

In regard to manual-training centres, the buildings and equipment provided are in many cases required only during part of the school week, and it is therefore impossible to preserve in present conditions a high standard of buildings and equipment in all cases. New rooms for domestic subjects have been provided and furnished at Auckland and Wellington Technical Schools, at Motueka Manual-training Centre, at Takapuna Grammar School, and at Timaru High School: rooms have been remodelled at Wanganui Technical School and Wellington South Manual-training Centre. Additional rooms for domestic subjects are required at Auckland, Hamilton, and Palmerston North Technical Schools, and at Opunake, Foxton, Napier, Wairoa, Waipukurau, Mount Cook (Wellington) Manual-training Centres, Blenheim Junior High School, Christchurch and Southbridge Manual-training Centres. Of these, Foxton and Blenheim should be opened early in 1928.

Insufficient attention is paid to the cleanliness of rooms, especially where they are not in use every day. A dirty cookery-room floor is a poor object-lesson in a course in which cleanliness is rightly emphasized as being of the first importance; yet many of the cookery-rooms have bare floors, which the pupils cannot be expected to clean, and the caretakers only occasionally scrub. Where the floors are covered with linoleum the pupils can easily keep them clean, and the general appearance is greatly improved, with corresponding improvement in the value of the work and the interest taken in it by both teachers and pupils.

Generally speaking, the equipment in technical schools and manual-training centres is carefully looked after where classes are held daily and rooms are not used for several purposes. In some cases, however, even in the laboratories of full-time schools, insufficient attention is paid to neatness and tidiness in handling and storing apparatus and materials. In workshops, for the most part, the machines and tools are reasonably well cared for and maintained in an efficient condition, though in some woodwork-rooms, where large numbers of young children are taught, the teachers have considerable difficulty in keeping the tools sharp and in good order. This is especially the case in districts where one instructor conducts classes in two or more country centres and has to spend a large proportion of his spare time in travelling.

In the largest centres the technical high schools, with about a thousand pupils in the day classes and up to two thousand in the evening, are sufficiently large for the question of establishing subsidiary district schools, for the elementary stages of the work, to be one admitting of practical solution. In Christchurch one such subsidiary school is projected, and a site at Papanui has been acquired for it. In Auckland similar steps must soon be taken, and in Wellington there will be need of subsidiary schools before long. The establishment of such schools will enable the principal school to concentrate on the more advanced work, and on all such technical classes as require expensive buildings and apparatus. The subsidiary schools, on the other hand, will not require a very elaborate equipment of machinery or heavy laboratory apparatus. In truth, all post-primary schools which take in children who remain less than three or four years should probably provide courses leading to the senior work of the technical school, rather than to the general course in arts of the University.

The genesis, government, and traditions of the secondary schools, the comparative simplicity of organization of the school with only one main course, the ease with which reasonably competent teachers of academic subjects can be obtained, the difficulty of getting trained teachers of subjects of courses specialized on the lines of industry and commerce, the impossibility of arranging any general scheme of training for teachers of technology, the additional cost of buildings and equipment for schools with varied courses, all militate against the development of real differentiation in the courses of the high schools.

A further factor of considerable importance is the fact that, on the whole, pupils taking the industrial and commercial courses do not stay long at school, since, on the average, they must go to work at sixteen or seventeen years of age, if not sooner. The Sixth Form, usually dominant in the affairs of the school, therefore, generally exists only on the classical side, and gives a classical bias to the aims and ambitions of the institution and of every able child who enters it. The most important practical obstacle, however, to the adoption of the principle of varied courses of equal standing in the secondary schools is the restricted scope of the Matriculation Examination and its acceptance as a standard of education for general purposes, and not merely as a preliminary to keeping terms at the University.

CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION.

With regard to the actual teaching of the various subjects, it can be said that definite improvement in method and results attained is, taken on the whole, not easy to discern. The greatest fault to be found in all the teaching, but most conspicuously in the teaching of the sciences and even of the crafts, is bookishness. Teachers apparently find it much easier to lecture their pupils and to give them notes to copy and learn rather than to perform experiments or to turn the pupils into the laboratories to perform vital and searching experiments for themselves.

In spite of the large amount of apparatus which has been provided, and which, at the urgent request of Boards, is being from time to time increased, it may safely be stated that in very few schools indeed is adequate use made of their material resources in this respect. It is lamentable that the written or spoken word should still too often be looked upon as being the most effective, and indeed the only instrument in the process of education. Still greater reluctance is shown to using improvised and home-made apparatus, even in schools which have workshops capable of turning out almost any piece of apparatus for, say, experimental mechanics, that may be required. Such reluctance is indefensible, since it may safely be said that a piece of apparatus constructed by one pupil, or by many as a class exercise, is capable of giving the pupils, just because of its being in a peculiar way a production of their own hands and brains, greater understanding than the most highly finished piece made for the same purpose by the scientific instrument maker.