Educational Developments in Technical Schools

The greatest development during the year has been in apprentice training. Classes have been organized in many centres in motor engineering and in plumbing, and a start has also been made with classes in the furniture trades. It is possible that classes in carpentry and joinery and in electrical practice will commence in the near future. All these classes, amounting in the aggregate to a considerable number, are pressing heavily on the available space. Technical schools have always been economically used, inasmuch as they are occupied all day and in the evening. In several cases they are also used in the late afternoon as well as in the evening and on Saturday mornings, and the workshops have very little rest.

A difficulty with which the schools have had to contend is the varied requirements of the apprenticeship orders in regard to daylight training. The commonest requirement is perhaps half a day a week, but on occasions a day a fortnight is suggested, and other variations ranging up to two or three weeks at a time. Sometimes the order stipulates day training; sometimes training at evening classes; sometimes both; and in at least one case it is a requirement that the school work shall be done on Saturday mornings. There is thus added to the difficulty of finding rooms and equipment in schools already taxed, and of finding part-time staff at odd hours or of devising means of employing full-time teachers, the real problem of organizing a school to meet a variety of intermittent demands. Principals and staffs have responded with commendable spirit to these many and varied tasks and have successfully met the first stages of the new challenge of daylight training.

The increased use of technical schools for daylight training of apprentices and for the training of professional engineers brings appreciably nearer the time when the junior school must be reduced in order to make room for these new and supremely important activities. Junior pupils must, of course, be accommodated elsewhere, and that is no easy problem to solve. The ultimate objective of a limited number of senior technical schools gradually assuming the character of technological institutions is still a few years ahead.

The Inspectorate

The full team of post-primary Inspectors is now divided into three districts, and each district is complete and self-contained. The Auckland district has one more Inspector than each of the other two districts, as the Senior Inspector in Auckland is called upon to do a very great deal of administrative work, which is done for the other districts by the Head Office staff. The teams include Inspectors of Homecraft, Woodwork, and Engineering, and are therefore able to deal with the many developments of practical work in schools of all types and with apprentice training. The close association of a group of Inspectors with a limited number of schools in a compact geographical area has been to the very great advantage both of the schools and of the Inspectors.

Apart from the routine work of school inspection, and the grading of teachers, Inspectors have been called on to carry out many duties concerned with education in the trades and professions. Thus Inspectors were on the committees set up to investigate the Technological Examinations and the education and training of professional engineers. They are members of various permanent Boards and committees, such as the New Zealand Trades Certification Board, the Motor Trade Certification Board, and the Plumbers' Board, and a variety of local and Dominion Apprenticeship Committees. In this way, useful contacts are maintained with the educational problems of industry. Inspectors are also on the Board of Moderators for University examinations affecting schools, and on the Entrance Board of the University.