

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

During the past year considerable progress has been made in this district in matters relating to manual training or hand and eye work, and technical education.

At the beginning of the year, during the Christmas holidays, a summer school was held in Auckland, at which nearly three hundred teachers in the service of the Board attended. Amongst those who gave lectures and instruction was Miss Eva Hooper, late Organizer in Kindergarten Work to the Victorian Education Department, who was specially engaged from Melbourne to give information relative to the teaching of hand and eye work in primary schools. At the conclusion of the summer school, Miss Hooper was engaged by the Board for a further period of three months to hold classes for teachers and to visit the various city and suburban schools to give advice to the teachers as to the methods of teaching hand and eye work, more particularly in connection with the infant department. Miss Hooper's classes included lectures on "The Principles of Teaching," and practical work in paper and cardboard cutting and folding, and in brush drawing. Two hundred and thirty-four teachers attended these classes, which were held in the evenings and on Saturday mornings, the average attendance being 190. Regarding the work of these classes, Miss Hooper reported as follows: "The majority of those attending the classes were badly handicapped, first, by having to attend the classes after school-hours, when they were already tired; secondly, on account of the shortness of the time at my disposal much of the work had to be done at home in time overcrowded already; thirdly, by the apparent entire absence of early training in handwork, or anything requiring precision. In the brushwork classes this was noticeable in the lack of control of the muscles of the hand and wrist, and in the paper-work classes by the general absence of accurate work. Control of the hand for brushwork can only be obtained through long practice, and for that, of course, the time with me has been too short. I have been able to show how the preliminary manipulations of the brush are carried out, and only subsequent practice can give the precision which is necessary for carrying out successful work. In the paper-work I can fairly say that there has been great progress during the last half of the course. Most of the teachers are now beginning to understand the absolute need of accuracy in the smallest detail of the work, and I think the models which were on view at the exhibition of work reflect credit upon the members of the class. Here again, of course, it has been impossible to do more than suggest lines of work. Cardboard-work alone requires more time than we have been able to devote to the whole subject. With regard to the supply of materials to the schools, I should recommend that your Board make arrangements for getting the needful supplies in large quantities, and from such a stock supply the schools as required. This would be found, I am sure, cheaper and more satisfactory than leaving such schools to provide for their own needs. Finally, let me express my conviction that a training college for teachers, with a practising school attached, is very badly needed in this district. By this, I mean a college in which teachers will be taught the science and art of teaching, and in which this will take the premier position, not a place to which young teachers will go to pursue their academic studies."

One of the results of Miss Hooper's teaching has been that a number of teachers have introduced handwork into their schools. With the idea of giving teachers an opportunity of acquiring a thorough knowledge of drawing in the various branches (a subject of the utmost importance to the teaching profession) the Board has engaged from England a specialist, Mr. Harry Wallace, who for the past four years has been Organising Instructor in Art and Hand and Eye Work to the Burslem School Board, and who has earned for himself a very high reputation in the Old Country. In addition to giving instruction to teachers in drawing and handwork, Mr. Wallace will visit the primary schools as expert adviser in these subjects.

During the year three manual-training schools have been built and equipped at Newton (Upper Queen Street), Newmarket (Manukau Road), and Ponsonby (Richmond Road) respectively. Six instructors (three for cookery and three for woodwork) were engaged from England, and work was commenced on the 20th July last. At each of these three manual-training centres the pupils of Standards V., VI., and VII., from six or seven of the primary schools in the vicinity of the centre, attend once a week (two hours) for cookery and woodwork respectively. The number of pupils on the rolls of the several cookery and woodwork classes was 878 and 934 respectively. Although these classes have been commenced only a little more than six months, the work done has created a most favourable impression upon the teachers of the primary schools, as well as upon the parents of the children. Germany, United States of America, England, Scotland, and other countries strongly advocate the introduction of manual training into the primary-school curriculum, and I feel sure that the beneficial effects of the work will soon be felt upon the rising generation in Auckland.

In order that the schools in the country districts may be able to benefit by the introduction of cookery and woodwork into their curricula, special classes for teachers are held in these subjects at each of the three manual-training schools on Saturdays. This will enable teachers to become qualified to give instruction in cookery or woodwork in the schools in which they may be engaged. A special course of instruction in each subject has been drawn up to extend over a period of two years, an examination being held at the end of each year. During October last I visited some of the larger centres of population in the province—viz., Thames, Paeroa, Waihi, Hamilton, and Cambridge. At each of these places I gave addresses to the School Committees and others interested in manual training and technical education, and, as a result, representations were made to the Board from Thames, Waihi, Hamilton, and Cambridge for the establishment of a manual-training school in each of these places. These schools, in addition to providing manual training in the day for pupils of the primary schools of the district, could be utilised for technical and continuation classes in the evenings. At Thames the provision asked for is a school of the same type as those established in Auckland, but smaller in dimensions. At Waihi, Cambridge, and Hamilton the school would be in connection with the District High School, and provision is asked for the teaching of practical science in addition to that of cookery and woodwork.