

No. 2.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION IN THE SEVERAL EDUCATION DISTRICTS

AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

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

Technical High School.—The school aims at providing for boys and girls who have passed the Sixth Standard of the primary school a modern secondary education which will at the end of three or four years prepare them to commence earning their living, or for the continuation of higher studies at a technical or University college. Unfortunately, a very small percentage of the pupils take even a three-years course at the school, only about 50 per cent. of those enrolling annually continuing even for a second-year course. This is no doubt due in many cases to parents being unable to afford to keep their children longer at school, and with the high wages now offered for juvenile labour—often, I am sorry to say, in “blind alley” occupations—so that rather than remain at school they prefer to go to work, and thus have the spending of sometimes not an inconsiderable portion of their earnings. I am frequently informed by parents that they “would much prefer John (or Mary, as the case may be) to remain at school, but he wants to go to work, so what can I do?”

Frequently in cases where boys intend to learn a trade, such as engineering, parents would be prepared to give their sons three or four years at the school if it were not for the fact that none of the time spent there counts as part of the apprenticeship, and for a boy to serve a full apprenticeship of five or six years after he is seventeen or eighteen years of age is naturally distasteful alike to boy and parent.

The number of pupils enrolled in the High School last year was 541—273 girls and 268 boys—as compared with 508 in 1916—243 girls and 265 boys. That the school is filling a public want is, I think, indicated by the steady annual increase in the number of pupils since its inception in 1906, and by the great demand by employers for our students.

Last year it became increasingly difficult to find accommodation for the day pupils, and the only way of doing so was by making the classes as large as the class-rooms would possibly hold, and even after this had been done it was necessary to refuse admission to a number of applicants. This meant that boys and girls who had earned their right to a free place at the school were denied the privilege, and were compelled either to content themselves with evening classes at the school or to attend other secondary schools and take up a course of training which they did not desire and for which probably they were not fitted either by tastes or faculties.

The Board is to be heartily congratulated on the action it took towards the end of last year in calling for tenders for the levelling of the grounds attached to the school and for the erection of a modern swimming-bath. Previously, on account of the configuration of the ground, which consisted entirely of hills and gullies, there was practically no playground (other than the flat roof for girls) for either boys or for girls. When the work is completed, and the iron building now used as a woodwork department is replaced by an up-to-date workshop block, excellent level playgrounds will be available for both boys and girls, whilst the swimming-bath, which will be a tepid one, will satisfy a long-felt want.

The courses of instruction provided in the Technical High School last year were as follows: For girls—business training, and domestic science; for boys—agriculture, business training, science and technology, and engineering. Whilst over 80 per cent. of the girls took the business-training course, over 75 per cent. of the boys were receiving training to fit them to enter trades, professions, or agricultural pursuits, less than 25 per cent. taking up business training.

The school was as successful as in previous years in external examinations. In the City and Guilds of London Institute examinations twenty-two certificates were obtained, twelve of these being in mechanical engineering. Two pupils obtained Junior National Scholarships, whilst fourteen passed the Public Service Entrance Examination, and twelve the Intermediate. 138 students were awarded senior free places by the Education Department. Four students who had completed three years' training in the domestic-science course and who wished eventually to become domestic-science teachers entered for two or more groups of the Teachers' D Examination. Of these one obtained a pass in four groups, and the other three in two groups.

During the year the school suffered a great loss by the death of Lieutenant A. V. Donnan, late instructor in agriculture, who died of wounds in France in June last.

Evening and Special Day Classes.—These classes were held as in previous years. The number of individual students in attendance was 1,218. Thirty-three students were successful in passing examinations of the City and Guilds of London Institute, two passed the Public Service Senior Examination, five the Public Service Entrance, and one the Intermediate. In the Matriculation Examination of the University of New Zealand five students passed the examination, three obtained partial passes, and three who had previously obtained partial passes completed the examination. Six students were successful in the A Examination of the Pharmacy Board of New Zealand, and