

The number of students in attendance at technical high schools during the year was as follows :—

Technical High School.						Number of Students.	
						1918.	1919.
Christchurch	..	..	..	..	..	532	596
Auckland	..	..	..	..	..	595	587
Dunedin	..	..	..	..	..	422	435
Wellington	..	..	..	..	..	414	405
Invercargill	..	..	..	..	..	297	300
Wanganui	..	..	..	..	..	258	300
Napier	..	..	..	..	..	203	275
Westport	..	..	..	..	..	26	28
						2,747	2,926

The enrolment for the year shows an increase of 179 pupils over the number for the previous year. The increase in attendance for the five years ending December, 1919, was 59 per cent. for the technical high schools. The increase for 1919 was below the average, and less than half the gain in 1918, which was abnormally high. Of the total number in attendance 786, or nearly 55 per cent. of the boys received training preparatory to entering the mechanical and electrical engineering and allied trades, while 1,635 boys and girls took the commercial or the general course.

The numbers of pupils taking up the various courses provided were as follows :—

Course.						Number of Pupils.		Total.
						Boys.	Girls.	
Industrial	..	..	..	..	..	786	..	786
Commercial and general	..	..	..	..	..	448	1,187	1,635
Domestic	..	..	..	..	..	..	297	297
Agriculture	..	..	..	..	..	203	..	203
Art	..	..	..	..	..	1	4	5
Totals						1,438	1,488	2,926

It is interesting to note that the numbers of boys taking commercial (or general) courses and of those taking industrial courses are in approximately the same proportion as the numbers of breadwinners in the Dominion in these two classes, 66·3 per cent. of the total number of male breadwinners in the industrial and commercial classes of the community belong to the industrial class, and 63·6 per cent. of the boys attending in the commercial (including general) courses and the industrial course took the latter course. In the case of agriculture, however, the number of boys attending is much less than the importance of the occupation and the number of breadwinners engaged would warrant. It is, however, to be remembered in this connection that the number of boys taking agricultural science in district high schools is not included in this return. The establishment of technical high schools in country centres should tend to correct this anomaly, and it is hoped that in time the present apparent bias towards town occupations will disappear, and that the boys will be distributed in the various courses in the same relative proportions as the breadwinners in their corresponding classes.

In the case of the girls the proportion taking the commercial and general courses is much greater, being nearly 80 per cent. of the total number of girls attending. Most of the girls who take up commercial occupations do not continue in employment for many years. For this reason the courses for girls all include a substantial proportion of training in subjects relating to the home. Commercial training and business experience are necessarily of value to the housewife, and if the training in home occupations included with the commercial course is sufficiently good, there does not appear to be any reason for discouraging girls from taking this course, which enables them to maintain themselves until such time as they are called upon to manage a home of their own, and if the course is well balanced, will also make them more efficient and capable housewives.

Capitation amounting to £41,113 was earned in respect of 2,926 pupils (of whom 2,754 were free pupils), as compared with £32,474 in 1918 in respect of 2,747 pupils.