

In addition to combined schools, in which the general courses are naturally by far the strongest, there are several country technical high schools which are in fact combined schools, in that they take the place of secondary schools in their districts and must provide professional and general courses in addition to technical courses.

Omitting combined schools and technical high schools serving all the educational needs of their districts, the following table shows the numbers in the several courses in the town technical high schools in 1916, 1926, and 1936 respectively :—

| Year.   | Course.  |        |             |             |        |               |       |        |            |              |
|---------|----------|--------|-------------|-------------|--------|---------------|-------|--------|------------|--------------|
|         | General. |        | Industrial. | Commercial. |        | Agricultural. | Art.  |        | Home Life. | Totals.      |
|         | Boys.    | Girls. | Boys.       | Boys.       | Girls. | Boys.         | Boys. | Girls. | Girls.     | Boys. Girls. |
| 1916 .. | ..       | ..     | 480         | 338         | 831    | 153           | 2     | ..     | 301        | 973 1,132    |
| 1926 .. | 120      | 60     | 1,740       | 462         | 1,435  | 147           | 70    | 211    | 704        | 2,539 2,410  |
| 1936 .. | 145      | 90     | 2,276       | 761         | 1,635  | 229           | 119   | 282    | 1,110      | 3,530 3,117  |

The numbers taking the general course are those who, though interested in one or other of the technical courses in the school, wish to prepare for external examinations, usually University Entrance, in order to take a University course bearing on their chosen career—engineering, commercial, &c. These numbers are relatively small, 3·6 per cent. in 1926, and 3·2 per cent. in 1936, and certainly do not lend any colour to the suggestion that the technical high schools are tending to become more academic in type. Moreover, the increases in numbers of those taking the industrial, the domestic, and the art courses have been in a very much greater ratio in the last twenty years, as the table shows, than the corresponding increase in the commercial course, again a clear proof that there has been no drift towards the academic side, but rather away from it. This is a natural development corresponding to, and in the same direction as, the general drift in recent years in the curriculum of secondary schools towards introducing a greater variety of subjects, many of them bearing more or less directly on the practical affairs of life.

THE TRAINING OF DOMESTIC WORKERS.

More attention has been given in the last two or three years, especially last year, to the question of the training and status of domestic workers in private homes. With the increased demand from factories, shops, and offices for female workers there have been fewer girls available for domestic work, even though higher wages have been offered. Various reasons have been advanced to account for the generally admitted reluctance of girls to enter private domestic service. It appears to be a fact that restaurants, boardinghouses, and hotels are able to secure the service they require, and no one who has travelled regularly through the Dominion in the last twenty years can fail to have noticed the general improvement in quality of the service in hotels and boardinghouses, and in the appearance and education of the staffs during that time. This has no doubt been accompanied by, and probably largely caused by, improvements in wages, hours, and other conditions of employment.

It is true that the average private employer cannot afford to pay the wages current in hotels and restaurants, nor to employ a number of specialists with opportunities for promotion in her house, nor to allow fixed hours of employment, which are possible only where a number of maids are employed; and these are no doubt some of the reasons why domestic assistants are difficult to obtain in private homes. It may, however, be doubted whether these are the most important factors.

The relationship of the hotel or restaurant keeper to his servant is that of business employer to tradeswoman employee, and essentially the same as that of shopkeeper to shop girl, or manufacturer to machinist. In each case employer and employee are partners in business, both deriving their livelihood from it. The employee in such a business does not occupy a professional status, for that is reserved for forms of personal service in which the employer is also client, and does what his employee advises him to do. The employee in a private home performs personal service like the professional man, but does what her employer orders her to do and is not paid for advice. The relationship is essentially feudal. This is perhaps the main reason why efficient paid domestic helpers are difficult to obtain in private homes.

Most of the proposals which have been made recently, mainly by women's organizations, have been in the direction of providing training courses of a professional or semi-professional character for girls intending to enter home service, so as to raise their standard of efficiency and give them a higher status.

It is at least doubtful whether mistresses would accept the position of being clients, acknowledging and relying on the superior knowledge of their domestic assistants in the same way as they would on that of their nurse or doctor, yet no other relationship would satisfy a person of professional status providing service of a professional character.

Apart from this difficulty, there is the practical question as to how long the trained home worker would practise her profession of assisting in others' homes. The experience of the Department in relation to trained teachers of home science is that they do not usually remain long in the teaching profession. To meet all demands, therefore, the numbers trained would need to be very large in order to have a constant reasonable supply for private homes. Statistics are not available in regard to the census of 1936, but the analysis of that of 1926 probably shows conditions not widely different from those ten years later.