

the technical college or school have been provided. In the smaller towns the manual-training centre is usually attached to the district high school, the secondary school, or the technical school, as the case may be. While the central system cannot be regarded as an ideal one from many points of view, yet for reasons of economy it appears at present to be the only practicable means of providing instruction. The work is, unfortunately, too often treated as an isolated subject in which the school staff takes little interest, and has little or no connection with other school subjects. These defects, which cannot be regarded as other than serious, would, it is considered, be less pronounced if the course of work were arranged after consultations between the head teachers of the schools served by the centre and the special instructors. The time spent by pupils in travelling to the centre, and the consequent break in the school-day, are also to be regarded as drawbacks to the system. In the case of schools at some distance from the centre these are met, to some extent, by increasing the duration of the lesson, thus allowing the course to be completed in a shorter time.

It is a matter for regret that very few public-school teachers have given instruction to their classes in either woodwork or cookery, in spite of the fact that during recent years special classes in these subjects have been established by Education Boards with the view, presumably, of giving their teachers the requisite training.

Elementary instruction in subjects bearing on agriculture was given in 832 schools as compared with 666 for the previous year. Instruction in this branch of manual training is, in the case of ten of the thirteen Education districts, supervised by special itinerant instructors. Experimental and observational work—the results of which, in some cases, have proved of no little value locally—is a feature of the course of instruction in most districts. Considerable attention is also being given to instruction, of an elementary character, in dairying, especially in the North Island. Local interest in the school-gardens and experimental plots continues to be well maintained, valuable assistance being forthcoming from agricultural and pastoral associations, School Committees, and members of the farming community generally. In addition to prizes, which, as in previous years, have been freely offered, contributions in money and kind to the value of over £300 have been received by Education Boards during the year. These contributions carry a Government subsidy of £1 for £1.

During 1911 regular courses of instruction having a direct bearing on rural pursuits were carried out in connection with the secondary departments of district high schools in five education districts, as follows:—

District.						Number of Schools.	Number of Pupils.
Taranaki .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	1	53
Wanganui .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	5	128
Wellington .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	6	206
Hawke's Bay .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	3	55
South Canterbury ..	..	..	..	..	..	2	57
Totals .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	17	499

Capitation payments on account of rural courses carried out during the year at these schools amounted to £3,349 2s. 8d., equivalent to a rate of £6·7 per pupil.

Arrangements are in progress for the establishment of similar courses in connection with district high schools in Auckland, North Canterbury, and Otago. These courses, which were inaugurated in 1909, appear from reports received to have fully justified their establishment. The opposition to which reference was made last year appears to have largely disappeared, an indication, it is hoped, that many who saw serious objections to the introduction of what was regarded as an uncalled-for innovation are discovering that a course of instruction that is definitely related to the pupils' environment affords opportunities for training that compare not unfavourably with those provided by a course based on what may be termed grammar-school lines.

The significant subjects of the rural course continue to be taught, for the most part, by visiting instructors. This arrangement, which is unsatisfactory from many points of view, appears at present to be unavoidable in view of the scarcity of trained