

*Visitors.*—The attendance of visitors during the year was very great, the proximity of the Exhibition having a decided influence. It is pleasing to notice that the collections are being largely and increasingly availed of for the purposes of nature-study. At times the galleries are crowded with school-children and their teachers, who show and explain to their pupils the objects of which they have read in their lessons. This is especially to be remarked of the New Zealand Room.

#### SCHOOL OF ART.

(Director, Mr. R. Herdman-Smith, A.M., F.S.A.M.)

I have the honour to report that the year 1907 has been notable as the first in which junior free day students have been admitted to the school. At the beginning of the year some thirty-five students joined the classes under the Government regulations for free places. Each of these students took up a specified course of art instruction, and attended the school for twenty-seven hours each week throughout the session.

This experiment proved highly satisfactory, both from an educational and financial standpoint. The attendance of these students was very satisfactory, and their work exceedingly creditable. I look upon this scheme as being a means of supplying the advanced classes of the school with a number of students whose elementary training has thoroughly fitted them to benefit to the full by such instruction as is now available in the life, landscape, architectural, and artistic crafts department.

These students are entitled to two years' instruction as junior and three years' as senior free scholars, providing they pass the annual examinations of the school. It is, therefore, possible for the first time to have thoroughly carried out a graduated course of instruction extending over a period of five years; hitherto the drawback to such courses of instruction has been the difficulty in getting students to remain long enough at the school to properly benefit by the instruction.

During the year several advanced students have obtained positions as designers and draughtsmen; one student was appointed Assistant Art Master at the Elam School of Art, Auckland, and several other students have received appointments in smaller schools. The number of letters I have received from managers of technical schools and classes in various parts of the Dominion, asking me to recommend art and craft teachers, proves that the school is being recognised as a centre for the training of art-teachers—a fact that goes to prove that the influence of the school is extending.

*Attendance.*—The students in attendance during 1907 numbered 1,085. The hour attendances during 1907 amounted to 93,520; the hour attendances during 1906 amounted to 48,000; the hour attendances during 1905 amounted to 34,160. This shows an increase for 1907 of 45,520 attendances over the year 1906, and an increase of 59,360 attendances over 1905, thus proving that the attendance has considerably more than doubled itself since my appointment in 1906.

I have made no comparisons in the number of students in attendance this year with previous years, because hitherto it has been the rule to give as totals the class entries, which tends to give an erroneous impression of the number of students. The number of actual students during 1907, taken on the basis of hour attendances, would be more than double that of 1905.

*Examinations.*—In connection with the advanced art examinations held by the Board of Education, South Kensington, London, the school obtained twenty-five pass certificates, and in the examinations for Art Class Teachers' Certificates three students had works accepted. The usual local examinations were held at the end of the year, and all the students submitted work for examination.

*Exhibition.*—In connection with the art competitions of the late International Exhibition, the school scored higher than any other art school in the colony, obtaining in all fifteen medals (seven gold, four silver, and four bronze). A certificate of the highest order of merit was awarded for the school's collection of work as a whole, and the complete furniture and decoration for a "hall" was awarded a certificate of special excellence.

*Scholarships.*—A bronze medal and nine free scholarships were awarded on the year's work to students of the day and evening classes, also some twenty-four scholarships to pupils of the State schools.

*Drawing and Painting.*—Instruction was given in drawing and painting from life, still life, antique, and landscape.

The greatly increased attendance in the day classes considerably taxed the accommodation available for the teaching of these subjects; on most days every room in the school was packed. The present rooms are small, and often necessitate a teacher having classes in three separate rooms, which does not allow any collective teaching, by which means the best class results are obtained. A large studio for figure and still-life work is urgently required.

*Design.*—The students have increased to such an extent in this department as to demand two additional classes per week, making a total of four classes per week in place of two, as hitherto.

*Artistic Crafts.*—A great advance has been made in this department since the appointment of the new instructor. A course of silversmiths' work and limoges, champeve, and cloisonné enamelling was commenced at the beginning of the year, and several beautiful pieces of jewellery were executed. Larger and more important work will be possible when a larger muffle furnace is available. Classes were held for repoussé, gesso, wood-carving, and embossed-leather work during the morning, afternoon, and evening throughout the year.

*Painters and Decorators' Classes.*—Classes in practical work were held twice a week, and instruction was given in sign-writing, glass-embossing, graining and marbling, stencilling and decorating, students also attending the special design and colour classes. The advantage to apprentices engaged in this trade by such classes being held at a school of art is obvious, as the practical work can be co-operated with the higher branches of colour and design, and so tend to raise the general standard of the trade.