

No. 4.

MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION IN THE SEVERAL EDUCATION DISTRICTS.

AUCKLAND.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE EDUCATION BOARD.

There has been a large extension of school classes during the year. Work has been continued at the three manual-training schools in Auckland, and also at the Thames and at Whangarei. Proposals for the establishment of similar schools at Hamilton and Cambridge are under consideration. Special attention has been given to the subject of agriculture and nature-study. Classes for the instruction of teachers have been held at various centres.

A munificent donation of £10,000 has been received from the trustees of the Auckland Savings-bank towards the fund for building a technical college for Auckland. This amount, with other donations and the Government subsidy thereon, will enable the Board to proceed with the erection of a suitable building upon the site secured from the Auckland City Council for the purpose. The building is to be designated the "Seddon Memorial Technical College."

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS.

Various branches of handwork are now widely taught, even in the smaller schools, and the benefits resulting therefrom are generally acknowledged. Paper-folding is not always sufficiently associated with drawing, and the exercises are seldom used as means of getting pupils to talk of and describe the forms produced. Brush drawing meets with great favour, and in the larger schools much excellent work has been done in this department. In some daubing is too noticeable. School gardens are becoming more numerous; both teachers and children are taking an increasing interest in them. It is most desirable that a serious effort should be made to provide school gardens in connection with all schools, and I would urge head teachers and School Committees to take this provision in hand without delay. In connection with nature-study and agricultural knowledge the pupils should always keep a special note-book, and drawings by the pupils should be freely entered in its pages. Besides these drawings—often rough ones—that pupils make themselves, there might sometimes be better copies of the teacher's blackboard sketches. It is pleasing to find a growing number of our younger teachers able to use blackboard drawings and sketches effectively in connection with various lessons.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

During the year 1906 very considerable progress was made in this district in manual training and technical education. The number of pupils attending the various classes was not only considerably in advance of that of the previous year, but, speaking generally, the quality of the work done showed steady improvement.

The initiation of a new movement, particularly in a new country, is generally accompanied by considerable opposition on the part of the public, chiefly, no doubt, on account of the natural conservatism of the people, who require to be convinced of the advantages of the movement by the results that it produces. "The proof of the pudding is undoubtedly in the eating," and it is gratifying to know that the general public now fully recognise the advantages of technical education and manual training, as initiated in this district in 1902.

Handwork in the Primary Schools.—The term "handwork" is a very comprehensive one, and is in New Zealand applied to those subjects of manual training which are taught in the standards of the primary schools, such as brush drawing, paper cutting and folding, plasticine modelling, &c. Of these subjects, in the Auckland District brush drawing has been taken up more than any other, and under the direction of the Board's Art Instructors, Messrs Harry Wallace and Francis C. J. Cockburn, the work has continued to make good progress during the past year. Handwork was taught in 195 schools, as against ninety-seven schools in 1906. An exhibit of brush drawing from various Auckland schools was sent to the Christchurch Exhibition, where it was very favourably commented upon.

Cookery and Woodwork Classes in connection with Primary Schools.—Instruction in cookery and woodwork to girls and boys respectively, in Standards V and VI of the primary schools, was given as in the previous years at the five manual-training schools—Newton, Newmarket, Ponsonby, Thames, and Whangarei. Woodwork classes were also started by the head teachers of two country schools—viz., Mr. Charles Cooper at Bombay, and Mr. George Wilson at Mayfield. The tools and benches for these two schools were provided out of the Board's Maintenance Fund, as up to the present the Department has not seen its way to make any grant towards the equipment for teaching woodwork in small country schools. This is much to be regretted, as, apart from the educational value of woodwork, in country districts its utilitarian value is, if anything, greater than in towns, and an initial grant for woodwork, such as is given in the case of elementary agriculture, would be most useful in such schools. At the Leaving Certificate Examination held in Auckland in July, 43 candidates sat for the examination in woodwork, of whom 14 passed, whilst 8 candidates out of the 14 who entered for the cookery examination were successful. It is encouraging to know that many of the employers in the various woodworking trades will only take as apprentices boys who have attended woodwork classes at a manual-training school.