

benefited thereby, there is a growing conviction in the minds of a large body of thinking men and women that there is a limit to the usefulness of the evening class, and that that limit has been reached. It is now generally admitted that the instruction to be effective must be compulsory, and must be in the daytime. Compulsory attendance at evening classes has been tried in Scotland, and has proved a failure so far as the general application of compulsion is concerned. In New Zealand legislative provision for compulsory attendance has been in existence for seven years, but the fact remains that last year "compulsory regulations" were operative in only seventeen school districts, confined to four education districts, all in the North Island. As illustrating the trend of thought in England on this important question, reference may be made to the report, recently published, of the Departmental Committee set up by the British Board of Education on juvenile education in relation to employment after the war. Of the twenty-one recommendations made by the Committee one of the most significant is as follows: "That it be an obligation upon all young persons between fourteen and eighteen years of age to attend such day continuation classes as may be prescribed for them by the local education authorities during a number of hours to be fixed by statute, which should not be less than eight hours a week for forty weeks in the year." Certain exceptions are made which need not be detailed here. The Committee points to numerous examples of experiments in "time off" by prominent business firms in England as evidence that the trend of thought amongst employers gives reasonable ground for the hope that a more general reform in the direction in which they themselves point will be met with sympathy and co-operation. The recommendations of the Committee as a whole may well be kept in view here in New Zealand as constituting an ideal to be gradually worked to as local circumstances and conditions permit, not the least important of these being the attitude of the people as to what they intend to make of their boys and girls through the forces of industry and society.

#### THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION.

The second general meeting of the Council, adjourned from June, was held from the 5th to the 12th September, 1916. Reports were presented from committees set up to consider the questions of agricultural and industrial education, constitution of education districts, medical inspection, education of girls, Kitchener Memorial Scholarship, secondary education (various questions), and courses of instruction in secondary schools. Some of the recommendations made have already been carried into effect, or soon will be, notably the establishment of agricultural bursaries, the appointment of school nurses, the establishment of classes for corrective treatment of physical defects, compulsory domestic training for girls in secondary schools, and the amendment of the regulations for secondary-school certificates. Other recommendations of the Council have necessarily had to be postponed for the present, such as the establishment of compulsory continuation classes for boys and girls up to the age of seventeen for those who leave the primary school to earn a livelihood. The recommendations for a readjustment of the numbers of representatives of rural and urban areas of Education Boards so as to remove some of the existing anomalies will receive consideration when the next amendment of the Act is being made.

#### DELIMITATION OF EDUCATION DISTRICTS.

Under the provisions of the Education Amendment Act, 1915 (No. 2), the changes in the number and boundaries of education districts indicated in last year's report were carried into effect during the year 1916, the nine new Education Boards coming into office on the 1st August. The adjustment of the financial and other affairs of the amalgamated and altered districts has been to a large extent effected, and although it is perhaps too soon to comment on the success of the changes made, no doubts are entertained as to the ultimate improvement in the general management of the affairs of the new education districts. The relative sizes of the new districts may be gauged from the