

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE CONTROLLING AUTHORITY OF THE PALMERSTON NORTH TECHNICAL SCHOOL.

During the past year the work of the Technical School has shown most satisfactory progress. The number of pupils attending the classes shows a steady increase. The number of classes recognized by the Department for the year was fifty-nine. The total number of individual students who attended during the year was 545; of this number 151 were holders of free places, the remainder, 394, being paying students. In connection with these free place students it is worthy to note that so far Palmerston North has not yet instituted compulsory attendance, the Director having been able each year, with one or two exceptions, to get all boys and girls leaving the primary schools and not attending the High School to take up technical school classes, and it is very gratifying to know that the attendance of all students has been highly satisfactory. New machinery has been installed in the engineering department making it now up to date in almost every particular. The report of Mr. Isaac, Inspector of Technical Schools, shows that the school is making very solid progress and that the tone and discipline are excellent. The finances of the school are quite satisfactory, and show a credit of revenue over expenditure. The Director gives his whole time to the Technical School, and the Committee fully appreciates the good work done by him. The teaching staff (numbering twenty) have without exception given valuable service, and the Committee are pleased to report that practically the same staff will be in charge of the classes during the coming year.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE PALMERSTON NORTH TECHNICAL SCHOOL.

It is satisfactory to note that it has so far not been necessary in the history of the Technical School to enforce the compulsory attendance clause of the Act. The Director has been able, except in five or six cases, to get all boys and girls leaving school each year and not attending the High School to take up technical school work, and it is very gratifying to know that the attendances of all students are highly satisfactory. Twenty-seven students are this year being recommended for senior free places, an increase of nine on that of last year. The total number of individual students passed through the school this year is 545: of this number 145 are free pupils, the remaining 400 being paying students. This on a population basis makes the Palmerston North Technical School the best attended school in the Dominion as regards evening classes. The work of the school as a whole has been very good, as shown by examination results. Some of the classes, such as those for chemistry, building-construction, and plumbing are not quite so well attended as could be wished for. This is no doubt owing to the fact that there is so little demand in a place of the size of Palmerston North for skilled workers in the above-mentioned subjects.

The commercial classes still continue to be the largest, with the exception of the dressmaking classes, nine in number, with a total roll of 130. It will be necessary in the near future to consider the advisability of providing a special room for the dressmaking classes, as the present room is used every day and evening in the week by eight cookery classes with an average attendance of twenty, and nine dressmaking classes, with an average of fourteen. Thus from an hygienic point of view a separat room is very desirable.

The engineering department continues to be fairly well patronized, four classes running for the whole year with an average of ten. The small attendance at the plumbing class is due to the fact that nearly all the journeymen plumbers in the town have now obtained their certificates. The work done in this class has always been among the best in the school. After a lapse of about four years a building-construction class has been formed under the tuition of Mr. Stephenson, the woodwork instructor, and has progressed splendidly, the work being of high merit. The Standard VI class still maintains a high standard, and no less than twenty were recently presented for the examination for certificates. This class supplies a great need in the community, especially for those who have to leave school to go to work before obtaining their proficiency certificates. The Working-men's Club assists this class by granting scholarships to the holders of competency certificates who are examined each year by the Director. The engineering department has now been completely fitted out by the addition of a Milne's lathe, a drilling-machine, a shaper, and sundry appliances, so that when the smithy is erected apart from the main room the work will proceed even more satisfactorily.

The agricultural course continues to be taken by about the same number of students as in previous years. This course is a useful one to farmers' sons, and provides for instruction in agriculture, farm carpentry, estimating areas, wool-classing, and sheep-shearing. A plot of ground consisting of 6 acres has now been granted by the Palmerston North Borough Council for the purpose of agricultural experimental work, so that next year we hope to make much more rapid progress and to demonstrate to the public generally the usefulness of this department of the school. The wool-classing and sheep-shearing classes were very successful; the work being of so practical a nature that students were able to go into sheds at the conclusion of the course and earn good wages as wool-classers and shearers. The sheep-shearing classes are attended by students coming from all parts of the district, some from as far as Te Aroha. The sheep-shearing classes owe a dept of gratitude to the Farmers' Defence Executive, who most generously assist the funds each year by a handsome donation; but for this assistance the classes would be heavily in debt each year, as the expenses are considerable.

The art department continues to produce excellent work, and the students competing at the recent agricultural and pastoral show in Palmerston carried off 80 per cent. of the prizes against all comers. Mr. Isaac, Inspector of Technical Schools, visited the school during the year and expressed satisfaction at the way the work was being done.

In conclusion, I wish to record my appreciation of the assistance rendered by the staff of the school at all times in furthering the interests of the school. Thanks are due to the following contributors to the funds of the school during the past year: Palmerston North Borough Council, £30;