

During the year over three hundred technical and continuation classes, with an average attendance of about 4,500 students, were conducted in connection with the technical and art schools. In addition to these classes, there were also held in various towns in the colony, in buildings more or less suitable for the purpose, over ninety technical and continuation classes, with an average attendance of about 1,600 students, making a total of some 390 classes. The number last year was 360. The number of classes in operation and the average attendance at each are given in Table X. attached to the report.

During the year many of the schools have been enabled, with the help of Government grants, to considerably improve their position in the matter of accommodation and equipment. New buildings for technical purposes are also being, or are about to be, erected in several towns where hitherto the provision for technical instruction has been either of a temporary character or altogether absent.

The appointment by the Auckland Education Board of a Director for Technical Education opens a new chapter in the history of the Auckland Technical School. Arrangements are in progress to considerably extend the work of the school, and Government grants have been made for the necessary buildings and equipment. A feature of the work will be the establishment of training classes for teachers on subjects of manual and technical instruction, with special reference to cookery and woodwork.

The Wanganui Education Board is also making provision for a considerable extension of technical work in its district. The chief feature of the proposed arrangements is the establishment of technical classes in close relation with the larger district high schools. Such classes will, it is expected, soon be in operation in Wanganui, Palmerston North, and Hawera. There are also indications that before long a technical school providing for, among other things, instruction in dairy-work will be established at Stratford. As this will be the first school of the kind to be established under the Act, its progress will be watched with considerable interest. The classes of the Invercargill Technical School, which have for some time past been held in rooms in the Board's offices, in the high school, and in private rooms in the town, will before long be similarly accommodated; the Board is now erecting a technical school which when completed should do much to further the work of technical instruction in Invercargill.

Important changes have recently taken place in the constitution of two of the older-established schools. The classes at the Wellington Technical School will henceforth be styled associated classes, as arrangements are being made to place them in charge of a Board of Managers representing the Education Board, the City Council, and the Industrial Association, with the Education Board as controlling authority, in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The classes of the Dunedin Technical School, heretofore under the control of a Board of Managers representing the Dunedin Technical Classes Association, a body that came into existence fourteen years ago, and to whose efforts the present condition of the school is mainly due, has now been placed on the same footing as the Wellington school, the classes being in charge of a Board of Managers representing the Otago Education Board, the City Council, and the original association, with the Education Board as controlling authority. Associated classes have also been established recently at Lyttelton, Rangiora, and Waimate, while arrangements are being made to establish similar classes in Christchurch and Temuka. It is the intention of the promoters of the proposed Christchurch associated classes to provide for instruction in such subjects as are not already well provided for by the courses of instruction at the Schools of Art and Engineering in connection with Canterbury College, and at the School of Domestic Instruction. It may fairly be predicted that when these classes are established Christchurch will, from the point of view of technical education, occupy a position second to none in the colony. There is no doubt that one of the chief factors in the successful establishment and maintenance of technical classes lies in the interest taken in them by local authorities; and it is to be hoped that the establishment of classes under the section of the Act relating to associated classes will become more general as time goes on.

The art classes of the colony continue to do, on the whole, good work. There are evidences that in the near future instruction in the various branches of applied art will be made a prominent feature of the work in the larger centres. This is to be regarded as a step in the right direction. The establishment of classes for instruction in applied art will provide opportunities for art students to usefully apply the principles they have learned in the art classes proper. It is, indeed, open to question whether it is desirable to encourage the study of pure art alone in any of our schools, except where students show marked ability.

Of the other subjects of instruction, plumbing seems to call for special mention. There has been a considerable increase in the number of recognised classes for this subject. Plumbers in many parts of the colony are now required under the by-laws of the local authorities to be able to produce certificates of competency before they can obtain licenses to do sanitary work; hence the demand for classes providing for the necessary instruction. Many of these classes are technical classes in the true sense of the term—that is to say, the courses of work include instruction in principles as well as in practice; others, again, partake more of the nature of trade classes, where the sole aim of the instructor, who is usually an expert craftsman, is to teach his pupils how to perform certain more or less difficult operations without reference, as a general rule, to the principles that underlie them. What has been said in reference to plumbing classes applies equally well to classes for carpentry and joinery. The causes are not far to seek. Instructors possessing the necessary qualifications are by no means easy to obtain, while many of those who attend the classes fail to realise that it is just as important to know why such-and-such a thing is done as to know how it is done.

Art, science, and technological examinations were, as usual, conducted by the Department on behalf of the Board of Education, South Kensington, and the City and Guilds of London Institute. The results, which are given in a special table attached to this report, may be summarised as