

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS.

The problem of providing adequate facilities for technical education in the main centres is an acute one. The schools in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin are all overcrowded both in day and evening, and the influx of pupils shows no signs of diminishing. Unfortunately, these schools, with the exception of Wellington and Christchurch, are located on such restricted areas that any considerable expansion on these sites is out of the question. Some relief was afforded to Christchurch by the opening of the branch school at Papanui, but the demand has continued until the main school is as congested as it was before the opening of the branch school. The situation is undoubtedly worse in Auckland than in either of the other centres, for on the 1st July of this year 1,440 were in attendance at the technical high school and 2,346 individual students at evening classes. It will be necessary to devise some plan in the near future to relieve the congestion at this school by providing branch technical schools located in thickly populated suburbs, reserving the central technical college for senior students doing work of an advanced character. It will also be necessary to decide as to the best way in which the division can be made—whether by the establishment of special schools such as a school of domestic science or commerce, &c., or by establishing junior schools of a composite type, following the pattern of existing technical high schools. Some discussion of this problem has already taken place, and it is imperative that a decision should be made as soon as possible as, if the present annual increase in demand for places takes place, it is obvious that many would-be students must be excluded for lack of accommodation.

Already this has happened to some extent, particularly in Auckland, and the Government's plans for the expansion of industry are bound to have the effect of greatly increasing the demands made upon the technical schools in the near future.

I cannot refrain from referring here to the findings of the Commission recently published in England on "Secondary Education," with special reference to grammar schools and technical high schools, commonly known as the "Spens Report."

The Committee's main recommendation is that there be established in Great Britain a new type of post-primary school known as a "Technical High School." These apparently are to be of precisely the same type of school that has existed in New Zealand for the last twenty years—and which, during that period, has become firmly established as an important part of our educational system.

The two main duties of such schools emphasized by the Committee are (1) to provide a good intellectual discipline apart altogether from its technical value, and (2) to have a technical value in relation not to one particular occupation, but to a group of occupations.

It is also insisted that these schools should be accorded in every respect equality of status with schools of the grammar-school type.

The Committee underlines a point which has been repeatedly stressed in connection with technical education in New Zealand as in other countries, "in any subject worthy of inclusion in a school curriculum it should be possible to lead the pupil to look beyond the immediate processes in which he is engaged to a wider human and social background" and that for pupils above thirteen years of age the curriculum "should be designed so as to provide a liberal education with science and its applications as the core and inspiration."

It is further to be noted that the Committee recommends that, whenever possible, the technical high school should be housed in and be a department of the technical college, and that the equipment of the technical college and its teaching-power should be available, as far as practicable, for the needs of the technical high school.

It need hardly be said that this close connection between higher technical work—chiefly done in the evening classes—and the work of the technical high school has been maintained in a high degree in technical education in New Zealand.

Thus is recognized the new type of post-primary school which has been evolved and is in actual operation in New Zealand, providing a liberal education based on a more realistic and scientific curriculum than that of a grammar school; and thus is recognized also, perhaps tardily, that culture is not necessarily an unchanging quantity, but something that may and indeed must change with the progress of mankind.

TRADE SCHOOLS.

There is a very clear and fundamental distinction to be drawn between trade schools and technical schools as we have them in New Zealand, a distinction which is not always clearly understood and which has led to a good deal of misunderstanding. The distinction is this: the trade school undertakes to teach as rapidly and efficiently as possible some definite ability or skill in connection with a particular occupation, so as to enable the trainees to take their places in that industry in as short a time as possible, with or without a shortened period of apprenticeship or improvership. The technical school, on the other hand, aims at a liberal education built on a foundation of the essential humanities, and with a core of science, and its applications to industry, as the essential part of the superstructure. It does not aim at providing manual dexterity for a specific industry or even for a group of industries, though practical work is taken throughout the course.

Even such subjects as plumbing, welding, and panel-beating are taught with reference to the underlying scientific reasons for trade practice and not as mere examples of empiricism.

Trade schools which have been established in other countries fall mainly into two groups.

(a) *Junior Technical Schools.*—These have usually been established (as in England) in districts in which large industries of the one kind are predominant and for which there are incessant demands for junior labour. Such schools have been operated for many years in London and the Midlands. They take pupils leaving primary school at the legal age and subject them to a course of two to three