

REPORTS ON TRAINING COLLEGES IN OPERATION. NORTH CANTERBURY.

EXTRACT FROM REPORT OF EDUCATION BOARD.

In his report, which is appended, the Director of the Training College gives full particulars as to the number of students that entered for training during the year. Mr. Watkins also refers to the difficulties met with in the children's department owing to the many changes that have taken place. The newer conditions under which the training and practising departments are now carried on have necessitated extensive alterations to several of the class-rooms. The increased grant lately made by the Department for training colleges has enabled the Board to increase the staff, which can now be arranged on a more satisfactory basis. There has been some difficulty in finding a suitable location for the science laboratory. The conversion of part of the old drill-shed for the purpose has been definitely decided upon.

REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL OF THE TRAINING COLLEGE (MR. EDWIN WATKINS, B.A.).

We began the year with thirty-one students, of whom twenty-three were new ones and eight were students remaining for a second year. All of these were ex-pupil-teachers from North Canterbury. Later on, one more pupil-teacher from North Canterbury entered; four also entered from South Canterbury and one from Nelson. There were also admitted seven non-pupil-teachers under clause B of the regulations for entrance. This gave a total of forty-four, of whom six were males. One student also came a few times to watch teaching, under clause 11. One student withdrew in July.

All the students attended some lectures at Canterbury College, and more than one-third did most of their work, if not all, in University classes. At the latter part of the year three passed the Canterbury College examination for the first year, six passed for the second year, and two for the third year, one of them, Miss Barker, winning the Canterbury College Exhibition in French. In the University examinations seven sat for the first section of the B.A. degree, of whom four passed; two sat for the final section of the B.A., and both passed. For the Matriculation, sixteen sat, of whom ten passed. In the departmental examinations, five sat for part of C, of whom four obtained partial C and one fell ill early in the examination and was unable to go on; twenty-six sat for D, of whom seven obtained full D, fifteen obtained partial D, and four failed. Two other students were unable to take the examination through illness.

In the children's department the year has been one of anxiety. The school had to be converted into a mixed one; the staff had to be reduced and rearranged; still further changes of teachers followed; a complete change in the practice-teaching of the students had to be made; the year was the first one of the introduction of the new syllabus for the standards, and only the second one of the introduction of a new syllabus for the students' certificate syllabus. Changes such as these are not easily met all at once, and in working out into shape they presented serious difficulty. But after the school examination in July, when the new system had had time to settle down somewhat, a good start was made which promises to work out well this year.

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EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE EDUCATION BOARD.

The report of the Principal of the Training College is attached. Under the regulations for the conduct of training colleges, the College controlled by the Board for thirty years has become almost, if not entirely, a Government institution. It is true the regulations set out with the declaration "The Education Board of any district in which any training college is situated, hereinafter called the 'Board,' shall have the entire control and management of such college, subject to the provisions hereinafter contained"; but "the provisions hereinafter contained" provide for everything that is essential to the control and management, and divest the Board of every shred of real authority. The relation of the Board to the Training College is precisely that of a Committee to the school of its district, and the Department is to training colleges what the Education Board of a district is to the schools of that district. That, it seems to the Board, exactly defines the position in which the Boards are placed by the regulations.

Realising as it did and does that a single examination is not always an adequate test of a student's acquirements, and above all that a teacher's personality is of greater importance than are his literary qualifications, and that personality cannot be tested at all by a written examination, the Board proposed that the teacher's certificate should depend not solely upon a single written examination applied by the Department at the end of the year, but in large part upon the results gained in class and college examinations conducted by the Principal and his staff during the currency of the year, and that the judgment of the Principal as to the fitness or unfitness of a student for a teacher's certificate should be the chief determining factor in the classification of the students under his charge. Regulations to give effect to this proposal were submitted to the Department; but neither the one nor the other found favour there.

It would, the Board considered, be a great boon to settlers living remote from surgical aid to have among them a person capable of administering first aid in cases of accident, and the Board accordingly recommended that skill in this branch of work should be allowed to count towards a pass for a teacher's certificate; but the recommendation was rejected by the Department.

Recognising the importance of what is implied in "nature-study" and the impossibility of its adequate treatment by teachers who have done little or no field-work, the Board recommended that the following course should be substituted for some of the work at present prescribed for the teacher's certificate:—

- (a.) A course of experimental work in elementary physics and chemistry, extending over the winter session.
- (b.) A summer course of outdoor studies having for its subject-matter the meteorology, physical geography, geology, and plant and animal life of the district. The plant and animal life may be made the chief subject of investigation, but the relation of the others to it must be kept in view; and, as opportunity offers, the attention of the students should be directed to significant facts irrespective of the branch of nature-knowledge to which they are related. Every outdoor excursion should have a definite purpose, and should be carefully planned beforehand; and accurate notes should be made by the students of what they observe in the field. The notes made and the objects collected during the outdoor excursions will furnish material for study in the lecture-room.