

The average attendance at the Dunedin schools shows a decrease of 38 pupils as compared with the previous year's attendance. The average attendance expressed as a percentage of the weekly roll shows a further increase for the year. In 1904 this percentage was 90 for the Oamaru schools and the twenty schools in Dunedin and suburbs, and 86.6 for the whole district. Last year the percentages were—Oamaru schools, 91; Dunedin and suburbs, 90.9; whole district, 89.7. If the mean weekly roll for the district be taken at 19,433, the average percentage attained shows that 17,439 pupils attended school every school day and that 2,000 were absent. This is easily the highest percentage of attendance recorded, and indicates a degree of regularity of attendance of pupils that is highly satisfactory.

**INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS.**—The Inspectors group the schools according to efficiency as follows: Good to very good, 45 per cent.; satisfactory, 42 per cent.; fair, 10 per cent.; weak or very weak, 3 per cent. The percentages in the second and fourth groups are the same as those of last year; that of the third group has decreased by 3, and the group "Good to very good" has increased by 3 per cent., a result the Inspectors regard as very satisfactory in the circumstances in which the schools had to work. In their report the Inspectors dwell at considerable length on the circumstances that in their judgment are inimical to efficiency. Making due allowance for these, they think that the majority of the schools rank as high in efficiency as could be reasonably expected. The following shows the Inspectors' estimate of the quality of the work done in Standard VII in schools other than district high schools: Very good, 7; good, 23; satisfactory, 21; fair, 5; weak, 1. In 13 other schools there was a Standard VII class, the pupils of which were absent on examination day. As the Inspectors remark, the labourer is worthy of his hire; and the teacher of a small school who gives satisfactory instruction to this class is worthy of extra remuneration for the extra work the instruction entails. The Board would again urge upon the Minister the reasonableness of this plea.

**MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.**—During 1905 there were 92 schools in which instruction in handwork of some kind or other was given. As this is just about the number of schools in the district that are taught by more than one teacher, it is evident that nearly all the schools that might fairly be expected to undertake this work are devoting at least some portion of time to it. In many of the schools that are taught by only one teacher great difficulty must naturally be experienced in devoting to manual and technical subjects the time necessary to qualify for capitation, or indeed to devote any time at all to them. There are in the district about 128 of such schools, and this is about the number in which, so far, no work of this nature has been undertaken. In 1904 the number of pupils receiving instruction in handwork was 6,027, or 31 per cent.; during last year the number rose to 10,010, or 52 per cent. Of the 92 schools in which the instruction was carried on, 67 devoted to the subjects the time necessary to qualify for the Government capitation grant. In the previous year the number of such schools was 54, so that during the year just closed the list of capitation-earning schools has increased by 13; and not only so, but in most of these schools the range of the instruction has been much extended. In many cases all the classes now participate in the instruction, where formerly only the infants and Standards I and II did so. The Board's aim is that in all schools above grade 4 some subject of handwork or science shall be taken by each standard class. The subjects most favoured by the teachers of this district appear to be: Paper-work for classes below Standard III; brush drawing, modelling in carton, cardboard, and plasticine, for classes in Standard III and higher standards. In the large schools the handwork subjects taken by Standards V and VI are woodwork, cookery, physical measurements, elementary physiology, first aid; and elementary agriculture. It is apparent that for many years to come agriculture must be the chief pursuit of a very large number of the inhabitants of this colony, and it is gratifying that a marked extension in the instruction in the subject of elementary agriculture is noticeable throughout the district, there being at the end of last year 34 schools in various parts of the district in which such instruction was being carried on, each school having connected with it a suitably equipped cottage garden where the practical work is done. The Inspectors report that the instruction given is of a very practical and educative character. The Board is of opinion that in consideration of the very great importance of this subject, and the large number of schools now giving instruction in it, the time has arrived when a specialist in agricultural subjects should be appointed. Instruction in paper-work, brush-drawing, carton, cardboard, plasticine, or clay modelling (sufficient to qualify for the Government capitation grant) was given in 33 schools, agricultural chemistry in 1, elementary physiology and first aid in 2, swimming in 4, woodwork in 21, cookery in 22, and elementary agriculture in 34. During the year cookery and woodwork classes were established at Kaitangata School, and a cookery class was commenced at Mosgiel District High School. Special teachers of needlework were employed in 24 schools having an average attendance below 41 and taught by male teachers. Special classes for instruction of teachers in woodwork and cookery were held during the year. Six of the Board's female teachers sat for the London City and Guilds examination in plain cookery, five of them obtaining first-class certificates, and one a second-class certificate. Nine of the Board's male teachers presented themselves for the London City and Guilds Final Examination in Woodwork, five of them obtaining first-class and three second-class certificates. The Saturday classes at the Dunedin School of Art in drawing, elementary designing, brushwork, and cardboard and clay modelling have been largely taken advantage of by country teachers and pupil-teachers. The following is a summary of the receipts and expenditure in connection with the manual and technical classes (exclusive of Dunedin, Oamaru, and Kaitangata technical classes) for the year:—

|  |    |    |    |    | <i>Receipts.</i> |    |    |       |    |    |
|--|----|----|----|----|------------------|----|----|-------|----|----|
| From Government—                       |    |    |    |    | £                | s. | d. | £     | s. | d. |
| Capitation                             | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,691            | 19 | 9  |       |    |    |
| Buildings, apparatus, and fittings     | .. | .. | .. | .. | 365              | 14 | 0  |       |    |    |
| Special grant for training of teachers | .. | .. | .. | .. | 200              | 0  | 0  |       |    |    |
| Fees                                   | .. | .. | .. | .. | 176              | 1  | 3  |       |    |    |
|  |    |    |    |    | <hr/>            |    |    | 2,433 | 15 | 0  |