

There are, however, indications of a movement in various quarters in the direction of providing opportunities for further study for those who intend to follow rural pursuits. There would appear to be no reason why suitable courses in continuation of the district high school course should not be provided at the rural secondary schools. In any case the number of students offering would probably not be sufficient to warrant the establishment of a special type of school, even if such a course were desirable.

One very interesting feature of the rural course is the excellent practical course in woodwork provided in some cases. All the exercises have a more or less direct relation to farm buildings and implements, and things in daily use on the farm. In one district a course in metal-work is also taken. The utility and practical value of these courses are beyond question. It is hoped that as opportunities permit instruction in metal-work will become more general, as a knowledge of it and of its practical application is perhaps of even more value on a farm than skill in the use of woodworking tools.

The number of recognized public-school classes receiving instruction in elementary physical measurements was 122, as against 118 for the previous year. It is gratifying to note that teachers generally are no longer attempting to carry out each year a large number of experiments covering a wide field. The result is less ambitious but more thorough work. The conditions under which the instruction in most cases is given may not be ideal, nor the apparatus used all that could be desired; nevertheless, a good deal of systematic practical work has been accomplished. We should, however, like to see a closer connection between the work of the senior classes in woodwork and the classes in physical measurements. It should, it is thought, be possible for some of the more elementary apparatus to be made by pupils as part of the course in woodwork. The educative value of such exercises is obvious; pupils would obtain a much clearer insight into the meaning and nature of apparatus made by them than can be gathered from seeing and using the more elaborate and better-finished apparatus figured in the catalogues of scientific-instrument makers. It may be mentioned that some suggestive exercises on the making of apparatus are to be found in Bailey and Pollitt's little book on woodwork published by Murray.

There has been a considerable increase in the number of recognized classes for instruction in various branches of natural and physical science in connection with the secondary schools and the secondary departments of district high schools, most of which are now provided with well-equipped laboratories.

Some particulars relating to manual instruction in primary and secondary schools will be found in Tables J1 to J6 inclusive, on pages 15 to 18.

B. TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

Details of the work of the various technical schools and classes for the year 1911 will be found in the reports of the controlling authorities or of the managers, as the case may be, in the appendix to this report. Various particulars relating to technical instruction are given in Tables J7 to J18 inclusive, on pages 19 to 32. The following remarks have reference chiefly to the more important branches of art, science, and technology in which instruction is provided in the technical schools of the Dominion.

Art.—Marked improvements are noticeable in the majority of the classes for pure and applied art. The average quality of the general work must be regarded as encouraging. A pleasing feature is an increase in the number of students taking properly graded courses of instruction, and a corresponding decrease in the number of students whose sole aim is to learn this or that branch of art without going through the preliminary elementary stages. Speaking generally, more attention is being given to drawing, with the result that the draughtsmanship is stronger and more intelligent. Tone studies, particularly in the still-life classes, have latterly shown a falling-off: it is therefore gratifying to be able to report an improvement in the colour-work generally. Many of the studies reveal a better understanding on the part of the student of the medium in which he is working. Quite a number of students who have attended the day classes in art for three or four years give evidence of the possession of a good deal of artistic ability. The methods of instruction followed in the case of some of the classes for wood-carving and so-called metal-work cannot be regarded as altogether satisfactory. The practice in too many cases is for the instructor to prepare the designs, which are then transferred by the pupils to the wood or metal, as the case may be. While a certain amount of the rough carving or beating is done by the pupils, most of the finishing touches reveal the hand of the instructor. At the end of the course the pupil is the proud possessor of one or more pieces of "art furniture" or repoussé work, and that is all. Classes conducted on these lines may serve a useful purpose, but they are certainly not classes for "technical instruction" as defined in the Education Act. It is to be hoped that the low rate of capitation prescribed for classes in which the instruction is not based upon studies and designs made by the pupils themselves and applied and carried out by the pupils themselves will have the desired effect. Students without the necessary knowledge of drawing, modelling, and design should be allowed to attend classes for practical wood-carving and metal-work only on the condition that they also attend classes for one or more of the first-named subjects.

Building Trades.—Classes for building-construction and drawing, architecture, &c., are on the whole fairly well attended, and the character and standard of work generally are satisfactory. The graduated scale of payments introduced in 1911 appears to have had the effect of increasing the number of students taking two or more related subjects. While the instruction in drawing leaves little to be desired, it should be borne in mind that drawing is a means to an end and not the end itself. An intelligent knowledge of the thing drawn is of more importance to the student than the drawing of it; hence the course in drawing should embrace all matters directly connected with the building and its construction. The importance of freehand sketching of details from the student's own measure-