

## SOUTHLAND.

## EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

The majority of the schools which took up the subject of elementary physical measurements did really good work. The temptation of former years to attempt too much work, and that of too difficult a kind, was resisted successfully, to the undoubted benefit of the classes. The classes in elementary agriculture now number thirty-three, and there is a hope of further increase. Steps have been taken to add to the efficiency of these classes by a circular of instructions addressed to teachers, and by furnishing them with the supplies which last year's experience showed to be necessary. A large extension of the woodwork classes to other centres besides Invercargill is under consideration. We shall be glad to hear that it has been deemed practicable to carry out this extension, so thoroughly convinced are we of the value of this branch of school-work.

## EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

*School Classes.*—Relatively to the school population the number of hand and eye classes conducted in the schools in Southland is large, and the work done is becoming increasingly satisfactory as teachers more fully realise the purpose and place of manual work in our schools. Plasticine modelling, paper-folding, cardboard modelling, and brush drawing are the subjects most extensively practised in the lower standards, and the work is being fairly well co-ordinated with the other subjects in the curriculum. In the upper standards, elementary physical measurements, elementary agriculture, advanced needlework, cookery, and woodwork are all taught—physical measurements in twenty-four schools, agriculture in thirty-three schools, needlework in twenty schools, and cookery and woodwork in the town and suburban schools, and at Gore, East Gore, and Bluff. In four schools lessons in swimming and life-saving were given; physiology and first-aid classes were conducted in three schools; and botany and physics were taught in one school each. In all, out of the 168 schools in operation throughout the district only eight are not to a greater or lesser extent, according to the circumstances, carrying on some form of manual and technical work. In view of the fact, however, that the Standard VI proficiency examination is reckoned the crucial test of the teacher's work, and that in that examination little credit is given for proficiency in manual subjects, teachers can hardly be expected to introduce into their daily duties any further innovations which curtail the time at their disposal for literary instruction. What is now required is the solidifying and rendering more efficient the work already undertaken. Certain subjects already taught in our larger schools, a knowledge of which is of immense importance and value to the young people, may with advantage be extended to more of our country schools. Chief of these subjects are woodwork, cookery, and agriculture. In woodwork and cookery the Board is fortunate in having instructors equal to the best in the Dominion, but, owing to the fact that efficient instruction cannot be given except in properly equipped centres, only the schools of Invercargill and suburbs, Gore, East Gore, and Bluff have hitherto been able to take advantage of the benefits to be derived from attendance at these classes. For the current year, however, the Board has elaborated a scheme whereby pupils in Standards IV, V, and VI in all schools adjacent to the railway-lines throughout Southland will be able to attend for instruction at properly equipped centres; a group of some fifty-four schools in this district will benefit by this extension. The carrying of a scheme to a successful issue will mean some measure of self-denial on the part of teachers, parents, and pupils, but the counterbalancing gains so far outweigh the disadvantages that it is anticipated the heartiest support will be accorded the movement.

The question of the extension of elementary agriculture classes in the larger schools in the district has received careful attention during the year. In 1907 the subject was taught in thirteen schools; in 1908 the number increased to thirty-three. At each of these schools there are to be found small parcels of land laid off into experimental plots, where work of greater or less value is being done under the guidance of enthusiastic teachers. In order that the practical work might be systematic and thorough, a special circular was prepared in the early spring and issued to teachers, while the necessary seeds and manures were generously donated by Messrs. Sutton and Sons (Limited), per Tothill Limited, and the Southland Frozen Meat and Produce Export Company, respectively, to which firms the hearty thanks of the Board were tendered. It is intended to equip each school with a small tool-shed in which to house the tools supplied by the Education Department, and it is hoped that this may be accomplished during the coming year. In carrying on this work, teachers have been encouraged not to exalt unduly the horticultural and kitchen-garden point of view, but rather to train the observation and personal powers of the children as a part of general education, so that their schooling may correspond with their environment, and so that ultimately they may be the better fitted to engage in rural pursuits with profit and be less influenced by the glamour of the town. In order that teachers may be as fully equipped as possible, the necessary apparatus for indoor experiments during the winter months will be supplied. It is further proposed to establish for the benefit of teachers a series of Saturday classes under the instruction of some thoroughly competent expert in agricultural science.

*Training of Teachers.*—Early in the year teachers' Saturday training classes were established as under: For uncertificated teachers—English, geography, mathematics, school method and blackboard drawing. For certificated teachers—Elementary physical measurements, elocution, music, physiology and home nursing, and physical drill. With the exception of blackboard drawing, the classes for the uncertificated teachers not being "school classes" as defined in the manual and technical instruction clauses of the Education Act, the Board generously provided out of the ordinary funds financial assistance towards the payment of the instructors. These classes were established expressly with a view to assisting the younger members of the profession who were preparing for the