

INVERCARGILL BORSTAL INSTITUTION.

(Superintendent, Mr. C. G. L. POLLOCK.)

On the whole, the health of the inmates has been good.

The special classes in wool-classing and agriculture, which are conducted on Saturday mornings by Mr. T. Mathews, have been continued as heretofore. No more popular classes are held in the institution, and the results of the instruction are a credit to Mr. Mathews, whose services are entirely voluntary. Mr. Mathews reports as follows: "Agriculture: This work has again gone ahead smoothly. We have had a full class throughout the year and the members display great keenness in their studies. The attendances at the Saturday morning classes have been well maintained. With regard to the practical part of the instruction, very pleasing work continues to be done in the experimental area. The competition plots are an added source of interest, and great credit is due to the members of the agriculture class on the high standard of work maintained throughout the year. Wool-classing: The members of this class are mainly first-year boys; hence, as is to be expected, the standard of work is not so high as in previous years, when we had a fair proportion of second- and third-year lads. It is pleasing to report, however, that on the whole the boys are very keen, and several are showing distinct promise in the wool line."

The special class conducted during the winter months under the auspices of the Southland Branch of the Workers' Educational Association has had another successful session. The tutor this year was Mr. James Stobo, M.A., who reports as follows: "The lectures covered a variety of subjects, treating mostly of the more important developments in modern and industrial life. These were treated from as many angles as possible—historical, geographical, and economic."

Under three competent visiting teachers the evening classes taking up scholastic subjects of fundamental importance have entered heartily into their studies. The practical character of the programmes in these subjects is not without its appeal to the learners, but the responsive co-operation to be noted must be largely credited to the trained skill of their instructors and the cordial relations which they establish with their pupils. The course in English was enhanced by collective study and discussion of suitable examples of good literature, the library being utilized in this connection. Following the lead of progressive secondary schools for boys, this institution has endeavoured to give a place to music. Class singing, a small brass band, and voluntary efforts, especially by the Maori inmates, have all helped to unfold latent powers and to quicken the social atmosphere.

Every encouragement is given to the lads to make full use of the library. Its contents, which provide a good selection of books of reference as well as reading-matter to suit various tastes, are constantly being increased and improved. By the kindness of friends, 321 suitable books, besides magazines and other periodical literature, have been donated during the past year. A complete set of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, gifted by the Athenæum authorities, forms a handsome and useful addition. Recognition of these different benefactors must include special mention of two to whose helpful personal interest users of the library are greatly indebted—Mr. Charles Gilbertson, under whose supervision the twenty-seven volumes of the *Encyclopedia* were re-bound by our Borstal librarian, and Mr. H. B. Farnall, Athenæum librarian, for his expert guidance freely accorded in connection with our library.

During the period under review it has been endeavoured to give the benefits of organized games a more general application in accordance with the greater value now assigned to games by educationists. To this end, for example, two Borstal teams were entered for the Southland Rugby Union's third-grade competition, so that the stimulus of trying to win and retain a place in one of the representative teams touched a much wider circle. Our A team played its matches on the different grounds controlled by the Rugby Union, while the B team met its opponents on the Borstal ground. For practice purposes the latter area allows of only one game to proceed at a time, so that it was a clear boon when the Agricultural and Pastoral Association granted us the free use of a portion of its show-grounds. The match played against the Southland Boys' High School on the school-grounds left a very pleasing memory not only because of the sporting spirit which imbued the game, but especially because of what followed. At the close of the match the home team hospitably entertained their visitors, afterwards showing them over the school buildings and the precincts. Such a gesture, in its unobtrusive friendliness, meant a great deal to lads apt to feel under a bar of disparagement; it would tend to reinforce the purpose and the hope to win back their good name. Keen appreciation was felt also as regards a later graceful act of courtesy due to the good offices of the Boys' High School. At the close of the secondary-schools football tournament held in Invercargill last August a match was arranged between a combined team of the visiting schools and a representative Borstal team. The privilege of meeting in friendly contest highly trained exponents of Rugby was realized by the Borstal lads, who also felt the honour of being given a part in a tournament of that standing as a bracing challenge to play the game in every sense of that phrase. The efficiency and the team spirit developed by Borstal footballers has to be credited to the exceptionally fine coaching they received at the hands of Mr. W. F. Sutton. To his expertness in the game he adds rare aptitude as a coach and a personality that evoked from the boys the best that was in them. His four years' service to this institution have borne far reaching values.

Under the fostering assistance of the Southland Cricket Association and the excellent coaching of Mr. A. E. Wish, cricket has taken a stronger hold among the lads. In the 1929-30 season the Borstal team, which was the only one in the third-grade competition to fulfil all its match engagements, had the honour of bringing to the Borstal the first sports trophy (the Washer Cup) to be won by its representatives. Members of the Cricket Association came along to make the presentation. The association generously presented the institution with a full supply of cricketing-material.