

gether with mending and darning. Exercises on small pieces of material should be used only for learning different kinds of stitches. In all classes the periodical construction and completion of some useful garment by each scholar should be aimed at, and the older girls may be taught the use and care of the sewing-machine with advantage. At the same time, the educational value of needlework as a form of hand and eye training must be kept in view as well as its practical value. Special care should be taken to avoid all conditions unfavourable to eyesight."

SINGING.—The Board was again fortunate in securing Mr. Robert Parker's services, and during the year special classes for teachers were held at Wellington and Masterton. These classes were well attended, and our district is already reaping the benefit in the more thorough voice-training and more melodious singing. *Inter alia*, Mr. Parker says, "My visits to the various schools have convinced me of the need for more systematic work to be prescribed and followed wherever practicable if the subject is to be of permanent and real benefit: even with the brief half-hour lesson so much more might be done by better arrangement of the time at the teacher's disposal. Take, for example, the subject of voice-training—the coarse harsh tone in many schools is entirely due to the want of a few proper voice-exercises at the beginning of each lesson. . . . If it meets with the approval of the Board, I shall be glad to draw up for circulation among the teachers a few practical suggestions for the weekly singing-lesson, which would be useful to teachers, and which would insure some uniformity of method in the teaching of a subject which, however little it may be valued by the practical man, is becoming more and more recognized by all authorities on education as one of great physical and moral importance." We have much pleasure in recommending the Board to accept Mr. Parker's offer.

ELEMENTARY AGRICULTURE.—In practically all our country schools the nature-study in the lower classes is arranged to lead up to school gardening in the higher. As teachers begin to appreciate the aim and value of this work there is a steady improvement, and in an increasing number of our schools excellent work is being done. Mr. Davies reports that fifty-five schools are now earning capitation for elementary agriculture, that 180 visits were paid during the year—these visits not being confined to schools earning capitation; and that the instruction of teachers was provided for by three courses of lessons at Greytown. "At all these sessions," Mr. Davies reports, "special attention was paid to the elementary botany of grasses and weeds, which were studied not only in the laboratory but also on field excursions. The advanced work was devoted mainly to the composition, properties, and improvement of soils and the sources and composition of fertilisers. I have to acknowledge the assistance rendered by Mr. Nottage, of the Agricultural Department's staff, and Miss Haggett, of the Marima School. I have pleasure in reporting a steady advance in the condition of school gardens, and in the educational value of the operations carried out and higher appreciation on the part of the teachers of the true aims of agricultural nature-study. The weakest feature undoubtedly is the care of the agricultural note-books, which in but few instances give evidence of systematic attention. In some cases the moral influence of well-kept tools has been lost sight of. I have to thankfully acknowledge the hearty and steadily increasing spirit of co-operation in our work on the part of the Board's teachers."

MANUAL AND TECHNICAL.—Handwork is carried on in all schools in which it is a compulsory subject, and also in a number of schools in which it is not compulsory. Grants were earned for elementary agriculture, dairying, physical measurements, chemistry, botany, physiology, and first aid, woodwork, cookery, dressmaking, swimming, and life-saving, and also for the usual school subjects for classes below Standard V. School classes in cookery were held by Miss McIntosh, assisted by Miss Alexander, in Wellington, Levin, Otaki, and Petone; and by Miss Talbot in the Wairarapa. In woodwork twenty-six classes, with an average of twenty-four pupils at each class, were held by Mr. Howe, assisted by Mr. Strack. During the year an application was made to the Department for a grant to establish at Mount Cook centres in cookery and woodwork, which are urgently required to carry on the work of the city efficiently.

Every year sees an improvement in the handwork of our schools, mainly because its co-ordination with the other subjects of the syllabus is now being more generally recognized. Very good work has been done in the woodwork classes, and better work would be done if cardboard modelling were more generally adopted in Standard IV. This is a subject which introduces the concrete element so often wanting in such subjects as drawing, measurements, and mensuration; and there is no reason why geometrical models for model-drawing and for exercises in mensuration should not be made by the children themselves. A number of these classes were visited by the Department's Inspector during the year, and his reports on the quality of the instruction ranged from "good" to "very good," and on the practical work only one class received the lower mark of "fair," all the others being "good." The equipment in all classes is reported as "good."

Saturday classes for teachers in singing, cookery, woodwork, freehand model and blackboard drawing were held at Wellington, and in singing and cookery at Masterton. In the cookery and woodwork classes some of the teachers made good use of their time, but there were some who did not appear to take enough interest in the work to receive much benefit from the instruction. On the work of the pupil-teachers who attended the Technical School for drawing Mr. La Trobe reports, "Good progress was made in this class, the work reaching a higher level than in previous years." The thanks of the Board are due to the Managers of the Masterton Technical School for establishing a class for teachers in drawing. As it was held on Saturday afternoons, an awkward time for country teachers, it was consequently not as well attended as a morning class would have been. In view of the various opinions which are held with regard to manual training, it is interesting to note that the headmaster of Eton, perhaps the most noted classical school in England, would include in his ideal curriculum for the preparation of boys for his own school "such subjects as drawing, handicraft, music, and gardening, with the proviso that if the last is difficult or impossible to teach very great good can be done with the other three." He would omit science in the sense of chemistry, physics, biology, &c., from the early training, but mathematical measurements and handicraft, combined with drawing, are part of his curriculum,