

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE PALMERSTON NORTH HIGH SCHOOL.

The Technical School has made considerable progress during the year. The finances are in a healthy state, and the buildings and land are free from debt. The classes (fifty-six in number) were similar to those of the previous year, but the attendances show a considerable increase. The number of enrolments has increased from 993 in 1911 to 1,100, and ever since the school has been established the numbers have steadily increased.

The art classes, though showing an increase over last year, are not so well patronized as they ought to be, but the Director reports that the standard of work has improved. The commercial classes are amongst the best attended, and it is to be regretted that there is not more demand for trade and domestic courses. I think the Technical Committee should make some endeavour to popularize these courses. In this connexion great difficulty has been experienced in keeping a class for building-construction going. The engineering class-room has been fitted up fairly satisfactorily, and some very good work has been done under the careful supervision of the teacher. A further supply of necessary equipment has been applied for on the recommendation of the Inspector. The science classes are well attended, and good work is being done in this department. The agricultural classes, which are of prime importance to the farming community, are not taken advantage of so much as might be expected in a district where farming is so extensively carried on. Those who take the course, however, are unanimous in their appreciation of the benefit received, and the Farmers' Union has not only supported these classes by monetary contributions, but has also through its executive personally inspected and approved of the methods adopted. The woodwork, plumbing, dressmaking, and cookery classes have each made good progress, and it is satisfactory to note that there is an ever-increasing number taking these subjects.

It is a source of gratification to the Board and all connected with the school to know that the Technical School ranks as the largest school of its kind outside the four centres.

In conclusion, I have to thank the members of the Board, the Director of the Technical School, and the Secretary for the kindly assistance which has enabled me to carry out my duties during my three years of office without the least friction.

W. H. COLLINGWOOD, Chairman.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE PALMERSTON NORTH TECHNICAL SCHOOL.

With one or two exceptions the classes were well attended, and the examinations show that on the whole good work has been done throughout the year. The art classes have not been so well attended as might have been expected, although the work done is quite up to the standard of previous years, if not better. The courses set out for the commercial classes have been faithfully worked through, and have been attended by a large percentage of the students of the school. In fact, these classes are by far the largest, showing as they do that not only boys but girls are largely going in for commercial work when in many cases it would be far better for some of the boys to take a trade course and girls a domestic course. One of the difficulties is that a good number of the students on entering the school do not seem to know what subjects to take up, and after continuing one line of work for a few months suddenly discover that they prefer something else. The young folks of the present day are inclined to be too irresponsible and lacking in application, and as a consequence have to be kept up to the mark by the careful oversight and interest of those in authority. It is worthy of note, however, that by the time a two-years course has been completed the interest of most of the students seems to take grip, and there appears a desire to continue, as is evidenced by the increase in numbers each year of students qualifying for Senior Free Places.

While the work of the plumbing class continues most satisfactory, it seems almost impossible to keep a class going in connexion with the building trade. The attempts to start a class for building-construction have failed. The apprentices say that they as wage-earners reap no benefit therefrom, and will not see that in the future they may become employers and contractors, where a knowledge of building-construction and its accompanying subjects becomes absolutely essential.

The classes in mechanical engineering have been well attended throughout the year, and good work has been done. Now that a gas-engine with the necessary fittings has been installed there is greater interest taken by the students in the work, and the classes next year promise to be still better attended. On the recommendation of Mr. Isaac, Inspector of Technical Education, an effort is being made to provide additional equipment for this department. As far as possible the work in the engineering classes is directly related to that which pertains to the ordinary engineering workshop, so that apprentices are afforded an opportunity of practice in work demanding a degree of accuracy not always insisted on in their everyday work. The chemistry class, although small, has been well attended and good work done throughout the year. The same applies to the larger class for electricity and magnetism.

Agriculture: This department includes, in addition to the farm class, classes for agriculture, wool-classing, and sheep-shearing. Although a good course of instruction is provided, it seems to take the farmers' sons a long time to realize the advantages of attending these classes. The course includes farm carpentry—viz., the making of gates, hurdles, bee-hives, ladders, wheelbarrows, &c.; the study of soils, manures, and stock-breeding; wool-classing, including baling and pressing, and lastly, sheep-shearing with both machines and blades. The shearing classes this year were very successful, three classes being conducted, some of the students coming long distances. The students expressed their appreciation of the instruction given and the attention bestowed upon them. The executive of the Farmers' Union (Wellington Province) visited these classes and expressed their appreciation of the methods and the value of the instruction and the practical manner in which the classes were conducted.