

fice of efficiency, but rather with a gain of both efficiency in actual instruction and economy in administration, a still greater reduction may be made in the record and return work, especially in this department of education. For instance, it is suggested in connexion with the rural course that the certificate of the Board's Inspectors as to the carrying-out of a prescribed course should suffice.

A full report on the district high schools appears in the Inspectors' report. The Board desires to support strongly the arguments of its Inspectors in favour of a more adequate provision in the educational system of the Dominion for the thorough training of youths who will follow country pursuits. It is nothing short of remarkable that in a country so largely dependent for its prosperity on the proper development of agricultural and pastoral enterprise so little should have been done towards affording to its youth in properly equipped colleges a thorough training in agricultural science and practice. It is very certain that delay is much more costly to the country than action.

Saturday classes were held for instruction of teachers, as follows: Wellington—Elementary home science, hygiene, woodwork and cardboard modelling, experimental science (physics), drawing and handwork, practical laundry class for instructors. Masterton—Elementary hygiene, physiology and first aid, drawing and hand work. A fortnight's instruction in nature-study and agriculture was also held at Masterton during September. The course was attended by thirty-eight teachers, who obtained a week's extension of the term holiday for the purpose. Mr. C. Cumming was in charge, and with him were associated Miss Kilroe, who gave instruction in hygiene, and Mr. Howe and Mr. Grant, in woodwork useful for the garden, the school, and the laboratory. Mr. Cockayne, of the Agricultural Department, rendered valuable assistance by lecturing and also directing the field-work undertaken.

#### EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

In handwork 107 schools, or 63 per cent. of the total number of schools, have been earning capitation, taking on an average three subjects per school. The chief subjects taken were plasticine-modelling (ninety-five schools), brushwork (seventy-four), paperwork (sixty), free-arm drawing (twenty-eight), carton or cardboard modelling (twenty-three). Swimming and life-saving classes were carried on in ten schools, and, in addition to district high schools, two schools earned capitation for advanced needlework and dressmaking. We are pleased to observe that the sewing-machine has been introduced into other schools than those which are actually earning capitation. While there are not wanting schools in which handwork is still regarded as an end in itself, and where the individual spontaneous work has not been fully recognized, yet there are many where the careful choice and rational treatment of various occupations afford valuable training, both sensory and intellectual, and we are glad to be able to say that the number of such schools is increasing. Good progress continues to be made in the primary woodwork and cookery classes. In cookery the scope of the work was somewhat wider than in former years, and the work of some centres was much in advance of anything previously attempted. Laundry-work was commenced at one centre, and we hope to have soon in operation a fuller domestic-science course which shall include hygiene, physiology, and first aid, for our primary classes.

Capitation-earning classes in elementary science were conducted in eighty-eight schools, or 53 per cent. of the schools in operation during the year, though this does not represent the whole of the science-teaching of the district. The city and suburban schools took physical measurements (eleven schools), hygiene, physiology, and first aid (seven), chemistry and physics (five). Two country schools earned capitation for botany. Elementary agriculture, more or less correlated with nature-study, forms the science subject of most of the country schools, and where too much time is not devoted to mere cultivation this subject has been the medium of much valuable elementary work in chemistry, physics, and natural science. Our observation shows that some teachers are finding progress in this respect hindered by over-large gardens. In general the work of the garden has been satisfactorily performed; but real progress in agricultural science cannot be attained until teachers have learned to look with less favour on the perfection of mere mechanical skill, and to lead the pupils, where possible by individual experiment and observation, towards that gradual revelation of herself with which Nature rewards the patient investigator.

In general our reports on the work of the district high schools are satisfactory in character, though two of these schools were considerably affected by changes in the staff. The secondary programmes are mainly based on approved rural and domestic schemes, and a portion of each week is devoted to practical work in the garden, the laboratory, the workshop, and the cookery-room. It was in order to encourage programmes of this character that the Board established the Senior B Scholarships, in which marks are given for practical work done during the year, and it is gratifying to find that the number of competitors for these scholarships is increasing. In 1911 eleven pupils under sixteen years of age obtained the number of marks necessary to qualify for a scholarship, in the following year the number rose to fifteen, while last year twenty-one were successful, and of the competitors who had been two years in the secondary classes only one failed to qualify, his failure being in the written and not in the practical test. This result shows a steady increase in the efficiency of the practical work of these schools, and when it is remembered that the average time of a pupil in the secondary classes is two years or slightly under, these classes may be said to accomplish all that can reasonably be expected of them in "bringing about a more intimate relation than, generally speaking, at present obtains between the course of instruction at district high schools and rural pursuits." There are two branches of education which should receive more encouragement in the Dominion—namely, agricultural training for our boys and domestic training for our girls. In our last year's report we dwelt at some length on the question of a course in domestic or home science for our girls, and we do not purpose