

apologetic and experimental stage. Should any be still sceptical as to the value of this new departure as a means of elementary training, they would do well to study the proceedings of the educational section of the last meeting of the British Association. Said Professor Armstrong: "For a long time past we have been drifting away from the practical, and those who are acquainted with the work of the school, especially the elementary school, are aghast at the influence they are exercising in hindering the development of practical ability." So Professor Dewar, president of the association, in an address on "Education and Progress": "Mental habits are formed for good or for evil long before men go to the technical schools. We have to begin at the beginning: we have to train the population from the first to think correctly and logically, to deal at first hand with facts, and to evolve, each one to evolve for himself, the solution of the problem put before him, instead of learning by rote the solution given by somebody else." And Professor Perry was so much impressed by the fatuity of much of the present-day methods that he evoked a conflagration or an earthquake to wreck the existing system of education, so that the whole business might be reconstructed on consistent and simple lines. The names of Perry, Armstrong, and Dewar are names to conjure with in education and science, so that we may take heart of grace when we reflect that we have committed ourselves to a policy in accordance with which our young people will be trained on the principles advocated in the educational section of the British Association.

We sincerely hope that the Board will adopt our suggestion regarding the institution of mid-summer classes for the benefit of teachers in remote parts of the district who have not hitherto had the opportunity of attending special classes. The further suggestion may be made here that, at the end of 1904, there should be held in Invercargill an exhibition of manual work, which might also include competitions in other departments of school-work, such as mental arithmetic, drill, singing, and recitation. Such an exhibition would do a great deal to stimulate educational activity amongst us.

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

Central Technical and Continuation Classes.

Classes and Teachers.—The technical and continuation classes held during the winter months in Invercargill have fully maintained their usefulness and popularity. The total number of students enrolled for the first term was 273, a decrease of 11 compared with the previous year; but in the second term the number enrolled was 205, an increase of 56 over the corresponding term of last year. There were 26 classes placed on the syllabus—5 in art subjects, 13 in scientific and technical subjects, and 8 in literary and commercial subjects. Of these classes 7 failed to proceed for lack of students, and 19 were established, one more than last year. The classes which were carried on were much the same as those held the previous year, except that it was found impossible to establish the chemistry class. On the other hand, a class for singing was successfully inaugurated. The most successful classes were those for book-keeping (junior and senior), singing, mechanical drawing, and cookery. The dressmaking class commenced with a roll number of 20, but in the second term it fell away to 8. The photography, laundry, and mathematics classes were carried on for one term only, but all the other classes were successfully conducted through a second session. Two of the classes—viz., cookery and shorthand—were continued for a third term.

An effort was made during the year to establish a class in the principles of sanitary plumbing, a subject of vital interest and concern to the inhabitants of the town in general, and especially so to those engaged in the craft. A sufficient number of students, however, was not found to justify the class making a commencement, so the effort was reluctantly abandoned for the session. There is reason to hope that this year the class will be inaugurated, and that this most important subject will receive the attention it deserves, for undoubtedly there is room for improvement in the sanitary plumbing practised at present in this town.

I can only speak in terms of highest praise of the interest and enthusiasm shown by the teachers as a whole in the conduct of their classes. To their zeal as much as to anything else is due the success of the year's operations in this department of technical education.

Exhibition of Work.—As in former years, an exhibition of the work of students in the art and manual classes was held at the close of the second term. Many of the exhibits were of a very high order, and were most favourably commented on by competent judges. At the close of the exhibition, and on the conjoint invitation of the High School and Education Boards, a number of prominent citizens were invited to partake of a supper, all the dishes at which were prepared by students attending the two cookery classes, the students themselves acting as waitresses.

Examinations.—The value of the classes as a means of advancement to those eager to succeed in life is being more widely recognised. Several students have taken advantage of the facilities offered by the classes to prepare themselves for the examinations held under the Board of Education, London, in science and art subjects, and under the City and Guilds of London Institute in technical subjects. These examinations are held locally in the months of May and June, and last year 14 candidates presented themselves for examination under the former department—viz., 9 in machine-construction and drawing, 2 in freehand drawing, 2 in model-drawing, and 1 in drawing in light and shade. Under the City and Guilds of London department there was one candidate for plain cookery (Mrs. Turner), who succeeded in passing. The results of the Board of Education Department examination have not yet been received. As time goes on, these examinations will be more fully taken advantage of. It is, indeed, the aim of the classes to work up to the standard requirements of these two departments, and to encourage the students to sit for the examinations, as the certificates from both bodies are of world-wide value.

In order to stimulate the students in the art and scientific classes to more determined effort, and at the same time to give them an idea of the character and quality of the work expected of them in the examinations, the Education Department in Wellington procured from the Home