

It would, of course, be absurd to claim that anything like exhaustive treatment of all or any of these points was attained in thirteen lessons at each place, but I was able to condense a fairly complete course of elementary training, especially in important first principles, into the very limited time at my disposal. The classes included teachers of all grades, and I was more than gratified at the keen interest they took in the work. Especially was this the case at Masterton, where the lessons often covered the best part of two hours, and were then only terminated by the exigencies of the train service. During my visits to some half-dozen Wellington schools I have seen that there is much intelligent work being done, but also that there are frequent and sometimes marked inequalities even in the same school. Some teachers have not qualified themselves for the work, or they do not regard the lessons as of any serious importance; but it cannot be too strongly urged that, apart from all musical considerations, actual physical harm is being done when such lessons are given on wrong or imperfect methods of breathing and voice-training. These are precisely two points on which the whole permanent usefulness and benefit of the singing lessons depend, and it is in these that the advice and supervision of an expert is especially and constantly required. The actual work of teaching singing must always of necessity be chiefly in the hands of the teachers themselves, and for their help and guidance much has been already done by your Board in this education district; but, in my opinion, there should be in Wellington, and in every large centre in the Dominion, a qualified expert who should regularly visit, instruct, and advise such teachers in this special and not unimportant work."

MANUAL AND TECHNICAL.—During the year 121 schools earned capitation under the Manual and Technical Regulations. In addition to the usual school subjects for classes below Standard V, grants were earned for agriculture, dairying, physical measurements, chemistry, botany, physiology and "first aid," woodwork, cookery, dressmaking, swimming, and life-saving. In woodwork fourteen classes were held at the South Wellington and Thorndon centres, under the instruction of Mr. Howe. The average attendance for each class was twenty-eight, and the boys took a keen interest in their work. As it will be necessary to extend the operation of these classes, the services of an assistant will be required. The usual school classes in cookery were carried on by Mrs. Wakelin in Wellington, and by Miss Talbot in the Wairarapa, and classes were established at Levin and Otaki. Provision will have to be made for instruction in cookery and woodwork at the Hutt and Petone during the coming year. In none of the grant-earning classes visited by the Technical Inspector was the quality of the instruction marked as less than "good," and some were reported as "very good" and "excellent." Saturday classes for teachers in singing, physical instruction, woodwork, cookery, drawing, and handwork were held at Wellington, and for singing, physical instruction, and cookery at Masterton, and at the request of country teachers Mr. Garlick gave some lessons in breathing exercises at Pahiatua.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.—As most of the pupil-teachers in the service had previously passed either the Matriculation or the Civil Service Junior Examination, only five were required to present themselves for the first examination this year. Of these, three passed and two failed. One of the latter also failed last year, and by the regulations her engagement is terminated absolutely.

SCHOLARSHIPS.—For the senior scholarships—open to all candidates under the age of sixteen—sixty candidates entered, forty of whom succeeded in obtaining sufficient marks to qualify for a senior free place. For the junior scholarships—open to all under the age of fourteen—106 candidates succeeded in obtaining more than 50 per cent. of the maximum number of marks, but, of these, ninety-six came from schools in Class A (over 200 in average attendance), eight from schools with an average attendance of between 41 and 200, and only two from schools with sole teachers.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—In the seven district high schools in the country the roll-number in December was fifty-two less than that of the previous year, and the average for 1908 was 278 as against 313 for 1907, a decrease of thirty-five. This is coincident with the decrease in S6 noted elsewhere, and may be due to the same cause, but the establishment of night classes at some of the technical schools may also be a contributing cause. We have noted several cases of boys who, after obtaining their certificates of proficiency in country schools, have undertaken work in town for the double purpose of earning a livelihood and attending night classes at the Technical School. From 1904 onwards we have dwelt at some length on the course of study to be pursued in the secondary classes of our district high schools, and we do not propose repeating our remarks here. During the year the Department published regulations prescribing courses of instruction for scholars holding free places. The subjects to be chosen are placed in five groups, and in determining programmes of work certain limitations are placed on the headmaster. These limitations do not restrict his choice unduly, for, with the exception that English and arithmetic and one subject to be chosen from a science group are compulsory, he has a free choice as far as subjects are concerned. It will not be difficult to draw up suitable schemes of work in accordance with these regulations, for our secondary teachers are gradually adopting courses of study more suited than formerly to the nature of the child and to the requirements of the community. As judged by the number of successful candidates in the Civil Service and Matriculation Examinations, our secondary teachers are doing satisfactory work, more particularly when it is remembered that the scholarship candidates are all sent to the secondary schools, but the preparation required for such an examination as the matriculation lays undue restrictions on the choice of subjects, and so long as this examination is looked upon as a public test of the work of the schools, teachers cannot avail themselves even of that freedom which the recent rearrangement of subjects for the Civil Service Examination allows. For those who wish to enter the teaching, medical, or legal profession classes must be formed to prepare for this examination; but, as the majority of the scholars do not require to go through such a course, it then becomes necessary to draw up alternative schemes of work, if the district high schools are to fulfil their proper function in our educational system. In a secondary school with a competent staff it may not be difficult to draw up