

to allow of the demonstration or application of the lessons and principles taught in the lecture-room or laboratory, but also to provide opportunity to the students to acquire or extend their practical knowledge, and to offer in sufficient variety and amount financial transactions to enable them to reckon up the condition of the business and to gain a useful insight into the relative economic position of the various branches of farm-work included in the general designation "mixed farming." From what I know of the attitude of parents who send sons here, and the great importance they attach to sound practical work, I am satisfied that any extension of the accommodation, without corresponding increase of the area of the farm, would provoke dissatisfaction, which, I believe, would be justified. At present, when land-values are inflated, the time is not opportune for the extension of the College farm, and it is well, further, for the Board of Governors to ascertain whether the increase in the number of applications to enter the College is likely to be maintained before proceeding to make provision for it.

The work and general attitude of the students during the year has been satisfactory. We have had less of the school-boy element, as the average age has been between nineteen and twenty, and the place has been full of young men who on the whole have proved better students of farming than any of the classes we have enrolled since I took office here. The greatest drawback attaching to our work and lessening its efficiency which we meet is the low standard of elementary education of many of the students who come up to the College. A few come thoroughly prepared to proceed to the course of instruction which the Board of Governors has organized, but many have had deficient elementary education. Again, a proportion of the students have been engaged on farms or stations for some time before joining the College, while others have been following business pursuits which they have left in order to prepare themselves to go on the land. It may have been a year or several years since they left school or college, and accordingly our classes are very uneven in standard of attainment. This difficulty could, of course, be remedied by requiring candidates for admission to pass an entrance examination; but were this course adopted a number of youths whose education is weak through lack of opportunity would be excluded. Not infrequently a student who comes up from working on his father's farm, very badly prepared to enter the College, nevertheless towards the end of his course, takes a leading place among his fellows. A middle course is therefore adopted, and the opportunity the candidate has had is considered in relation to the degree of his attainments.

Only a proportion of the students who enter the College complete the full course of three years. Some have no intention of completing the course when they come, but enter only for one year, or for part of the course, and for such time as they can be spared from the farm; others become impatient to be at work on their own account; and others again have to leave in accordance with the regulation of the Board of Governors to the effect that, if the report of a student at the end of a session be unsatisfactory, he will be required to cease residence. Last year eight students completed the course of study and entered for the diploma examinations. Of these, three failed to satisfy the examiners, and the following five were awarded the diploma of the College: A. W. J. Abbot, of Auckland; J. Brown, of Oxford; J. C. Colebatch, of South Australia; C. G. Dixon, of Waikato; L. J. G. Hamilton, of Taupo.

The College farm is being maintained in high order. The abnormally wet year interfered considerably with the cropping results, it being quite impracticable to get on much of the land in good time for seeding; but the lighter parts of the farm yielded well, and the financial returns on the whole were very satisfactory.

The live-stock is being gradually improved in quality. From the Shorthorn herd we were able to win the "points" prize for Shorthorns at the Christchurch Metropolitan Show, and the milk-records are year by year improving.

The purebred flocks are also being improved, and in quality and variety the live-stock on the farm is far ahead of that of any other college in Australasia.

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WILLIAM LOWRIE,
Director.

The Hon. the Minister of Education, Wellington.