

WANGANUI.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

Technical and Continuation Classes.—Classes were held at Wanganui, Wanganui East, Patea, Marton, Taihape, Mangaweka, Apiti, Ashhurst, Bunnythorpe, Feilding, Halcombe, Glen Oroua, Hunterville, Ohakune, Pohangina, Raetihi, Rangiwhia, Rangataua, and Rongotea. The enrolments totalled 4,313, the number of individual students being 1,931. These figures show a decrease of 1,204 and 697 respectively compared with the numbers at the end of 1915. This is to a large extent accounted for by the fact that the portion of the district transferred to the Taranaki Education Board included a number of centres at which technical education had made considerable progress, particularly Hawera and Eltham.

Very successful classes were inaugurated in the Main Trunk district, the most successful being at Raetihi, at which centre the residents are taking steps to secure a site for a building. The effects of the war were felt especially in the trade classes, where there was a marked falling-off in the attendance, and also in the number of male students. The number of students taking the commercial course, however, showed a decided increase.

At the Feilding Technical School classes covering a wide range of subjects were held. Eighty-nine free-place pupils attended. At the Senior Free Place Examination fifteen candidates qualified, and for certificates in book-keeping offered by the Board six passed in the preliminary and three in the junior grade. Lectures on fruit-culture and poultry-rearing respectively were delivered by Messrs. Pierce and Brown, of the Agricultural Department. The school again showed up well in athletics by winning the junior football competition and the Rogers Cup. The initial steps for the establishment of a technical high school at this centre have recently been taken.

Classes in nine subjects were conducted at the Marton Technical School. This school promises well for the coming year. At Taihape only one class was held. This centre possesses a good building, but there is a decided lack of interest. Apiti still continues to be an active centre, there being seventy individual students on the roll. A good commencement was made with classes at Patea, but these closed down after running for one term. Dressmaking was a popular subject at all centres, no less than 281 pupils attending, excluding those on the roll of the Wanganui Technical College. Despite the fact that expert instructresses were available, only twenty-one students outside of Wanganui took up the study of cookery.

Compulsory Continuation Classes.—There has been no cause to regret the Board's action in bringing section 124 of the Act into operation. Classes under this clause were held at Wanganui, Wanganui East, and Pohangina, the number of pupils being 257. At the beginning of the current year the section became operative in the Feilding and Marton districts. Reports to hand show that those who were required to attend quickly fell into line, and that in no case was it necessary to take proceedings to enforce attendance. In connection with the classes at Wanganui and Wanganui East eighty-three warnings were issued to parents by the Truant Officer. It was found necessary to take proceedings in thirteen cases. Seven convictions were recorded, four cases were withdrawn, and two dismissed. Court proceedings are instituted only when all other means of inducing regular attendance fail.

Wanganui Technical College.—The number of pupils who enrolled in the Technical High School was 250, compared with 194 for the previous year. The capitation for the Technical High School showed an increase of £734. In the evening classes the number of individual students was 735, which was about the same as for 1915. There was a slight increase in the capitation earned. The total number of individual students attending the College was therefore 985. In addition about 500 primary-school pupils attended for instruction in woodwork and domestic science, and some forty-five teachers attended Saturday classes. The total number provided for was thus over 1,500.

A boys' hostel was opened by the Director, some eighteen boys taking up residence there. Since the College reopened this year the number of boys has increased to twenty-six. A girls' hostel has recently been opened under the supervision of a lady member of the College staff. The number of girls in residence is fourteen. Country pupils are thus for the present provided with suitable homes, but the time is not far distant when the question of erecting suitable buildings for the accommodation of boys and girls from the country districts will have to be faced. The figures quoted above show that the College is making solid progress, but the question of finance always looms large, and the strictest economy has to be observed in order that the expenses may be kept within the income. The following are excerpts from the Director's annual report:—

The staff on the whole has done excellent work during the year, and I feel that much of our increase in numbers is due to their loyal efforts to maintain the efficiency of the teaching.

The courses of study have not been altered. We have, however, made it possible for pupils in the commercial, engineering, and agricultural courses to enter for public examinations, and this has tended to give the boys and girls more interest in their work and a more definite objective. Now that the General Council of Education has given its official verdict that the courses in operation here are those most desirable for every secondary school there is some reason to hope that the Public Service Commissioner and the University Senate will recognize technical courses by adopting their subjects for the Public Service Junior and the Matriculation Examinations, and that Government Departments will give a substantial recognition to the product of our technical courses. Something in this direction has already been done. In its examination for third marine engineers' certificates the Marine Department has given a substantial and valuable recognition to boys who attend the engineering courses, while the Public Service Commissioner has also notified that he is prepared to recognize the training given in the engineering course to boys who wish to enter the Lands and Survey Department as draughting cadets. Boys who have