

SESS. II.—1897.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION: CONTINUATION SCHOOLS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

1. EXTRACT FROM REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR 1895.

We present full statistics of the second year's work under the Evening Continuation School Code. The returns, which cover the year ended the 30th April, 1895, show that the number of separate departments inspected has risen from 3,742 to 3,947, and the number of scholars from 266,683 to 270,285. The annual grants amounted to £112,084, as compared with £91,540 in 1894. On the whole, the figures in our possession point to the fact that the evening schools are slowly tending to become "continuation schools" in the true sense of retaining the scholars who have recently left the elementary day schools. The percentage of scholars above sixteen years of age has, however, appreciably declined, as is shown in the following table:—

| — | Year. | Number of Scholars on the Registers aged | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| | | 16 and under 17. | 17 and under 18. | 18 and under 19. | 19 and under 20. | 20 and under 21. | 21 and over. |
| Percentage | 1894 | 13.55 | 9.66 | 7.03 | 4.99 | 3.67 | 13.89 |
| | 1895 | 12.93 | 9.12 | 6.28 | 4.37 | 3.27 | 13.22 |

Though the total number of scholars has increased from 266,683 to 270,285, the number of free scholars has declined from 103,323 to 98,133. The great majority of paying scholars pay fees from 2d. to 3d. a week. The list of subjects is a copious one, but it will be seen that the elementary subjects, reading, writing, and arithmetic, still engage the attention of the largest number of students. Next in popularity still comes geography (32,469 scholars), needlework (29,290 scholars), shorthand (26,222 scholars), and vocal music (22,454 scholars). Other technical subjects follow—viz., book-keeping (20,087 scholars) and mensuration (18,648 scholars). In 1894 history and the life and duties of a citizen occupied a higher place in the list, but in 1895 domestic economy has taken precedence of them. At a long interval follow French and German, "the science of common things," English, elementary physics and chemistry, human physiology, chemistry, algebra, agriculture, magnetism and electricity, and elementary physiography. A comparatively small number of scholars have taken up mechanics, sound, light and heat, horticulture, hygiene, Welsh, Euclid, Latin, botany, or navigation. There has been an increase in the number of scholars taking two, three, and four subjects, but a decline in those taking five.

Various accounts reach us from Your Majesty's Inspectors as to the success of the evening continuation schools in different districts. From some places there are complaints of apathy in regard to them, but the general tenor of the reports is that the schools are making steady progress. It is clear, however, that the successful organization and conduct of the classes present problems of considerable difficulty. The discipline of the evening school has to be different from that of a day school, as the elder scholars naturally resent undue interference. The appliances and furniture of the schools are not always suitable for the use of youths and adults. There is in some cases a tendency on the part of the scholars to take up new subjects to which they have not the perseverance to give the time and labour necessary for success. In fact, the movement is still in an experimental stage. In many districts the County Councils have rendered valuable aid in its development, and in all there is wide opportunity for voluntary service both in propaganda and in actual teaching.

It is much easier to carry on a successful evening continuation school in towns than in country districts. In the former special teachers can be more readily obtained, and those who by gifts and tastes are particularly fitted for this branch of work tend to be naturally selected for the purpose. More suitable rooms can generally be found, and the necessary appliances are more readily at hand. There are many signs that the curriculum that is most likely to prevail in the evening continuation schools of the future will be technical in its character, and adapted to the needs of those seeking to acquire special knowledge which will be of advantage to them in their daily work.

At the same time it must be remembered that the evening continuation schools essay a difficult task, and that it needs skill, care, and enthusiasm to guide and retain the interest of young scholars, many of whom are just enjoying their first taste of liberty and are specially sensitive to the counter attractions of light amusements. It is wise and necessary, therefore, to introduce an element of carefully-planned recreation, and much thought is necessary to the classification of the scholars and to the preparation of lessons. Essentially important as it is in every form of educational work, the personality of the teacher is in these schools almost the sole guarantee for sustained and general success. He needs leisure and some degree of freedom from other preoccupying work if he is to prepare interesting lessons on a variety of subjects which, if treated mechanically, fail to awaken the interest of the scholars. The classes themselves make calls upon his energy and resourcefulness which, if he is already tired with a long day's work, he cannot be expected to satisfy.

2. EXTRACT FROM REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FOR 1896.

The work of the evening continuation schools, to the special value and difficulties of which we alluded in our last report, continues to make satisfactory progress. The effects of the new code introduced for these schools in 1893 have been as far-reaching as they have been beneficial. We now present full statistics of the third year's work under that code. The returns, which chiefly cover the year ended the 30th April, 1896, show that the numbers of separate departments inspected and of scholars have materially increased. The following table shows the facts in summary form :—

| | | 1894. | 1895. | 1896. |
|--|-----|---------|----------|----------|
| Number of separate departments-inspected | ... | 3,742 | 3,947 | 4,347 |
| Number of scholars | ... | 266,683 | 270,285 | 298,724 |
| Annual grants | ... | £91,540 | £112,084 | £129,542 |

While many of the evening continuation schools are playing an increasingly-important part in the work of adult education, there are signs that the great majority of the schools are becoming the means of retaining the scholars who have recently left the elementary day schools. In absolute numbers the scholars over sixteen years of age have increased during the year, but the percentage of those scholars is shown by the following table to be still in course of decline :—

| | Year. | Number of Scholars on the Registers aged | | | | | |
|----------------|-------|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| | | 16 and under 17. | 17 and under 18. | 18 and under 19. | 19 and under 20. | 20 and under 21. | 21 and over. |
| Percentage ... | 1894 | 13.55 | 9.66 | 7.03 | 4.99 | 3.67 | 13.89 |
| | 1895 | 12.93 | 9.12 | 6.28 | 4.37 | 3.27 | 13.22 |
| | 1896 | 12.34 | 8.41 | 5.78 | 3.92 | 3.03 | 11.98 |

The total number of scholars in the evening continuation schools has increased from 270,285 to 298,724, and the number of free scholars from 98,133 to 108,708. The tendency, apparent in last year's returns, for the number of free scholars to decline has thus been checked. Of those scholars who pay fees, the great majority pay from 2d. to 3d. per week. The elementary subjects—reading, writing, and arithmetic—still hold numerically the chief place in the curriculum. Geography, needlework, shorthand, and vocal music come next in popularity, with other technical subjects—book-keeping and mensuration—in the following places. Domestic economy still precedes the study of history and of "the life and duties of the citizen." Then come, in the order named, French, German, "the science of common things," ambulance-work, algebra, chemistry, human physiology, English, elementary physics and chemistry, elementary physiography, magnetism and electricity, agriculture, and hygiene. A comparatively small number of scholars have taken up horticulture, mechanics, Welsh, Euclid, botany, sound, light and heat, Latin, and navigation. There has been an increase in the number of scholars taking from two to five subjects, but a decline in the number of those taking five.

The evening schools inspected during the year were 3,742, containing 4,347 separate departments, as compared with 3,947 last year. The number of principal teachers employed was 3,402 men and 918 women. Most of these teachers were certificated—viz., 3,195 masters and 791 mistresses, as compared with 207 masters and 127 mistresses not holding certificates from the department. There were 298,724 scholars on the registers, as compared with 270,285 in the preceding year. Of these scholars, 108,708 paid no fees; 61,196 (20·48 per cent.) were under fourteen years of age; 163,643 (54·77 per cent.) were between fourteen and eighteen; 38,070 (12·73 per cent.) were between eighteen and twenty-one; and 35,815 (11·98 per cent.) were over twenty-one. Drawing was taught in 1,048 schools, manual or technical instruction in 438, cookery in 531, laundry-work in 47, and housewifery in 9. Dairy-work has only been taken by one school. The total of the grants paid to evening schools was £129,542 6s. 4d., as compared with £112,084 7s. 7d. in the year before. Under the Evening Continuation School Code the grants are based upon the amount of instruction given to each individual scholar.

The following table shows the chief of these figures in a summary form for the years 1894–96 :—

| | 1894. | 1895. | 1896. |
|-------------------------------------|---------|----------|----------|
| Schools inspected | 3,318 | 3,421 | 3,742 |
| Departments inspected | 3,742 | 3,947 | 4,347 |
| Principal teachers :— | 3,738 | 3,927 | 4,320 |
| Certificated masters | 2,822 | 2,881 | 3,195 |
| Non-certificated masters | 215 | 217 | 207 |
| Certificated mistresses | 623 | 718 | 791 |
| Non-certificated mistresses | 78 | 111 | 127 |
| Scholars on the register :— | 266,683 | 270,285 | 298,724 |
| Under fourteen years of age | 32,342 | 43,049 | 61,196 |
| Percentage | 12·13 | 15·93 | 20·48 |
| Between fourteen and eighteen | 155,459 | 153,879 | 163,643 |
| Percentage | 58·29 | 56·93 | 54·77 |
| Between eighteen and twenty-one | 41,839 | 37,640 | 38,070 |
| Percentage | 15·69 | 13·92 | 12·73 |
| Over twenty-one years of age | 37,043 | 35,717 | 35,815 |
| Percentage | 13·89 | 13·22 | 11·98 |
| Free scholars | 103,323 | 98,133 | 108,708 |
| Schools in which have been taught,— | | | |
| Drawing | 1,213 | 1,338 | 1,048 |
| Manual or technical instruction | 281 | 399 | 438 |
| Cookery | 468 | 501 | 531 |
| Laundry-work | 26 | 42 | 47 |
| Dairy-work | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Housewifery | 23 | 12 | 9 |
| Total grant paid | £91,540 | £112,084 | £129,542 |

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (1,650 copies), £2 11s. 6d.

By Authority: JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1897.

Price 3d.]

