

Department's examinations, and were conducted by the most competent of our experienced teachers, who in the interests of their co-teachers cheerfully sacrificed a considerable portion of their leisure time, and throughout the whole course maintained a whole-hearted interest in the work intrusted to them. The classes were well attended, and the majority of the students evinced a praiseworthy appreciation of the facilities for self-improvement placed within their reach. As a finale to the work of the term, Mr. J. Crosby Smith, F.L.S., delivered a most interesting lecture, illustrated by a large number of lantern views, on "The Plant-life of New Zealand."

Evening Classes.—Invercargill: The evening classes in Invercargill were conducted on much the same lines as in previous years. At the end of the session the returns showed that there had been a decrease in the average attendance as compared with 1907 of nearly 50 per cent. Why this was so it was impossible to say. The attendance at the classes in 1907 was the highest on record—this year again the numbers may resume normal proportions. The principal falling-away was in the number of free students; the number of paying students remaining much the same as in former years. At Gore, Bluff, and Maitāwhiri successful classes were conducted. At these centres, too, the numbers in attendance showed a slight decrease as compared with the previous year; but, as this was the second year of the existence of these classes, the decrease was not to be wondered at. Through the kindness of the Board, Inspector Hendry and I were granted permission to visit the technical schools in the North Island, and on our return we reported specially on what we had learned regarding technical and continuation classes at other centres, and detailed our own requirements. A copy of this report is herewith attached. At the beginning of the usual winter session a circular was forwarded to all teachers in the district inviting them, if they could conveniently do so, to organize and conduct evening technical or continuation classes in their schools. In response, classes were established as under: Greenhills, freehand and model drawing; Nightcaps, elementary physical measurements for mining students and arithmetic; and Makarewa, Standards V and VI work. It is a difficult, indeed an almost impossible task, to establish successful evening classes in districts remote from fairly large centres of population.

Exhibition of Work.—At the end of the session an exhibition of the work performed by the students attending the Invercargill classes in art, building-construction, architectural drawing, mechanical drawing, wood-carving, carpentry and joinery, cookery, and millinery was held in the Technical School, and attracted a large number of visitors. In conjunction therewith there was exhibited a collection of work performed by school classes throughout the district in freehand drawing, cardboard modelling, paper-folding, woodwork, &c. There was also exhibited a splendid collection of brush drawings from the schools in the Auckland District, kindly procured by Inspector Isaac, of the Education Department, and also a number of works from American schools. This exhibition proved exceedingly interesting and instructive, and a great stimulus to our teachers.

Examinations.—Several students were successful at the annual examinations in art subjects under the Board of Education, South Kensington, and in technological subjects under the City and Guilds of London Institute.

I have again to acknowledge the fairness with which the Central Department at Wellington met all claims for capitation and grants made during the past year. I have also to acknowledge with gratitude the kindly consideration shown by teachers and by all others concerned while I have been engaged in carrying out the duties of my office.

W. A. McCaw, Director.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF INSPECTOR AND DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION ON THEIR VISIT TO THE TECHNICAL CLASSES IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICTS.

The Inspectors and the Director of Technical Instruction, who are responsible to the Board for the organization and administration of technical instruction in this district, have from time to time discussed the feasibility of certain proposals for enlarging our field of operations under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act, but have found themselves, from financial considerations, unable to give effect to some of the more important of these proposals. Hitherto the various classes established in this district have been carried on without monetary assistance from the Board, the income accruing from fees and capitation being sufficient for the classes now in existence, though totally inadequate for any substantial extension.

In order to learn specially how the financial difficulty is dealt with by other Boards and controlling authorities whose operations under the Act cover a wider field than in Southland, and to investigate generally how the Act is administered elsewhere, we were granted leave of absence by the Board to visit such other educational districts as we considered advisable for the purpose in view.

During our absence from Invercargill we visited technical schools in the following places: Palmerston North, Feilding, Marton, Wanganui, New Plymouth, Auckland, Napier, Hastings, Masterton, Wellington, Christchurch, Timaru, Waimate, and Dunedin. We were present at a teachers' class in elementary agriculture then sitting at Greytown, and we further took the opportunity of visiting a considerable number of schools that have taken up this subject, and in connection therewith have established school gardens. We interviewed the Inspectors of Schools in the various districts visited, the Directors of the Technical Schools, members of Education Boards and Technical Committees, instructors in agriculture, dairying, &c., certain officers (including Mr. T. W. Kirk) of the Agricultural Department—in short, we laid under contribution all who could in any way assist us by furnishing such