

## WANGANUI DISTRICT.

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

There were on the staff at the close of the year, apart from instructors of evening classes, twenty-five permanent Supervisors, Directors, and instructors, and three part-time instructors. Two members of the permanent staff who had been on active service had not resumed duty.

Classes were held at Ashhurst, Bull's, Feilding, Marton, Ohakune, Pohangina, Rongotea, Taihape, and Wanganui. The enrolments totalled 3,005, and the individual students 1,448.

*Feilding Technical School.*—The enrolments were 1,023, and the number of individual students 345. Eighty-four were free-place pupils, eighty-one compulsory students, and six were discharged soldiers. The purchase of an additional 10 acres for the proposed technical high school was completed, and the title to the 20 acres handed over to the Board by the Technical School Committee. Plans for the building have been prepared, and it is expected that a commencement will be made with the erection shortly. As soon as this matter is settled, plans of the proposed hostel will be gone on with. It is hoped that both buildings will be ready for occupation within twelve months from date. The site is an excellent one. The new school will relieve the present unsatisfactory conditions under which the Technical School pupils and the pupils of the secondary department of the District High School are taught.

*Marton Technical School.*—This school made considerable progress, the enrolments exceeding those of the previous year by almost one hundred. Thirteen were free-place pupils, fifty were compulsory students, and five were returned soldiers. Application has been made for a grant for the erection of a workshop for classes in plumbing and motor engineering.

A movement is on foot at this centre to secure a site for a technical high school. The time is perhaps not quite ripe for the establishment of such an institution, but it would nevertheless be a wise policy to obtain sufficient land for the purpose now, as it will probably be more difficult and costly to do so in a few years.

*Taihape Technical School.*—At Taihape there was a decrease in the numbers. Fifty-three were compulsory students and one held a free place. Successful work at this centre is hampered by the difficulty of obtaining suitable instructors in some subjects.

*Other Centres.*—Classes in five subjects were held at Ohakune for the first half of the year, and were then discontinued owing to the small attendance. Classes in dressmaking only were held at Ashhurst, Bull's, Pohangina, and Rongotea.

*Wanganui Technical School.*—The numbers in attendance at the day school were 300, and exceeded those of any previous year, having almost doubled in the last five years. The increase is due partly to the rapid growth of the town and partly to the establishment of boys' and girls' hostels in connection with the school.

The steady growth in the roll numbers has made possible the employment of a full-time highly qualified staff; and the five courses of instruction—General High School, commercial, engineering, domestic, and agricultural—are all taken by a sufficient number of pupils to make the courses sound ones. It has been the policy of the day school to provide in all courses a sound secondary education, giving, in the technical courses such vocational bias as will tend to stimulate the real interest of the pupils in the elementary principles lying at the foundation of their future callings. In each course except the domestic the pupils are encouraged to take the Public Service Entrance and higher examinations, and the syllabus of instruction is arranged with that object in view.

The epidemic affected considerably the results at public examinations. Nevertheless, as compared with other years, we have reason to be satisfied with last year's achievements, amongst the best of which were—(a) Pass in four subjects of the Bachelor of Commerce course; (b) Public Service Entrance—third and fifth for New Zealand; (c) pass in shorthand at 120 words a minute, and in typewriting at fifty words a minute.

The interest of both boys and girls in their school sports has been fully maintained. The boys' cricket team won the junior grade in last season's Cricket Association competitions, and their football team was well up in the football contests. The interest in house matches has been exceptionally keen throughout the year, and this has done much to raise the standard of achievement, which has been higher than at any time during the past five years.

An endeavour has been made this year by the establishment of a school council to promote some measure of self-government among our boys and girls. The members of the council have taken up their disciplinary duties in class-room and playground in the proper spirit, and I believe the school as a whole recognizes their authority with becoming loyalty. If the council has done good it is largely due to the head girl and the head boy. It is expected that the council will promote interest in public speaking, will focus attention on desirable improvements, and will provide a recruiting-ground for prefects; but above all it is hoped that it will create a wholesome public opinion which will resent dishonourable conduct, and by this means raise the general tone of the school.

Under the will of the late Miss Alexander the school is endowed with an income of £150 per annum for the provision of scholarships. The value of the scholarship is £50 each per annum, payable to pupils selected for training for positions as teachers in commercial, engineering, domestic, and agricultural courses. This scheme will make it possible for our best students to remain at school long enough to enable them to qualify for bursaries in domestic science, engineering, and agriculture at Otago University, Canterbury College, and Lincoln College. The scholarships will be beneficial not only to the pupils, but to the College and to the cause of technical education in general. They should also be the means of bringing matriculated students into our technical courses and so strengthening them. The students are not obliged to take up teaching, but the object of the scholarships is to encourage them to do so.

An important side of the school, the Boys' Hostel, continues to develop, the enrolments for 1920 being over forty. Provision will be made by the Government for more extensive premises, and steps are now being taken to find a suitable site.

The inauguration of a Past Students' Association during this year has been successfully accomplished. This association has taken an active part in the campaign to provide the school with a Memorial Hall. School traditions are slow in developing, but as the number of our old boys and girls increase there is a steady growth of that love of school and desire to help it on to a