

*Manual and Technical.*—The report of the Board's Director of Technical Instruction affords ample testimony to the success achieved by classes carried on during the year, and gives detailed information respecting the number of students in attendance, and other aspects of this department of the Board's operations. The completion of the new Technical School buildings, for which a special grant has been made by the Department, has now been undertaken, and this work, when completed, will greatly facilitate the prosecution of this branch of education.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

The work accomplished in the evening technical classes may fairly be described as satisfactory. The programme of work attempted was somewhat in advance of former years, the attendance at the various classes reached the highest level yet attained, and the attention and diligence of the students were most commendable. As compared with last year the figures are: Number in attendance first term, 1904, 284; number in attendance second term, 222: 1905, first term, 423; second term, 397—an increase of 139 and 175 respectively. This increase is partly, though not wholly, accounted for by the operation of the Free Technical Scholarship Regulations, under which any persons who have obtained the proficiency certificate of the Sixth Standard may receive free education in as many classes as they choose, provided they attend the English and the arithmetic or mathematics classes. These figures do not include two classes (cookery and painting) which were conducted during the third term. In these there were thirty-six students, thirty-five of whom were not in attendance at any of the classes held during the first or second terms. In all 263 individual students were enrolled during the year. The classes were carried on as formerly in the Board's offices, the Central School, and the High School. This division of interest is now, happily, a thing of the past, as the new Technical School—a contract for the erection of which, on the section adjoining the Board's offices, was let in August—will be ready for occupation in time to commence the work of 1906. In the plans provision was made for the erection of a plumber's workshop, and the students in the plumbing class will now receive practical instruction in the most necessary branches of sanitary science.

The experiment was made of throwing all the classes—technical and continuation—open to the Junior Scholarship students, instead of the continuation classes only, as was the case last year. The result fully justified the step taken: 67 students took advantage of the Junior Technical Regulations—27 more than last year. Twelve of these students attended five classes each; 18 attended four classes each; and the other 37 attended three classes each—and all with such commendable regularity that 65 out of the 67 qualified for capitation. When the regulations regarding Junior and Senior Technical Scholarships become more widely known there should be a large accession to the numbers in all classes. The establishment of day classes under these regulations, on the lines suggested in my report of last year, is a matter worthy of careful consideration.

At Mataura, where evening classes have been successfully conducted for several years past, the classes fell through this year through lack of students. At Gore—the largest centre between Invercargill and Dunedin—an effort was unsuccessfully made to establish technical and continuation classes. Inspectors Hendry and Braik and I convened a meeting there in the early part of the year, and we attended in person. A certain amount of enthusiasm was aroused, and a local committee was formed to further the end in view; but so far nothing definite appears to have been done. There is not another town in New Zealand, of the relative size and importance of Gore, in which a Technical School does not exist. When one considers that the funds for the erection and equipment of technical-school buildings and for the free education of the young people of the community is provided by the State practically for nothing, it is a matter for regret that the people of Gore should be so apathetic in the matter of technical education. Continuation classes were conducted at Arrowtown, Greenhills, Koromiko, and Wendonside by the head teacher at these schools, with results undoubtedly beneficial to those in attendance.

The various forms of hand and eye work that have been introduced into the schools during past years have now been thoroughly tested by the teachers, and the verdict is almost unreservedly in favour of the new form of education. In nearly every school in the district are to be found classes in paper-folding, plasticine modelling, cardboard modelling or brush drawing, each conveying to the mind of the pupil, when co-ordinated with drawing, instant graphic ideas in the principles sought to be applied, in a manner unattainable by other educational methods without much hard labour. In twenty of the larger schools advanced needlework was taught to the girls in the upper standards by the mistresses of these schools. In the classes the girls were taught how to draft and cut out simple garments, and by the aid of the Singer's sewing-machine the garments were completed and rendered fit for actual service. In two schools physiology and the principles of first aid were practically taught to the pupils; in one school the pupils were instructed in elementary agriculture; while in the Invercargill and suburban schools cookery and woodwork classes were conducted at the Central Technical School. The woodwork classes will, after this year, be established on a much more satisfactory basis than has hitherto been the case, as the Board has appointed a woodwork instructor to the sole control of these classes. A considerable number of teachers have applied to have elementary physical measurements and elementary agriculture classes recognised in connection with their schools, and their applications have been transmitted to the Education Department, who will advise in due course. Standard needlework classes were conducted by sewing-teachers, approved by the Board, in thirty-three schools where the sole teacher was a male. The claims for capitation on account of these classes have up to the present been made to the Department at the end of the year only, but next year it is proposed to make the claims half-yearly, in order that the mistresses may not be kept out of their just dues for such a lengthened period.

The Department having intimated that the usual grant would be made for the training of teachers, arrangements were made with Mr. G. M. Thomson, F.I.C., F.L.S., of Dunedin, to conduct two classes in Invercargill and one class in Gore in botany and nature-study. These classes