

of the schools all that they should be. The Hawera Agricultural and Pastoral Association has a summer competition for the best-kept school-grounds, for which three small prizes are given, and for this there are usually from eight to a dozen entries. As the conditions and judging are left to myself to arrange, there is no risk of sacrificing the educative interests for nursery or kitchen-garden practice. This year Mokoia School (two lady teachers) won the competition; with Tokaora (sole male teacher) second, and Ohangai (male head teacher and lady assistant) third. The Hawera Winter Show Committee has an autumn competition run much on the same lines. This competition was won by Okaiawa, with Tokaora second. At Hawera Spring Show a challenge cup for the best display of spring flowers was competed for by schools in this district, and was won by Ohangai. These competitions are of great value in raising the standard of our work from year to year, and in promoting the interest of parents and others in the development of rural education. Most of the schools in my district were visited several times during the year, as many as a dozen visits being made to schools in centres where classes for farmers were held.

Up till June I regularly instructed the district high school classes in agricultural subjects at Eltham, Hawera, and Patea. In June the teachers took charge of these classes under my supervision. In September a week of continuous instruction in practical agriculture was given at Hawera for the Hawera and Eltham lads, and a similar course was given at Patea. In December the lads from the above centres met at Hawera for a continuous course of three weeks. They took wool-sorting and shearing under Mr. Hambly for a fortnight, and practical work at the Hawera Dairy Factory for a further week. Our thanks are due to Mr. A. Hunter, of Hawera, for use of sheds and for providing sheep, and also to Mr. Baker for sheep. Unfortunately, bad weather prevented us from dealing with all the sheep offering. At the Hawera Dairy Factory the lads thoroughly enjoyed themselves under the careful tuition of the general manager and his staff. Our thanks are due to both for the accommodation granted and for the great interest taken in the progress of the lads. It is of some interest to note that farmers in this and other districts are getting the services of lads trained by our methods.

In June it was arranged that I should be relieved temporarily from routine work in connection with technical and rural classes, and devote some weeks to lectures and demonstrations among the farmers, as many requests had come from farmers' unions and others for such lectures and demonstrations as were given in previous years. A week was given to each centre desiring my services, and in eight weeks the following were visited in turn—viz., Kakaramea, Tokaora, Otakeho, Auroa, Manaia, Matapu, Kaponga, and Ararata. I gave eighty lectures and demonstrations on farms, the subjects dealt with being—

The laying down of pastures, temporary and permanent; top-dressing established pastures in (a) winter, (b) spring; growing lucerne; growing root crops generally; the turnip, mangel, and potato; manures generally, and mixing manures; special conditions of soils in Taranaki and adaptations of farming methods to suit these; rotational cropping in light soil; orchard-work in season; gardening throughout the year. Such interest was aroused by these lectures that farmers' clubs were formed in various centres, or farmers' unions took the matter up and arranged a system by which I should visit the farms of members, make plans thereof, noting conditions of soil, pastures, crops, &c., and advise on sowing-down of pastures, top-dressing, growing of special fodder crops and ordinary root crops, also care of gardens and orchards. At any time members could write to me for information as to manures, seed, &c.

In connection with the above, and to ease the work of correspondence, a system of more or less regular lectures was inaugurated, each centre being visited once a month, or oftener if occasion arose. Attendance at these lectures has been very regular, and the best of good fellowship has prevailed. Altogether some thirty-eight lectures were given since the work started toward the end of September, thus making a total of 118 lectures and demonstrations since June. The centres that so far have arranged for advice through these farmers' clubs are: Tokaora, Inaha, Manaia, Kapuni, Kaponga, Mangatoki, Matapu, and Ararata; other clubs also are being formed for the purpose. Altogether since June 286 individual students attended my lectures and demonstrations. I had two large classes in orchard-work at Hawera, and another at Manaia.

The question naturally crops up as to the advantage of such work to young people of our schools. My answer is that greater interest than ever is now taken in the gardens and experimental work of our country schools, as we have now captured the interest of both parent and pupil. Farmers have donated trees, shrubs, manures, seed, and many personally help in the experimental work of our country schools. The results of experiments are watched with keenest interest, as it is recognized that from the results of our work in the school-garden and elsewhere a better system of farm practice, thoroughly suited to our local needs, has been evolved.

From our experience it is quite plain that agricultural instruction should be developed so as to reach the primary school, the secondary school, and the adult farmer. It is all a matter of financial support, and of freeing the instructors from routine work, so that they can develop classes along suitable lines. It has frequently been stated that the farmer does not desire instruction in his work. That is not the case. The farmer will not listen to lectures on general agriculture, but if any one deals with the special branches that locally claim his interest he is all attention. Moreover, he is quite willing to pay for such instruction, as is evidenced by the fact that since June a total of £150 was subscribed in the way of donations to our classes.

All classes which pupils coming under the regulations for compulsory attendance at technical classes attended in the daytime gave general satisfaction, and the instructors were quite pleased with the conduct and progress of the pupils. It was not so with the classes taken in the evening, especially those in English and arithmetic, and again especially in the case of the lads attending these. It would be a great advantage if attendance could be arranged for afternoons of slack days, instead of bringing the lads out at nights. This would perhaps mean a little hardship to a few employers, but