

Classes for practical instruction in elementary agriculture are recognised in seven schools, part of the school grounds being laid out as gardens, in which experimental work is carried on.

Many of the teachers continue to display enthusiasm in the teaching of lessons that come under the head of nature study. In this connection it may be remarked that the splendid attendance of teachers at the series of twelve lectures delivered at Timaru by the Principal and staff of the Lincoln College of Agriculture was specially gratifying to the Board. By arrangement the lectures were very fully reported in the *Timaru Herald* and afterwards published in pamphlet form; and it is safe to say that a great deal of good must ultimately come from the fresh interest in agricultural science which the lectures aroused, not only amongst the teachers for whom they were primarily intended, but also among the farmers of South Canterbury, many of whom found food for reflection and discussion in what the lecturers so clearly set before them.

For regularity of attendance the district as a whole has for many years held a high place, and with the good roads and excellent climate for which South Canterbury has a reputation it would be a disgrace were it otherwise. Last year the district held third place. There is an aspect of attendance that the yearly returns do not give prominence to—namely, the number of days a school has been open during the year. Looking to the entries of attendance against the names of pupils on the examination schedules and the possible number of attendances in each school, we find very few schools have been open for more than four hundred half-days from the date of one annual visit to the next. The leakage is not in the undue prolongation of the usual summer vacation, but in too frequent single-day holidays that so far from being recreative are in reality vexatious and unsettling. It would be well for the Board to fix both the maximum and the minimum number of holidays to be observed in all schools throughout the year.

In a good many cases teachers have not fully complied with the demands of Regulation 5 in respect of drawing up for each term or quarter schemes of work for the classes; and the records of their periodical examinations in accordance with these schemes are not always presented to us with sufficient clearness. It is in the smaller schools that partial neglect of this regulation or incompleteness in the information supplied to us has been most noticeable, and in these very schools, on account of the frequent changes of teachers, the absolute necessity of strict adherence to the regulations is of the highest moment. We trust that those who have shown any remissness in this matter in the past will duly appreciate its importance and in the future give it their full attention.

We have much pleasure in reporting favourably on the order and discipline of the schools, and on the manners and general behaviour of the scholars.

We have, &c.,

The Chairman, Education Board, Timaru.

JAS. GIBSON GOW, M.A.
A. BELL, M.A. } Inspectors.

OTAGO.

SIR,—Education Office, Dunedin, 21st March, 1907.

We have the honour to present our general report for the year 1906.

The following table shows the number of pupils on the roll, the number present at the annual visit, and the average age of each class :—

Classes.					Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.
							Yrs. mos.
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	410	366	14 10
" VI	...	...	...	...	1,452	1,427	13 8
" V	...	...	...	...	1,996	1,952	12 10
" IV	...	...	...	...	2,287	2,227	12 0
" III	...	...	...	...	2,354	2,295	10 11
" II	...	...	...	...	2,264	2,221	9 11
" I	...	...	...	...	2,194	2,152	8 10
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	6,456	6,053	6 10
Totals	...	...	...	...	19,413	18,693	11 1·8*

* Mean of average ages.

As compared with 1905 there is a slight increase in three and a considerable decrease in five classes, the total decrease being 0·85 per cent. of the roll-number. It is perhaps a good sign that the increase is chiefly in the lowest class, where it amounts to 1·3 per cent. of the roll-number of the class for 1905.

We group the schools according to efficiency as follows: Good to very good, 50 per cent.; satisfactory, 42 per cent.; fair, 7 per cent.; weak or very weak, 1 per cent. The percentage in the second group is the same as that for 1905; but the third group has decreased by 3 and the fourth by 2 per cent., while the first group has increased by 5 per cent., a very satisfactory increase in the percentage of good schools.

The following table shows the mean efficiency marks in subjects: Compulsory subjects (English)—Reading, satisfactory; composition, fair; spelling, good; writing, good; recitation, satisfactory; mean of English, satisfactory; arithmetic, satisfactory; drawing, good; singing, satisfactory; physical instruction, good; geography, satisfactory; history, satisfactory; mean of compulsory subjects, satisfactory. Additional subjects—Nature study and science, satisfactory; handwork, satisfactory; geography, satisfactory; history, satisfactory; needlework, very good; mean of additional subjects, satisfactory.