

*Report of the Superintendent on the Work of the Classes carried on by the Association at Dunedin and Port Chalmers.*

The total number of students enrolled was 634, a decrease of 119 compared with the previous year. The failure of the classes at Port Chalmers is responsible for nearly half the falling-off, and although the decrease seems great it need not, in my opinion, be regarded as serious. The scope and importance of the work done are better shown by the subjoined statement, giving the subjects and number of classes taught: English (two classes), Latin, French (two classes), Maori, elocution (four classes), arithmetic (two classes), mathematics (two classes), penmanship and correspondence, commercial law, shorthand (three classes, Dunedin and Port Chalmers), typewriting (three classes, Dunedin and Port Chalmers), book-keeping (two classes), botany (held during the summer), chemistry (two classes), physics, heat and electricity (two classes), applied mechanics and steam, theory and principles of plumbing, plumbers' work, carpentry and joinery, tailors' cutting and fitting, dressmaking (two classes), wood-carving, wool-classing, cookery (three classes).

Thus, although the support accorded the classes in engineering, drawing, arithmetic, mathematics, and wood-carving at Port Chalmers, and that in painters' classes at Dunedin was so poor that these classes had to be abandoned, it will be seen from the foregoing list that the association carried on forty-one classes in twenty-four different subjects, and I have to add that twenty-nine teachers took part in the work during the year.

There were, as usual, several changes in the teaching staff. At the beginning of the session Mr. W. B. Graham was placed in charge of the mathematics classes, Mr. H. McMillan having previously acted as temporary teacher; Mr. O. D. Flamank succeeded Mr. J. Park Smith as teacher of penmanship and correspondence; Mr. W. Given, M.A., was appointed teacher of chemistry in place of Mr. James Niven, M.A.; Mr. James Simmers, M.A., took the position of teacher of physics vacated by Mr. C. O. Lillie, M.A.; and Mr. John Coutts was appointed teacher of tailors' cutting and fitting. It is worthy of public statement that each and every one of the above-mentioned retiring teachers served the association with more than usual ability and enthusiasm. Then, during the second quarter, Miss Kate Stewart, teacher of the dressmaking class for the past seven years, left for Wellington, and the thanks of the association are due to Miss Isabella Findlay for carrying on the work till the end of the year; also to Mr. James Jeffery for undertaking the work of the junior English class in addition to that of his own. Mr. G. A. Hansard was added to the staff as teacher of the new class for Maori, and Mr. W. A. McNaught of that of the wool-classing.

Reviewing the work of the continuation subjects, I wish first to emphasize the fact that much of the time of students attending the English, arithmetic, and penmanship classes is taken up in again going over work previously done by them in their ordinary school course. The reason is apparent: scholars leaving school to enter the ranks of the workers allow a few years to pass before they enrol themselves as students of our school, consequently much has been forgotten, and the extent to which these students are afterwards hindered in their study of the technical subjects is apparent. The remedy seems obvious—strengthen the connection with the primary school by granting free tuition in the three subjects mentioned to those students who enter our classes immediately after leaving school—that is, provided such students have passed through the higher standards of the public-school course.

The class for junior English was large, but for the reason just noted the students varied considerably in attainments and ability. However, the senior class in the same subject was more satisfactory in this respect, and good work was done; while the competition for Professor Gilray's prize of free tuition in his class at the University causes students to take extra interest in the work. Although the two divisions are still taken at the same time, the work of the Latin class was quite satisfactory; however, provided the attendance keeps up, the work will next year be taken in two separate classes. Considering the ability and enthusiasm of the teacher, I do not think that the French class gets anything like the support it merits. The elocution class was attended by thirty-two pupils, and, in order that these might have every attention, the class was divided into six sections, and each taught on a separate night, the teacher practically working six nights a week. In arithmetic the senior class was a source of pleasure to the teacher, but for the reason already indicated the students of the junior class were, on the whole, rather a poor lot. This year a class for the teaching of Maori was opened, and before the end of the first quarter eighteen students were in regular attendance. This class proved a great success, and the credit of this is due to students and teacher alike. The attempt made to extend the scope of the work of the penmanship class by adding commercial correspondence has tended to limit the number entering the class, the reason being the amount of work first required to bring many of the students to the standard at which correspondence should begin. I have again to report that the commercial group—book-keeping, typewriting, shorthand, and commercial law—are the best supported of our classes, and that the results attained are uniformly good. There was only a slight decrease in attendance at the classes for these subjects, except in the class for commercial law, in which the falling-off was most marked, and it is just possible that provision for a separate class in this subject may for a year or two be allowed to drop from the syllabus. A feature of the work in book-keeping and shorthand this year was the high standard reached by the senior classes in each of these subjects, the class for book-keeping being probably the best that has passed through our school, while two pupils of the shorthand class, by easily gaining certificates for writing 160 words per minute, proved the superiority of the work over that of former years, the highest speed for which certificates have previously been granted being 140 words per minute. The Port Chalmers class was again examined with the Dunedin class, and the results were exceedingly good. The greater proportion of the certificates for shorthand were marked "first class." It is possible, however, to have this striving after excellence in one subject leading to the neglect of the kindred subjects; thus a quick