

show that the economic side of the work is not disregarded. Research of this kind is of great educational value, for it embraces the cardinal principles of the methods of science: (1) a statement of the purpose for which the experiments are performed, here to test the capacity of the soil for the growth of selected plants under certain conditions, and (2) the systematic observation and reasoning that come from measurement and record. It is a training in observation, in reasoning, in arithmetic, sometimes in drawing, and always in composition of the most useful kind, namely, the accurate expression of personal experience, an exercise that is of incomparably greater practical value than essay-writing about nothing in particular. We have nothing but praise for the enthusiasm with which our country teachers have entered upon this department of work.

At present every application for the establishment of a handwork class has to be referred to Wellington for sanction. This causes what seems to us unnecessary correspondence and delay. The Board is in a better position to judge as to the suitability of any kind of work for a particular school and locality than is the Department, and ought, we think, to be invested with power to say *yea* or *no* to every application for the establishment of a class.

Before closing our report of this class of work, we wish to say that in our opinion the district is inadequately provided with means for instruction in manual and technical work. In 1903 one of our number wrote for the information of the Board an account of what had been done in some of the northern districts, and by implication suggested what should be done here. Since then a good deal has been achieved in the direction suggested; but we are still working with an inadequate equipment of kitchens and workshops, and are still without a day technical school for the city and suburbs, and without a trained director of technical instruction.

Our reports on the work of Standard VII in the district high schools are given elsewhere. Most of these schools are situated in farming districts, and therefore they ought to specialise in work that has direct bearing on agriculture. This they could do without over-pressure, for elementary agriculture is now included among the subjects for the Civil Service examinations. Algebra is taught in all the district high schools; and, whether the pupils are or are not preparing for the Civil Service or the Matriculation Examination, they are made to work through the intricacies of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and factorising of long complex literal quantities, with the result that those who leave at the end of a year or so, leave without having learnt to use algebra as a means of generalising their arithmetical practice and of solving problems the solution of which is difficult and cumbrous by arithmetical methods. In our opinion only those pupils who enter the secondary department with the view of passing examinations in which such work is set should be required to take in face the examples given in the earlier chapters of the text-books; the rest should learn addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and factorising as far as, but no farther than, these operations are necessary for the solution of simple equations, the only part of the subject that is of value to the majority of those who enter upon secondary work in the district high schools.

There was a Standard VII class in seventy other schools, but the pupils of thirteen of these were absent on examination day. The following shows our estimate of the efficiency of the instruction in the remaining schools: Very good, 7; good, 23; satisfactory, 21; fair, 5; weak, 1. 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. This we have urged again and again, but so far in vain.

School decoration makes little headway. In Dunedin there is only one school (Albany Street) in which it has been seriously attempted. Dunedin Committees deserve great praise for the excellent work they have done in fencing, asphaltting, planting, and building. There yet remain two other things for them to do: (1) the decoration of the school walls, and (2) the formation of school libraries. Good pictures can now be obtained cheaply, and £5 or £6 will purchase one hundred dainty little volumes of classical English literature. It would be a real pleasure to us to assist in the selection of pictures and books.

We have, &c.,

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|-------------------|---------------|
| P. GOYEN,         | } Inspectors. |
| W. S. FITZGERALD, |               |
| C. R. RICHARDSON, |               |
| C. R. BOSSENCE,   |               |

The Secretary, Otago Education Board.

#### SOUTHLAND.

SIR,—

Education Office, Invercargill, 3rd January, 1906.

We have the honour to present our annual report for the year ended the 31st December, 1905.

Though there remains much to be done, the year has been unquestionably a year of progress. The introduction of newer subjects, methods, and aims into educational work has produced, so to speak, a renaissance in the educational world, the influence of which has permeated in liberal measure our primary schools. We may, in a single sentence, indicate three of the many features which struck us during the year as being favourable and progressive. First, there is the reasonable and intelligent manner in which the great majority of the teachers, freed from the tutelage—bondage some would prefer to call it—of the annual individual pass examination group, classify and promote their pupils; second, there is the resourceful interest teachers have shown in correlating subjects and combining classes for the purpose of instruction; and thirdly, there is the sympathy engendered between teacher and pupil in their mutual study of natural phenomena and natural objects, animate and inanimate.