

The conditions under which the science subjects of the rural course are taught are far from ideal, and will never be otherwise until a well trained and enthusiastic science teacher on the staff is in charge of the course at every school in which it is taken. There is consolation, however, to be taken from the fact that in most cases science is systematically taught, and if “the special purpose which science serves is the inculcation of principles and balance, not facts,” the utility of the instruction lies not in how much scientific knowledge of farming, botany, chemistry, biology, &c., has been imparted by the teacher, but in the mental discipline, quickened observational powers, and the stimulus to persistent effort the course has provided.

It is to be expected that as normal conditions return an increase will take place in the number of classes in elementary science, instead of a slight decrease as is shown by the returns for 1918. The number of approved classes for swimming and life-saving shows a slight decrease for the year, due to the prevalence of the epidemic at the time that the classes would under normal conditions have commenced.

Capitation earnings by Education Boards for the year amounted to £41,906, as compared with £39,538 for 1917, while grants amounting to £3,596 in aid of buildings and equipment were received. The total receipts (including transfers from other accounts) of Education Boards in respect of manual instruction amounted to £53,164, and the total payments (including transfers to other accounts) to £62,009. The monetary assets of the Boards at the 31st December, 1918, were £12,027, and these exceeded the liabilities by £5,639.

The following table gives some particulars of the payments by Education Boards in respect of certain branches of manual instruction :—

Subjects.	Number of Schools.	Payments.		
		Salaries of Instructors.	Working- expenses.	Totals.
		£	£	£
Woodwork and ironwork	494	9,163	2,475	11,638
Domestic subjects	500	7,558	4,078	11,636
Agriculture and dairy science ..	1,390	7,187	3,688	10,875
Elementary science	133	230	178	408
Swimming and life-saving	134	628	264	892
Elementary handwork and needlework	2,135	1,608	7,213	8,821
Totals	..	26,374	17,896	44,270

STAFFS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The number of teachers employed in the primary departments of public schools in 1918 was 5,464, including 4,818 adult teachers and 646 pupil-teachers, the corresponding figures for the previous year being 4,707 and 649 respectively. The increase in numbers took place entirely in the female staff, the number of male adult teachers being seventeen less than in 1917 and the number of male pupil-teachers nine less. Of the adult teachers, 1,323 were sole teachers, 934 were head teachers, and 2,561 were assistant teachers. Classified according to sex, there were 1,366 males and 3,452 females among the adult teachers, and 123 male and 523 female pupil-teachers. In addition to the staff of adult teachers and pupil-teachers, 378 probationers (including 48 males and 330 females) were employed, the number being 32 less than in the preceding year.

The number of primary-school teachers (including training-college students) who left the teaching service to take up military duty was about 900. Of this number 155 have given their lives for their country. Although some returning teachers are not again taking up the work of teaching, a large number are resuming their profession. The names of all teachers who joined the Expeditionary Forces may be found in Appendix B of E.—1.