

3. DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS, EDUCATION BOARDS, DIRECTORS OF MANUAL INSTRUCTION, ETC.

AUCKLAND.

REPORT OF THE SENIOR INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS.

THE following are the names of the district high schools in operation in this district at the close of 1917, with the enrolment in the secondary departments for the last quarter of that year: Aratapu, 31; Cambridge, 23; Coromandel, 18; Huntly, 17; Normal, 22; Paeroa, 23; Pukekohe, 82; Rotorua, 20; Tauranga, 61; Te Kuiti, 45; Waihi, 57: total roll, 399. There is an increase of one in the number of schools in operation since last year, and an increase of 113 in the total enrolment. It is hoped that a steady expansion of roll number will follow a better understanding and a more encouraging development of district-high-schools activities in this part of the Dominion.

The remarks appearing in my report of last year in regard to attainments and progress of pupils attending the secondary departments of these schools continue to apply. There is still much room for improvement in both method and results of teaching, so that with but few exceptions the work in these departments fails to reach a level of attainments which might fairly be expected.

The difficulty of securing suitable assistants is steadily becoming more pronounced, and there is no doubt that some of the pupils join the secondary class with no definite object in view and hence have but little incentive to strenuous effort. To some extent these may be contributing causes to conditions now obtaining; but when all due allowance in this connection has been made, I am still of opinion that the best possible results are not being achieved.

Work in the rural course is fully taken up in the majority of schools, suitable courses in dairy science, or horticulture, or agriculture finding a place in the schemes of instruction, in most cases two and in some cases all three of these subjects being taught. The Board's instructors attend the schools at regular intervals, and are of considerable assistance to teachers and pupils; but the value of the training in the subjects dealt with loses much of its effectiveness in those schools where the efforts of instructor are not reinforced by those of head teacher or assistant.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE SUPERVISOR OF MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

The full rural course was taken by the pupils of Aratapu, Cambridge, Pukekohe, Tauranga, Waihi, and Paeroa District High Schools. Each of these schools was visited regularly by an instructor in agriculture for the purpose of giving instruction in agriculture, botany, dairy science, and physics and chemistry. It is anticipated that during 1918 all the district high schools will take the rural course.

TARANAKI.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE TARANAKI EDUCATION BOARD.

It is pleasing to note the increase of interest in secondary education in this district. The attendance at the Stratford District High School and the day technical classes at New Plymouth and Hawera centres show that parents in the Taranaki Education District are becoming fully alive to the advantage of secondary education. The average attendance of the Stratford Secondary Department during the period 1910-17 has risen from 95 to 143, and at Hawera from 34 to 47. As a further indication of the interest taken in education in this district, during the year the Hawera Borough Council offered the Board 5 acres of land, part of the Recreation Reserve No. 36, to be used as a site for the proposed technical high school, the site being one of the best in the borough; and the Stratford Borough Council, through the Board, donated 6 acres of land, part of Block 69, Stratford, to be vested in the Crown for education purposes, thus showing the keen interest taken by the citizens of those towns in secondary education.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTION.

At Hawera some eighteen lads took agriculture and dairy science as for the Public Service Junior and Matriculation Examinations. There was no rural course at this school during 1917, but a full rural course is arranged for 1918. At Stratford a course in botany, agricultural chemistry, general agriculture and dairy-work, &c., was taken, all the instructors meeting there on one day per week, and instructing classes in S5 and S6. Good progress was made in all subjects of instruction, and especially in dairy science. A beginning has been made in taking part of the practical work at the Stratford Model Farm, and in the new year this work will be extended. Our staff will be responsible for the herd-testing work being carried out, and will also observe and record the experimental work of the farm, in conjunction with the Agricultural Department. Very important developments may confidently be anticipated in this connection at this and other centres.

Harmonious interlinking of instructional work at Stratford District High School with the Model Dairy Farm Committee and with officials of the Agricultural Department has resulted in great gain from the correlation of effort in this work. The suggested taking of agriculture as a subject of instruction throughout the whole of Stratford District High School secondary department, and also the projected entrance of New Plymouth High School to our course of instruction, are matters for congratulation.