

APPENDIX C.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF PRINCIPALS OF TRAINING COLLEGES.

AUCKLAND.

I HAVE the honour to submit my report for the year 1928.

The College has been in session for thirty-six weeks during the year, in three terms of twelve, ten, and fourteen weeks. The roll number has been considerably less than that of the preceding year.

Staff.—No change in the staff has been made during the year. Three of its members have suffered from serious illness, and the College routine has been slightly disorganized in consequence, but the situation has been well met, and no serious loss of efficiency has resulted. In each case restoration of good health is steadily progressing. The health of the students has been generally satisfactory, though the number of short absences on account of illness is greater than should be necessary.

Organization of College Work.—A notable change in the College organization for 1928 has been the provision of courses leading to specialization in infant-teaching and secondary-school teaching, arranged to comply with the amendment to Training College Regulations which came into force on the 1st February. As no warning had been given that such an important change was pending, and as the regulations were gazetted only after the College had closed for the summer vacation, it was difficult to meet the position adequately. It was not possible to provide for all who wished to take the course leading to secondary-school teaching (approximately one-third of the students newly admitted), nor to arrange adequate courses for those for whom some provision could be made. In the main, the general course had to be followed by all, with only slight differentiation for the would-be specialists, in the hope that in the second year of training (1929) adequate emphasis could be given to the differentiation necessary to comply with the regulations. Where it was not possible to fulfil what the regulations implied, their spirit, at least, was faithfully observed. The new plan of grouping students has been a matter of considerable interest to the staff, who have been keenly observant of the characteristics of the different groups. Though it will be wiser to defer generalizing until later in the second year of training, I note one interesting fact—viz., the relatively high average skill in practical teaching possessed by the members of the group preparing for teaching in secondary schools. As this group is necessarily almost entirely composed of students giving very considerable time to University studies, it is distinctly satisfactory to find close correlation between ability to undertake University studies and skill in actual teaching.

University Work.—The University work of a very considerable number of students has been very satisfactory. As before, there has been not a little bad judgment on the part of new students as to their individual capacity for undertaking University work. The beginning of the year sees much genuine enthusiasm. Where this is not supported by sound preparation in a good secondary school, it is seldom that it can be maintained and the aim of the enthusiast fulfilled. Such failures are not entirely useless; they bring realization of facts difficult for youth to learn. In the best cases they lead to a better balance of the load attempted and a strong determination to succeed. It is interesting to note the great difference among students in fitness for accomplishing what a University course demands in addition to other requirements. Not a few of those who excel in their University work and carry a very considerable load of subjects are able to find time for effective participation in a variety of other activities.

Emphasis on Music.—I record with pleasure a remarkably good year's work in music. With three students specializing in this subject for their third year in college, a feature has been made of their practical work in teaching school classes, with the most gratifying result. The high standard of the work reached by them has reacted favourably on other students. Many favourable comments from critic teachers and headmasters testify to the increasing effectiveness of our students in handling this subject.

Similarly, in drawing and other art work, specialist teaching in the College is already tending to raise the standard of our students' work when teaching in the schools. Though only one student has specialized in this subject as a third-year student, her work in the College has acted as an incentive to others, tending to raise the standard of work of the average student. Both in music and in art our third-year students have undertaken responsible continuous teaching throughout the year in the Normal School, with very satisfactory results, and I have no doubt that the good promise they have shown will be amply fulfilled when they leave the College for their life's work.

In English a new syllabus, providing for wider reading in literature, has proved highly satisfactory both to lecturer and students during the year, and there seems little doubt that the course is leading to a fine appreciation of literature on the part of many students.

Life-saving.—Nearly a hundred students have qualified for the bronze medallion, and about a dozen for the instructor's certificate in life-saving. The work has been organized and carried through by the students without professional or staff help. The standard of swimming is gradually improving.