

2. ABRIDGED REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION AND THE INSPECTORS OF TECHNICAL SCHOOLS AND MANUAL-TRAINING CLASSES.

SIR,—

Education Department, Wellington, 8th August, 1929.

We have the honour to submit, in accordance with the regulations, the following report on manual and technical instruction for the year 1928.

We have, &c.,

W. S. LA TROBE.

M. DYER.

F. C. RENYARD.

W. S. AUSTIN.

The Director of Education, Wellington.

I. TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

ATTENDANCE.

The total number of students in part-time day and in evening classes was 10,963, of whom 5,286 held junior or senior free places and 5,677 paid fees. Of the total number, 1,172 had been attending day schools for primary instruction in the previous year. From Table J 8 appended to this report it will be seen that 6,207 students, being nearly 55 per cent. of the total, were seventeen years of age or over, while 1,249, or 11·5 per cent., were under fifteen years of age. Of this 11·5 per cent., however, a considerable number—probably at least one-third—were part-time day pupils included among the 947 persons of “no occupation” as given in Table J 7 appended to this report. It is probable, therefore, that less than 8 per cent. of the evening-class pupils were under fifteen years of age. Of this 8 per cent., those under fourteen years of age all held, under the regulations, a certificate of proficiency and were free-place holders.

It is noteworthy that the proportion of girls to boys in the evening classes is only about 4 to 7. This ratio has been decreasing in recent years. This increasing disparity is due mainly to the small and diminishing attendance of girls at technical classes in cookery, dressmaking, millinery, &c. The apparent reduction in numbers as compared with the previous year is probably due mainly to the fact that the numbers for 1928 are those on the roll of the schools at the 30th June, whereas in previous years the total enrolments for the year were included.

Tables A and B below give some indication of the way in which the attendance at technical schools has changed in recent years. Columns 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of Table A give the numbers according to ages enrolled in technical classes, apart from pupils in technical high schools (and, since 1926, in technical day schools) since the year 1917. Up to 1921 numbers of children attending from primary schools, public and private, for manual training were included, and swell the numbers in columns 1 and 2 for the earlier years. They are now counted in other returns as pupils taking manual training. There has, however, undoubtedly been a real diminution in recent years of the numbers of young children attending evening classes. The regulations have for many years permitted the attendance of children under fourteen years of age at evening technical classes only if they held certificates of proficiency. The reduction in numbers of young children is not, therefore, due to changes in regulations. It is probably due to the children continuing at day schools—secondary or technical—in preference to going to work and attending evening schools. Columns 6 and 7 of Table A below indicate clearly the trend in this direction, the first-year junior free pupils in technical high schools being practically all the leavers from primary schools of the year before, who continued their day training at technical high schools in the following year.

The totals of columns 6 and 7, as shown in column 8, have increased by about 25 per cent. in the last ten years, but the numbers transferring straight from the primary school to the evening or part-time day classes have diminished by some 40 per cent., while those transferring to full-time technical high schools or technical day classes have increased in numbers by nearly 200 per cent.

Column 5 of Table A shows that whereas in 1917 the females outnumbered the males—due partly to war conditions, and partly to the inclusion of students attending classes in subjects of drawing and handwork for teachers' examinations, in which the women greatly outnumbered the men—in 1928 the number of male students was nearly twice as great as that of female students. This great change is, however, largely due to the fact that girls now receive in day schools the training in domestic and commercial subjects for which they went formerly to evening classes at the technical schools.

In this connection the totals of columns 6 and 7 in Table A below show that, whereas among transfers from the primary schools in 1917 to technical classes of all kinds the number of girls was 70 per cent. of the number of boys, in 1928 the ratio was 79 per cent., the average for the whole period being approximately 76 per cent. Leaving out technical-high-school pupils, the average for the period 1917–28 (inclusive) is 68·5 per cent. For technical-high-school pupils alone it is 82 per cent. The ratio of girl entrants to boy entrants, however, is considerably lower in technical schools than in secondary schools, where it reaches 91 per cent.