

TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS.

The number of technical high schools was increased by one during the year 1919. The statistics for this school are, however, included in those for technical classes, as the establishment did not take place at the beginning of the year.

The steady growth of these institutions and the constant demand for new schools of this type afford some evidence that they serve a useful purpose in the Dominion, and so long as their aims remain primarily educational, and the material content of their courses is used to train the intelligence and develop the aptitudes of the pupils, and to prepare them in every respect for their future duties as good and useful citizens, there is little doubt that their close connection with the occupations of the people possesses considerable advantages.

Not the least of these advantages is that the technical-high-school pupil on leaving the day classes to take up employment usually continues his studies for some years in the evening classes of the same institution, and thus receives a continuous training closely correlated with his occupation, and often under the same instructors, extending over the whole period of adolescence.

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.		
	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
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