

opportunity to avail themselves of the higher education afforded is still considered of the highest importance by the students.

The number of students attending the classes is regulated in a great measure by the facilities for obtaining employment in mines situated within a reasonable distance from the class-rooms; and the attendance both at the Thames and at Reefton schools has fallen off through the mines in their vicinity being not so fully in a position to furnish employment as formerly.

The opening of schools at Coromandel and at Waihi has also induced students to attend the classes in those schools, and the number attending at both places shows that the desire on the part of the miners to acquire all the higher branches of knowledge is still maintained. Therefore the number of students throughout the Hauraki District has been increased in a marked degree.

The schools at Waipori and at Miller's Flat, to which assistance has been furnished by the Government, are not yet in the position to afford students an opportunity of attending classes.

The school in connection with the Otago University continues to steadily advance, the attendance for the year being greater than in any previous year.

The attendance at the school at Nelson shows that the same amount of interest is taken by the students as formerly. The classes are presided over by Mr. W. F. Worley, who devotes his spare time to the advancement of the students.

The following reports have been furnished by Mr. F. B. Allen, M.A., B.Sc., the Director of the Thames School; Mr. R. M. Aitken, Director of the Reefton School; Mr. P. G. Morgan, M.A., Instructor of the Waihi School; Mr. James M. Maclaren, M.A., Instructor of the Coromandel School; Professor George H. F. Ulrich, F.G.S., Director of the Otago School; and Mr. W. F. Worley, of the Nelson School, and show the results of the annual class-examinations, the subjects taught, the number of ore-samples that have been assayed, and the returns from the larger parcels treated at the different reduction plants at the schools. It is thus apparent that the public are greatly benefited by the institution of the schools, where, for a reasonable charge, the full value of any ore or mineral substance can be readily determined, and the most approved process for treatment in order to recover the different metals ascertained.

THAMES SCHOOL.

Mr. F. B. Allen, M.A., B.Sc., Director of the Thames School of Mines, reports as follows:—

I have the honour to furnish the following annual report of the Thames School of Mines for the twelve months ending the 31st March, 1898:—

The twelve months just ended has been an extremely busy period for the school, which has been taxed to its utmost capacity to cope with the large increase in work. The attendance at the classes, which has steadily increased since the end of 1895, reached its maximum in the middle term of 1897, and the experimental plant was kept in constant employment testing trial parcels of ore by various processes, until, at the end of the year, it was closed down for alterations and repairs.

Two changes have been made in the teaching staff. At the end of June, Mr. P. G. Morgan, M.A., relinquished his duties as assistant, which for close on twelve months, during a very busy period, he had discharged with untiring energy and zeal. On the 1st August, 1897, Mr. W. A. MacLeod, B.A., B.Sc., was appointed to fill the vacancy, and has carried out his arduous duties in an entirely satisfactory manner. At the end of 1897 Mr. John Parr, B.Sc., M.E., terminated his engagement as drawing-master, in order to go to Australia. Mr. Parr proved an excellent teacher, with a thorough knowledge of his subject, and under his guidance the drawing-class made rapid progress. His successor, Mr. E. J. Williams, commenced duty at the beginning of 1898. He has shown himself to be thoroughly competent, and has gained the confidence of the students under his charge. Mechanical drawing is a very essential portion of the work of a mining school, and to insure proper attention being paid to this important branch requires the constant attention of a capable instructor.

The average number of individuals attending the school during 1897-98 is 136. The average attendance of registered students has been 98, a slight falling-off from the previous year, although at one time (*viz.*, during the second term of 1897) the roll of registered students included the large number of 128. Since that time the number of students attending classes has been decreasing. The attendance at the school is of necessity regulated partly by the state of the mining industry in the district. Latterly active mining has been largely superseded by development work, the erection of plants and batteries, and in the meantime comparatively little gold has been won on the Thames field. Men have had to journey to the up-country districts in search of employment, while new-comers to the Thames have been fewer than in former years. The effect on the school has been to lower the attendance from the abnormal height it had reached during the first two terms of 1897 to something more like an average number. The attendance, however, is still in excess of that of two years ago. Moreover, the majority of the present students are in active employment, and it is partly because of the smaller number this year of that section of the students who are not working in the mines or elsewhere that the attendance has decreased. The school has been designed and the course of study arranged for the advantage and instruction of men employed in the mine or battery, and each student, if he could so arrange matters, would find it to his advantage to obtain outside employment either in the direction of mining or of metallurgy during the time that he is studying, so as to combine the practical with the theoretical.

During the last twelve months two new schools of mines have been started, for the purpose of giving regular instruction in mining and kindred subjects. The Waihi School is under the leadership of Mr. P. G. Morgan, M.A., the late assistant at the Thames School, the one at Coromandel being under Mr. J. M. Maclaren, formerly a pupil of the Thames School, and the winner of a School