

apathy of Education Boards. The truth is that the Education Boards would welcome and foster any demand for instruction, especially in agricultural and domestic subjects, and the Department is prepared to recognize classes of reasonable size and to provide the necessary facilities, but there is no widespread demand for such instruction at the present time.

It is to be remembered that in country districts where it would be possible for evening classes of a reasonable size to exist there are always post-primary day schools, which are attended by an increasingly large proportion of the children. These schools usually provide courses in domestic subjects for girls, and in rural science for both girls and boys, and in woodwork and cognate subjects for boys. Boys and girls leave school with a better grounding in elementary science, and are able to make better use of special publications relating to agriculture and home arts, than if they had not attended secondary classes. They are also better able to profit by the advice of the district officers of the Agricultural Department. It may also be that the demand for evening classes in dressmaking and millinery is affected by changing fashions in dress, and the demand for classes in cookery and housewifery by the changing conditions of housework and the supply and preparation of food. The pre-war pupil in dressmaking and millinery came to class because the dress of that time demanded greater technical skill and more elaborate methods of working than present fashions require. Similarly, the preparation of foods is increasingly done in the factory, and the domestic worker is therefore relieved of the necessity for a long training in a large number of branches. Also, the facilities now available for cooking by gas or by electricity, and for cleaning and housekeeping, are much superior to those of pre-war days, and the difficulties of the housewife are correspondingly reduced. On the whole, it would appear that the diminishing demand for evening instruction in domestic subjects is mainly due, on the one hand, to the girls getting more training at day schools, and, on the other, to the fact that the housewife finds it possible to get along with less skill and knowledge of practical methods than she formerly required.

Though these appear to be the chief causes of the diminution of interest in evening classes in domestic subjects, there are no doubt other local or general sociological factors entering into the question and making it difficult to determine to what extent it would be in the interests of the girls themselves, and through them of the people as a whole, to make any special efforts to foster the growth of such evening classes. Probably the best solution of the problem is to be found in a reorganization of the post-primary education system, with the transfer of pupils at an earlier age to the post-primary school, where the tuition in domestic subjects may be taken as an integral part of the teaching provided on the premises, and be carried on as a continuous and progressive course throughout the whole school life of the girls. In connection with such an institution, provision for evening instruction of those girls who were compelled to leave school at an early stage of their training might be made economically and with some chance of being fully utilized.

The demand for instruction in commercial subjects which enables the student, especially the girl student, to prepare in a comparatively short space of time for a position in an office is naturally increasing with increase in the size of the towns. Most of the girls taking evening classes do so with the object of increasing their usefulness as clerks or typists. There is also a steady attendance in the larger centres of boys and girls preparing for the several examinations conducted by the University for the Society of Accountants. In towns where there are no University courses available in accountancy, classes at the technical school are provided in all cases where there is a reasonable enrolment, and the Society of Accountants gives assistance in some centres towards the cost of the classes. In towns where University courses in accountancy are available the technical schools should not provide courses overlapping those of the University colleges, but it is possible that the technical schools can still do useful work in preparing candidates for, say, the book-keepers' certificate, since the University course for the professional accountant is not usually suitable for those who have only the lower qualification in view.

Attendance at classes for trade apprentices and learners has in recent years tended to develop considerably, especially in the larger centres. In many cases apprentices attend under the provisions of the Apprentices Act, 1923, their training in the workshop and in the school being under the supervision of Apprenticeship Committees formed in the particular trade and centre. The total number of Apprenticeship Committees is considerable, there being about 120 such committees dealing with trades for which technical classes are at present available, besides about forty in trades for which courses are not at present provided in technical schools. The Apprenticeship Committees have done excellent work in co-ordinating the training of the apprentices in the workshops with that in the technical classes, and in securing the sympathy and assistance, in kind and in money, of the employers and employees in the industries concerned.

Steps have been taken towards the setting-up of Dominion technological examinations in other branches of technology besides those for which special legislative provision has already been made. The proposed examinations are intended to replace those conducted by the Department on behalf of the City and Guilds of London Institute. Provisional syllabuses drawn up by committees representative of the industries concerned, and approved by the representative committee appointed in anticipation of the establishment of a Technical Schools Board, were circulated and tried out in the schools in 1927, and it is proposed to hold the first examinations in 1928.

CONTINUATION CLASSES.

As in former years, continuation classes in the larger centres have been well attended, chiefly by junior-free-place holders taking courses of all kinds, forming nearly 25 per cent. of the total number of students, and compelled by regulations to take English and arithmetic or mathematics as part of their courses, but also by other pupils, fee-paying or free-place, preparing for Matriculation, Public Service Entrance, or other examinations.