

the technical nature of the institution, except an engineering-room. In all other respects many of these technical high schools are really high schools of the ordinary type devoting the greater part of their attention to the Public Service Entrance and Matriculation courses.

On the other hand, the secondary schools have broadened their curriculum considerably in the last fifteen years. Nearly all of them provide a commercial course, a considerable number provide an agricultural course, and all the girls' schools have a home-science course. In far too great a degree, however, are the time, energies, and ambitions of the high school concentrated on the Matriculation course, which of necessity cannot be the proper course of instruction for a very large proportion of the pupils.

It will thus be seen that the secondary and the technical schools are more and more approximating to a common type as far as the full-time day free-place pupils are concerned.

Arrangements are in hand for investigating the whole position through a select representative committee, so that, as far as possible, a definite future policy, and perhaps a modification of the present practice, may be laid down.

Our secondary institutions should cater more for the needs of the pupil who requires a sound, general education, but who has no wish to proceed to a University or to enter upon an academic or professional course.

CONSOLIDATION OF SMALL SCHOOLS.

During the past few years considerable additional assistance has been given to small country schools in order to improve the facilities of country education and to justify the desire that more people should help to develop directly the cultivation of primary products. It is admitted that though small one-teacher schools have done excellent work under their conditions, and though the teachers concerned deserve all praise for this devotion to the interest of the pupils, the small school cannot offer the same educational advantages as the larger and more fully staffed school. The consolidation of small schools has been discussed for many years, but this year a definite application of the policy has been made at Otorohanga, where a number of children are now being conveyed in motor-buses owned by the Department to a centrally situated school which is now able also to provide a secondary department. Everything points to a successful result, and it seems certain that before long the Department will be pressed in all directions to convey children to the more-fully-equipped centrally-situated school.

Arrangements for a second application of the system are now almost completed in Taranaki at the request of the people concerned, while in the South Island in several localities the parents and Committees connected with small country schools are urging the Department to consolidate the small schools into one larger school. Thus, instead of the previous objections and opposition that existed, the Department is beginning to find that the people themselves are convinced of the benefits of the policy and are urging its adoption.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

The resources of the Department have been taxed to the uttermost and have even then failed to meet all the demands made in respect to school buildings. The Government has spent during the past year on new buildings, alterations and additions to buildings, a sum which a few years ago would have caused widespread satisfaction. There are, however, at least three important respects in which the question of buildings is at present a very difficult one. There is, first, the very rapid increase in population, particularly in the North Island; further, a large number of the schools which were built thirty or forty years ago are falling into decay and have to be rebuilt. There is the leeway of the war period to make up; and there is the undoubted fact that any given sum spent on the erection of buildings will provide less than one-half, probably only one-third, of the school accommodation it would previously have secured.

In spite of these difficulties the position is being rapidly improved and the more urgent needs are being overtaken.