The latest Science and Art Report of the English Department shows increased activity in the matter of inspection of drawing and kindred subjects in primary schools, a staff of additional Inspectors properly qualified having been appointed for this purpose in order that advice and assistance may be readily available in such subjects as affect the system of technical education.

We are not by any means equal in quality of work to the Home schools. Solid geometry, for instance, is one of the most important branches of work. In New Zealand it is unfortunately considered by the majority of School Inspectors unnecessary, as at the Conference of Inspectors a recommendation was carried to omit this subject. It is still, however, retained in the syllabus by the Education Department, and in the Wellington District is combined with model drawing. I trust, however, that this may soon be remedied, and that we may strengthen our position in primary results by every possible means in our power. Although a large number of schools were inspected during the past year, I hope to considerably extend my work in this direction with a view to still greater efficiency.

First-grade Drawing Examination.—In this examination the following were the results: The total number of papers issued was 6,109, and the number worked, 5.526; passed, 3,593; papers failed, 1,933. Freehand, 1,693 papers worked—937 passed, 756 failed; geometry, 1,736 papers worked—1,122 passed, 614 failed; scale: 1,444 papers worked—1,067 passed, 377 failed; model, 653 papers worked—467 passed, 186 failed. Number of papers "excellent," 207; number of papers "good," 666; individual candidates, 3,880; individual passes, 2,801; schools presenting candidates, 99.

The number of papers applied for outside the Wellington District was 437, of which number 287 passed. Schools were represented from the following districts: Marlborough, Westland, Greymouth, Nelson, and the following schools unconnected with any Education Board: Bishopdale Sketching Club, Nelson; Wanganui Collegiate School; Convent of Mercy, Lyttelton; Convent of Mercy, Christchurch; St. Patrick's College and St. Francis Xavier's, Wellington.

The following shows the result of 1895-96 in the Wellington Educational District: 1895—Papers worked, 5,242; papers passed, 3,116; failed, 2,126. 1896—Papers worked, 5,089; papers passed, 3,306; failed, 1,783. This is an increase of 19 individual candidates and 93 individual passes upon 1895.

The total number of certificates issued in connection with this examination since its inauguration in 1884 is 22,588. The number of full first-grade certificates issued to date is 1,226.

Manual Instruction.—I am much disappointed with the progress of this work. The first country manual instruction class was opened at Paraparaumu with a boys' class of fifteen held during the afternoon, and an adult class of twelve, held in the evening, under the instruction of Mr. Foster head teacher. Mr. Foster was unfortunately removed to Manakau at the latter part of the year.

The next to follow was Cross Creek, under the instruction of Mr. W. Haywood, Chairman of the School Committee, who, with the active assistance of members of the School Committee, constructed benches, vices, and shop-fittings from timber supplied by Mr. W. Booth, of Carterton. The roll numbered eleven. The workshop being too small, Mr. Ronayne, at my request, very kindly provided the necessary timber and iron for increased accommodation, which has since been constructed by the Committee, assisted by the boys. I inspected the work of this class in November, and was much pleased with the good work and excellent management of the class. The interest of the boys may be shown in the fact of there being not a single absence during the quarter ending December.

Mauriceville West established a class under the instruction of Mr. C. R. Joplin, the head teacher, on the 20th October, with a roll of twenty-one boys. At the time of my visit the class had received only one or two lessons.

Great credit is due to the instructors named above for their earnest endeavours to promote this instruction, for I am afraid the tendency is to consider industrial employment as distinctly inferior to professional or mercantile occupation. It is the easiest possible thing to obtain clerical workers, but not so industrial; whilst the latter offer our young men far greater opportunities for success than any other calling.

Locally, unfortunately, there is an utter want of sympathy shown. It may be of interest to know that the report of the Science and Art Department gives the figures relating to the progress of manual instruction in England as follows: 1894—Scholars taught, 30,096; grants paid, £8,041 4s. 3d. 1895—Scholars taught, 67,470; grants paid, £16,307 10s.

The increase for 1896 is of similar importance, but the exact figures are not available, thus showing the value attached to this subject as a means of ordinary education. "The Manual and Technical Instruction Act, 1895," requires that instruction in this subject shall be given out of school-hours, but this condition is held by the English authorities to be satisfied if twenty hours per week are given to other subjects prescribed by the codes. It is further stated that spelling, arithmetic, and formal grammar have hitherto received an amount of attention disproportionate to their educational benefit, especially if compared with the value of the subjects sought to be introduced. Surely it would be possible to relieve the pressure in ordinary subjects sufficiently to enable the boys of the Sixth and Seventh Standards to present themselves for manual instruction for two hours per week, and the girls to cookery, laundry-work, housewifery, or dairy-work Until some such arrangement is come to success is impossible. In Liverpool, Manchester, and other large centres, central schools are established for these subjects, and the children attend in classes during ordinary school-hours, accompanied by the teacher. By this means the instructors are constantly employed, one set of appliances serve, and the cost is reduced to a minimum.

As a means of bridging the gap between the occupations of the primer classes and the upper Standards, cardboard-modelling will be found an effective study, cultivating habits of order and exactness, quickness and manual dexterity. A circular is now in print giving details and sugges-