

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE EDUCATION BOARD.

The year 1908 was marked by the erection of substantial additions to the Timaru Technical School at a cost of about £3,500. It is hoped that the new structure will afford proper accommodation for the various trade, art, commercial, and domestic-instruction classes. The building has been arranged to provide also for new Board offices.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS.

In nature-study and elementary science a great deal of splendid work is done, and the enthusiasm of many of the teachers for this work is deserving of the highest praise. In fourteen schools elementary agriculture has been taken as one of the subjects for which grants are earned under the Manual and Technical Instruction Acts. School gardens for experimental work are increasing in number, and the competition for the Hurdley Shield was keener than ever. The shield is held for the year by the school that gains most points for its exhibit at the Timaru Horticultural Society's Show, the judges taking into account the value of the exhibit from an educational standpoint. The competing gardens are visited by a professional gardener, whose report on the state of the gardens at the time of his visit is taken into account in awarding the prize. At the Saturday classes for teachers this year, Dr. Hilgendorf, of the Lincoln Agricultural College, gave a course of twelve lessons on elementary agriculture suitable for the instruction of children attending the primary schools. The attendance was excellent, and the keenest interest was taken in Dr. Hilgendorf's masterly handling of his subject. The course of lessons has been published in a pamphlet, and Dr. Hilgendorf's reputation as a teacher is a guarantee of its value. In the larger schools the forms of handwork taken in the infant classes and Standards I and II are modelling in plasticine, stick-laying, brick-laying, and paper-folding. In Standards III and IV modelling in plasticine is continued, with modelling in carton or in cardboard, and designing with coloured paper. In fifteen schools the boys of Standards V and VI are making very good progress in isometric drawing and woodwork under their instructor, Mr. Chaplin; while the girls at the same stage enjoy the privilege of a splendid training in cookery from Miss Wilson and Miss Rennie, both teachers of exceptional merit. In many of the smaller schools various forms of handwork find a place in the programmes of work for the lower classes. The girls of all schools are instructed in needlework, the estimate of the work done generally ranging from "good" to "excellent."

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

Various branches of handwork were taken up in all the large schools in the district, and also where practicable in some of the smaller ones. In all the large schools where woodwork and cookery were taken a definite course of instruction has been adopted from the infant department right up to Standard VI. This course included paper-folding, stick-laying, or brick-laying in the infant classes, modelling or paper-folding in Standard I, modelling or brush drawing in Standard II, carton-work in Standard III, cardboard modelling in Standard IV, woodwork and cookery in Standards V and VI. In some of the smaller schools with only one teacher, handwork was taken up in the lower standards, but had to be discontinued in the upper standards. Possibly with the increased staffing now allowed by the new regulations, these schools will be enabled to continue handwork in the upper standards. Besides those mentioned above, the following subjects were also taught: Elementary agriculture, advanced plain needlework, swimming and life-saving, chemistry, botany, electricity, and elementary design. Last year fifteen sole-charge schools having no female teacher availed themselves of the financial assistance given under the Regulations for Manual and Technical Instruction, and appointed sewing-mistresses.

In this country, where water plays such an important part, it is absolutely essential that every boy and girl should not only be able to swim, but should know some of the principles of giving assistance in cases of drowning. In this district I am glad to state that much has been done in this direction during the past year. Regular instruction was given to boys and girls in the art of swimming and life-saving at Timaru, Waimate, Temuka, Geraldine, and Winchester, the principal difficulty with regard to the smaller schools being that there are no suitable bathing-pools in close proximity to the schools. The annual swimming competition conducted by the Board took place in February. Besides the competition amongst the schools for the Challenge Shield, the Board donated prizes to individual swimmers, and the South Canterbury Swimming Centre gave two silver medals for the championship of South Canterbury. The sports showed a marked improvement on previous years, both in the quality of the swimming and the number of competitors. Timaru Main again succeeded in winning the Championship Shield.

Elementary agriculture as a school subject was taken up at fourteen different schools in this district during the year, and the experimental work done at some of the schools was of a high order. It is not necessary here to enlarge on the benefits likely to accrue to an agricultural district like South Canterbury from the teaching of elementary agriculture in our public schools, and there is no reason why nearly every school in the district should not have its school garden. The Department makes a liberal grant for the initial cost of providing tools, and also gives a capitation grant of so much per head on the number of lessons given, besides subsidising any moneys raised by Committees for the purpose of improving the school gardens. In this way the sum of £64 was raised in this district last year. The handsome Challenge Shield donated by Mr. Hurdley for the best school garden was won last year by the Hilton School. Cookery classes were conducted at five different centres during the year—viz., Timaru, Waimate, Temuka, Pleasant Point, and Fairlie. The work at Pleasant Point and Fairlie was carried on under great difficulties, as no suitable rooms could be found at those places. At Pleasant Point a new cookery room has been erected, and it is hoped that for the future both instructor