

The botany class opened on the 5th October, 1896, for the spring session, and on the 8th February, 1897, for the autumn session. In my last report I stated that it was intended to take up a class for advanced work in botany, and this was done by Mr. Tennant, nine students attending.

A special class was opened at the beginning of summer to prepare candidates for the technological examinations of the City and Guilds of London Institute in plumbing and carpentry, but was abandoned very soon after starting owing to the paucity of the attendance.

The regular winter session was opened on the 5th April, with twenty-one classes, and closed on the 30th September, there being a fortnight's recess in the middle. New classes for painters' and decorators' art and photography were projected, and one for German resuscitated. For painters' art the Committee were fortunate in securing a most competent instructor in Mr. R. F. Smith, who gave his services gratuitously. I have reason to believe, from conversation with men who know the trade thoroughly, that instruction in its technique is much needed by boys and improvers. Yet the number who entered was so discouragingly small that the class was dropped. Similarly, and from the same cause, the attempt to establish a German class was abandoned.

For photography between thirty and forty persons enrolled, and more were prepared to come forward. In this case our difficulty arose from the opposite cause—that, namely, of obtaining a teacher. Mr. W. Williams, president of the Dunedin Photographic Society, was provisionally induced to undertake the tuition of this class, but he could not obtain the necessary permission from the Government department to which he belongs, and it was not found possible to secure any one else at the short notice.

The English literature class was carried on for the first quarter by Miss Marion S. White, and was well attended, the greatest interest being taken by the pupils in the subject, owing largely to its able presentation. The sad death of this very talented and promising young lady broke the course of work undertaken by the class. The Appointments Committee was fortunately able to secure the services of Miss Rose M. Davey, M.A., who at once addressed herself to the task of sustaining the high standard previously reached, and was very successful in her endeavour. The break, however, caused a very serious falling-off in the attendance, as such interruptions invariably do. The number enrolled for the English class was so large that I had to ask Mr. Eudey to subdivide them into two sections, he retaining the most advanced pupils, while Mr. T. R. Coutts, M.A., was appointed to the junior division. The arrangement was eminently satisfactory.

In connection with the Latin class, I have regretfully to report that Mr. E. A. Phillips, who has carried on this branch of our work since 1891, died after a short illness on the very day on which he had arranged to hold his closing examination.

Mr. William Gray, having been selected at the commencement of the session for the position of vice-principal of the Training College, found himself unable to resume the teaching of the arithmetic class, and Mr. J. R. Rutherford, M.A., undertook the duty at very short notice, and carried it on very successfully. Such changes are more or less inevitable in the work of an association like ours, and would, no doubt, be lessened were the classes under the direct control of the Education Board. But they militate against the success of the work, as the teachers who are appointed have no time for preliminary arrangement of their course of study.

One of the most popular and successful classes this year was one newly established for penmanship, which was conducted by Mr. J. Park Smith. The work done and the improvement shown by those who attended was extremely satisfactory, and at the suggestion of Mr. Cohen, who examined the class, it was resolved to award certificates to a number of candidates who presented themselves for examination. These certificates cannot, under our present rules, count for the diploma of the association, but they will be useful to those who have gained them as evidence of their success in improving their handwriting.

The association suffered a great loss in the departure for Oamaru of Dr. Don, who had conducted the chemistry classes since 1889 with such marked ability and vigour. Fortunately one of his own students, Mr. J. W. Mellor, whose scientific training began in these classes in 1891, and who last year gained from the University of New Zealand his degree of B.Sc. with first-class honours in chemistry, was able to step into the vacant place, and I have much pleasure in stating that his work has been carried out with conspicuous success. In addition to the regular class in elementary inorganic chemistry, a class in elementary organic chemistry was also formed, while several senior students carried on practical work in connection with their various trades.

The teaching of physics, which ought to be one of the strong points of a technical course, has suffered more than any other from change of teachers and want of a settled home. By shifting backwards and forwards to and from the Normal School the apparatus has been much deteriorated, and teachers find little satisfaction in undertaking the subject under such conditions. Mr. J. A. McNickle, who undertook the class under some pressure, has done the best he could under the circumstances, but has not been encouraged by the attendance. In our new premises special provision is being made for a lecture-room and separate laboratory for this important subject.

The dressmaking class this year was undertaken by Miss Kate Stewart, and was so largely attended that extra assistance had to be provided. I would like to call attention to the fact that the class "is especially meant for shop-girls, tailoresses, and other young women employed during the day-time, and is intended to teach them how to cut out and make their own dresses." Our classes in this, as in other subjects, are nowhere meant to enter into competition with any others already in existence, but to supply good tuition to those who cannot afford to pay the fees of private teachers.

I have not referred specially to the work done in the classes for French under Mr. Donald, mathematics under Mr. Marshall, bookkeeping under Mr. Grater, typewriting under Mr. Cope, shorthand under Messrs. J. Crosby Smith and H. Renfree, mechanical engineering under Messrs. Stevenson and Payne, plumbers' work under Messrs. Sherriff and Knox, carpentry and joinery