

The regulations at present in force require a junior technical scholar to make during the year a minimum of twenty hour-attendances in each subject taken up in order to qualify for capitation. Though this does not appear to impose any great hardship on students availing themselves of free technical education, yet it is a regrettable fact that quite a large number of scholars have failed to comply with the regulations. By this action they have imposed considerable hardship on controlling authorities who, while providing for the instruction during the time the scholars chose to attend, have through no fault of their own been unable to claim the extra capitation on account of the instruction given to these scholars. The steps that have, we understand, been taken by the controlling authorities concerned to guard themselves against such loss in future will, it is hoped, prove effective in putting a stop to what is really a breach of faith on the part of pupils taking advantage of free technical education. There are indications that in at least one education district steps will shortly be taken to provide for the instruction during the day of pupils who have left school and are eligible to hold junior technical scholarships. The experiment will be watched with much interest.

There is little evidence as yet of any definite movement on the part of controlling authorities and others interested in the matter to arrange for classes in country districts for instruction in subjects having a direct bearing on agricultural and pastoral pursuits. The returns in respect of classes established in country districts show that the subjects most commonly taken up are those relating to commercial pursuits. Commercial subjects have their place, no doubt, in a scheme of technical instruction suited to country districts, but they certainly require to be supplemented by subjects having more direct bearing on rural occupations. It is to be hoped that the instruction that is now being given in primary schools in certain districts in elementary agriculture will lead presently to a demand on the part of the pupils for instruction of a more advanced and specialised character after leaving school. The character of such instruction would, of course, be determined by the nature of the staple industries of the various districts. It is not too much to expect that local bodies in country districts will before long follow the example of the local bodies in some of the larger centres, and co-operate with controlling authorities in arranging for instruction that must directly benefit the communities of which they form a part. It is suggested that the establishment of classes for instruction in subjects bearing on rural pursuits might well mean the presence in the district concerned of an expert whose help and advice, apart from the instruction he would give in connection with the classes, should prove of no small value to the farmers in the neighbourhood.

The art classes in the colony continue on the whole to do good work. There is, however, room for improvement in the case of certain of the classes in the direction of substituting more modern methods of instruction for those now in use. There is also a need for greater prominence and more facilities to be given to instruction in the various branches of applied art.

It seems necessary again to call attention to the desirability of making the instruction in connection with adult cookery classes more truly technical. The instruction is too often confined almost entirely to the preparation of dishes. We should like to see such instruction supplemented by instruction in principles, and by suitable experiments and investigations on the part of the students. We are aware that in the case of many cookery classes the circumstances are such as to render it difficult to introduce much, if any, of the kind of work indicated, but at the same time it must be here stated that classes that exist solely for the purpose of teaching how to cook are not, strictly speaking, classes for technical instruction within the meaning of the Education Act.

There has been, especially in the larger centres, a considerable extension in the direction of instruction in electrical and mechanical engineering, in plumbing, and to a less extent in the various branches of physics, and in chemistry.

Special classes for the training of public-school teachers in drawing, and in subjects of hand-work presented for school classes have been held during the year in each of the education districts. In this connection we would suggest that Education Boards should consider the advisability of making some provision for the training of teachers (and especially the younger teachers in country schools) in subjects connected with rural life and occupation. The annual grants made to Education Boards since 1901 for the maintenance of training classes for teachers have hitherto been expended on courses that have not, except in a few cases, included instruction in the subjects mentioned. There would therefore appear to be good reason for making a change in the direction we have suggested.

The number of recognised technical continuation and art classes, and the average attendance at each, are given in the table on pages 3 and 4.

The art and science examinations of the Board of Education, South Kensington, and the technological examinations of the City and Guilds of London Institute were conducted as usual by the Department. The results, which are given in the tables on pages 7 and 8, may be summarised as follows: Of 437 candidates who sat for the art and science examinations, 295 passed; 41 students' works were sent Home for examination in connection with art certificates, and of these 16 were accepted by the examiners—a book prize was also gained by a Napier student; 336 candidates sat for the examinations of the Institute, of whom 261 passed. At the Institute examinations for teachers in cookery and woodwork, 102 teachers passed in cookery and 87 in woodwork. The art and science examinations were held at twelve centres, and the technological examinations at nine. The following extract from the annual report of the Institute is of interest: "The number of separate subjects in which the candidates are examined in the colonies increases from year to year, and likewise the number of centres from which the candidates are drawn. Some of the papers sent from New Zealand to England for examination, particularly those in plumbing, were of a high order of excellence. The percentage of failures in New Zealand is less than in the Mother-country, although a smaller proportion of the colonial candidates qualify in the honours grade."

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