

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE SUPERVISOR OF THE NORTHERN DISTRICT.

There was a decided increase in the number of individual students who attended the classes. These totalled 291, as against 210 for 1914. This total included twenty-three junior free pupils, eight senior free pupils, forty-five compulsory students, and 215 other students. Of the junior-free-place pupils eighteen were in their first year and five in their second year. All senior-free-place pupils were in their first year.

We are indebted to the Hawera County Council and the Hawera Borough Council for donations of £20 each.

The following shows the hour attendances made in the most important subjects: English, 1,196; arithmetic, 1,196; book-keeping, 1,548; shorthand and typewriting, 1,928; drawing and painting, 998; cookery, 270; dressmaking, 622; first-aid and ambulance, 1,118. The progress made has been such that the time has come when the school should have a Director devoting more time to the work and taking a greater share in the teaching. There is this year no reason to complain of the behaviour of the free and compulsory pupils. In nearly all cases it has been good, and the work of the various instructors has been more pleasant in consequence. In a good many cases, however, pupils have failed to provide themselves with books and pens. Others bring writing-pads from which they remove the leaves as soon as they are used. The pupil has therefore no record of the work he has done. Next year it is proposed to supply books and pens to the pupils at cost. These will be collected at the close of each lesson and kept locked in a cupboard.

Eltham Technical School.—The 31st October, 1915, brought to a close another year's work. On the whole the compulsory classes have worked well, but the weaknesses noted below are difficulties to be overcome locally: (1.) The Board's regulations do not require girls to attend night classes. (2.) In small centres such as Eltham, where there is only a very limited population, separate classes for boys in the evenings and girls in the afternoon cannot, for financial and other reasons, be successfully established. (3.) Some parents, and the girls themselves, objected to an afternoon class being formed to interfere with their weekly half-holiday. (4.) Most girls affected are in town positions learning dressmaking, and dressmaking was the only afternoon class established at the Technical School. Cookery was suggested, but, apart from the difficulty of securing an instructor, the numbers offering were insufficient to form a class. (5.) The number of free classes likely to form is limited, and some boys are thereby compelled to attend a class they do not want, simply because they must attend for two hours on two nights a week to fulfil their obligations under the Act. Such cases occurred here before it was possible to form another sufficiently payable class. Free writing-material, &c., would greatly lessen the burden of instructors, who have frequently to deal with delinquents in this respect. The motor engineering classes formed proved very popular, and also a source of much revenue to the school. It was unfortunate that it was impossible, through the removal of a capable instructor, to continue the classes. Donations of £5 each were again received from the Borough and County Councils, and in the future will probably be made a regular grant. The behaviour and attendance of most of the pupils was, on the whole, entirely satisfactory. The enrolments for the year were as follows: English, 40; arithmetic, 40; motor engineering (junior), 34; motor engineering (senior), 24; dressmaking, 10: total, 148.

At Patea there was but one class held during 1915: this was in dressmaking, and the roll number was 22.

The progress of the classes for farmers reported for 1914 was continued throughout the past year. Past recommendations and demonstrations have borne such fruit that now we can definitely say that the work undertaken has been at least of permanent district value. Since the new season began in May we have directly given advice on the manurial and cropping operations of over three hundred farmers. According to the reports of farmers themselves the results of the new methods have been remarkable, easily doubling the previous carrying-capacity of farm or paddock. We have the unqualified support of the Agricultural and Pastoral Association, local farmers' unions, and individual farmers. Instruction has been given to farmers in the heavier lands towards Wanganui, as well as in the lighter lands round Hawera. The greatest success has been met with in connection with improved methods of the putting-down of pastures, and again in the after-treatment of these, both of which sets of operations have been reduced to a system suited to local soil and climate, yet sufficiently flexible to allow of accommodation to all ordinary soil variations. The following is a list of centres at which classes were held, showing also the number of students in attendance: Manutahi (20), Hawera (29), Kaponga (22), Tokaora and Inaha (25), Mokoia and Whakamara (28), Maxwell (16), Whenuakura (21), Kapuni (21), Riverlea (20), Normanby (20), Rowan (21), Alton (19), Mangatoki (50), Ararata (9), Hawera orchard work (16); total, 337. An organization of representative farmers has been formed to control the development of classes, and to arrange for the formation of new centres of instruction. Members take a keen interest in the development of primary agricultural instruction, and there is a growing demand for vocational training in agriculture of the same nature as, but of a higher grade than, that at present given in the district high school rural course, where the general instruction is considered to be of too composite a nature to suit best the needs of the coming farmer. Added to a good grounding in English and in book-keeping, the farmers would like to see the truly rural work at present taken at our district high schools extended until it was taken on each day of the week. All our work with farmers shows that there should be no break in the instruction from the primary school to the farm. The instruction should be in the same hands, and should merely be amplified with each grade.