

The number of free pupils admitted during the year to technical schools was 2,207, an increase of about two hundred. About 24 per cent. of these students held senior free places, as against 19 per cent. in 1908. Some particulars are given below.

	Males.	Females.	Totals.
Junior free pupils ... ..	871	812	1,683
Senior free pupils ... ..	336	188	524
<b>Totals ... ..</b>	<b>1,207</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>2,207</b>

Courses of Instruction.	Number of Free Pupils.	
	1908.	1909.
Science and technology ... ..	516	649
Pure and applied art ... ..	137	152
Domestic economy ... ..	277	319
Agriculture ... ..	7	21
Commercial instruction ... ..	1,063	1,066
<b>Totals ... ..</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>2,207</b>

Capitation on account of free places amounted, for 1909, to £6,401 1s. 6d., being at the rate of about £2 18s. per free place. As predicted last year, there has been a gratifying increase in the proportion of free pupils taking courses other than commercial courses. Last year about 55 per cent. of the free pupils attended commercial courses, this year the percentage is 48. Day technical schools—that is to say, schools providing day courses of not less than twenty hours a week—were in operation during the year at Auckland, Wanganui, Wellington, Napier, Westport, Christchurch, and Dunedin. As has been previously stated, these schools appear to be filling a distinct gap in our educational system. The curriculum is mainly secondary in character, yet the establishment of these schools does not appear to have adversely affected the attendance at the secondary schools in their vicinity. These schools have, moreover, had a distinctly beneficial effect on the evening technical classes, the best students at the latter being those who have previously attended the day classes. The total number of free pupils attending the day technical schools was 846, of whom 501 were girls.

Speaking generally, it may be said that much good and useful work, within the limits imposed by existing conditions, continues to be done by the technical schools. Most of the instruction is necessarily given in the evenings, and it is gratifying to note that the attendance at evening classes, although entirely optional, in most cases continues to be satisfactory, and, further, that the number of evening students who attend definite courses on two and three evenings a week continues to increase. The chief inducements at present held out to students are free places offered by the Government, scholarships and free tuition provided locally, and the payment of fees by some employers.

Assuming that one of the chief functions of evening classes should be to provide such instruction as students do not or cannot get in the ordinary course of their occupations, it should, it seems, be unnecessary in connection with such classes to supplement the above-mentioned inducements or an extension of them on the lines indicated in the report of last year by anything savouring of direct compulsion.

That something more in the way of such compulsion is needed in the case of the relatively large number of young persons who do not on the completion of their primary-school course proceed to secondary or to technical schools seems now to be generally admitted. Without referring here to what has been done on the Continent in regard to this important matter, it may be mentioned that the Education (Scotland) Act of 1908 imposes on each School Board the duty of making suitable provision of continuation classes for the further instruction of young persons above the age of fourteen with reference to the crafts and