

hours a week—were in operation during the year at Auckland, Wanganui, Wellington, Napier, Westport, Christchurch, and Dunedin. As has been previously stated, these schools appear to be filling a distinct gap in our educational system. The curriculum is mainly secondary in character, yet the establishment of these schools does not appear to have adversely affected the attendance at the secondary schools in their vicinity. These schools have, moreover, had a distinctly beneficial effect on the evening technical classes, the best students at the latter being those who have previously attended the day classes. The total number of free pupils attending the day technical schools was 846, of whom 501 were girls.

Speaking generally, it may be said that much good and useful work, within the limits imposed by existing conditions, continues to be done by the technical schools. Most of the instruction is necessarily given in the evenings, and it is gratifying to note that the attendance at evening classes, although entirely optional, in most cases continues to be satisfactory, and, further, that the number of evening students who attend definite courses on two and three evenings a week continues to increase. The chief inducements at present held out to students are free places offered by the Government, scholarships and free tuition provided locally, and the payment of fees by some employers.

Assuming that one of the chief functions of evening classes should be to provide such instruction as students do not or cannot get in the ordinary course of their occupations, it should, it seems, be unnecessary in connection with such classes to supplement the above-mentioned inducements or an extension of them on the lines indicated in the report of last year by anything savouring of direct compulsion.

That something more in the way of such compulsion is needed in the case of the relatively large number of young persons who do not on the completion of their primary-school course proceed to secondary or to technical schools seems now to be generally admitted. Without referring here to what has been done on the Continent in regard to this important matter, it may be mentioned that the Education (Scotland) Act of 1908 imposes on each School Board the duty of making suitable provision of continuation classes for the further instruction of young persons above the age of fourteen with reference to the crafts and industries (including agriculture) practised in the district, and also for their instruction in the English language and literature; and, further, that the English Board of Education, recognizing the importance of the matter, instructed its Consultative Committee to advise as to whether any means, and, if so, what, could be devised for securing (1) that a much larger proportion of boys and girls on leaving the public elementary schools commence and continue attendance at evening schools than at present do so, and (2) that employers and other persons and bodies in a position to give effective help should co-operate in arranging facilities for such attendance on the part of their employees and in planning suitable courses and subjects for the schools and classes. After examining a large number of witnesses selected from employers, representatives of labour, Inspectors of Schools, local education authorities, teachers, and women, together with certain persons possessing special knowledge and experience, the committee arrived at certain definite conclusions which are embodied in the report adopted by the committee in May, 1909. Some of the more important of these conclusions are as follows:—

- (a.) Increased attention should be given to the connection between the continuation school and the public elementary school, with the view of lessening discontinuity of attendance.
- (b.) The age of exemption should at no distant period be raised to fourteen, subject to certain limitations.
- (c.) Junior employment registries should be established to give skilled advice to parents, managers, and teachers on the selection of suitable occupations for young persons.
- (d.) Head teachers in the public schools should be able to take part in the direction of the continuation school to which their pupils go.