

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT (MR. WATKIN).

Throughout the year classes were run in the following subjects: Plumbing, woodwork, commercial English and arithmetic, shorthand and typewriting, book-keeping and office routine, dressmaking and millinery, cookery, drawing and painting, wood-carving and metal-work, trade drawing, trade mathematics, and photography. Teachers' Saturday classes in art subjects and in singing were also held. The attendance was well maintained throughout the session, and good progress was made in every direction. There has been a decided increase in the number of free-place pupils, proving that the public is beginning to appreciate the advantages offered by the new system of technical instruction. Special mention may be made of the highly satisfactory work of the plumbing classes under Mr. Bert Woods, and of the excellent results of the examinations—not a single failure being recorded. Technical classes in Apiti, Pohangina, Ashhurst, and other attached centres have been conducted with marked success during the year, showing that an increased interest is being manifested in technical education throughout the district. Especial notice must be taken of the remarkable success of the wool-classing classes that have been held during the year at a large number of centres. The attendance at these classes has been most excellent, and, best of all, the farming community has been awakened to a sense of the importance of the subject—so much so, indeed, that there have been numerous requests made to the Education Board for the establishment of classes in new districts. As a direct outcome of the notable success of the wool-classing, the question has been raised as how best the work of the technical schools can be extended to directly benefit the farmers, and steps are at present being taken by the Feilding Technical School Committee to convene a meeting of representative farmers and others interested to go thoroughly into the matter. It is claimed that the ultimate results of this conference will be of the utmost importance.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF ITINERANT INSTRUCTORS.

*Agriculture and Dairy-work.**Central and Southern Districts (Mr. Grant).*

At the end of the year 1908 the number of school classes in elementary agriculture was eighty-seven, the number of pupils receiving instruction, 1,988. At the end of this year (1909) the number of classes has increased to 118, the number of pupils receiving instruction to 2,459. On Friday evenings throughout the school year I conducted a class in practical biology in the Wanganui Technical School. On Saturdays I conducted a class for teachers in agricultural botany, the first half of the year in Taihape, the second half in Wanganui. In order to help to carry out the scheme of instruction in agriculture as outlined in Circular 18, I gave lessons in dairy science on one day a week for ten consecutive weeks in the Taihape, Bull's, and Marton District High Schools. The remainder of my time was spent in supervising the work in elementary agriculture done in the primary schools. In a few schools first-rate work is done in elementary agriculture, in the greater number very fair work is done, but in a small number, although a fairly good programme has been presented, the results have not been wholly satisfactory. The work in this latter case has not been attacked with enthusiasm, and the general effect of the course has been to make the pupils dull.

The notebooks are fairly well kept, but in too many instances slovenly work is permitted. The beginning is generally quite satisfactory, but towards the end the books are disfigured by bad writing and bad spelling. The tools are much better kept this year. The amount of loss through breakages is small.

In the course of the next two years I hope all the country schools will be taking the combined course of agriculture and dairy-work. It will then be best to restrict the plants studied to those that are of most value as food for cattle. I hope during the next season to introduce the growing of maize into a number of school gardens.

As in former years the Manawatu and West Coast Agricultural and Pastoral Association, the Feilding Agricultural and Pastoral Association, and the Wanganui Horticultural Society have done their part in the encouraging of the study of practical elementary agriculture by offering substantial prizes for the various phases of school-garden work.

Northern District (Mr. Browne).

During the year all classes in this district were visited. Owing to the pressure of technical work, not so much time as formerly could be given to the work of regular instruction. This was, however, carried out at the various district high schools, where, on the whole, fair work was done. Dairy-work was taken at Hawera, agriculture and dairy-work at Eltham and Patea. I would recommend that in future, dairy-work as a separate subject be not taken in these classes, as the pupils, on the whole, have no interest in that subject. As part of the agricultural course ten or twelve lessons are quite sufficient. In ordinary school classes the work done varies from fair to exceptionally good. On the whole the Board has reason to be well satisfied with the way in which the classes are handled. Nothing could be better than the work done in agriculture at Kakarama and Maxwelltown, and a number of other schools are following close on these. It is pleasing to note that in quite a number of the schools rural science is well correlated with the other work, more especially with arithmetic and with drawing.

On the whole the tools are well looked after, though in a few cases carelessness is noticeable; in one or two schools tools should be replaced, as, owing to breakages and to poor material, the sets are much reduced. At Waverley, Riverlea, and one or two other places the tools are regularly oiled once a quarter. This practice should be encouraged, and I should suggest that each school taking agriculture be supplied with a bottle of linseed-oil. The notebooks are very unequal. While admirable work is met with in some schools, in others notes and records are kept in a haphazard fashion. More uniformity is desirable.