

The Instructor of Agriculture at four different centres held classes in practical agriculture for farmers. We notice that at a recent conference of fruitgrowers the delegates from this district spoke in high appreciation of the instruction so given.

In a circular recently issued the Department sketched an admirable scheme of agricultural work for the instruction of the pupils of the secondary classes in rural district high schools. Practical difficulties have so far prevented the adoption of it in its entirety. Only two of our high schools are in agricultural centres; the difficulty of communication between them is too great to admit of their being economically worked by one instructor; the want of cookery and woodwork rooms and equipment makes it impossible to take two of the essential subjects.

The work throughout has been enthusiastically undertaken, and development made in the number of classes and of students, as well as in variety of subjects of instruction. It should now be the principal aim of the management to bestow as efficient a training as possible upon the students, and to insure the continuance of the system by such close attention to the details of the working of a somewhat complex department as will enable it to be most economically administered by the Board.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

At least one branch of handwork has been taught regularly throughout the year at forty schools in the Board's district, this total making an increase of 4 over the preceding year. Modelling in plasticine as a handwork subject still finds greatest favour among teachers; but it is worthy of note that paper-folding and cardboard modelling are being adopted in several schools, particularly on the West Coast, where attention was given to these subjects at the summer school for teachers held in Westport at the end of 1908. Classes for elementary needlework were conducted at 6 schools in which no female teacher was employed upon the staff. Capitation for needlework in 1909 was £39, as compared with £63 14s. 6d. for 1908. The decrease is accounted for by the fact that there were fewer sole-teacher schools in charge of males last year than during the previous twelve months. The total handwork revenue (exclusive of needlework capitation) for 1908 was £91 10s. 10d. The sum of £107 has been paid for 1909.

The past year has witnessed considerable progress in subjects of manual training taken by teachers on the staff of the primary schools, and by the special instructors in the Board's employ. There has been a gratifying increase of 142 in attendance at classes in agriculture, for which 30 schools claimed capitation, as compared with 21 for the preceding year. There are still, however, a few schools which do not comply with the Board's Manual and Technical Regulations. Waimea West and Tapawera have received initial grants and have purchased apparatus for practical work, but for the past two years have not applied for recognition for their classes.

Classes were recognized at Collingwood, Ferntown, Little Grey, and Hope Schools, but in each of these cases the teacher failed to forward returns for the year. This neglect means a considerable loss in revenue to the Board. *Elementary physiology* as a recognized manual-training subject was taught in 9 schools, as compared with 13 schools for the previous year. This decrease is accounted for by the opening of the manual-training centre at Westport, and the abandonment of physiology as a subject by classes attending that centre for ironwork or cookery. *Swimming and life-saving* was taken in 16 schools, classes at 15 schools being recognized during the previous year. An increase of 98 in average attendance at swimming classes has to be recorded. It is perhaps worthy of note that in Nelson District a larger proportion of school-children are taught to swim than in any other education district of the Dominion. Further, it is to be regretted that, through the demolition of the marine baths, there is at present no safe locality where the girls attending the Nelson schools can receive instruction, and as a consequence the classes which have annually provided training for over a hundred girls have now to be abandoned. The Board may see fit to make some representation on this matter to the City Council. *Physical measurements*, which in 1908 was taught in 3 schools, to an average attendance of 37 pupils, is now being taken in 8 schools, to an average attendance of 175, an increase of 138 pupils for the year. Teachers are recognizing the advantage of this subject in the teaching of practical arithmetic and geometry, and I anticipate a further increase in the work during the coming year.

With the completion of the Technical School at Westport in May last, the Board now has four manual-training centres well equipped for their work, and staffed with well-qualified instructors employed wholly in the Board's service. This reorganization, which was commenced in May, 1908, and was completed by the appointment of a cookery teacher for the West Coast portion of the district in November last, has resulted in a great improvement in the work of manual training, which now, in the capable hands of Misses Sutherland Smith and Lousley, Messrs. Thompson and Tomkies, will compare favourably with that undertaken in any other portion of the Dominion. A keener interest and appreciation from both parents and pupils is being evinced, and objections to attendance at manual-training classes, which have been somewhat frequent in the past, have only twice been brought under my notice during the year. The cookery centre at Richmond, which was used by only one class per week, and proved most inconvenient to work, was disestablished, and the equipment transferred to Westport and Reefton.

Woodwork: Eleven classes in this subject have been conducted during the year, the average attendance being 18 less than for 1908. At Nelson and Wakefield centres, in addition to bench-work, particular attention has been given to the drawing which forms an essential portion of the course, and which in the past has not received the amount of attention it warranted. *Cookery*: During 1909 16 classes were conducted, as against 11 for the preceding year, the average attendance increasing from 225 to 319. The thanks of the Board are due to Miss D. Harkness, who capably conducted the Westport classes pending the appointment of Miss Lousley. *Ironwork*: The chief development in manual