

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE EDUCATION BOARD.

The attendance at the four district high schools is very satisfactory, and good work has been accomplished. In one or two instances it has been found difficult to secure the services of teachers specially qualified to undertake secondary work, particularly at Westport, where the services of a commercial teacher were much needed. It was not found possible to institute a rural course at any of the schools during the year, but with the advent of a manual-training school at Takaka it is hoped to remedy this during the current year.

CANTERBURY.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE SENIOR INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS.

The district high schools were examined by the district Inspectors, and sufficient time was spent in each school to form a sound impression as to the general quality of the work. The total number of pupils in the district high schools is 648. The majority of these schools are now carrying out the rural course, and there is every prospect of its universal adoption. The work done maintains a very fine level, and praise is due to the teachers for consistent thoroughness and efficiency. The success in the recent examinations gives evidence that these schools are quite capable of holding their own in competition with secondary institutions. We record with pleasure our appreciation of the fine work being done by the district high schools, and believe that in the near future their sphere of usefulness will be still further increased.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE CHIEF INSTRUCTOR IN AGRICULTURE.

The rural course is being carried on in the following district high schools: Waimate, Pleasant Point, Temuka, Lincoln, Darfield, Oxford, Kaiapoi, Kaikoura. During the coming year it is expected to introduce the course at the district high schools at Akaroa, Geraldine, Greymouth, and Hokitika. Insufficient laboratory accommodation has been available at Darfield, Oxford, Kaiapoi, and Kaikoura, but science laboratories were erected during the year at Kaiapoi and Oxford, and will be available for the work of 1917. Specially good experimental work in the garden-plots has been carried out at Waimate, Temuka, and Oxford, while at all centres rural-course pupils have been successful in the various public examinations. The war has been responsible for a falling-away in the attendance at most centres, the number of pupils who received instruction in 1916 being—Waimate, 60; Pleasant Point, 21; Temuka, 39; Lincoln, 18; Oxford, 14; Darfield, 17; Kaiapoi, 32; Kaikoura, 10: total, 221.

OTAGO.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

In the secondary classes of the district high schools the work has proceeded along the lines indicated in our last year's report. We are not satisfied that in every case the best classification of the pupils has been made, and we suggest that head teachers should make the grading more even than it now appears to be in several of the subjects. Especially is this the case with mathematics and Latin. It is quite possible to secure in these two subjects fairly even qualifications, and if pupils will not earnestly strive to reach that level the better workers should not be handicapped by their presence. During our visits we found the treatment of Latin, French, mathematics, history, and geography on the whole satisfactory, but the necessity of preparing pupils for the various public examinations frequently restricts the educational aims of the teacher. This is especially the case in much of the English, in which the work might be made both more extensive and intensive with great benefit to all concerned.

The full agricultural-science course has been in operation in the district high schools at Lawrence, Balclutha, Tokomairiro, Mosgiel, Tapanui, and Palmerston, and a partial course has been followed at Alexandra. In each of these centres adequate laboratory accommodation and equipment, with contiguous experiment plots, allow of a permeation of the ordinary subjects of the curriculum with sciences allied to agriculture. In this work the pupil is brought into touch with experiences which illustrate the processes of thought by which a logical conclusion is reached. These experiences, supplemented by many generalizations, give him an understanding of the fundamental facts, while his actual practical work in the laboratory and experimental plots, in the acquirement and application of these principles, tends to develop that ability to do upon which the power to apply knowledge to the affairs of life wholly depends. Both as leading to an intelligent grasp of the principles upon which the practice of our basic industry—agriculture—is founded, and as cultivating a scientific method of work, is this training particularly important in a rural community. Further, with the extension of facilities for higher agricultural education, which, if this country is to attain its highest level of productivity, is a problem to be faced in the very near future, the intermediate course of instruction as carried on in the district high schools should provide a foundation upon which the superstructure of the higher institutions may be more profitably developed. Not infrequently have the scope and efficiency of such institutions been limited by the inadequate preparation of the students on entrance. Tangible evidence of the pupils' practical work in agriculture was exhibited at the Otago Agricultural and Pastoral Society's winter show. The exhibit, embracing results of variety and manurial tests with roots, fodder crops, and grasses, was well staged and elicited very favourable comment.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE EDUCATION BOARD.

The full agricultural-science course was continued in all the district high schools in the country except Alexandra, where a partial course only was followed. The six schools taking the full course were visited weekly by the Board's special instructors in agriculture, woodwork, and cookery. The average attendances in the secondary departments in these schools were: Balclutha, 78; Lawrence, 34; Mosgiel, 34; Alexandra, 23; Tapanui, 21; Tokomairiro, 17; and Palmerston, 16.