

3. CHRISTCHURCH.

I have the honour to submit the following report on the Christchurch Training College for the year ending 31st December, 1924.

The year has been a particularly hard one, on account of the large number of students and lack of accommodation. The classes have all been too large, and consequently the lecturers have been very much overtaxed. Nevertheless a good year's work has been completed, and the students as thoroughly prepared for their career as in any previous year.

At the beginning of the year the staff was strengthened by the appointment of Mr. W. T. G. Airey, M.A. (N.Z.), B.A. (Oxon.), a returned Rhodes Scholar, who had just completed his course at Oxford. He has taken over a large part of the instruction in English and all the history, in both of which subjects he is splendidly equipped. In history particularly his breadth of view and fine treatment will do much to set before students a conception of history that will make that subject appeal to them, while at the same time the work set will ensure that they will make up to some extent the lack of knowledge that characterizes most students on entrance.

The visit of Professor Adams was a great treat. In the addresses he delivered he made a very strong appeal. He was an inspiration to students and to members of the staff, and his visit will be long remembered with pleasure.

Mr. C. T. Aschman, Headmaster of the Normal School and Master of Method for many years in the Training College retired on superannuation at the end of the year. No tribute, however well expressed, can do justice to the service rendered by him to the College. He has been associated with the institution for over thirty years, and has always been very keenly interested in the welfare of the students. His wide reading, clear exposition, and brilliant demonstrations have made his work particularly successful. The College is indebted to him for many years of valuable work, and I take this opportunity of gratefully acknowledging his services, and of expressing my regret at parting from a colleague with whom it has been such a pleasure to work.

On the academic side the students have been prepared for the various examinations, departmental and University, for which they were permitted to enter. Generally they acquitted themselves well. The standard of attainment reached by Training-college students at Canterbury College compared very favourably indeed with that reached by other University students.

Regarding practice teaching, the teachers who have taken part in the professional training of the students have expressed their conviction that the five-week period of continuous school practice has given much better results than the former short periods did. The work of the critic teacher in personally supervising the teaching practice and co-ordinating the work of the various practice schools has been very valuable. He writes: "Ample opportunity has been afforded for the students to gain experience in actual teaching and to try out in practice the theories expounded in the method lecture-room. The periodic discussions have proved quite helpful in assisting the students to see more clearly the problems encountered in the class-room. Observation work was systematically carried out along specified lines, and in many cases very good work was done. All students, as far as possible, had experience in each of the junior, middle, and senior departments of the primary-school work." The sole-charge school conducted in its own section adjacent to Phillipstown School enables students to observe the organization of a rural school under conditions as nearly as possible similar to those experienced in an ordinary country school. The reports from teachers state that students generally approach their teaching practice with much eagerness, that they are keen to learn, very willing to assist in every way, and evince an earnestness of purpose that is quite commendable.

The reports from the Training-college staff show clearly that the work of the students has been well done. They deplore the limitations imposed by large classes and inadequate accommodation, both of which difficulties will be at least partially removed in the near future. Wherever possible the project plan has been adopted, and a considerable amount of individual work thus carried out.

The students were thoroughly tested at the end of each term, and were subjected to a final examination covering the whole course at the end of the year. Every lecturer has therefore abundance of information concerning the standard reached in his subject by each student. A high standard has been demanded, and no student has been given a pass until it has been thoroughly earned. In view of the opinion expressed that this testing in the past has not been severe enough, it seemed wise to state clearly the plan adopted. Examination work makes very heavy demands on the time of the lecturers, who can only get through the work by devoting much holiday time to the correction of papers. Wherever a comparison can be made with external examinations the results clearly indicate that the work demanded by the Training-college staff is distinctly higher.

An important problem in Training-college work is that of differentiation in training. For three years now some differentiation in professional training has been provided for. In this way an effort has been made to solve the problem of preparation for secondary-school teaching. A special lecture course in secondary-school subjects has been drawn up, and two hours a week devoted to lecture and discussion. This class is attended by all graduate students and by those who are sufficiently advanced in their University work to warrant the assumption that they will ultimately become secondary-school teachers. This class is in addition to the usual method course; indeed, it is really a special application of method plans to secondary-school subjects. Arrangements have been made whereby some of the practice teaching is done at the Girls' High School under the supervision of experienced teachers. It is hoped that facilities in this direction will also be provided by the Boys' High School and the Technical College. I am convinced that all students preparing for the work of teaching in secondary schools should take the ordinary Training-college course and be thoroughly acquainted with teaching principles which are applicable alike to primary and secondary schools. The intimate knowledge obtained of the primary school, especially of the upper department, forms the best beginning for special secondary-