

shall be borne by the Committees, so that, in cases where the school buildings are not connected with drainage systems—and such places are numerous—Committees will not benefit to any extent. A cry was raised that certain Boards—Wanganui amongst others—were not behaving so liberally in the matter of capitation to School Committees as they should, especially compared with some other Boards; but when the position is carefully analysed it is easily seen that a cast-iron system of grants is not always the best. Some localities favour much cheaper administration by Committees than others, and an inspection of the balances in hand throughout the district would show that it is only in isolated cases that funds are insufficient to meet requirements. Drainage troubles, exposure to the sea-air, water-supply, condition and situation of the school-site, supply of gravel available, and a dozen other things impossible to enumerate determine the local expenditure on a school. Then, again, encouragement is given to local effort in connection with a district high school by a Government subsidy of £1 for every voluntary contribution of £1, but no help of the sort is given to any other primary schools, yet district high schools are generally established in centres of population, while struggling settlements in widely scattered districts are surely just as deserving of help.

ELEMENTARY AGRICULTURAL AND DAIRYING SCIENCE.—Reference to a table given in the report* of the Superintendent of Technical Instruction will show that 130 of the schools now take agriculture or dairying or both. This is an advance of eight on last year's figures. The nature of the work done may be gathered from the technical section of the report. The Board has again to acknowledge the great support given to the school-garden movement by the agricultural and horticultural societies in the district, more especially to the Manawatu and Feilding Agricultural and Pastoral Associations. The interest shown in primary and technical education by the authorities of the Manawatu Agricultural and Pastoral Association's shows is of great value, and should be specially recognized.

HIGHER RURAL INSTRUCTION.—The Board has grappled with this problem with a very satisfactory measure of success. The obstacles to complete success are two: a rooted objection on the part of many parents to the suggestion that their children should undertake any study leading up to the casting of their coats, and a difficulty inherent in our system of public examinations, which put a premium on book-work. Meanwhile the Board is proceeding along the lines of compromise, making provision for both scholarship work and practical work. The practical syllabus forms an ideal course for the boys and girls of our rural district high schools. It is for the Department to reconcile the conflicting claims of the scholarship and vocational pupil by making the necessary modifications in the examination system of the Dominion.

MANUAL AND TECHNICAL.—It may be gathered from tables furnished in the Superintendent's report that during the year great progress was made in this important department of the Board's work. The principal classes taken may be grouped under the following heads: Classes for junior and senior free pupils, commercial, art, artisan, and primary-industries classes. To secure coherency in the commercial work, the Board has established a system of examinations, the first having been held in November last, when junior and senior certificates were awarded. The syllabus for examination is based on present-day commercial practice, and employers will find that certificates under the hand of the examiner, Mr. Anderson, may be depended on to represent their face value. Of the primary-industries classes, the principal were wool-classing, taken all over the district, and horticulture, bee-keeping, and poultry-raising, taken at Hawera. When the farmers realize the value of the instruction given at the schools they will not be slow to take full advantage of it. Since the date of the compilation of the last report, technical schools have, through the generosity of the residents and the Department's subsidy, been built at Pohangina and Apiti. Equipment is now being supplied, and the people are determined to make full use of the advantages that they have sacrificed so much to secure. In all the sum of £547 1s. 5d. was given as voluntary contributions during the year. In view of these contributions and those of previous years, the Board recognizes its responsibility to the people in the matter of providing efficient instruction at the schools. The question of compulsory attendance, as provided for by the Education Act Amendment Act of last year, has been discussed by eight of our Technical Committees in conference with the School Committees. No decisive steps have yet been taken, but it is understood that the matter is receiving the earnest attention of the Committees concerned, and that the opportunity offered for making the experiment is not likely to pass unseized. While admitting the necessity for some measure of compulsion if our youthful population is to receive the full advantage of our system of technical education, the Board recognizes that it is not advisable to compel girls to attend such classes at night; that there must be a considerable proportion of boys between the ages of fourteen and seventeen who do not attend our technical schools, and that the instruction best suited to them is available. Given these conditions, then the compulsory system is worthy of a trial.

MEDICAL INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS.—It has been repeatedly stated that the Department is about to take this matter in hand. Apart from the spasmodic examinations of the children's teeth by the local dentist, nothing has yet been done. The Board believes that a system of State medical inspection, backed by a reasonable probability of securing the carrying-out of the doctor's recommendations, would be of great and immediate benefit to the health of the children.

MILITARY TRAINING.—Now that the Defence Department has taken over control of the military training of our boys, it may be assumed that the Board's responsibility in the matter ceases. It is, however, reasonable to expect that the Board, through its officials, will be made cognizant of what is being done. To make this possible all cadet orders should be forwarded to the Inspectors, as well as to the teachers, else the former will be entirely in the dark regarding the nature of the training given, and of the demands made on the teachers' time.

* Reprinted in E.-5 (Manual and Technical Instruction Report).