

No. 2.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION IN THE SEVERAL EDUCATION DISTRICTS

AUCKLAND DISTRICT.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE AUCKLAND TECHNICAL SCHOOL.

Technical High School.—The number of students in attendance during the year was 595, of which 284 were girls and 310 boys, which was a total increase of 54 over that of the previous year. The distribution of pupils in the various courses provided at the school was as follows: Agriculture course, 60 boys; business training course, 70 boys and 224 girls; domestic science course, 60 girls; engineering course, 15 boys; science and technology course, 166 boys.

It is regrettable that so large a percentage of pupils still attend the High School for one year only. It is true that a fair proportion of those who leave and go to work continue their education in the evening classes of the College, but this cannot in any way be considered a satisfactory substitute for day-school education. In connection with boys who take up trades, there is no doubt that the long-apprenticeship system militates against several years' attendance in day technical schools, as the boy still has to put in the full period of apprenticeship, even although he may have received three or four years' technical training in the day school. In connection with the business training of girls it is particularly noticeable that a large percentage of those who leave the school at the end of one year continue their education at private commercial schools, where they can devote the whole of their time to shorthand and typewriting. It is no doubt due to the fact that so many girls receive a one-sided training by taking these two subjects only, without having had previously, or at the same time, a good general education, that so big a proportion of the commercial typists are simply part of the machine and are quite unable even to write a decent letter. It is to be hoped that in time the Education Department will see its way to issue special certificates for shorthand-typists, so that there will be some guarantee to the employer when he engages such a typist that he is obtaining value for his money.

In spite of the various changes of staff necessitated by war conditions, the work of the Technical High School appeared to reach the same high standard as in previous years. Seventeen students passed examinations of the City and Guilds of London Institute; thirteen passed the Public Service Entrance Examination, and five the Intermediate; two students were awarded Junior National Scholarships, and one a Senior National Scholarship; one obtained the Certificate in Book-keeping of the University of New Zealand; and 150 were awarded senior free places by the Education Department.

It is very gratifying to learn that the Minister is considering the question of hostels in connection with technical and secondary schools. At the present time a large number of country boys and girls are attending the Technical High School in Auckland. There is no hostel accommodation whatever, and the parents have to make the best arrangements they can to get them boarded in town. The results are not always satisfactory, as in many cases the boarders are not under proper supervision, and are allowed to spend their time when not at school or studying pretty much as they like. It is to be hoped that before many years have elapsed a large area of ground within easy reach of the City of Auckland will be provided for technical high schools—one for boys and one for girls. It is absolutely essential in connection with every school where there are pupils from fourteen to eighteen years of age that adequate playing-space should be provided. Physical fitness is of national importance, and educationists are beginning to realize that "organized games" are as important an item in the curriculum of a school as science or mathematics. At the present time in Auckland, where there is only a little over an acre of ground at the Technical High School, the difficulty of insufficient playground accommodation has been overcome to some extent by making Wednesday afternoon a compulsory half-holiday for sports, and utilizing the Domain and the Victoria Park, which have so generously been placed at our disposal by the City Council.

In view of the importance of agricultural education, steps should be taken at an early date to obtain for the use of students attending the agriculture course of the school a small farm of 30 or 40 acres within reasonable reach of Auckland. I believe that such a farm could be made quite self-supporting, and the value it would provide in training for the students cannot be over-estimated. At the present time the 3 acres of land at Otahuhu which is leased from the Agricultural Department is made the very best possible use of, but it cannot by any means be said to entirely "fill the bill."

Evening and Special Day Classes.—Evening and special day classes were conducted much on the same lines as those of previous years. In addition to the College proper, the Normal School, Wellesley Street, as well as the old Technical College building in Rutland Street, was made use of. The attendance throughout the year was very satisfactory until the classes had to be closed down, early in November, on account of the influenza epidemic, which also prevented the College examinations being held as usual at the close of the session. In the absence of these