

MARLBOROUGH.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE EDUCATION BOARD.

Manual and Technical.—Practically every school in the district is now taking some branch of handwork. Following is a list of the subjects taught: Cookery, woodwork, elementary agriculture, elementary physical measurements, swimming and life-saving, elementary physiology and first aid, needlework, modelling in plasticine, paper-folding, stick-laying, cardboard modelling and brick-laying. Owing to the reduction of the capitation payable on cookery classes, the Board has had to make a corresponding reduction in the salaries of the special instructor in this subject. The attempt to conduct evening classes in connection with the Blenheim Technical School has had to be abandoned, owing to the insufficient number of students offering.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS.

In 1908 special classes for teachers were held during Easter week. Six hours a day were devoted to the work. Eighty-four teachers, including several from private schools and some monitors, were in attendance. Mr. G. Hogben, M.A., Inspector-General of Schools, delivered lectures on education in Europe and America; Mr. J. S. Tennant, M.A., B.Sc., Inspector of Schools, Wellington (nature-study and botany), Miss Igglesden, Nelson, (model-drawing and design), Dr. Bennett (first aid and ambulance), Mr. D. A. Sturrock (singing), Mr. James Bruce (agricultural chemistry). Additional interest was given by an exhibition of school-work covering all such parts of the course as could be reduced to paper or to the concrete (writing, drawing in various forms—freehand, model, scale, geometric, design, brush drawing and mapping—tablet-laying, paper-plaiting, paper-folding, stick-laying, exhibits in cartridge paper and carton, needlework, weather charts, models in plasticine correlating with arithmetic, geography, geometric drawing, design and nature-study, woodwork, cookery, products of school gardens, children's collections of shells, eggs, stones, leaves, &c., essays, sheets of conversation lessons on nature-study, and teachers' helps in geography). The exhibition had an educational value that was in itself equal to many lectures. Advantage was also taken of the opportunity to make a display of educational literature of a most comprehensive character. This confluence of teachers from all parts of the education district, with its facilities for comparing notes and for gauging attainment by comparison with that realised elsewhere, has an invisible yet very potent influence in making and cementing friendship, and thus aiding a benevolent emulation, broadening the outlook, and tying the bonds of professional spirit, all of which have reflex influences tending to the advancement of the education of the province. In the end the teachers go forth to their several localities, apparently lost in remote regions, yet inspired to fresh effort, silent and all-pervasive missionaries bringing the effects of fresh air to the atmosphere of adults and children alike. Whatever enlightens the teacher is ultimately a benefit to his whole neighbourhood. At the close of the classes certificates were issued to all that had attended the full course. The Department aided greatly the success of the course by providing free transit on the railway, material for the classes, and capitation on the attendance; and Mr. Hogben by his presence further gave his sympathy and encouragement to the movement.

Fifty-three schools include handwork of some description in their programmes. Many examples of plasticine modelling and brush drawing seen at the schools were of high merit. Classes from the following schools attended at the Blenheim centre for instruction in cookery and woodwork: Blenheim, Springlands, Grovetown, Tuamarina, Waitohi, Picton, Renwick, Marlborough High School, St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Convent Schools. The aggregate roll was—in woodwork, 205; average, 161; in cookery, 183; average, 149: total roll, 388; average, 310. These cover all classes—school, technical, and teachers. The school classes were—roll, 306; average, 249; as compared with 256 and 183 respectively in 1907. The average attendance has improved. These figures prove that the provision made by the Department is appreciated and availed of as greatly as possible. Some of the pupils walk to the Technical School, some come by rail, and some by special conveyance. In cookery, programmes of work have been formed covering in four years the course for the diploma of the City and Guilds of London Institute. The insufficiency of the capitation compelled the Board to terminate the engagement of the cookery instructress. Fresh arrangements are, however, made for continuing the classes. The cookery classes can register the minimum attendance in twenty weeks, the woodwork in thirty weeks. This disparity causes some difficulty in schools. The insufficiency of the capitation prevents the extension of the cookery instruction to thirty weeks. There are gardens at thirty-nine public and three private schools. They are mostly under the supervision of Mr. Bruce. At the smaller schools, though the children have gardens, agriculture is not taught. The pupils are, however, learning the lessons of which experience is a good teacher. With them the subject may be called nature-study. Grovetown won the prize for producing the greatest weight of vegetables from a given area. The garden at that school was considered by Mr. Bruce the best of the year. Picton and Marlborough-town deserve mention of good work done in breaking up and preparing fresh ground. In quite a number of cases that have come to my knowledge the pupils, having learnt to cultivate gardens at the schools, carry their enthusiasm to their homes and form gardens there. The horticultural gardens would be improved if some attempt were made at classification. At Havelock each child has for his gardening a notebook, into which details of operations are entered. In American colleges, where entrance examinations are at a discount, the production of such note books is compulsory in various subjects. The horticultural societies display a gratifying interest in the work of the children. The Board adopted the recommendation to grant the teacher three-fourths of the capitation earned by classes for learning swimming. Teachers' classes in agriculture, needlework, cookery, and woodwork have operated on Saturdays. Two first and three second class awards were made by the City and Guilds of London Institute to candidates in cookery. In 1907 twenty-one diplomas in cookery were awarded