

subjects dealt with included agriculture, dairy-work, wool-sorting, shearing, and orchard-work. Classes for the instruction of farmers in subjects bearing directly on the agricultural and dairying industries, and in some cases in subjects relating to the keeping of accounts, were conducted in some districts by itinerant instructors. In the Taranaki District alone "farmers'" classes were held at no fewer than forty centres. That the value of the instruction is recognized is indicated by the attendance, and by the sums contributed by the farmers to the funds of the classes.

There was an increase of eighteen in the number of classes for domestic subjects. The special courses in home science and domestic arts at the Otago University continue to meet with satisfactory support. The number of students in attendance during the year was forty-one, of whom twenty-five were prospective teachers of domestic subjects holding Government bursaries. Of these bursars eighteen took the course for the Degree of Bachelor of Science in home science, and seven took the course for the diploma. Payments totalling £1,548 were made by the Government on account of home-science bursaries, being an average payment of £62 per bursar. Twenty-two students have on the completion of their courses been appointed to positions in various schools in the Dominion.

An increase is shown in the number of students taking up courses of instruction in related subjects bearing on particular occupations. Courses of this kind were provided at fifty centres. Provision is made for payments of capitation at higher rates (varying from 3d. to 8d. per hour attendance) in respect of students attending approved courses occupying not less than four hours a week and eighty hours a year.

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

			1916.			1917.		
			Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
Junior free pupils	First year	..	820	596	1,416	806	610	1,416
	Second year	..	534	418	952	461	450	911
Senior free pupils	First year	..	433	354	787	394	413	807
	Second year	..	310	273	583	265	268	533
	Third year	..	175	147	322	145	165	310
Totals	..	..	2,272	1,788	4,060	2,071	1,906	3,977

Nearly 22 per cent. of the total number of students in attendance at classes held free places under the Government regulations. The total number of junior free pupils shows a decrease of forty-one, as compared with the number for 1916; and the total number of senior free pupils shows a decrease of forty-two. 364 students held scholarships or free places provided locally.

By an amendment to the regulations for technical instruction towards the end of the year a modification in the standard of qualification required for free admission to technical classes was introduced whereby free places could be awarded on the recommendation of an Inspector of Schools to pupils who, being over fourteen years of age, were not otherwise qualified for a free place. Such pupils on their admission to technical classes are required to take subjects of instruction bearing directly on a trade or industry or on domestic occupations. There are indications that advantage is likely to be taken to a considerable extent of the wider facilities thus afforded pupils for free education at technical schools.

Regulations for the compulsory attendance of young persons at continuation classes were brought into operation during the year in three additional school districts. The number of students attending classes under these regulations was as follows :—

Auckland Education District	..	..	454	students in 11 school districts.
Taranaki Education District	..	..	225	„ 3 „
Wanganui Education District	..	..	498	„ 5 „
Hawke's Bay Education District	..	..	157	„ 1 „
Total	..	..	1,334	„ 20 „