

classical and modern courses, but in secondary classes which are merely adjuncts to a primary school, with two, or possibly only one teacher, the problem becomes much more difficult of solution. Moreover, the limitation in the choice of teachers for certain subjects raises another difficulty, for where the teaching of all the subjects of both the classical and modern sides is confined to one or two teachers, the same results cannot be expected as in a secondary school, where subjects may be allotted to teachers of special abilities. For examination purposes our district high schools cannot be expected to be on the same level as the secondary schools, but this does not mean that they may not be doing good work, for they meet a want in the community which the secondary schools cannot at present fill, and are a decided boon to the child whose school life will extend only one or two years beyond S6, and whose parents cannot afford to send him away from home.

The provision recently made by the Department for admission to senior free places up to the age of nineteen, without a special examination test, now leaves no excuse to the country teacher to exclude from his yearly scheme subjects which have some bearing on the child's future life, and at the same time are able to give him a sound training, educational and moral—a training, too, from which he will derive a more lasting benefit than from the mere smattering of grammar-school subjects which his limited school life will enable him to obtain. Thus, for boys, a course in science, more especially elementary agriculture and kindred subjects, and for girls, a training in the principal branches of domestic science, should figure largely in the optional part of the programmes of our country schools, and suitable provision should be made for the experimental and practical part of the work.

As in the primary school, the most important subject on the programme of the district high school is English, and in our conferences with the teachers special attention has been directed to the methods of teaching and to the time allotted to it. It is generally recognised that in all English-speaking communities the teaching of the mother-tongue is weak, and that Continental nations are in advance of us in this respect, and it has been urged, with some justification, against our educational system, that boys and girls leave our public schools without that love of literature which will induce them to carry on their education after they begin their work in life. The removal of this reproach lies with the secondary classes of our district high schools. More time should be allotted to English than to any other subject, and in the teaching of it two points must be kept constantly in view—namely, the study of literature and the training in the expression of thought. During the year there was a decided improvement in this subject, more especially in the treatment of the authors read. Writings of Shakespeare, Tennyson, Scott, George Eliot, Ruskin, Macaulay, Lamb, Coleridge, and others were read with some appreciation of their literary value, and the old philological treatment was kept entirely in the background. More concrete work might be done in the treatment of mathematics, more especially geometry, but the latter subject has undergone so much change during recent years that teachers cannot be expected to adopt the new methods all at once. Owing to the teaching experience which lies behind each being very limited, much of the educational value of some subjects on the modern side is at first lost, and progress must be slow, but the experimental work in the laboratory and the practical work in the garden both show a distinct advance on that of previous years. We have drawn attention to the fact that in subjects such as these, where notebooks are kept, these books should be fit for inspection if recommendations are to be made for the granting of senior free places without a special examination for the purpose. We had to call attention to the want of neatness in the written work of some of the classes, and we are pleased to note that our remarks have had some effect.

Year after year it has been pointed out that the present syllabus cannot receive justice under the existing scale of staffing, that the smaller country schools need a greater measure of justice in the matter of fixed salaries, and that the pupil-teachers should be replaced by trained teachers. A most promising attempt to remove these defects has been made in "The Education Amendment Act, 1908," the passing of which may be regarded as the most important educational event of the year for both children and teachers. Its importance to the children lies in the fact that by the reduction in the average number of pupils to each trained teacher the schools should be enabled to reach a higher standard of efficiency. Apart from the actual monetary benefit given by increases in salary, teachers will derive great encouragement in the recognition given to the important work they are doing in the community, and direct tangible evidence that it is receiving recognition by the State will go far to lighten the labours of such a conscientious body of workers as the men and women engaged in the arduous work of educating the children in our public schools.

We have, &c.,

T. R. FLEMING,	} Inspectors.
F. H. BAKEWELL,	
J. S. TENNANT,	

The Chairman, Education Board, Wellington.

HAWKE'S BAY.

SIR,—

Education Office, Napier.

At the end of December last 107 schools were in operation in the Hawke's Bay Education District. These were made up of small household schools having an attendance varying from two to ten pupils, and Board schools that vary from twelve to 912 pupils in attendance. Household schools have no buildings provided, and some even no apparatus or appliances, but in the case of ordinary schools, sites, buildings, furniture, and needful school material are supplied, and wherever possible a certificated teacher is appointed to take charge.