

Technical instruction in the district continues to progress. Increases in attendance, number of classes, and revenue derived therefrom have to be recorded. The issue of revised departmental regulations after the sessions at Nelson and Westport had commenced necessitated a readjustment of timetables and programmes of work to conform with the special conditions required for grouped courses of instruction. Despite their hurried arrangement these courses were conducted in a fairly satisfactory manner, though difficulties regarding time available, accommodation and equipment, and teaching staff prevented their being as comprehensive as is desirable. However, the experience of 1911 has shown where many improvements can be effected, and the coming year should see these in operation.

Our technical schools at Nelson and Westport have now passed that stage, incidental to small struggling institutions, where one of the chief considerations is the securing of as many pupils as possible, and thus assuring revenue sufficient for all expenses. Nelson and Westport schools are now well equipped for work on definite lines suitable to district requirements, and the time has come when, instead of encouraging the attendance of large numbers at single classes, which in themselves cannot provide the best means of securing a technical training, we should, with certain exceptions, insist on attendance at a group of related subjects having a direct bearing upon some trade or occupation. This course will be adopted during the coming year, and, though it may result in a lessening of the numbers in attendance at the schools, it will confer much greater benefits upon the community. The generous financial provisions made in recent departmental regulations will also assure that the Board's finances will not be detrimentally affected by this step. The following is a brief comment upon the main features of the work of the past year:—

*Nelson.*—The domestic branch was excellently attended, and produced good results; an extension of its scope to include dressmaking, millinery, cookery, hygiene, English, and arithmetic will be brought about during the coming session. A striking feature of the attendance was the large number desiring dressmaking, many pupils having to be refused admission to classes. The commercial department was again very popular—in fact, it would appear that more of the youth, particularly girls, embark upon an elementary commercial training than can possibly be absorbed by the demands of employers in city and district. A class in accountancy, held three nights weekly, was introduced during the year, received very good support from those employed in offices, and did excellent work. The extension of the scope of instruction in art and art crafts was the most important development of the year. The appointment of a highly qualified art master to the permanent staff, and the provision of suitable accommodation and equipment, made possible instruction of a kind not previously attempted. The classes were well attended, and a successful exhibition of students' work served to bring under the notice of the public the facilities for art instruction now available in Nelson. The work of the telegraphy classes was fair, but the attendance was very irregular, a fault not entirely due to the special conditions under which the students were working. It cannot be said that the plumbing-work of the past year was satisfactory. The class was a small one, and the attendance, especially at theory and practical workshop mathematics, was irregular. In this respect the plumbers present a marked contrast to the engineering apprentices, who attended regularly and worked most enthusiastically at the mathematics class. The day trades course, though attended by but a small number of boys, did efficient work in both theoretical and practical subjects. The evening carpentry class, which was composed principally of amateurs, was liberally patronized.

*Westport.*—The day Engineering School completed the third year of its existence. The pupils, 14 in number, have been regular in attendance and keenly enthusiastic in their work. As the result of representations made by the Board, a clause was introduced into the Shipping and Seamen Amendment Act, 1911, which will have an important effect in assuring recognition of the time spent by the boys at the school. Under this clause two years' attendance at a day engineering school approved by the Marine Department will be recognized as two of the five years required to be served before a person can sit for his third marine engineer's certificate, provided that the remaining three years are put in at some commercial shop fulfilling the requirements of the Act. This is but one step in the direction necessary to secure adequate recognition of the instruction given at Westport, where the teaching is distinctly on vocational lines. It will next be advisable to endeavour to secure from the Railway Department some form of preference for the admission of technical school engineering pupils to the Department's workshops, and, if possible, a waiving of the age limit at which a youth may enter the service. Until this is done it will not be advisable to ask private employers to grant to a State-supported institution what another Department of the State refuses. A tribute to the quality of the instruction at the Westport Day Engineering School is found in the fact that all of the five boys who joined when the institution started three years ago are still attending, while in the evening class half of the number are third-year pupils. Small plumbing, carpentry, and art classes were conducted satisfactorily at Westport, but the lack of suitable accommodation for the pupils of these and the commercial classes proved a great inconvenience.

No technical classes were held at Reefton; two dressmaking classes were conducted in the Waimeas, and commercial and chemistry classes at Motueka. A course in farm carpentry was carried on at Stoke Industrial School. During the year requests for classes, dressmaking in particular, were made from several country centres, but as the only instructors available were fully employed at Nelson Technical School it was considered inadvisable to disorganize the work of that institution for the purpose of carrying on isolated classes in small centres.

Drawing, cookery, woodwork, and chemistry classes for the instruction of teachers were held at Nelson, a chemistry class at Motueka, and a brief course in drawing at Westport.

During the year a new art-room, cloak-rooms and lavatories, and a small room for modelling and casting were added at Nelson, a cookery-room was erected at Motueka, and a start made with the erection of a small laboratory at Takaka. Additions to Westport Technical School are urgently needed. Several changes in the staff have occurred. Mr. Duff, English, mathematics, and commercial master at Nelson, accepted a more remunerative position at Invercargill, and Miss Lousley resigned