

SESS. II.—1897.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION: CONTINUATION SCHOOLS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

1. EXTRACT FROM REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR 1895.

We present full statistics of the second year's work under the Evening Continuation School Code. The returns, which cover the year ended the 30th April, 1895, show that the number of separate departments inspected has risen from 3,742 to 3,947, and the number of scholars from 266,683 to 270,285. The annual grants amounted to £112,084, as compared with £91,540 in 1894. On the whole, the figures in our possession point to the fact that the evening schools are slowly tending to become "continuation schools" in the true sense of retaining the scholars who have recently left the elementary day schools. The percentage of scholars above sixteen years of age has, however, appreciably declined, as is shown in the following table:—

		Year.	Number of Scholars on the Registers aged					
			16 and under 17.	17 and under 18.	18 and under 19.	19 and under 20.	20 and under 21.	21 and over.
Percentage	...	1894	13.55	9.66	7.03	4.99	3.67	13.89
		1895	12.93	9.12	6.28	4.37	3.27	13.22

Though the total number of scholars has increased from 266,683 to 270,285, the number of free scholars has declined from 103,323 to 98,133. The great majority of paying scholars pay fees from 2d. to 3d. a week. The list of subjects is a copious one, but it will be seen that the elementary subjects, reading, writing, and arithmetic, still engage the attention of the largest number of students. Next in popularity still comes geography (32,469 scholars), needlework (29,290 scholars), shorthand (26,222 scholars), and vocal music (22,454 scholars). Other technical subjects follow—viz., book-keeping (20,087 scholars) and mensuration (18,648 scholars). In 1894 history and the life and duties of a citizen occupied a higher place in the list, but in 1895 domestic economy has taken precedence of them. At a long interval follow French and German, "the science of common things," English, elementary physics and chemistry, human physiology, chemistry, algebra, agriculture, magnetism and electricity, and elementary physiography. A comparatively small number of scholars have taken up mechanics, sound, light and heat, horticulture, hygiene, Welsh, Euclid, Latin, botany, or navigation. There has been an increase in the number of scholars taking two, three, and four subjects, but a decline in those taking five.

Various accounts reach us from Your Majesty's Inspectors as to the success of the evening continuation schools in different districts. From some places there are complaints of apathy in regard to them, but the general tenor of the reports is that the schools are making steady progress. It is clear, however, that the successful organization and conduct of the classes present problems of considerable difficulty. The discipline of the evening school has to be different from that of a day school, as the elder scholars naturally resent undue interference. The appliances and furniture of the schools are not always suitable for the use of youths and adults. There is in some cases a tendency on the part of the scholars to take up new subjects to which they have not the perseverance to give the time and labour necessary for success. In fact, the movement is still in an experimental stage. In many districts the County Councils have rendered valuable aid in its development, and in all there is wide opportunity for voluntary service both in propaganda and in actual teaching.