

Agriculture and cottage gardening have been taken up by nine schools; and Mr. Bruce, the Instructor of Agriculture, has given a series of interesting and instructive lectures to teachers on this subject. These lectures were well attended, and were in a marked degree helpful to teachers—not only in agriculture, but in nature-study generally. Teachers' classes in free-arm drawing, brush painting, and in cookery were also held during the year. Carton-work and paper-folding were taken by several schools, and cookery was taken by nearly every school in the district. The children from some of these schools have to travel some thirty miles by rail and lose a whole day in order to obtain a two-hours cookery lesson. Important as the subject is, in these cases it is costing the children too dear, and the schools which, labouring under this disadvantage in respect to distance, continue indefinitely to devote a whole day a week to this subject must necessarily suffer in their general school-work. A woodwork class is held in connection with the Greymouth District High School, and a special class in wood-carving was also arranged this year. Altogether quite as much technical work has been done during the year as the circumstances of the district render advisable.

Speaking generally, the teachers of this district have worked excellently and conscientiously throughout a particularly trying year, and they are deserving of every credit. Where failure has occurred it has been in almost every case owing to circumstances beyond the teacher's control. In some instances the introduction of the new syllabus and the noise and fuss made about the necessity for new methods have had rather a bewildering and distracting effect upon the teachers—especially upon those who are young and inexperienced. Amidst the temporary and perhaps inevitable dislocation and confusion incidental to the transition from the old methods and syllabus to the new, I would ask teachers to remember that to store the mind with knowledge still remains one of the aims of education and that a Standard VI proficiency certificate is intended to represent not only that a pupil's faculties have been developed and quickened to a certain degree, but also that he is the possessor of a more or less definite amount of actual, positive, accurate information on the subjects in which he has been taught.

The school buildings generally are in fair repair, though painting is in many cases badly needed. As to the school grounds, their condition throughout the district is such as to leave abundant room for improvement. Not one of them can be said to make even a remote approach to being "a thing of beauty," and most of them are supremely ugly. Now that cottage gardening has been introduced in this district it is not too much to expect that some little attempt should be made in the direction of beautifying our school surroundings. A more enthusiastic observation of Arbor Day and a little regular systematic attention would work wonders, and would very soon remove from our school surroundings that dreary air of unrelieved ugliness which now hangs over them.

I have, &c.,

E. A. SCOTT, Inspector.

The Chairman, Education Board, Grey.

WESTLAND.

SIR,— Education Board Office, Hokitika, 14th February, 1908.

I have the honour to present a report for the year 1907 on the work of the schools of the district. The tables accompanying the report present information relating to the numbers and results in connection with the examination of thirty-five public and five Catholic schools.

The following table is a summary of the numbers and average age of the various standard classes. It may be added that the number of pupils in the preparatory classes over eight years of age is sixty-seven, and that seventeen pupils in standards were placed in a lower standard in arithmetic and one in a higher class.

Classes.						Number on Roll.	Present at Inspector's Annual Visit.	Average Age of Pupils in each Class.	
Standard VII	...	...	...	...	...	45	42	Yrs. mos.	
" VI	...	...	...	...	...	75	75	15	5
" V	...	...	...	...	...	70	67	13	11
" IV	...	...	...	...	...	102	96	12	7
" III	...	...	...	...	...	104	101	12	1
" II	...	...	...	...	...	124	122	11	2
" I	...	...	...	...	...	104	102	10	1
Preparatory	...	...	...	...	...	398	373	9	4
Totals	...	...	...	...	...	1,022	978	6	9
								11	5*

* Mean of average age.

An annual visit was made to each of the schools, and, apart from those of South Westland, each school received at least one inspection visit. Owing to changes of teachers and other special causes it was found expedient to visit several schools more frequently. The teachers of all the smaller schools were, moreover, required to forward, at regular intervals for inspection, specimens of the pupils' work in the form of exercises worked in connection with periodical or special tests. The