

II. TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS AND TECHNICAL DAY SCHOOLS.

ATTENDANCE.

The enrolment at technical high schools and technical day schools of full-time pupils taking courses under the Regulations for Manual and Technical Instruction was 7,214 at the 30th June, 1928, as compared with 6,720 at the corresponding date in the previous year. The enrolment of 7,214 included 3,930 boys and 3,284 girls.

Of the boys 2,034 took industrial courses, 359 agriculture, 759 commercial work, 676 a general course, and 102 an art course, all numbers being higher than for the previous year. Of the girls, 1,019 took the domestic course, 1,778 the commercial, 238 the general, and 249 the art course—higher numbers than for the previous year in the domestic and art courses, but slightly lower in the commercial and general courses.

STAFFING.

The full-time staff of the technical schools, including technical day schools and technical high schools, increased from 295 for 1927 to 305 for 1928, and the proportion of teachers with qualifications at least equivalent to the diploma of a University college increased from 55·6 per cent. to 57·8 per cent., the average salary being also slightly greater than in 1927. In 1920 the proportion of teachers with the higher qualifications was 41·6 per cent., so that a very marked improvement has taken place in the last eight years in the academic and professional qualifications of the teachers.

BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT.

Buildings and equipment have been maintained in good order and condition during the year, and some necessary additions have been made. The question as to how to provide for the large numbers enrolling in the four main centres must soon become very urgent, and the establishment of subsidiary schools in these centres has been discussed, but cannot be finally determined until the general policy in regard to post-primary education has been settled.

CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF THE INSTRUCTION.

In the main the teaching in the technical high schools and technical day schools is effective for its purpose, which is to provide the pupil with an all-round preparation for entering on some specific occupation. The tendency noted in our report last year for teachers to rely too much on tradition and too little on active investigation by the pupils themselves is not peculiar to technical high schools, but is peculiarly dangerous to the type of education which they should provide—a type that should have a particularly direct and intimate connection with and bearing on the life and industries of the people.

When inspecting the work of the teachers we too often find that men and women with good practical experience and a wide knowledge of industrial conditions are content, when they become teachers, gradually to lose contact with industry and to immerse themselves more and more in a formal and academic treatment of subjects in which in their earlier days they have shown a vital interest and a fecund knowledge, both intensely stimulating to the young student, and infinitely more effective educationally than mere pedagogical skill applied in the inculcation of ideas put forward by the teacher with the contemptuous ease of practised familiarity, and often, therefore, regarded by the pupils simply as pawns in a useless game.

The following tables give some particulars of certain courses in technical high schools, the periods quoted being those actually given in certain schools, it being impossible to show what, on the average, is the time devoted to each subject in each course.

The courses shown in Table C for schools A and B are those provided in large technical schools in the main centres for pupils who, though interested in engineering or industrial subjects, wish to matriculate in order to go on to the University to take higher courses leading to their chosen profession.

The course shown in Table C for school C is a general course as given for pupils in a technical high school in a country district where there is no other post-primary school. It necessarily approximates more closely to the general or professional course of the ordinary secondary school, all the boys, however, studying agriculture in all the years, and all the girls home science.

In Table D details are given of courses in several types of technical schools for boys preparing for apprenticeship in the various engineering trades. Schools A and B are large city schools, C and E schools in centres of intermediate size, and D is a school in a small country town. The courses are therefore thoroughly representative of the work done in technical high schools, and it will be seen that satisfactory provision is made for the general subjects—English, history and civics, mathematics, science, and drawing—while, in addition, a treatment is included of special subjects occupying about one-third of the time, and in all cases including applications of science and drawing to simple problems in the theory and practice of the mechanical trades.