

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSTRUCTOR IN AGRICULTURE.

The year's itinerary under the four Education Boards was the same as originally arranged—viz., six months in the Nelson District—January, April, May, June, August, and November; three months in the Marlborough District—July, September, and December; three months in Grey and Westland—February, March, and October.

In view of my early severance from the Grey and Westland Districts this year, an additional three months will be available for the Nelson Education District: this should give me time to visit parts of the district that I have so far not been able to get to—viz., Collingwood, Karamea, Murchison, Inangahua, Reefton, and Westport.

At the end of 1907 the number of recognised school classes in elementary agriculture in the Nelson Education District was twenty-five; during the year the number has increased by five, making thirty in all. Gardens have been established at all these schools.

The work done during the year is of a very encouraging nature, and in nearly every case shows a marked improvement on the previous years. The crops grown are chiefly vegetables, and the common flowers usually found in small gardens; the instruction, too, has been co-ordinated with some branch of the ordinary school-work.

For the future development and improvement of the schools gardens, I would strongly recommend specialisation adapted in some way to the needs of various parts of the district. Such specialisations might take the form of growing collections of grasses under varying conditions, and finding out the most suitable to the soil and climate of a special locality, or it might take the line of dealing with other crops such as fodder-plants and cereals in the same way. Then, again, in certain parts of the district this specialisation might be in the way of growing varieties of fruit-trees, or even grape-vines, as a test of suitability. On these lines, the school garden might in a small way be made of much wider educational value than at present, and might become a valuable means to an end that would result in material advantage to the district; all might be done in addition to what has already been undertaken. Samples of grass-seed I might be able to supply, and probably some cuttings of vines on requisition. Fruit-trees, of course, would have to be purchased. Already some sixty apple-stocks have been distributed to fifteen schools, and should be available for grafting next spring. The equipment of schools in which elementary agriculture is taken up with some apparatus, such as is necessary for performing simple experiments in natural science bearing on agriculture and every-day life, would prove of much advantage to both pupils and teacher. Classes for farmers were inaugurated in Wakefield, Richmond, Nelson, and Takaka. In Takaka these classes were a decided success, but were not well taken up in the other centres. Probably the break in the course, due to my absence at intervals in other districts, prevented the interest from being sustained; and I am of opinion that a continuous course of, say, six or eight lectures in one centre at one time, might be more effective than the longer course. Further, it would seem to me that the farmers were not so desirous of giving themselves up to a course of lessons as of attending on occasions to get hints and special knowledge suited to their own requirements and surroundings. This is in accordance with the experience of other countries and other parts of the Dominion, and was strikingly instanced when I attended at certain places and lectured on special branches, when as many as thirty were in attendance on one night. These lectures were given at Stoke, Waimea West, Dovedale, and Upper Moutere. The subjects were dealt with entirely from a practical standpoint, and so were of general interest. With regard to future classes, I am of opinion that new centres should be taken each year, as a second year's course does not seem to meet with the same amount of support in the way of attendance. A Saturday class for teachers in nature-study and elementary botany, with outdoor excursions, was again conducted in Nelson, and was on the whole satisfactorily attended. The laboratory in connection with the Nelson Technical School is now practically finished, and should be of use for botanical and physical as well as chemical experiments, while it will for the first time provide students in the district with a suitable means of doing individual practical work. From a good general knowledge of other similar rooms in the Dominion, I can safely say that, so far as up-to-date working conditions are concerned, it should be second to none. I should like to further suggest that the proposed laboratory at Motueka should be so fitted as to be available for botanical as well as chemical work, bearing on the horticultural industry of the district. In regard to the building at Takaka, it should also be fitted up with a similar aim in view. In conclusion, I wish to express my thanks to the officers of the Board for valuable assistance and advice, and to Mr. Hale, nurseryman, Nelson, who generously provided the teachers' botany class with plant-specimens and the use of his nursery for outdoor lessons.

JAMES BRUCE.

Statement of Receipts and Expenditure for the Year ending 31st December, 1908, in respect of Special Classes conducted in the Nelson District by the Nelson Education Board.

Receipts.			Expenditure.		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
Capitation on special classes	232	17 1	Balance at beginning of year	652	6 0
Capitation on account of free places ..	53	14 0	Salaries of instructors	646	14 6
Buildings	610	7 0	Office expenses (including salaries, station- ery, &c.)	81	15 10
Furniture, fittings, apparatus	418	9 3	Advertising and printing	31	1 10
Material	11	17 4	Lighting and heating	56	11 11
Fees	223	16 2	Insurance and repairs	10	9 9
Voluntary contributions	74	2 0	Rent	6	2 0
Sale of material	4	19 4	Examinations, &c.	1	10 0
Examination fees	1	10 0	Material for class use	75	1 5
Exhibition receipts	5	3 0	Expenses, exhibition	36	13 0
Contributions to agricultural instruction from Marlborough, Grey, and Westland Boards	199	15 0	Travelling-expenses, director	36	12 2
Balance at end of year	1,796	19 3	Contracts (new buildings, additions, &c.) ..	1,400	1 3
			Furniture, fittings, and apparatus	598	9 9
	£3,633	9 5		£3,633	9 5

N. R. WILLIAMS, Secretary.