that underlie the practice is receiving greater attention than heretofore. Practical work is important, but it should ever be subordinated to the purpose of a technical school, which is not to teach trades, but rather to give instruction in principles together with such practical instruction as is necessary to illustrate those principles. Thus it should be possible to carry out a thoroughly good technical course in mechanical engineering—one of the subjects that is likely in the near future to occupy a prominent place in the curriculum of certain of the larger technical schools—without including in the equipment heavy or complex machine tools, or types of the latest kinds of labour-saving machines. No doubt a knowledge of such appliances would not be without benefit to the students; but is it primarily the function of a technical school to provide opportunities for obtaining such knowledge? The equipment should first of all consist of a selection of a sufficient number of the best types of machine tools suitable for carrying out such work as the limited time at the disposal of the students for workshop practice would allow of. With such an equipment, and an expert demonstrator, it should be possible for students to gain such an insight into principles and methods at first hand as could not fail to be other than of benefit to them in their daily work in the engineering workshop or factory.

During the year 568 technical and continuation classes, with an average attendance of 6,433 students, were recognised under the Act. The corresponding numbers for 1902 were 390 and 6,100 respectively. The number of classes at the various centres and the average attendance at each class are given in the table on pages 2 and 3. An examination of this table shows that the subjects most generally taken up were drawing, modelling, painting, woodwork, cookery, dressmaking, plumbing, and commercial subjects. Good work on the whole has been done by the art classes, but the number of students taking up art seriously still remains small compared with the numbers of students whose aim is merely to get some knowledge of this or that branch without reference to a graduated course of study. It is not easy to see how this is to be altogether avoided when it is remembered that circumstances do not at present admit of anything like compulsory attendance being thought of. Attempts are being made with, in general, encouraging results, to institute, when opportunity offers, courses of instruction in applied art. We hope to see still greater prominence given, as time goes on, to instruction in art as applied to industries, the importance of such instruction being more and more recognised every day.

There continues to be a demand for classes for instruction in plumbing, due largely to the regulations now in force in many parts of the colony regarding the licensing of plumbers. The work, generally, may be described as good; in some cases, especially at one or two of the smaller centres, really excellent results have been obtained. The principle of obliging those wishing to undertake sanitary work to show evidence of having received a satisfactory preliminary training in the theory and practice of the subject cannot but have a beneficial effect on the character of plumbing and sanitary work generally. The extension of this principle in other directions is recommended for the careful consideration of local authorities, in whose power it lies to take the necessary steps.

There appears to be a very general demand for classes for instruction in commercial subjects, and, while a large number of the existing classes are of the nature of continuation classes, that is to say, classes that only provide for instruction in specific subjects such as shorthand, typewriting, and book-keeping, it is encouraging to note that the number of classes providing for courses of commercial instruction, and ranking, therefore, as technical classes, is increasing. There appears to be a tendency to attach undue importance to shorthand and typewriting in connection with courses of commercial instruction, with the result that too little attention is given to what should form the most important feature of the work. The subjects named, especially the latter, belong to what may be described as the mechanics of commercial work, and as such they no doubt have their proper place in a scheme of commercial instruction. The work in connection with a scheme devised for those preparing for general clerical work should, it is considered, be directed chiefly to instruction in English composition and arithmetic, on lines suited to the end in view. With this as a basis, instruction in general business methods, commercial technology, shorthand, and typewriting would follow as a matter of course; but such instruction should be kept subservient to the main object of the course, which should be to prepare students for commercial work rather than to render them, more or less, proficient in certain of the operations incident to such work. There are, no doubt, many real difficulties to be surmounted in connection with the establishment of courses of commercial instruction on right lines, not the least of which is the indifference of those for whom the courses are intended, many of whom desire nothing beyond a bare knowledge of shorthand and typewriting sufficient to enable them to obtain employment of a sort. The adoption by employers of rules similar to those now obtaining in many places in connection with plumbing and sanitary work would, we think, do much to strengthen the hands of local authorities in charge of technical instruction, and to raise the standard of attainments of those engaged in clerical work.

Classes in the various branches of domestic economy have been established in an increasing number of centres; cooking and dressmaking being the subjects most in demand. The instruction generally has been on good lines, and the classes have been well attended. With regard to cookery it seems necessary to emphasize the desirability of devoting more attention to a proper understanding of the principles that underlie the various operations incident to the culinary art. Instruction in cookery, if it is to be regarded as technical instruction in the full sense of the term, should include something more than the preparation of this or that dish in accordance with accepted recipes or instructions. May not the kitchen from the point of view of technical instruction be regarded as a laboratory adapted to a special purpose, and might not therefore some of the work at any rate be of an experimental nature? Would it be a waste of time and material if, for example, a given recipe were occasionally analysed, say, by omitting altogether, or altering the proportions of, one or more of the more important ingredients? By this means something could be done in the way of ascertaining the reasons for the presence and the amounts of the several ingredients, and, *inter alia*, of learning something of their properties. Surely more benefit to the students would result from such work as this, than from merely preparing dishes without reference to the principles on which the recipes or instructions are based. Dressmaking