

concerned. In New Zealand legislative provision for compulsory attendance has been in existence for seven years, but the fact remains that last year "compulsory regulations" were operative in only seventeen school districts, confined to four education districts, all in the North Island. As illustrating the trend of thought in England on this important question, reference may be made to the report, recently published, of the Departmental Committee set up by the British Board of Education on juvenile education in relation to employment after the war. Of the twenty-one recommendations made by the Committee one of the most significant is as follows: "That it be an obligation upon all young persons between fourteen and eighteen years of age to attend such day continuation classes as may be prescribed for them by the local education authorities during a number of hours to be fixed by statute, which should not be less than eight hours a week for forty weeks in the year." Certain exceptions are made which need not be detailed here. The Committee points to numerous examples of experiments in "time off" by prominent business firms in England as evidence that the trend of thought amongst employers gives reasonable ground for the hope that a more general reform in the direction in which they themselves point will be met with sympathy and co-operation. The recommendations of the Committee as a whole may well be kept in view here in New Zealand as constituting an ideal to be gradually worked to as local circumstances and conditions permit, not the least important of these being the attitude of the people as to what they intend to make of their boys and girls through the forces of industry and society.

#### GENERAL.

The work of the schools and classes has proceeded satisfactorily considering the many unavoidable hindrances and disabilities arising out of the war. The ranks of the teaching staff and of the students have been thinned by numerous departures for the front. The published lists of distinction for bravery, initiative, and resource, and of killed, and wounded, include the names of many instructors and students. When the time arrives for reviewing New Zealand's effort in the cause of freedom it will be found that the technical schools, in common with other educational institutions, have responded well to the continued calls for reinforcements. As was to be expected, the returns for the year show for the first time a falling-off in the attendance at evening classes, while the technical high schools show a small increase, and this in spite of the demand for young people to take the places of those who have enlisted. The total number of students in attendance at all schools and classes was 19,691, a decrease of 511. In the circumstances such an attendance must be regarded as very satisfactory. The total number of students receiving free education under Government regulations or as holders of local scholarships and free places was 7,574, an increase of 591. The practical interest hitherto taken by local bodies, industrial organizations, and others in technical education has been continued in face of the many and increasing demands on the pockets of the community. Contributions in money from the above sources (carrying a Government subsidy of £1 for £1) totalled £4,200 for the year.

The school authorities have, for obvious reasons, considerably refrained from making application for grants for other than urgent requirements in the way of necessary buildings and equipment. Consequently, the amount (£4,040) distributed in the shape of Government grants was very much less than usual; in the previous year £13,461 was distributed. The number of buildings specially designed and equipped for technical instruction is now about sixty. Where such buildings have not yet been provided (*e.g.*, in remote centres) use is made of the local public schools or of suitable rented buildings. During the year classes were held at twenty-nine such centres in Taranaki, at sixteen in Wanganui and Canterbury, at twelve in Otago, and at seven in Auckland and Southland, and in smaller numbers in the remaining three education districts.