

probably be temporary only) would be more honourable than the present inaction. One of the most useful things, for instance, that an agricultural association could do in conjunction, say, with an Education Board would be to establish in its district classes conducted by a well-qualified agricultural instructor for training young farmers and teachers in the elements of some branch or branches of agriculture suited to the district. The Department would do what it has always done when requested in such cases, send one of its Inspectors to explain what initial steps should be taken, and generally to advise the local authorities as to the work of the classes. Similarly, in mining districts or in towns, good work might be done by local authorities or societies in encouraging the formation of classes.

I would mention one or two facts that should not be forgotten: First, that it is not necessary to set up elaborate institutions, to start an agricultural college or a fully equipped dairy school in every country district, or an engineering college in every town, even if the colony could afford it; secondly, that if it were necessary probably the colony could not afford it, as, owing to the geographical configuration of New Zealand, such a policy would probably be three or four times as expensive in New Zealand as in any other country; and, thirdly, that the work done in this direction should be adapted to the special wants of the district, to its staple industries or pursuits. (That the warning just given is not altogether unnecessary is shown by the fact that in several instances small country towns right in the heart of rich dairying or agricultural districts have sought to establish not a single class in subjects bearing on country pursuits, but in lieu thereof classes in shorthand, typewriting, and commercial correspondence, which is almost as reasonable as for an intending traveller to Persia to study Chinese.)

A fourth point on which I would lay emphasis is that the technical schools, new and old alike, should endeavour, as some of them are already doing, to arrange their classes in such a way as to make it possible for students to take up more or less complete courses bearing on the trades or pursuits in which they are engaged or which they intend to follow. Direct encouragement should be given to take up these complete courses; in time, perhaps, the unions of employers and workmen may see their way to give distinct advantages to apprentices that do this, and to ask for the recognition of such a principle, if necessary, by legal enactment or by decision of the Arbitration Courts.

Of the various suggestions made in the reports of the Inspectors, two, I think, could be carried out almost at once at small cost and great advantage—namely, that as to the holding of local examinations in certain technical subjects on the lines of the examinations of the English Board of Education and the City and Guilds of London Institute, and the suggestion as to the institution of a national competition of art and technical work.

The prospect of an early fulfilment of the proposals for the more complete equipment of the two existing training colleges and for the establishment of two others (at Auckland and Wellington) raises a hope that the primary and secondary teachers of the colony will be more fully equipped not only for giving better manual instruction, but for carrying out the fundamental ideas that underlie manual instruction and the new methods in all other subjects alike.

20th November, 1903.

G. HOGREN.

REPORT OF INSPECTORS OF TECHNICAL SCHOOLS.

WE have the honour to make the following report on the state and progress of manual and technical instruction in the colony during the year ending the 31st December, 1902:—

A. MANUAL INSTRUCTION.

There continues to be a steady increase in the number of schools in which handwork is taught in accordance with the regulations under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act. Of the more elementary forms of handwork, modelling in plasticine, brush drawing, and paper-work are the subjects most generally taken up. In most of the schools the work has been confined almost entirely to the preparatory classes and classes for Standards I. and II., though there are not wanting cases where it has been found possible to provide for some instruction in handwork throughout the school. The reasons why this most desirable state of things has not as yet become more general would appear to be—

1. The absence in the past of any provision for the thorough training of teachers in handwork. Many teachers have, it is true, endeavoured to supply this want by studying the various text-books and manuals that deal with handwork, with, it is to be feared, in some cases, not the most satisfactory results. The Government, realising that before really sound work could be accomplished in the schools the teachers must first be given an opportunity of familiarising themselves with the various forms of handwork, has made grants to Education Boards for the maintenance of teachers' training classes; these grants, which were first made in 1901, were renewed this year, and will be again available next year. Most of the Boards have established such classes, which have been generally well attended by teachers, many of whom have had to travel considerable distances. In addition to these classes, which are usually held on Saturdays, summer schools on similar lines have been successfully organized by the Auckland, Wanganui, and Otago Boards, whose example will probably be followed by other Boards next year. While the establishment of these training classes has resulted, as was to be expected, in a considerable increase in the number of classes recognised under the Act, yet in one or two districts the teachers appear to be somewhat slow in applying in their schools the knowledge they have acquired at the classes; this may, however, be due to the