

and pruning of fruit-trees. Since then the boys have received lessons on spraying, and have themselves sprayed the young trees. Grape-vines have been purchased and planted out, and it is intended next year to place these vines in the greenhouse, and commence the study of viticulture. Next year's scheme will also provide for a course of instruction in budding, grafting, pruning, and spraying of fruit-trees. An expert's services will be utilized in dealing with all orchard-work. Bee-keeping will also be taken as a subject next year. In connexion with agriculture, it is interesting to note that arrangements have been made whereby an officer of the Agricultural Department will be available at times to give instruction to the students of secondary schools in which agriculture is taught. This innovation was advocated by this school many years ago, and its adoption will be the means of standardizing the instruction in practical work in the subject and ultimately in raising the standard. The ideals of the Education and Agricultural Departments, however, differ somewhat—their outlook on agriculture is from different standpoints—and it remains to be seen how far the course of work recommended by the expert is suitable for adoption in school classes. Dairy-science classes have been carried on throughout the year. It is the first time this important subject has been placed among those optional for the Civil Service Junior Examination, and eighteen of our pupils selected it as one of their subjects. The students of the second year gave, at the Stratford Agricultural and Pastoral Show, a demonstration in the methods of estimating the butter-fat content of milk, and the amount of moisture in butter. Next year it is intended to give instruction in the use of the Gerber tester, and it is hoped that results will be obtained to enable comparisons to be made between this method and that of the Babcock. As in the past, all pupils who have been two years in the school sat for examination in December either for Senior Free Places or for the Civil Service Junior; boys and girls took in common as subjects for examination dairy science and elementary physical measurements. The boys took also agriculture and the girls botany.

Results.—The following table shows the State schools that gained the highest results in 1912 [the table, being mainly of local interest, is not reprinted].

It is gratifying to note that this year there are twenty schools that have received "good" or a higher mark for efficiency, order, discipline, and tone as against ten for 1910 and eighteen for 1911.

We are, &c.,

The Chairman, Taranaki Education Board.

W. A. BALLANTYNE, B.A.,
R. G. WHETTER, M.A., } Inspectors.

WANGANUI.

SIR,—

Education Office, Wanganui, 26th March, 1913.

We have the honour to present our annual report for the year ended the 31st December, 1912. Interesting information is disclosed by a study of the statistics submitted, the compilation of which will not have been in vain if each teacher will take the trouble to orientate the position of his school according to the data given and the deductions drawn.

The year did not pass without its increment of progress. While faithfully discharging their onerous and responsible duties, the teachers uniformly preserved an attitude of open-mindedness to the prevailing influences making for educational advancement. On the whole, the Saturday training-classes were well attended, and, though there were some exceptions, the students acquitted themselves creditably. A goodly proportion of uncertificated teachers took advantage of the Board's correspondence classes, and the instructors had the satisfaction of knowing that in each subject keen and earnest students kept doing their utmost during the whole of the tuition period. The opening of the Central Infants' School in Wanganui and the appointment of Mr. Watkin as instructor in drawing mark notable stages in the history of education in the district. A word now with respect to the pupils of our schools. In the wide bounds of our district not one case has come under our observation where the discipline is inferior, but, on the other hand, schools in which it could hardly be bettered are quite common. It is to the tone of our schools that we attribute the best part of their success.

Referring briefly to some of the subjects of instruction, we note that English continues to improve. Reading is becoming less mechanical, fuller in tone and more vivacious, the improvement being no doubt due in great measure to the greater choice of reading-matter now available. Extensive reading gives the language-sense, the sense of balance, rhythm, and word-value; but it should be pointed out that there is a tendency to forget that words are but the servants of thought, which is the chief thing. There should accordingly be some intensive study, with a view to leading young minds to grasp the substance of the thought and meaning of a writer. Not only should this be done in the case of selected prose, but also in connexion with school recitation. Unfortunately, the poetry often chosen lends itself but ill to this purpose, being but tinsel stuff, devoid alike of excellence of thought and beauty of language. We cannot say that we are yet satisfied with the teaching or the learning of either spelling or handwriting. Success here depends on the capacity for taking pains, which in all ordinary walks of life is the supreme capacity. It is to be hoped that teachers will not fail to make use of the little handbook, "Practical Hints on Systematic Handwriting," kindly sent them by Messrs. Blackie and Son. We should add that the handwriting of the pupils that sat for the Proficiency Examination was, in the great majority of cases, creditable. The standard of proficiency in composition was more than maintained. It would have been better still had more attention been paid to the syntactical relations of words in sentences. The inverting, converting, and obverting of the members of sentences, encouraged of later years by the proficiency tests, tend to withdraw the attention of teachers from their real relationships, and also, it is to be feared, to encourage in not a few