

AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTION.

276. We have reviewed the question of agricultural instruction and have come to the conclusion that little, if any, harm would result from the discontinuance of this class of instruction. There are twenty-two agricultural instructors and the salaries, travelling-expenses, and incidentals cost approximately £11,000 per annum. We recommend that three months' notice of intention to discontinue the instruction be given. The teachers have been largely responsible for the formation of what are known as "agricultural clubs." These have been formed in collaboration with the Instructors and Inspectors in the Agricultural Department, and the clubs should be able to function notwithstanding the fact that the agricultural instructors are dispensed with. All teachers passing through the training colleges receive instruction in elementary agriculture, and with the assistance of Inspectors of the Agriculture Department may be expected to carry on this special subject without assistance for the time being.

Estimated saving, £11,000.

MANUAL-TRAINING INSTRUCTION.

277. Instruction in woodwork and cookery is at present given to Forms I and II, corresponding to Standards V and VI. We are of opinion that in so far as Form I—*i.e.*, Standard V—is concerned the instruction might be discontinued, and this would save the salaries of a number of teachers and their travelling-expenses. We estimate that the grants to Boards for salaries, travelling-expenses, and incidentals would be reduced by £13,000. We have already recommended the closing-down of expensive manual-training centres, and the present recommendation is in addition to the saving which we estimate can be effected by the closing of those centres. We consider that the pupils of Form I can ultimately obtain instruction in handwork and cookery when they reach Form II, and later still when they commence their post-primary education.

Estimated saving, £13,000.

278. The economies suggested above are listed hereunder for the sake of clarity and convenience:—

	£
Closing of training colleges at Wellington and Dunedin	7,000
Allowances to training-college students (eventually reaching £90,000 per annum)	25,000
<i>School Journal</i>	7,000
Manual-training schools	5,000
Conveyance of school-children	50,000
Closing of smaller primary schools	12,600
Over-scale salaries paid to teachers	3,000
Administrative expenses: Abolition of Education Boards, &c. ..	50,000
Departmental staff	1,150
School Committees' allowances	10,000
Capitation allowances to Boards on account of secondary pupils in district high schools and for science classes in secondary schools	3,000
Special capitation for science classes in primary schools	6,000
Material for handwork in primary schools	1,000
Free books to primary-school children in necessitous cases	2,000
Capitation grants to Secondary-school Boards for incidental expenses ..	2,000
Incidental allowances to Technical-school Boards	5,000
Native-school scholarships	1,750
Maintenance of school-buildings	23,750
Special allowances to teachers	5,800
Salaries of female teachers in primary schools	75,000
Minimum age of admission to primary schools, raising of	11,000
Proficiency Examination, fees chargeable for	3,000
Other examinations, fees chargeable for	1,400
Travelling-expenses of physical instructors	500
Taranaki Scholarship Endowment, abolition of: Immediate benefit to Consolidated Fund	28,000
Free post-primary education (ultimate saving, £33,000)	3,000
Special capitation for sewing in primary schools	3,000
Agricultural instruction	11,000
Manual-training instruction	13,000
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	£369,950

279. We have dealt at considerable length with the question of expenditure on education, but have had perforce to confine ourselves to those items of expenditure that appear to afford the greatest scope for economy.

280. We propose to examine in more detail the expenditure of the Education Department, and may have further recommendations to make in connection therewith in our final report. In the meantime we are convinced that the savings enumerated above can be effected without greatly impairing the efficiency of the system. The expenditure both per head of population and per pupil has grown at an alarming rate, and, if unchecked, will certainly continue to increase. As previously stated, however, the economies we have recommended, together with economies already brought into operation by the Government, will effect a very real saving when it is most needed, and at the same time will not place any undue obstacles in the way of the children of the Dominion receiving adequate education.