

## WANGANUI DISTRICT.

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

Classes were held at Alton, Apiti, Ashhurst, Bunnythorpe, Feilding, Foxton, Glen Oroua, Halcombe, Hunterville, Kiwitea, Marton, Ohakune, Pohangina, Rongotea, Raetihi, Rangiwhia, Taihape, Utiku, Wanganui, and Wanganui East, a total of twenty centres. The enrolments totalled 3,614, and the number of individual students 1,588. Compared with 1916, these figures show a decrease of 699 in the enrolments and 343 in the number of individual students. The subjects which showed a marked decrease in numbers were English, arithmetic, typewriting, vocal music, telegraphy, art, cookery, ambulance and home nursing, woodwork, motor and mechanical engineering, and electric wiring. Increased numbers attended day classes and classes in plumbing, mechanical drawing, steam-engines, agriculture and horticulture, magnetism and electricity, chemistry and home science, economics, French, Latin, art needlework, and millinery. There is no doubt that the war is responsible for the decrease in the number of adult male students.

At the Feilding Technical School the enrolments totalled 960. Sixty-seven were free-place pupils, sixty-nine attended under the compulsory clause of the Act, and seven were discharged soldiers. To enable the discharged soldiers to carry out practical work in connection with the subjects chosen by them arrangements were made with local firms for the use of their workshops. Eleven students passed the annual examination for senior free places, three gained certificates of proficiency, and fifteen passed the Board's examination for certificates in book-keeping. The General Council of Education recommended the establishment of a technical high school at this centre when a suitable site was secured. It is expected that the efforts of the Technical School Committee in this direction will be successful. The compulsory clause of the Act came into operation at the beginning of the year and ran very smoothly. Practically every compulsory student took a course of instruction which had a direct bearing on the occupation in which he was engaged.

At Marton the Technical School had a most successful year, the number of enrolments being 505. The compulsory clause of the Act came into operation, and eighty-eight students were enrolled in consequence. Considerable opposition to the idea of compulsory attendance was shown in past years, but this has disappeared, and there was hardly a suggestion of friction during the year. The Technical School Committee and the Director worked hard to ensure the smooth working of the compulsory classes by providing instruction to meet the needs and inclinations of all, and by spreading and putting into action the idea that the classes are not regarded so much as compulsory but as free classes. A conveniently fitted-up cloak-room for ladies was added to the school, and the boys in the woodwork class fitted the workshop with shelves and made furniture for the office. The grounds were nicely laid out in lawns, flower-beds, and shrubberies, and the appearance of the school was thereby vastly improved.

*Wanganui Technical School.*—The roll number of the day school was 270, which is considerably higher than in any previous year. In 1915 it was 190, and in 1916 250. As at other centres, there was a decrease in the number of adult students. The number of individual students was 630, as compared with 735 in 1916. There were many changes in the staff. The Board was, however, fortunately able to secure well-qualified teachers to fill the vacancies.

The following are the numbers of pupils who passed the various examinations: Matriculation, fourteen; Public Service Entrance, thirteen; Senior National Scholarships, two scholarships won (one boy gained highest marks for the Dominion); Junior National Scholarships, three scholarships won (one boy gained highest marks for the district); Public Service Commissioner's Typists' Examination, one senior grade, fourteen junior grade; Education Board's Speed Short-hand and Typewriting Examination, eight passed at rates of 70 to 120 words per minute in shorthand, and nine passed at 26 to 35 words per minute in typewriting; Education Board's Book-keeping Examination, sixteen senior grade, twenty-five junior grade, and three preliminary grade.

The Boys' Hostel was continued, the average roll being twenty-four. A Girls' Hostel was opened in charge of a member of the school staff. It provides accommodation for the lady teachers as well as for country girl students. The hostels are very important auxiliaries to the school. The present buildings are too small to meet requirements, and it is unfortunate that this lack of accommodation should have necessitated the turning-away of a number of intending students from country districts.

The sports activities of the school were fully maintained, and in the various competitions the boys' teams were very successful.

The Department authorized a considerable sum for the purchase of apparatus and for the erection of a carpentry workshop and a motor-engineering shop. The latter is already too small. It provides means for a needed extension of the engineering department, and it is hoped that a grant for its enlargement will be available in the near future.

*Compulsory Continuation Classes.*—Classes under section 124 of the Act were held at Wanganui, Feilding, and Marton, and at the beginning of the current year were instituted at Taihape. A proposal to bring the clause into operation in Ohakune is being considered by the local Committee. The Board has had no cause to regret its action in 1912 in making a commencement with the compulsory system. The Truant Officer issued twenty-three summonses to defaulters in Wanganui. In the thirteen cases which came before the Court convictions were recorded. At Feilding a few warning notices were sent out. At Marton it was not even necessary to issue a single warning. It has been the experience of those in charge of the classes that once the pupils become interested in their work the element of compulsion disappears. Many compulsory pupils have made excellent students.

Saturday classes for the training of teachers in agricultural science were held at Wanganui, Feilding, and Taihape. A winter school was held at Wanganui in June. Teachers' Saturday art classes were regularly conducted at Feilding, Wanganui, and Taihape. The syllabus for teachers'