

agriculture is not only a technical science, but that it can be made a valuable means of education. The teaching in general also appears gradually to become more scientific. The total grants for the year by way of initial capitation for tools amounted to £60. It were well if the Department could see its way to grant capitation for this branch of science in Standard III also, as that class naturally goes with the upper standards in schools staffed with two teachers. This ought to be readily granted, for, as mentioned above, we do not propose to teach agriculture as a technical subject, but as a concrete medium of education. Viewed in this way the subject has claims for capitation from the lowest class. The London *Times* during 1905 interested itself greatly in "rural education," and obtained among others a special report on "Developments in England." According to the writer, "From an educational point of view it seems unfortunate that the Government grant is only given for boys over eleven years of age, and that it is only possible for so few boys to learn. Gardening should be a part of the general curriculum of the rural school, as it is in the Macdonald schools in Canada, not a subject for the few." The Board recognised that a school does not do its duty to the community in which it is situated if its curriculum tends to divorce the feelings of the pupils from the calling of the locality. Hence its ready support of the proposal to join with Nelson, Grey, and Westland in engaging an expert to foster the teaching of elementary agriculture. This led to the appointment of Mr. Bruce, who has expressed himself highly pleased with the progress made and with the spirit manifested by the teachers in the attempt to adapt the science to the ends of education. The annual report (1906) of the Board of Agriculture, England, which has been kindly placed in my hands by Mr. Chaytor, refers to school gardens. According to this there are upwards of four hundred scattered over thirty-two counties. The gardens vary from one-eighth to half an acre, with, roughly, 1 rood to each pupil. The largest number learning gardening at any one school was fifty-six, and the smallest five. Two hours a week were said to be devoted to gardening. In various places throughout the Kingdom are also evening-school gardens. Many universities and colleges provide teachers' courses and extension lectures. The experience of other countries is valuable, for it frequently gives us suggestions for our own use.

School classes in *Cookery* were successfully continued at Fairhall and Marlborough schools. The former captured five medals at the New Zealand Exhibition, one exhibitor—a boy—taking first prize in an open class.

During the past year the technical school in Blenheim was opened, and school classes in cookery organized under the capable management of Miss McIntosh. The Department arranged for passages on the railway, and thus pupils were enabled to come from Picton, Waitohi, and Tua Marina to Blenheim. Springlands, Blenheim, and Marlborough High School also sent classes, and the cookery room has thus made a prosperous beginning.

*Woodwork.*—Difficulties in regard to an instructor hindered the opening of the woodwork room, but this subject, too, is now making headway.

*Other Classes.*—Evening classes in arithmetic, English, book-keeping, brush-drawing, commercial arithmetic, commercial geography, algebra, and singing were held at two schools.

Marlborough town excelled during 1906 in the handwork exhibits of the agricultural and pastoral show. Not only brush-drawing, plasticine, &c., but cookery and many varieties of preserves made an admirable collection.

THE NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.—Sixteen schools sent a representative collection of exhibits, including photographs of school-gardens, and specimens of drawing, penmanship, handwork, needlework, and weather-charts.

M.H.R. MEDALS.—It was noticeable that this year the marks gained were higher than usual. This was according to expectation, and was doubtless partly due to the winter school and the Saturday classes, which latter enable teachers to meet and discuss difficulties and thus become mutually helpful.

STANDARD VII.—In a number of schools excellent progress has been made during the past year. Three pupils from Blenheim Girls and one from Canvastown succeeded in passing the Civil Service Junior Examination. The efforts of teachers, especially in Standard VII classes beyond a reasonable radius from the high school, deserve more recognition than the Department yet accords them.

The London School Board's letter scheme appears to be bearing better fruit than I had anticipated at the time of my last report.

The Training College authorities in Wellington, with a view to assisting teachers whose experience has made them feel the need of specific training, have decided to arrange special classes to meet special needs. They will be held during the latter half of July and the beginning of August.

From what has been written above the Board will understand that progress has been made in a number of directions. The teachers have loyally co-operated in any scheme for the betterment of the education of the province. Their sympathy and their earnestness form a circle of inspiration of greater radius than they sometimes imagine. The Inspector finds a large part of his duty and his pleasure in carrying round from school to school the original and effective ideas of the different teachers. In this way he correlates the energies and organizes as it were the mind of the province in its bearing on education. Each teacher, in proportion to his earnestness, his originality, and his sense of responsibility for the future of the child brings his quota to the common stock; hence the advancement of the province is as much the work of the teachers as the advancement of their own schools. No teacher should feel that because his school is remote, or its attendance small, his work counts for little. This report shows that even the smallest schools afford samples and ideas that are found valuable and suggestive in the largest.

D. A. STRACHAN, Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, Marlborough.