

school were coming to the front in the quality of butter made by them. During late years the attendance of dairy pupils has been quite satisfactory, whilst the benefits to the district through the working of the school have been conspicuous.

The returns of the Cork Butter Market, which is the largest in Europe, show that there has been since the establishment of the dairy school at Cork a large increase in the number of packages of the higher qualities of butter sent to market, whilst there has been a considerable decrease in the number of packages of inferior quality. The chief inspectors of the market, who are charged with the grading of the butter, have frequently stated that this improvement is due to the working of the dairy school.

Agricultural Boarders.—The agricultural session for male pupils has not been so well attended. The cause for this may be mainly sought for in agricultural depression and the unsettled condition of agrarian matters. Notwithstanding the fewness of the agricultural pupils the Commissioners and the local committee have not relaxed their efforts to make the teaching of the school as effective as possible. An efficient staff of science lecturers is provided by the local committee, the school is fully equipped, and it is hoped with improved times the number of youths seeking instruction in this institution will reach its due level. Many of the students trained therein have obtained free scholarships, value £15 each, at the Glasnevin establishment in competitive examination.

School Farms and School Gardens under Local Management.

There were at the close of the year fifty-five school farms and twenty-nine school gardens. There is some improvement evident in several of the agricultural school farms, but I should like to see further progress. The teachers of these schools labour under serious disadvantages in connection with the Agricultural Department. In the first place many of the older teachers of them have not had opportunities of seeing an example of what a really well-kept small farm and garden should be. The surroundings of the school farm are, to say the least, not suggestive of improvement or tasteful management, so that the eye is accustomed to disorder. Next, the teacher cannot procure skilled or satisfactory labour without considerable expense. Since my appointment as Superintendent of the Agricultural Department I have been reluctantly obliged to recommend that a large number of school farms be struck off the list. I have endeavoured by counsel and otherwise to encourage improvement in the remainder.

There has been a fair response in many, but a few are still unsatisfactory. I believe very considerable good might be effected by a proper development of these agricultural schools, and I earnestly hope to see an extension of the system. Arrangements have been made with seedsmen in the City of Dublin for supplying farm and garden seeds at reduced rates to teachers of agricultural schools and school gardens. I believe this has been serviceable in the districts where the schools are situated in proving the advisability of sowing seeds of good quality. An enormous amount of inferior seed is sold to farmers in backward districts. The loss occasioned thereby is considerable. In some instances teachers of agricultural schools have sold at a good price in their neighbourhood grain for seed grown from imported corn. The farmers are in this way instructed in the value of the system of changing seed.

The school-farm and school-garden system has important considerations in connection with rural progress in this country—amongst others, the cultivating a taste for order and neatness in farm and garden management, as well as bringing before the notice of farmers in backward districts improved varieties of farm and garden crops.

The examination of pupils in practical agriculture in the schools to which farms are attached has given me satisfaction. The percentage of “passes” in those schools at my examination is lower in 1887 than in 1886; but it is right that I should remark, I have adopted a higher standard of examination, as well as a more critical testing of the genuineness of the instruction given. The examination of children in schools having school gardens attached is conducted by the District Inspectors.

The following statement of results may be considered satisfactory:—Pupils examined by me on farms attached to agricultural schools under local management, in programme comprising knowledge of the practical work carried out on those farms and gardens: 1887—Pupils examined, 863; of whom passed 613, being 71.0 per cent. 1886—Pupils examined, 837; of whom passed 665, being 79.4 per cent. Pupils examined by District Inspector on their knowledge of the crops in cultivation in school gardens: 1887—Pupils examined 507, of whom passed 390, being 76.9 per cent. 1886—Pupils examined, 507; of whom passed 362, being 71.4 per cent.

I beg to submit a few observations of a more general character in reference to agricultural progress. The wave of general depression in the agricultural interests, now so universally felt, has not been without its influence in affecting profits on the farms of the Commissioners, as well as in causing a reduction in the numbers of agricultural male pupils in attendance at the Glasnevin Agricultural School, and in preventing a satisfactory development of this department of the Munster Agricultural School. Whilst the number of applications for nominations for free places increase, the number of paying pupils at the farm shows a decrease. The full number (twenty-five) of free pupils has been kept up. The number of paying students at the Glasnevin establishment during the eight months' session ending 31st October was thirteen. During the corresponding session of 1886 the attendance was eighteen, and for 1885 it was twenty-four. I have every reason for considering that this diminution is due mainly to the fact that farmers of what used to be considered the well-to-do classes are crippled in their resources, and, from uncertainty as to the future of agriculture, they are more careful in the expenditure of funds. In many instances I have had applications from farmers for a reduction in the premium for their sons, or for an allowance of time for the payment by instalments of the full amount. I do not believe that there is any increased apathy on the part of the people in respect of obtaining an agricultural education. I have had some cases where young men have written most touching appeals for admission to the Glasnevin establishment on reduced terms when they failed to obtain admission by competitive