

application for a new centre, but the matter will have to be faced in the near future. That the time devoted to manual training should be increased is very desirable, especially as regards domestic science, so that the Christchurch District may come into line with the other education districts in this matter and the course of instruction be rendered more complete and therefore more efficient.

The example of New South Wales in limiting its elementary education to pupils of twelve years of age and under and devoting the last two years of compulsory education (in the case of those who are not going on to high schools) to a course that has bearing upon the prospective occupation of the child cannot fail to have an influence on public opinion in New Zealand. But perhaps the most striking sign of the times is the prominent place given to the topics of handwork and the domestic arts in the address of the Director of Education to the first meeting of the New Zealand Council of Education, where these topics occupied nearly two-thirds of the whole address. I should like to call attention to the concluding portion of Dr. Anderson's remarks on handwork: "For handwork in one form or another as an instrument of education many things are claimed—(1.) It is the only kind of instruction in which you can make certain that the learner is not trusting to words and to words only. (2.) It greatly affects the habit of attention. Attention is strengthened, and, further, it is tested. Manual occupations occupy the whole of the attention and strengthen the habit of concentration. They also test it, because if the attention is not fresh in the task the incorrectness of the work proves itself quickly and completely. (3.) It cultivates what may be called the practical intelligence. The boy thus learns more clearly than in any other way the effort and determination which are requisite to master the outside world. (4.) It has a hygienic bearing: it is valuable to growing boys as a health-giving exercise. (5.) It has moral advantages: it encourages the virtues of diligence, perseverance, love of order, neatness, dexterity, caution, a love of construction, a respect for the work of men's hands, and a contempt for wanton destruction. Time was when every household was a miniature technical school, but in the present day machinery displaces hand labour and nothing is done at home. If the training of the hand is omitted at school the hand is never trained at all. This means not only the loss of normal dexterity, but a cramping of the intellectual powers, for, as modern physiology teaches, there is a close connection between the training of the hand and the actual growth of the brain."

In dealing with the domestic arts, and referring to a statement by Sir Philip Magnus, Dr. Anderson says, "We cannot but be with him in the fullest sense when he claims for the domestic arts virtues in education with which the corresponding handwork occupations of boys other than the characteristic handwork of the rural school will not compare in terms of equality." If handwork and domestic science receive such recognition of their value from the Director of Education we may hope that they will come to be regarded as an essential part of our primary system, carrying necessary weight in determining the award of the privilege of free education for every pupil that has had the benefit of the training.

A great extension of this education district is to take place during the ensuing year, and a reorganization of the manual-training department will necessarily follow. Whoever is entrusted with this important work may be assured of the active interest and sympathy of the members of the Board of Education who have always given full recognition to its value and have endeavoured to extend its benefits as widely as possible. With so able, enthusiastic, and conscientious a staff the work may be relied upon to improve and develop.

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#### EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE CHIEF INSTRUCTOR IN AGRICULTURE.

There has been a falling-away in the number of recognized classes in elementary agriculture this year, there being now 105 classes as against 126 in 1914 and 136 in 1913. This is entirely attributable to teachers in sole-charge schools having in so many instances dropped the subject on the advice of a departmental Inspector. Five schools took up agriculture during the year, so that in point of view of numbers more children were receiving instruction this year than last—viz., 2,260. The standard of attainment is in many instances very high indeed, but it must more and more be emphasized that the aim should be less the imparting of facts than the training of the pupils in the art of learning facts. To this end the course of instruction should be experimental in character rather than purely catechetical or observational; it should consist less of facts illustrated by experiment than of experiments from which the child makes observations, records results, and formulates deductions.

In almost every case tools have been well cared for, but the notebooks are seldom what they might be. The art of successful farming is largely a matter of planning and having things done just at the proper time. This is greatly facilitated by keeping a record of observations and experiments, as well as a calendar of operations to act as a reference for future guidance. It is done by every scientific investigator, and no less in the school than on the farm should such records be made. Indeed, the mere act of making a record may well be of more direct value to the child than the actual record itself.

For two months three days a week were devoted to visiting schools and discussing with teachers and Committees the formulation of a scheme for the improvement of the school-grounds, the child is so largely a creature of environment that who can measure the refining influences of a well-laid-out and well-kept playground or schoolroom? This work was undertaken to ensure that money spent on Arbor Day celebrations would be used to better purpose than was sometimes the case in the past, and that whatever in future was done would be part of a preconceived plan. Several lectures, illustrated by lantern views, were given during the year with a view to enlisting the sympathy of parents and Committeemen, and were well attended. A scheme for the correlation of natural phenomena and the changing phases of nature with soil temperatures and rainfall was initiated during the year, and is already in great favour with the teachers.