

The engineering class, which was a small one, was carried on by the Supervisor, Mr. Jackson, in anticipation of an instructor for the subject being appointed. There seems to be no doubt that an engineering class at this centre will do well.

Art work was taught by the Board's instructress from New Plymouth, who visited the centre one day in each week. Most satisfactory progress was made, some of the students showing decided ability.

Evening classes were conducted as follows: Shorthand, book-keeping, cookery, dressmaking, English and arithmetic, woodwork. The work was carried on generally by the day staff, assisted in the case of dressmaking by a visiting instructress.

At Eltham classes were held in the following: English, arithmetic, book-keeping, shorthand and typing, dressmaking, motor engineering.

At this centre the experiment was tried of holding shorthand classes for girls at 8 o'clock in the morning. Owing to the kindness of employers and parents the experiment proved a success, and might be tried in other centres.

The difficulty of obtaining suitable instructors has always been a rather serious one in the smaller centres, but during 1917 instructors were available in engineering from the New Plymouth staff, and in shorthand from the Hawera staff, hence the Eltham Supervisor reports that this was the first year during which it was possible to keep the classes going to the end of the year.

At Stratford classes were held in shorthand, motor engineering, plumbing, dressmaking, advanced English and Latin, and English and arithmetic. Some of the dressmaking students travelled upwards of thirty miles to attend the class. This was the only centre where the attendance was quite voluntary, and the numbers must be considered to have been very satisfactory.

An attempt was made to conduct a "grouped course" of instruction so that free-place students might obtain free tuition, but the results were not so satisfactory as was anticipated, and there seems every likelihood that the School Committee will recommend the Board to bring into operation regulations for compulsory attendance.

*Compulsory Attendance.*—One would think that free instruction at continuation and technical classes would induce parents voluntarily to insist on their children taking advantage of such instruction, but this has not proved to be the case. It would appear that free classes must necessarily be followed by compulsory attendance at such classes. I think this has been the experience right throughout the Dominion with regard both to primary and to secondary or technical education. In the case of the former the compulsion does not apply only to the districts from which a special request is made, but to every part of the country where facilities are provided; and I would respectfully suggest that the only method of dealing with attendance at technical classes is to make the clause of the Act dealing with compulsory attendance automatically operative wherever suitable classes are established. The onus of sending the boy to the class must lie with the parent. Many parents are very keen on this matter, while many others are extremely apathetic; others again have absolutely no control over the boys, and this is the most alarming feature of all. It is pathetic to hear a strong robust man say of his fifteen-year-old son, "I will try to induce him to attend." The fault does not always lie with the lad. It is a common fallacy among us that the lads of the present day have not the same strong qualities that characterized boys "when we were young," but we must remember that many of the youths who were shirking lessons a few years ago wrote with their life-blood on the sand and rocks of Gallipoli their protest against the charge of deterioration. The lads are all right; what is lacking is discipline, and discipline must begin at home. Some of the boys are engaged in callings which militate against their attendance and progress at evening classes—*e.g.*, hairdressers' assistants and post-office messengers. I do not suggest that these, and lads similarly placed, should be exempted, but it would be a good thing for all concerned if matters could be arranged differently.

A. GRAY, Director.

#### EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTION.

*Farmers' Classes.*—These were carried on in forty centres, with an enrolment of 682. A total of 135 lectures or demonstrations was given. Gradually the system of two or three occasional lectures throughout the year is being dropped in favour of regular instructional work once per month except during midsummer. This section of our activities entails a great deal of heavy instructional work and much travelling, frequently in bad weather. The following are centres visited, with enrolments in each case: Auroa (21), Lowgarth (27), Mangatoki (16), Mahoe (10), Ngaere (29), Cardiff (32), Warea (33), Oaonui (9), Opunake (14), Inglewood (4), Bell Block (32), Waitara Road (3), Lepperton (6), Maketawa (24), Durham Road (19), Egmont Village (15), Kent (14), Upper Mangorei (6), Pukeho (11), Tariki (12), Stratford (22), Toko (14), Bird (19), Kaimata (17), Waitoitoi (11), Patua (23), Pungarehu (28), Tututawa (18), Kina (9), Okato (10), Carrington (23), Rahotu (41), Newall (17), Tarata (14), Korito (16), Awatuna (5), Waitui (10), Pihama (22), Normanby (14), Matapu (12).

The amount of capitation earned by these classes was low, approximately £60. There is no doubt that for such work the rate of capitation should be increased, as the instruction is of an advanced character, and is received by men who are directly applying it in their business.

Classes in orchard-work and horticulture were held at the following centres: Central, New Plymouth (18), Fitzroy (12), Vogeltown (15), Inglewood (15), Stratford (7), Waitara (5). All classes did good work, and their continuation next year can be anticipated.

*Easter Course for Teachers.*—A short course of instruction in dairy-work, agriculture, and nature-study was carried out at New Plymouth from the 10th to the 20th April, the majority of teachers in the Board's service attending. A very profitable and interesting fortnight was spent. The roll number in these classes was 249.

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