

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE SCHOOL OF ART.

During the month of May the school was remodelled, renovated, and extra accommodation provided, being now in a perfectly sanitary and comfortable state. The work has been much facilitated by the rearrangement of the rooms, and the provision throughout of individual seats. The lighting, both by day and night, is now exceedingly satisfactory, and is especially appreciated by the students attending the evening classes. The entrance has been widened and improved, an office being provided on the ground floor. In the near future it is hoped that the entrance-hall will be furnished with the work of the students in the design, crafts, and modelling sections, but in the meantime it is convenient and safe compared with the dangerous cramped passage which it replaces. The total number of individual students receiving instruction has this year reached 611, an increase of 22·7 per cent. upon those attending in 1908. This number comprises 147 teachers, 68 pupil-teachers, 74 Training College students, 149 day students, and 173 students attending the evening classes. Such courses of instruction as have been demanded by the particular requirements of the various groups of students have been afforded. The juveniles have been taught freehand and model drawing, brushwork, and the arrangement within geometrical spaces of simple decorative forms derived from floral, animal, and landscape sources. These classes, which have been well attended, have been held in the late afternoon, and the amended hour seems to have the approbation of parents and guardians. The classes for pupil-teachers have also been held at a like hour, so as to interfere as little as possible with their home and University studies. The free day students of the Technical School have been provided with one hour's instruction each afternoon, and have been treated as an intermediate section. Drawing from models, natural objects, floral and plant forms, has been the principal part of their course, but ornamental forms have not been neglected. The school has been open to them at any spare hour, and many of them have availed themselves of the opportunity to attend the morning classes, the afternoon classes in light and shade, and some few enthusiasts have even attended the evening classes. By interesting them in this way it is hoped to cull a number of earnest art students for the more advanced work. For the mining students of the University a special class in geometry and isometry was held at an hour to suit their University arrangements. Freehand and model drawing, geometrical and perspective drawing, have received careful attention as the foundation of correct art education, and a distinct effort has been made to impress the logical principles underlying these subjects so as to increase the self-reliance of the student, and to permit their application to original work. In drawing and painting the classes have been well attended, and much enthusiasm shown in the work both by day and evening students. Instruction has been given in drawing and painting from life, still life, the antique, landscape, and flowers. Much good work has been done in all these sections, both of painting and drawing in every medium. The students have been keen, and have gained many minor successes in addition to their usual works for the Board of Education, South Kensington, London. The still-life paintings of the students at the school have gained a special prize at the exhibition of the New Zealand Academy in Wellington, first prize at Palmerston North, first prize at Wanganui, and special mention at the Otago Art Society's exhibition. Paintings from life and landscapes by the students also received honourable mention in the latter exhibition. At Palmerston North the school was successful in gaining both first and second prizes in drawing from the antique. These and other New Zealand successes have done much to rouse the spirit of emulation among the students—so much so that some of the more advanced have been at work from 9 in the morning and yet attended the evening life class. The students in modelling have received instruction in relief and round representations from plant-form, natural objects, conventional decoration, the figure, and from their own designs, casting from waste and piece moulds. It is hoped to devote special attention to this and the art crafts in 1910. Drawing for tradesmen has been specially catered for. A successful inauguration of a six-months course of trade preparatory drawing made during the winter, was most regularly attended, and justified the care bestowed upon it. The importance of plane and solid geometry to the trades is not sufficiently recognized, but a thorough course was provided, and the attendance was fairly well maintained throughout the year. Drawing for cabinet-makers was specially provided for under most able and practical instruction, and the work executed by the students was of so high an order that it is confidently expected that a constantly increasing number of tradesmen and apprentices will take advantage of the course. Another departure during the year was a special course of decorative painting, lettering, stencilling, and ticket-writing under expert tuition. The students were enthusiastic, and the attendance during the winter months often taxed the accommodation. Too great stress cannot be laid on the advantage to apprentices and journeymen of holding this course in a school of art, where the practical portion of the work can be co-ordinated with the higher branches of drawing, design, and colour, to the obvious welfare of the trade. Architects and the building trade have had special facilities in the provision, in addition to the various branches of ornamental, geometrical, and perspective drawing, of a complete course of building-construction. The class has been well attended throughout the year, and the students have been thoroughly alive to the advantages offered. Machine construction and design have also been taught with most successful results, and there is a distinct advantage in taking this subject at a school of art, not only on account of its correlation with geometrical and model drawing, but because its separation from the workshop is in accord with actual trade practice. The atmosphere of the school of art impresses the student by its sense of aloofness, as does that of the draughtman's office or the rooms of the consulting engineer. For teachers and pupil-teachers a complete course of instruction in elementary drawing, brushwork, modelling, wood-carving, and design has been provided on Saturday mornings. Every effort has been made to make the instruction of such a nature as to be directly applicable to the work of the elementary school, and the course seems to have been met with cordial sympathy on the part of the teachers, who have attended in large numbers and taken a keen interest in the schemes of work submitted to them. It will be a genuine hardship to the country teachers of Otago if these classes have to be abandoned or