

2. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

SIR,—

Education Department, Wellington, 14th August, 1923.

I have the honour to present a report on technical education in the Dominion for the year 1922.

The year was chiefly marked by a considerable increase in the numbers attending technical high schools, and a large decrease in the numbers of those regarded as attending technical classes, day and evening. This apparent decrease is largely due to the transfer of some two thousand pupils from technical to manual-training account, being young children from private schools admitted to classes in cookery and woodwork, &c., at technical schools and manual-training centres. A decrease of about nine hundred is due to the suspension of the regulations for the compulsory attendance of pupils at evening classes, about three hundred to the reduction in the numbers of returned soldiers taking classes, and probably the remaining fourteen hundred is due largely to the restrictions placed by the Department, for reasons of economy, on the establishment of classes for adults in such subjects as dressmaking and woodwork; though it is to be noted that a large increase in technical-high-school enrolment is often associated, as Mr. Marshall, Director of the Dunedin Technical School, has pointed out, with a corresponding decrease in evening-class numbers. It is also to be noted that the larger technical schools have maintained their numbers, except in one or two cases where reliance on compulsion left the school "in the air" when compulsion was removed.

I have to report that, in the main, the present arrangements for classifying teachers, for paying salaries, and for providing incidental expenses are satisfactory to all concerned, although some small amendments might be made with advantage when opportunity serves.

The rate of growth in the cost of technical education has been almost exactly the same as that in the total cost of education in the Dominion; and, as salaries and other expenses are on about the same relative scale as for other branches, it would appear that the natural increase of work is about the same also.

The expenditure on account of buildings has been exceptionally large during the past two or three years, on account of the necessity for erecting new technical high schools in several of the smaller towns, as well as providing a new school in Wellington, and considerable additions in Christchurch and Dunedin, besides new workshops in Auckland. Further demands will be made for additions at an early date to these new schools, which have filled up much more quickly than was anticipated, while all the larger schools are rapidly becoming overcrowded in spite of recent additions.

The following notes on the work of the year in the various technical schools are based largely on the reports of the Boards and Directors:—

AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

Capitation was paid to the Auckland University Council in respect of courses in engineering subjects, in which ninety-six students were enrolled. The students in engineering make considerable use of laboratory machines and apparatus which were obtained to enable students in the School of Architecture to take practical courses in strength of materials, hydraulics, and kindred subjects necessary to their professional training. Many of the engineering students study with the object of taking the professional examinations of the respective Institutes of Civil, Mechanical, and Electrical Engineering, and it will doubtless be necessary before long to allow these students to take at least part of their professional training for the University degrees in engineering in Auckland, in spite of the fact that one School of Engineering of University rank is already established in Christchurch and is capable of accommodating all the students likely to be offering in the Dominion for some years.

Capitation was also paid in respect of classes in commercial subjects, in which the number of students was 100. There appears to be no good reason why, in connection with these courses, and also with the course in architecture, the University College should not avail itself of the facilities offering at the Technical School and at the School of Art for training in practical subjects. In the case of architecture especially it would be to the advantage of the students to attend the Art School classes in life drawing and painting, in modelling, and probably also in crafts. In these classes the students would have the advantage of being trained by specialists, and also of meeting other students with whom as craftsmen they must later collaborate if the whole available knowledge and skill in the city are to be fully utilized in the design and construction of its buildings.

Through the resignation of Mr. George George, who had been in charge of the Auckland Technical School for nearly twenty years, and the appointment of Mr. G. J. Park, Director of Wanganui Technical School, in his place, considerable changes in the organization and curricula of the Technical High School were introduced at the end of the year, and the school is now offering six day courses on much the same lines as other technical high schools. Mr. R. McLaren, Chief Assistant in English, was appointed Acting-Director during the period of some months which elapsed before Mr. Park was free to take over the school. Mr. McLaren performed the heavy task allotted to him with skill and ability.

During the year a complete range of new workshops, occupying three floors of a new building, and including some 16,000 square feet of useful floor-space, were erected, at a cost of £25,000, entirely provided by Government grants. The new workshops have a uniform width of 30 ft., and are well ventilated and lighted by large windows on both sides, the building being designed on the "daylight factory" principle. Provision is made for the addition of a fourth story at any future time.