

and technical education by the authorities of the Manawatu Association's shows is of great value, and should be especially 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 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, beekeeping, 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 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 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.

Saturday Classes.—There seems to be a general indisposition on the part of our adult teachers to turn out to Saturday instruction classes. The pupil-teachers, of course, attend, and also teachers desirous of securing or improving their classification. But the great majority, even though the classes may be held at places quite convenient to them, prefer professional stagnation to attendance at such a subject as drawing taught by men of the first rank in their profession. It is their own affair, but sooner or later their pupils must suffer.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

Separate reports on elementary agriculture and elementary dairy science are presented by the supervisors, Messrs. Grant and Browne, the value of whose services we cordially recognize. In town schools the science subject is elementary physical measurements, dealing with which a study-scheme was sent to the teachers early in the year for the purpose of securing uniformity and efficiency of instruction. Handwork in one or more of its forms is taken in all our schools, and its value, as the material substratum of much of our primary-school work, is duly appreciated. Drawing, the most important of the handwork subjects, has gained somewhat in quality, but much better work could be done if the teachers of the larger schools were to respond more readily to the Board's invitation to the Saturday classes, classes taught by men of the standing of Messrs. Seaward, Watkin, and Elliott. It may be recorded as a testimony to the energy of our Committees and head teachers that the number of children now receiving instruction in swimming and life-saving is something to be proud of. Baths have been erected on the school-grounds at Eltham, Wanganui District High School, and Sedgebrook, while the pupils of the Hawera, Queen's Park, and Feilding schools avail themselves of the facilities offered by the Corporation baths. It is understood that the pupils of the Taihape, Marton, and Campbell Street Schools will presently be provided with similar facilities.

District High Schools.—During the year, in addition to the scholarship course, a practical course of instruction was taken at Hawera, Patea, Marton, Taihape, and Feilding. Reference to Table XI will show the relative numbers of pupils taking each course [table not reprinted in full]. The same programme is being carried out at the same schools during the present year (1911). So much has recently been said of the advantages of the rural course that, beyond recognizing the good work done at the schools named, we content ourselves with an indorsement of an opinion elsewhere expressed that an extra special assistant should be provided in schools where the course is taken, and with the announcement of a further opinion that if the Department is really in earnest in the matter it should decline to recognize any district high school failing to supply a sufficient number of pupils to admit of the course being introduced.