

Stroud's Textile Training Centre

A WELL-EQUIPPED BUILDING.

Co-operation Between Education Authority And Manufacturers.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL FACILITIES.

Some Unique Features.

It is only appropriate that Stroud, so long and so prominently associated with the West of England cloth trade, should be well equipped for the teaching of students who desire to play their part in the progress of this great industry. And from to-morrow (Saturday), when the new Textile Department of the Stroud Technical College is to be opened by Sir Frederick Cripps, Chairman of the County Council, the dream of many enthusiasts in this connection will, thanks to the happy co-operation of the County Education Committee and the West of England Manufacturers' Association, be realised to an extent which must satisfy the most ardent of them.

A Historical Review.

Textile instruction in Stroud dates back some thirty years, when classes were conducted by Mr. Bell, who was engaged in this work partly in Stroud and partly in Trowbridge, Wiltshire. When Mr. Bell became head of the Textile Department of Halifax Technical College, he was succeeded by Mr. Sam Brierley, who carried on the work at Lansdown Hall.

Then came the erection of the Stroud and District Craft School, now the Stroud Boys' Central School, in August, 1910, and with it the appointment of Mr. Brierley as headmaster, and the transfer of the Textile Department to the new school buildings, still under Mr. Brierley's supervision. On Mr. Brierley's departure for Huddersfield to take control of the very important Textile Department there, Mr. Wilkinson, science master at the Craft School, became textile instructor, until he left for service during the War, in which he lost his life.

Effect of War.

The War brought with it bad days for textile instruction. There was a gradual diminution in the number of students, and this and the growth of the Craft School eventually resulted in the machinery being dismantled, and the building utilised for handicraft purposes.

Since then single classes have been held in textile subjects, and the fact that properly correlated courses could not be given has caused much concern both to the Technical College, and to those interested in the textile industry. The ultimate result was that three years ago a committee representative of the textile manufacturers and the textile workers was appointed to go into the matter. This they did with characteristic thoroughness, and classes were established at the Technical College under the supervision of Mr. M. J. Dixon, who

These machines have all been provided by the Manufacturers' Association—to which, of course, practically all local manufacturers belong—and in addition Messrs. S. Rawlings and Sons, Ltd., of Frome, have provided card clothing for the carder; Messrs. C. Walker and Sons, of Leeds, have given an endless tape, and a twisting frame (Hozz motion) has been loaned by Messrs. W. Whiteley and Sons, Ltd., of Huddersfield. This machine, of the very latest design, is used for the production of fancy yarns, and is probably the only one of its kind in the West of England, except that at Longfords Mills, Nailsworth.

The driving of the card, incidentally, is thought to be unique in technical colleges, in so far as it is a synchronised electric drive, while the power transmission to the self-acting mule—a Reynolds Friction Coupling—is also of interest.

The Weaving Section.

The main equipment of the weaving section consists of two Dobcross Power Looms—a loom which is extremely popular in local factories—a tappet loom, and five pattern handlooms for the use of designers. There has also been presented a positive take-up machine by Messrs. Hutchinson, Hollingworth, and Co., Ltd., Dobcross, and one of the newest Leeson Winders (four spindles) loaned by Messrs. The Universal Winding Co., Ltd., of Manchester.

Testing Facilities.

Ample opportunities will be given to any student wishing to carry out any testing on his own account, for which the following machines are available:—One Twist Tester (Goodbrand), one Twist Tester (Barker), one Single Thread (Dead-weight) Tester (Goodbrand), one Hank Tester (Goodbrand), one Wrap Wheel (Goodbrand), one Quadrant Balance, one Electric Conditioning Oven, and Microscopes.

From Scoured Wool to Cloth.

The result is that in addition to a thorough theoretical groundwork, students can gain wide practical experience, as they are enabled to carry out all the main mechanical processes except the scouring of the wool and the actual finishing of the cloth. The spinning of the wool, the designing, and the actual weaving of the cloth can be carried out on the premises, and so provide the student with a real understanding of the industry in which, it can be said without fear of contradiction, there is a new spirit of enterprise not surpassed for many years. New branches of the trade are being invaded by local manufacturers, and the new textile department should do much to provide a supply of the trained operatives who will be required in the growth which must result from increased enterprise.

THE STAFF.

The staff chosen for the purpose of guiding the new department is an admirable one. The Principal of the Technical College, of course, is Mr. F. P. Fuller, A.R.C.S. (London), M.R.S.T., and the head of the new department is Mr. P. P. Townsend, B.Sc., A.T.I., a silver medallist of the City and Guilds of London Institute in Woollen Yarn Manufacture and Cloth Finishing. Mr. Townsend is entering his second year at Stroud, and his capabilities have been proved by the successes already gained. The other member of the technical staff is Mr. W. W. Dixon, M.Sc., who will deal with textile chemistry.

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THE LATEST STEP.

The response was such that the manufacturers were encouraged to go still further, and evolved a scheme whereby they offered to provide the necessary machinery if the Education Committee would provide the teachers and the building necessary for an advanced grade of textile instruction.

The County Council accepted the offer, and at a cost of £2,000 have provided the new building at the rear of the Church Street boys' school. The building, if not exteriorly prepossessing, is admirably suited to its purpose. It contains two large apartments for the housing of the machinery, each measuring 50 feet by 20 feet, a class room 30 feet by 20 feet, well equipped for theoretical instruction, and a small staff room. The lighting, both natural and artificial, is excellent, and altogether the building is admirable for its purpose.

Mechanical Equipment.

The mechanical equipment is of particular interest. First, as to the power. This is provided by independent electric motors, permanently loaned by Messrs. Maudesley, Ltd., while, as already stated, the manufacturers have been generous in the provision of machinery, much of which has been adapted for instructional purposes. The spinning department houses one scribbler, one intermediate, one carder, one tape condenser, two Scotch feeds, one automatic weighing box by Cliffe, one grinding frame, and a Platt self acting mule (50 spindles).

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The courses provided are suitable for students who wish to obtain National Certificates in Textiles, City and Guilds of London Institute Certificates, and Exhibitions and Scholarships of the Drapers' Company. Students are advised to attend group courses wherever possible.

A limited number of adult students will be allowed to attend the practical classes for carding, spinning, twisting or weaving, and the speciality lectures, providing that they are above 25 years of age and possess practical knowledge of the machinery. Students under 25 years of age will only be enrolled for the group courses.

The speciality lectures are also to be continued during the session, and the syllabus includes the following:—

"Textile Machinery" (illustrated), by F. C. Crawshaw, Esq., of Messrs. Whiteley and Sons, Ltd.

"Carding and Spinning of Woollen Yarns," by J. B. Wilson, Esq., of Dewsbury.

"Practical Loom Tuning," by B. Wise, Esq., of Cam.

Visit to Messrs. Holloway Bros., Ltd., of Stroud. Cloth factory.

"Cloth Finishing," by H. Hardy, Esq., A.T.I.

The textile advisory committee consists of Messrs. T. E. Sanders (chairman),

(Continued at foot of next column.)