

occupations cannot, for instance, be properly conducted in existing galleries, and the long desks and backless seats, to which in point of school hygiene objection may be taken, must give place, in part at least, to something better suited to the various school employments and the physical needs of the occupants.

With the object of doing the best for our schools in respect of illustrative equipment, we think it very desirable that as complete a collection as possible be made from the stocks of school-furnishing firms in Europe and America of all kinds of appliances (not omitting copies of suitable pictures now produced in numbers for school purposes specially) to form a permanent exhibition for the use of teachers, who would thus obtain many valuable suggestions, and know better what to ask for. With such an exhibition a teachers' library of professional works and reading-room might well be combined with conspicuous advantage.

*District High Schools.*—A salient feature in the history of the year just past has been the extension of the district-high-school principle to a number of small centres which were previously contented with the educational opportunities of the ordinary primary school. The subjects taken up are in general the usual high-school subjects, the choice being determined quite as much by the scholastic attainments of the young graduates or other teachers we have for the very limited and uncertain emolument available been able to secure as by any special preference on the part of parents. On the prospects of the permanence of the demand it is too early to express an opinion, but, as already indicated, here as elsewhere the need of better equipment in buildings and apparatus to make the education of the best type is sufficiently evident. With the expansion made in this direction we have reason to feel gratified, though personally we should be inclined to welcome more readily an extension of the primary course on the lines of industrial development in conjunction with a further English education without attempting to assume the recognised functions of existing high schools. In our report two years ago we expressed the opinion that in Christchurch itself there was need of a central school on the model of the higher-grade schools of England, which would bridge over the interval between the completion of the primary course at thirteen or fourteen and an industrial apprenticeship or clerical occupation at sixteen or seventeen, and we have since then seen no reason to alter that view. For those who desire to remain at school only an additional year, the Seventh Standard programme without further provision should be sufficient; but outside of this number there must be a good proportion of pupils now spending two or perhaps three years at high schools without the intention of continuing scholastic studies who would be much better provided for in a school specially adapted to their needs. Pending better arrangements, one of the city schools, having more than enough space for the present attendance, might be utilised for the purpose, and the experience thus gained be garnered for future use.

*Higher-grade Schools.*—By way of illustration, and for convenience of reference, it may be profitable to add a few notes on some examples of the higher-grade school we propose as a model. We draw the information from the voluminous and instructive report of the New South Wales Commissioners.

The higher-grade school had its origin, we believe, some twenty years ago in Birmingham, where conditions comparable with those now existing in the larger towns of New Zealand then invited attention. The more intelligent boys were found to be leaving school at twelve or thirteen years of age, after passing through the ordinary standard course, and some further provision for their education was required. Accordingly a preliminary experiment was made, and, this proving a success, a fully equipped higher-grade school (the Waverley Road School) was some years later started with co-educational classes for technical and commercial training, and was fitted with laboratories, workshops, &c., and all the necessary apparatus for advanced work. In 1898 followed, on similar lines, the George Dixon Higher-grade School for boys and girls. These two schools now supply the educational wants of parents who desire the higher primary education for their children. Admission is granted at about the age of twelve to those who have completed the Fifth Standard course, provided that their intention is to remain at school for another period of at least three years. "These schools in their advanced classes aim at giving their pupils an opportunity for specialising, but they also keep in view the necessity for a wide educational training." In the specialised classes the subjects dealt with are: (a) on the side of scientific and technical training—mechanics, theoretical and practical physics (especially electricity), theoretical and practical chemistry, machine construction and drawing, practical plane and solid geometry, and manual work in wood and metal; (b) on the side of commercial training—commercial geography, book-keeping, shorthand, mensuration, and one foreign language. For the special requirements of girls provision is also made for domestic economy (including needlework), hygiene, and vocal music. Hours longer than in the ordinary school—9 to 12 and 2 to 5, with quarter-hour intervals morning and afternoon.

An excellent school of the type is the Central Higher-grade School, Manchester, which enjoys the widest and highest reputation, and is immensely popular, many of its pupils coming from long distances. The school is attended by 900 boys and 400 girls, and is conducted in two sections—elementary standard work in the lower school, and science work in the advanced or upper school. The science-teaching and laboratory-equipment are especially admirable.

At Bruntsfield, in Edinburgh, where another notable school of the kind is established, the upper work is divided into a three-years course, the first of which is common to all pupils, as all have started with the standard of the "merit certificate" (comparable with our Sixth Standard "certificate of proficiency"). On the completion of the first year's work, during which the sifting process has been going on under the eye of the headmaster, specialisation is made in the direction on the one hand of industrial and on the other of business pursuits, while general education is provided for by an advanced course of the usual English subjects with one or more modern languages. In the study of English literature it may be noted that the first two years are "devoted to the cultivation of a taste for good literature by the reading of interesting books of good style