

BUILDINGS, EQUIPMENT, AND APPARATUS.

The remarks made in regard to buildings, equipment, and apparatus in my report for 1935 apply also to the year 1936.

In the matter of building and general equipment progress was made in several centres, while continued attention was paid to repairs and maintenance.

Among buildings, equipment, &c., for which grants were made during the year 1936 were the following :—

- Pukekohe: Structural alterations to engineering shop, and equipment.
- Stratford: New workshops.
- Feilding: Hostel—refectory block.
- Wanganui: Completion of new woodwork-room and two classrooms.
- Wellington: Access improvements. Assembly-hall and home-science wing completed.
- Grants approved for completion of north-east wing.
- Westport: Additions to engineering and woodwork shops.
- Greymouth: Home-science and workshop block.
- Christchurch: Additional site. Additions and alterations to buildings.
- Dunedin: Further alterations to buildings.
- Wairarapa: Additional buildings on high-school site.
- Ngatca (Auckland): Manual-training school.
- Kurow (Otago): Alterations to and equipment for manual-training school.
- Oamaru (Otago): Alterations to and equipment for manual-training school.
- Tokomairiro (Otago): Erection of woodwork-room.

TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS.

The technical high schools continue to follow essentially the lines on which they have developed from their beginning over thirty years ago. The conditions under which free places are held in them have not changed materially in the last twenty-five years. For junior free place pupils English, history, and civics must occupy at least four and a half hours weekly, arithmetic or household accounts, or practical mathematics, three hours weekly, drawing two hours weekly, and physical training one hour weekly, a total of ten and a half hours weekly, or two-fifths of the school-week. The remaining three-fifths of the school-week may be, and in general are, devoted to the specific subjects of the special course taken by the pupil; and the general compulsory subjects are usually somewhat carefully co-ordinated with the specific subjects of the special course. Thus history and civics deal largely with industrial and economic matters for courses in engineering or commerce, but with social and domestic matters for home-science pupils, drawing with domestic crafts for the home-science course, but geometry and freehand machine sketching for the engineering course. Mathematics for the engineering course finds its direct applications in the practical problems of the engineer, while, for the domestic course, arithmetic deals mainly with household accounts. Even the curriculum in English is modified according to the course. Thus each course has its own correlated set of subjects and is essentially different from every other course, not so much in the actual subjects studied as in the manner of approach and the points of emphasis.

For the senior free place pupil there are no prescribed subjects, and the schools are therefore free to arrange courses without provision for any particular subjects, except that the courses of vocational and technical instruction must be in continuation and advance of the courses for junior pupils.

The technical high school has therefore almost complete freedom in laying down courses for its pupils. It has equal freedom from external examinations. Senior free places are awarded to pupils on the recommendation of the Principal, and few pupils are not recommended. Any pupil not recommended may sit for the intermediate examination with its wide range of optional subjects, and, if successful, receives a senior free place. Thus, in its curriculum and in its teaching practice the technical school has almost complete freedom from regulation and from external examination.

The managers of a technical high school are bound by certain regulations in the appointment of teachers. In common with other schools, the proportion of teachers to full-time pupils in the technical high school is fixed by regulation. The appointment of Principal requires the approval of the Minister of Education, and, in the case of assistants, the Director of Education must be satisfied that the teacher has sufficient qualifications for the position he is to hold.

In practice, the Managers have the initiative in selecting a Principal or Assistant, and approval necessarily follows if the selected candidate is reasonably fit for the position, independent of the claims of other candidates, there being no provision that the highest-graded or any applicant must be appointed. Salaries, however, in the case of full-time teachers are fixed by the Department's officers, according to a graded scale, depending on attainments, service, and efficiency, but with certain restrictions according to position.

Thus in practice in all essential respects the Managers have complete control of the technical high school, while the Principal is also their chief executive officer and controls the office staff as well as the teaching staff.

Statements have been made that latterly the technical high schools have tended to become more academic in type. As shown above, there is no reason for such a tendency so far as regulations governing the courses are concerned, the time required to be devoted, and in general actually devoted, to general compulsory subjects being the same now as twenty-five years ago.