

No. 3.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION IN THE SEVERAL EDUCATION DISTRICTS.

AUCKLAND.

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

Technical High School.—The school continues to increase in popularity, the number of pupils enrolled for 1916 being 508, as against 464 in the previous year. Courses of instruction were provided as follows: For boys—agriculture, business training, science and technology, and engineering; for girls—business training and domestic science.

The agricultural course, which is intended specially to attract sons of farmers, and also the boy from the town who desires to make his living on the land, was taken by sixty-one pupils—forty-one first-year, seventeen second-year, and two third-year. The practical work at the experimental paddock at Otahuhu was in charge of Mr. F. E. Ward, diplômé of the Hawkesbury Agricultural College, who temporarily took Mr. Donnan's place whilst he was away at the front. Excellent work was done by Mr. Ward, but at the end of the year he enlisted. Fortunately, Hawkesbury College again came to the rescue, the Principal, Mr. G. H. Potts, agreeing to send over to us his son, Mr. G. G. Potts, who was a diplômé in agriculture and also in dairying of the College, and who was medically unfit for military service. By this means the work of this important course will be carried on under efficient supervision. The annual camp for second-year students was held at the end of the year at the Government Experimental Farm at Ruakura. The Manager did everything in his power for the comfort and well-being of the students, and most valuable instruction was received.

The business-training course, which aims at providing, in addition to a good general education, special training to boys and girls who intend to take up a business career, was again the most popular in the school, the number of students enrolled being 252, as against 227 of the previous year. This number was made up as follows: Boys—first year, 40; second year, 80; third year, 1; girls—first year, 121; second year, 52; third year, 17; and fourth year, 3. Owing to the dearth of male clerks, who were away on active service, there was a greater demand than ever for well-qualified students in business training.

The domestic-science course is designed to supplement the home training which girls usually receive, and to better fit them for the duties of the home-maker, whilst their general education is not lost sight of. The number of girls taking this course last year was fifty, being five less than that of the previous year. Excellent work was done in cookery, needlework, dressmaking and millinery, but the course still suffers very much on account of the lack of real practice in housewifery and laundry-work, such as would be provided in a hostel or house attached to the College. The second-year students again attended the Campbell Creche and received practical instruction in the care and feeding of infants from the Matron, who spares neither time nor energy in making this part of the girls' course a thorough success.

The science and technological course, which provides a preliminary two-years training for boys who intend to take up a trade or profession such as building, plumbing, cabinetmaking, engineering, &c., or for those who wish to take up a specialized course at the College in the various branches of engineering, was again well attended, the number of students being 126—eighty-four first-year and forty-two second-year—against 120 in 1915. Before students are admitted to the engineering course they must receive at least two years' training in our science and technological course, or in a high school. The number of students attending last year was nineteen, as compared with seventeen in 1915. In addition to providing training for those who wish to take up civil, mechanical, or electrical engineering, the curriculum covers the work required for the Public Service Senior Examination.

In the Senior National Scholarship Examination one scholarship was obtained, while seven students passed, two with credit. Nine students passed the Public Service Entrance Examination, two with credit, and two passed the Intermediate Examination. In the City and Guilds of London Institute examination fourteen successes were obtained, and three in the examination of the Board of Education, South Kensington, London. 109 students were awarded senior free places by the Education Department.

The most disappointing feature is the period of time for which students attend. About 50 per cent. of the students who enter the school leave at the end of the first year. It is true that a fair number of these continue at evening classes, but the majority are quite content with one year's post-primary education. The longer I live the more I am convinced that it is practically a waste of time and money for students to attend a technical high school for one year only. In my opinion parents should be required to enter into a bond for the minimum attendance of two years. One of the causes that mitigate against longer attendance at technical high schools is that the time spent there does not count as part of the apprenticeship in the case of students who afterwards enter a trade such as engineering. Many parents would be quite prepared to keep their boys at school until eighteen or nineteen years of age provided there would be a