

From time to time the Secondary Inspectors in their talks to Sixth Form pupils advise those who contemplate taking up secondary-school work to include as many teaching subjects in their degree course as possible, and to avoid advanced work in non-teaching subjects. It would be well, too, for Principals both of schools and of training colleges to give similar advice on appropriate occasions.

It is pleasing to note that, except in Auckland, the heads of both boys' and girls' secondary schools have continued to co-operate with the Department in providing opportunities for observation and a little practice to those training-college students who definitely intend to take up secondary-school teaching. The technical and district high schools in the four centres and the Kowhai Junior High School have also provided facilities for training young secondary-school teachers.

The proportion of trained teachers among the entrants to the ranks of secondary-school teachers continues to be very high, especially among the men. Of the twenty-eight male entrants this last year twenty-three had taken a training-college course, and there were only three who had had neither previous teaching nor training-college experience. The position as regards the women was not so satisfactory; there were thirty-one women entrants; of these sixteen had passed through a training college, seven others had been given some practice in teaching during their home-science degree course, and five others had had previous teaching experience.

Not many secondary pupils are given the opportunity to devote much time to geography during their school course, and the majority of them do not take the subject for the University Entrance Examination. As a consequence, their geographical knowledge on entering the training college has been in many cases extremely limited, and it has been found difficult to equip them as teachers of a subject which plays so important a part in the primary-school syllabus. Many women students, similarly, have learned no mathematics before entering the training college. It is for these reasons that both geography and mathematics have been made compulsory subjects in the recently instituted training college Entrance Examination. English, history, and drawing are also compulsory subjects, but French, Latin, and science are not included. As exemption from the examination in any subject may be obtained by qualifying in it for the higher leaving certificate, the institution of the examination has had a somewhat disturbing effect upon the programmes of Sixth Forms, especially in girls' schools, where there has been evident an inclination to drop science and foreign languages in order to concentrate upon the subjects required for the Training College Entrance. It is to be hoped that this tendency will not develop unduly, as our future secondary-school teachers cannot afford to leave school poorly equipped in either languages or science.

With regard to the courses of study in secondary schools, the process of the liberalization of curricula referred to in a previous report continues at a steady pace. Woodwork, for example, in 1928 was taught in 50 per cent. of the schools attended by boys; in 1930 this percentage had increased to 76, and one-third of all Third and Fourth Form boys in our secondary schools were being taught the subject. Bookkeeping was taught in forty schools and shorthand and typing in twenty-eight; approximately one-fourth of all secondary pupils were learning these subjects. In two years the number of pupils learning Latin has fallen by 3 per cent. and now only 43 per cent. of our boys and 31 per cent. of the girls take the subject.

As regards agriculture the subject just holds its own; probably that is as much as can reasonably be expected of it in a time when the primary industries of the country are so seriously affected by the prevalent depression. As part of vocational or semi-vocational courses, agriculture is taught in seventeen boys' or mixed secondary schools, as against sixteen two years ago; the percentage of boys in these schools who take the subject has fallen, however, in the same period from 23 to 21.4. On the other hand, the proportion of all boy pupils learning agriculture has shown a slight increase, and stood at 9.9 per cent. on the 1st July, 1930. Among the notable progressive movements of the year have been, first, the purchase by the Rangiora High School of a block of 85 acres of high-grade farming-land near the school upon which dairy and general farming are being carried out on practical lines, and, secondly, the successful development at the Waitaki Boys' High School of the system of taking the agricultural classes regularly to "co-opted" farms where the boys are enabled to engage in such practical work as ploughing, the sowing of crops, the docking of lambs, drafting, dipping, and trucking sheep, classifying and judging stock, &c., under expert practical farmers.

The district high schools chosen for inspection this past year were those of the Auckland Education District. It was the general opinion of the three Secondary Inspectors who visited the twenty-five schools in that area that the district high schools were an outstanding feature of the education system in the Auckland Province. In the main, considerable improvement was noted since the preceding visit in 1927. The length of the school week and of the lesson periods had been brought more into accordance with modern views on these points. More opportunities for specialization in teaching were being given to the staff, and in most cases more courses of study were being offered. The inclusion in the curriculum of the more æsthetic subjects has, however, not progressed to any great extent. This is due in part to the difficulty in finding teachers with special qualifications in the arts, but it appears mainly to arise from a reluctance to spare time for subjects which do not pay in examination. Any such misgivings on the part of the teachers are no doubt re-enforced by the views of many of the parents with regard to the money-earning value of secondary education. Another feature in district-high-school life which requires the development of a keen local interest for its success is the extension of library equipment.

In conclusion, I have again to express my recognition of the earnest desire of secondary-school principals and staffs to attain a high standard of efficiency and of their willingness to work in harmony with the Department's officers. And again also I have to thank my colleagues for their zealous co-operation and assistance.

I have, &c.,

E. J. PARR,

Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools.

The Director of Education.