

destined to train the architects and builders of the future. During the year under review the building trade has been, for obvious reasons, practically confined to works of absolute necessity, and a corresponding diminution in the number of workers has had its effect upon the classes. As a corollary a conspicuous feature at most classes connected with the building trades is the absence of the more mature students—journeymen who, anxious to improve their knowledge and ability, were prepared after a day's laborious work to tackle abstruse problems in, say, staircasing, and produce by hand fine examples of the joiner's craft, far removed both in design and execution from the ordinary bench-work engaged in during the day. The young craftsmen are, however, present, and the type of instruction offered in both the theory and practice of the carpenters' and joiners' art and craft appears calculated to have a good effect on both the design and construction of buildings. In view of an award by which attendance of apprentices at approved classes carried with it an increase of wages, a large increase in the number of attendances in some districts may have been expected, but probably the disturbed conditions and social unrest caused by the war make concentration of purpose and effort difficult, and the demands of other and less exacting interests receive undue attention. A corresponding decrease in the number of attendances at classes dealing with the principles and practice of architecture is also shown; but the character of the work, although carried on under somewhat depressing conditions, does not appear to have been affected. Viewed as a whole the work of the year in architecture, building-construction, carpentry, and related subjects has many encouraging features, and good results have been achieved. With the return of normal times it may be expected that the training in building subjects will be brought more completely into line with other branches of technical and vocational training, and the importance of it to the individual and to the State be recognized by increased attendances. The increased attention given to the theory and practice of cabinet-making is encouraging, and the increasing demand for cabinet work in the home of a better type than the usual stock work will no doubt react favourably on the attendances and work of the classes.

Some excellent examples of carpentry and cabinet work have been constructed at classes attended by amateurs, and any form of instruction intended to lead to a more profitable use of the leisure hour, such as creative work in furniture-making for the use and adornment of the home, must, it is considered, produce good results.

In connection with the trade classes under review it is noted that no attempt appears to have been made to provide instruction in upholstery, a subject which might with advantage find a place in the syllabus of the larger technical schools, and open the way to employment for those unfitted physically for trades demanding a strong physique.

It is to be regretted that the number of students in attendance at classes in the principles and practice of plumbing continues to decrease, owing to the war and other causes. In the larger centres a few years ago these classes were, speaking generally, among the best attended, the number of students in attendance ranging from fifty to a hundred, with a large proportion of advanced students engaged in carrying out intricate examples of lead-beating and pipe-jointing, and it was quite a common thing to find students attending for four and five consecutive years. This, however, has been changed, and if, as an instructor asserted, "the stimulus to attendance has been removed," it is to be hoped that something will be done at an early date to revivify interest in one of the most important branches of the building trade.

The increasing demand for clerical assistance has had its effect on most of the classes related to business life, and for the most part the courses of instruction are designed to fit the students to occupy junior positions in offices, and in the more advanced classes to qualify them for the higher positions of accountants and book-keepers. Speaking generally the whole of the teaching is in the hands of capable instructors having more than book knowledge of their subjects. Many of the instructors in evening classes occupy important positions in large business concerns, and, as may be expected, the training offered is soundly practical, and the knowledge to be gained available for immediate use. Improvements are noted in the instruction at some of the smaller centres, and an attempt made to bring the methods of instruction into line with those obtaining at the larger schools. A suggestion as to the value of the "touch system" of typewriting made in a previous report appears to have borne fruit, and an endeavour has been made to carry it out. It must, however, be acknowledged that the limited time available for practice at the typewriter in the case of many evening classes, and the limited supply of machines, renders sound and systematic instruction in typewriting a difficult problem; but an effort is made to increase the efficiency of the instruction, and this is to be commended.

The interest in classes dealing with subjects related to home life and work appears to be unabated. For the most part the classes in dressmaking and millinery attract a large number of pupils, particularly in the country centres, who learn to make articles of wearing apparel they would probably have to do without if they were wholly dependent upon the professional dress-maker. Without exception the instruction appears to be in capable hands. At some of the centres there is a slight falling-off in the number attending, largely due to the fact that many of those who would be likely to join the classes have already passed through a course of instruction in cookery and dressmaking at primary or secondary schools.

It is a fact worthy of remark that, so far as can be discovered, only one male student has since the inception of technical classes in cookery attended for instruction, and this in an island community with large shipping interests, employing a fairly large staff of men cooks and assistants, also a large number of hotels and other establishments requiring similar service; and the question arises whether or not an attempt has been made to provide a course of instruction for these branches of domestic duty. Surely the vocational training of boys and men for these not unimportant services is worthy of consideration.