

so being 279 more than last year. The attendance at commercial and general courses shows an increase of 14 per cent., and at industrial courses of 4 per cent.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE EDUCATION UNDER THE REGULATIONS FOR FREE PLACES.

			1915.			1916.		
			Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Junior free pupils	First year	..	850	501	1,351	820	596	1,416
	Second year	..	549	358	907	534	418	952
Senior free pupils	First year	..	447	348	795	433	354	787
	Second year	..	305	262	567	310	273	583
	Third year	..	162	109	271	175	147	322
Totals	..	..	2,313	1,578	3,891	2,272	1,788	4,060

Nearly 25 per cent. of the total number of students in attendance at classes held free places as above. The total number of junior free pupils was 2,368, an increase of 110, and of senior free pupils 1,692, an increase of 59. Over 50 per cent. of the students who entered technical classes as first-year junior free pupils in 1915 continued to attend in 1916. Of the total number of senior free pupils in their first year over 35 per cent. had previously completed two years at technical classes as junior free pupils. The remaining 65 per cent. had previously attended technical high schools, secondary schools, or district high schools. In addition to students holding Government free places, 310 students held scholarships or free places provided locally.

Regulations requiring the attendance of young persons between the ages of fourteen and seventeen who are not otherwise receiving a suitable education or who are not specially exempted from attendance were in force in ten school districts in Auckland, in three in Wanganui and Taranaki respectively, and in one in Hawke's Bay. The number of students attending under these regulations was 1,219, an increase of 361. Of this number, 654 were males. Returned soldiers to the number of 70 were admitted to free education under regulations gazetted last year providing for the free education of duly accredited returned soldiers at technical schools. Although, as was confidently expected, the school authorities offered facilities up to the limit of their available resources, the attendance was much below expectations. It is not difficult to advance reasons for what appears to be a meagre response on the part of the soldiers. For example, many of them being men of good education do not stand in need of further education, and are able to take up or return to profitable employment. Again, the courses of work at technical schools are not designed to enable students quickly to become proficient in the technique of a particular trade or industry and put them in a short time in the way of commanding good wages. Yet another cogent reason is the unavoidable disturbing effect which the sudden change from civil to military life must have on the individual. If, presently, it is found that there is any considerable number of returned soldiers who desire and stand in need of further industrial training, means must be found for giving them such training either at selected technical schools prepared, with the assistance of grants if necessary, to specialize in particular trades or industries, or, possibly, at one or more special institutions.

The following technical schools had roll numbers of 500 and over, exclusive of the technical high schools carried on in connection with some of them :—

School.	Roll Number.	
	1915.	1916.
Auckland Technical College	1,451	1,329
Christchurch Technical College	1,156	1,225
Wellington Technical College	1,163	1,207
Dunedin Technical College	1,277	1,204
Wanganui Technical College	984	814
Palmerston North Technical School	566	673
Dunedin School of Art	535	560