

his notes of lessons details of the methods adopted. The school garden, with its experimental plot, should prove of great value in affording a handy field of investigation in nature-study.

In needlework greater attention than formerly is now paid to the requirements of the syllabus. In 100 schools, twenty-seven of which received high commendation, this useful training is given to all the girls, and in a few cases the boys also undertake some branches of what is usually regarded as a purely feminine occupation and take no small delight in the neatness of their productions. In fourteen schools controlled by male sole teachers the work is carried on under the Manual and Technical Regulations by paid visiting teachers.

From Mr. Hintz, who was during the year appointed Director of the Nelson Technical School, with a general supervision over all manual and technical matters throughout the district, and who has entered upon his duties with considerable enthusiasm, we obtain the following summary of the classes undertaken: Elementary handwork was taken in 36 schools. Classes in the following subjects were recognised in 39 schools: Woodwork, cookery, dressmaking, agriculture, physiology and first aid, swimming and life-saving, physical measurements.

As we have been anticipating such an extension of the system as would place the benefits to be derived from a training in these useful branches of manual work within reach of all our larger schools, we regret to find that the numbers attending are fewer than previously. The failure to form a cookery class at Westport District High School this year, in anticipation of the early completion of the Technical School, accounts for a large part of the difference.

It is at the district high schools that manual and technical subjects, through their special suitability to pupils who have finished their primary course, need most development.

Further encouragement towards the formation of classes is given by a recent regulation removing the restriction upon the amount of capitation it is possible to earn by scholars in the secondary department. We notice in last year's report that the Wanganui District could boast of seven district high schools, of which five each possessed a laboratory, woodwork, and cooking room, and the two others were each shortly to be equipped with a laboratory and a cookery room. Our four district high schools have as yet had the advantage of a woodwork and a cookery room at only one of them, Reefton. The chemical laboratory recently erected at the Nelson Technical School is now practically equipped and ready for use.

The study of elementary agriculture, a course especially suited to a large part of the district, is, under the instructor's direction, extending, thirty school gardens having now been established.

The instructor considers that experimental plots might be further developed, and suggests that each class should specialise in regard to the growth of such cereals, grasses, or fruit-trees as would best suit the requirements of the district. In addition to the work of the vegetable garden and of the experimental plot, the girls, especially by the cultivation of flowers and shrubs, have frequently done much towards beautifying the surroundings of the school, an effort worth every encouragement, for who can tell how far-reaching in its effect upon the plastic minds of the young may be the little touch of beauty that will enable them in after-life to cherish the memory of their old school as the seat of refinement as well as of enlightenment!

The instructor has made a new departure this year in instituting a course of itinerant lectures to farmers, which have been given in the Waimeas, Moutere, Dovedale, and Takaka, and have been highly appreciated. If their only success is to get farmers interested in agricultural education, much will be gained, as local interest may be a powerful stimulus to progress in any educational movement.

Another suggestion already made to the Board by the instructor of agriculture has our most cordial approval. He proposes that the small laboratory shortly to be established in connection with Motueka High School be equipped with a view to specialising in horticulture, so that, for example, the microscopic investigation of insect and fungoid diseases might be undertaken. To one of the chief fruit-growing centres of the Dominion such a study would be particularly applicable.

Classes for the instruction of teachers were held at Nelson and Westport, the subjects taken up being model, geometrical, blackboard, and brush drawing, elementary physiology, dress-making, woodwork, botany, and agriculture. A summer school for the training of teachers was held at Westport during December, our schools in the Buller Valley and along the West Coast being closed for the midsummer holidays a week earlier than usual to enable the teachers to attend.

This, our first experiment in this direction, was much appreciated, especially as no technical school has as yet been erected in the neighbourhood, and opportunities for self-improvement are few. We are particularly indebted to Mr. Clark, of Wanganui, for able assistance in handwork subjects. We hope that his efforts and the work of the school will give a much-needed fillip to the teaching of manual subjects in the schools concerned.

Two Acts passed during the last session of Parliament directly affect members of the teaching profession and should prove of immense benefit to the service and to the cause of education. "The Public Service Classification and Superannuation Amendment Act, 1908," provides for teachers more liberal retiring-allowances, two-thirds of the salary being the maximum, but, as a rule, only obtainable after forty years' service or at sixty-five years of age in the case of male teachers; thirty years' service, or at fifty-five in the case of female teachers. A minimum retiring-allowance is no longer specified, and the allowances to widows are reduced so that the present contributor has the option of remaining under the old Act if before the 10th April, 1909, he elect so to do.

"The Education Act Amendment Act, 1908," introduces several innovations. The grades of schools are altered, Grade 0 being confined to schools of less than nine in average attendance. Salaries, especially in lower-grade schools, are increased, minimum and maximum salaries arranged for, and a small yearly increment provided for one who remains in the same position