

The total number of public schools at which approved classes were held was, for elementary handwork 1,793 (an increase of 280), and for manual instruction 1,398 (an increase of 100). Capitation amounting to £34,450 was distributed during the year to Education Boards on account of classes. The amount for the previous year was £31,360. In addition, special grants totalling £1,804 were made in aid of buildings and equipment, mostly the latter, financial considerations arising out of the war rendering it necessary to refrain from proceeding with other than the most urgent works. Necessary equipment was provided for classes at Waihi, Pukekohe, Tauranga, Te Kopuru, Dargaville, and Pleasant Point.

The expenditure by Education Boards for the year was £42,582, the chief items being—Maintenance of classes, £34,036; buildings and equipment, £3,403; and administration, £3,297.

In the lower standards hand-and-eye training is given through the media of constructive work in paper and cardboard modelling, of plasticine, and of design and colour work. In the higher standards these are supplemented, where practicable, by woodwork, ironwork, cookery, laundry-work, dressmaking, and various branches of elementary science, including agriculture and dairy-work. The centre system is largely availed of in the case of such subjects as woodwork and cookery. There are now over eighty well-equipped buildings for instruction in these subjects. In the larger centres these take the form of special manual-training schools; otherwise accommodation is provided in the local technical school, secondary school, or district high school, as the case may be. The cost to the Government of the conveyance of pupils to manual-training centres was £5,414.

During the year 587 classes for wood or iron work and 929 classes for domestic subjects (cookery, laundry-work, and dressmaking, associated in most cases with suitable instruction in domestic economy and hygiene) were held. The instruction is given for the most part by special teachers, seventy in number (woodwork, 38, average salary £200; domestic subjects, 42, average salary £142). Increased attention continues to be given to subjects bearing on the home, and there are now on the staff of instructors a number of highly qualified teachers, including several who as holders of home-science bursaries have completed the course for the diploma or the degree of home science at the Otago University. Compared with the previous year, the number of classes for domestic subjects shows an increase of 19 per cent.

The number of classes for elementary agriculture was 1,382, an increase of 183. The instruction, which includes observational and experimental work in connection with school gardens and plots, combined in many cases with elementary dairy-work, is supervised by special itinerant instructors, of whom there are now nineteen (average salary £325).

Full courses bearing on rural life, with in the case of girls a domestic trend, were carried on during the year in connection with the secondary departments of 61 per cent. of the district high schools (sixty-one in number) as follows:—

District.					Number of Schools.	Number of Pupils.	Capitation earned.
							£
Auckland	...	...	...	...	5	154	962
Taranaki	...	...	...	...	1	71	501
Wanganui	...	...	...	...	8	212	1,178
Wellington	...	...	...	...	6	241	1,447
Hawke's Bay...	...	...	...	...	3	138	1,021
North Canterbury	...	...	...	...	5	100	660
South Canterbury	...	...	...	...	3	132	822
Otago	...	...	...	...	6	177	1,096
Totals 1915					37	1,225	£7,687
Totals 1914					34	984	£6,302

Capitation at the rate of £6.3 for each pupil under instruction was earned by the schools providing these courses. In most cases the science subjects included in the course are not taken by the regular staff, but by visiting instructors. The continued dearth of trained teachers with an adequate practical acquaintance with modern laboratory methods is a matter for regret, in view of the facilities for training now within reach of prospective teachers.