

In the district high schools in which a rural course is in operation the teachers are becoming more efficient, and the practical work in the laboratory and in the garden is showing improvement year by year. The last competition for the Board's B Senior Scholarships—those reserved for scholars taking this course—was the keenest yet held, and the general average of marks given for practical work was very satisfactory. This course, however, labours under several disadvantages, one of which is the difficulty of obtaining teachers properly equipped for this particular work. In answer to the Board's last advertisement for vacancies in the secondary departments of these schools only a few applications from graduates were received, and, while the literary attainments of some of the applicants were satisfactory, their knowledge of science was not such as to qualify them to give efficient instruction in a course largely scientific. A remedy for this is an increase in the salaries offered for this branch of the work, but until the training colleges and the University colleges train more students in science even this remedy will be only partial. Another disadvantage under which rural scholars labour is that in competitive examinations such as that for positions in the Civil Service many of the science subjects of the course are not marked as highly as some of the literary subjects, which scholars from institutions adopting mainly a literary or grammar-school programme can take in place of these science subjects in the competition. In the programme lately issued for the Civil Service Junior Examination, agriculture, a subject which should receive especial encouragement in a country like New Zealand, carries fewer marks than some languages the teaching of which would be of little value to many of the scholars in our country districts. In spite of these disadvantages the results of the examinations, both Civil Service and Matriculation, show that our secondary teachers are doing very good work. Further encouragement would be given to the rural course if specialized schools of agriculture were established; but at present, as far as the North Island is concerned, there is no higher institution where a student of agriculture can receive the training he requires. The itinerant teachers of agricultural science, drawing, woodwork, cookery, and dressmaking in these schools have done good work, and it is to their untiring efforts that much of the improvement in the practical part of the programme is due.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE WELLINGTON TECHNICAL COLLEGE.

The year 1912 has been one of steady progress and consolidation of the work of the school with the changed conditions due to changes in the Government regulations. These changes have so far been beneficial to the school and the students, especially in making more advanced teaching more nearly self-supporting and in encouraging students to take grouped courses.

The total number of those who have joined classes at the school was very nearly the same as in the previous year, the difference being less than ten. The total number of students who received instruction has, however, increased by over 130, or nearly 8 per cent., the increase being mainly due to the College supplying the instruction in drawing to students of the Training College and to teachers attending Saturday morning classes. The number of class entries in the evening classes has, however, largely increased, due to the students taking grouped courses more readily than in the previous year. Thus while the number of students has been practically at the same mark as in the previous year, which was a record for the College, the number of class entries is about 14 per cent. greater. The general education, commercial, engineering, and science classes, in that order, showed the greatest increases.

As regards the relative numbers of free and paying students, the numbers of paying students are fewer and the number of free students greater than in the previous year, the increase in the one balancing the decrease in the other. On the other hand, while the fees for the several classes have remained the same, the total fees received were slightly higher than in the previous year, showing that they were taking more classes on the average than in the previous year. The average fees paid amounted to about £1 3s. per student for the year. This means an average of about one and a half classes per student for the whole year. Many of the paying students, however, merely attend for one or two winter quarters. The total numbers of students who took grouped courses and attended sufficiently regularly to earn the higher rates of capitation were as follows: Elementary commercial, 167; higher commercial, 80; science and mathematics, 45; trades, 228; domestic, 38; art and art crafts, 74; "Amokura" classes, 55; total, 687. Adding to this the students in the day Technical School—243 in number—the number of students who took a reasonably satisfactory course was 930 out of 1,408, a percentage of 66.

As far as free-place students are concerned, very few failed to earn the grouped-course capitation. Out of 746 paying students, 289—i.e., about 39 per cent.—took a grouped course and made sufficient attendances to earn higher capitation. Many of those who did not take a grouped course were, however, satisfactory students, in that they were attending for special training in special classes, such as sanitary science, veterinary science, wool-classing, French, Latin, book-keeping, steam, special art subjects, &c. The results indicate, as usual, that the free-place students, on the whole, are better attenders than the paying students. It may be expected that this feature of the school-work will persist and possibly become more pronounced, since the free-place pupils naturally include a higher percentage of those who are really interested in learning. On the other hand, a larger proportion of the free students attend with the object of preparing for examinations, and the moderate compulsion due to this has doubtless a considerable share in improving their attendance. The healthful influence of such compulsion is seen in the case of the plumbing classes, where the majority of the paying students take a satisfactory grouped course. In spite of the general improvement in attendance which I have reported for the last few years there is still ample room for further improvement, and this as much in earnestness of study as in actual attendance at class.

Art classes: The year has, I think, been one of steady progress. Results obtained in the National Competitions in London show that the work is improving in quality, and that the school occupies a respectable position among the other schools, British and colonial, represented