelligent acquaintance with some of the facts and laws of nature; and also (2) to foster the natural activities of hand and eye. Such a curriculum is contemplated in the various regulations issued under the Education Act. Its full development, with such adjustments as experience may dictate, must necessarily be a matter of time and opportunity.

Of the remaining branches of handwork, the only one that calls for special comment is dressmaking. This subject is being taken up in an increasing number of schools, and is, generally speaking, well taught. In some cases, however, especially where the instructor is not, or has not been, a