

buildings, but has made provision for the free transport of the children to those centres, and for the payment of efficient instructors. In consequence every Education Board in the Dominion has established such schools, and everywhere the establishment of them has been hailed with delight by those interested as a step a long way in advance of educational facilities hitherto existing. The ideal is to have a cookery and woodwork class established in connection with every school in the Dominion, but in the practical working-out of the scheme the expense consequent thereupon has been found to be prohibitive of the attainment of the ideal. The next best course, therefore, has been adopted—viz., that of establishing as many properly equipped centres as possible, under the charge of fully qualified teachers, where instruction in these most essential subjects may be given to as many children in the higher standards of our schools as can be brought together. The instruction imparted in both subjects is of such a nature as cannot be given either at home or in the ordinary schools, co-ordinating as it does the training of the hand, the eye, and the brain. A visit paid to the school by yourself or any member of the Committee will amply demonstrate this, and all are cordially invited to pay such a visit.

"In establishing these manual-training centres the Southland Board is only assisting in carrying out the aims of the Education Department. It rests, therefore, with the parents to co-operate heartily with the Board in making the scheme a complete success by seeing to it that their children attend regularly. The Board is aware that a certain amount of self-sacrifice is called for on the part both of parents and children, but at the same time feels that the advantages to be gained far outweigh the sacrifice involved. Further, the Board desires to point out that the Department has made exceptional provision for the well-being of children who have to travel by train, inasmuch as it has agreed to recognize attendance at the classes for the short period of thirteen whole days as equivalent to the time which is demanded of the boys and girls who live adjacent to the centres. In Invercargill the town children have to attend for two hours per week for a period of thirty weeks.

"Keeping in view, therefore, the national welfare of our children, the Board trusts that parents will loyally see to it that those under their care are in every way encouraged to avail themselves to the utmost of these privileges and opportunities which are placed within their reach, and which, taken advantage of to the full, can only result in the production of a more efficient type of manhood and womanhood."

The attendance of pupils at these classes, considering that the long distance travelled in many instances necessitated a very early start in the morning and a correspondingly late return in the evening, was remarkably good. In order that the finances might be secured on a sound basis all the pupils in Standard IV were included in the scheme. It is found, however, that Standard IV pupils are not sufficiently advanced to benefit by the instruction imparted in either class, and if it could be accomplished it would be to the benefit of all concerned were pupils not admitted to the classes until they had entered Standard V. The second noteworthy advance made by the Board was the appointment of an agricultural inspector to supervise the work of elementary agriculture in the schools of the district, to give instruction to teachers on Saturdays, and to conduct the agricultural classes in connection with the day Technical College. Mr. J. Moodie, who has had considerable experience in this branch of education under the North Canterbury Board, was appointed to this position, and it is expected that this most important work will receive considerable impetus during the coming year.

Teachers' Saturday training classes in subjects of manual and technical instruction were continued as in former years at Invercargill and at Gore. In Invercargill a class was conducted in cardboard-modelling by Mr. W. McElrea, B.E., Headmaster of the Balclutha District High School. The class was extremely popular, and Mr. McElrea succeeded in interesting his students to a degree never previously attained in this subject. The other classes conducted were physiology and first aid, elementary agriculture, advanced needlework, plasticine-modelling, blackboard drawing, freehand and model drawing. In addition, classes in school method, English, mathematics, and elocution were conducted at both centres for the benefit of teachers who were anxious to complete their D certificate. The teachers, however, bore the cost of these classes themselves, no part of the special grant for the training of teachers being devoted thereto.

Successful evening classes were conducted in Invercargill, as in past years. Except for the usual fluctuations in certain subjects the attendance was very good, 369 individual students having distributed themselves over the 30 classes on the syllabus. The number of free-place students was 59, against 58 in 1910. Other evening classes were held at Queenstown, Greenhills, and Riverton. As in former years, the work accomplished at Greenhills was of a very high order. The classes conducted for several years past at Bluff and Maitua were, owing to a combination of local circumstances, allowed to lapse for a year, but efforts will be made to resuscitate them during 1912. Classes were established at Invercargill and at six other centres throughout the district in the subject of wool-classing, under the direction of Mr. J. McGregor. Every class was well attended, no less than 194 students having enrolled, and all spoke most highly of the value of the instruction imparted.

The third notable advance affecting technical education in Southland was the decision of the Board to establish, with the authority of the Department, a day Technical School in Invercargill. The initial steps towards this end were taken during 1910, and were developed during the current year. The consent of the Education Department having been obtained, the Board proceeded, towards the end of the year, to the appointment of a staff. It was estimated that possibly an average of 60 students would attend, and preparations were made accordingly. Dr. D. E. Hansen, M.A., M.Sc., was appointed Principal of the school, and Mr. Oliver Duff was appointed to the position of first assistant. At the close of the year everything was in readiness to open the school at the beginning of February, 1912. Although it is trenching somewhat on the operations of the current year, I may be allowed to say that the school opened on the 5th February with 104 students in attendance; that at the present time there are 139 names on the roll; and that, owing to the large attendance, it has been found necessary to appoint a lady assistant and a commercial master to the permanent staff. Four courses of instruction were placed on the syllabus—viz., commercial, trades, domestic, and agricultural—and each course has its quota of students, the commercial predominating. A complete staff of visiting instructors has also been appointed to give instruction in building-construction, cookery and hygiene, dress-making, veterinary science, wool-classing, land-surveying, shorthand, typewriting, and agriculture. The school promises to rank as one of Invercargill's most cherished and valued institutions.