

instructors have been appointed. The development of this plan of instruction will be observed with the keenest interest. While the number of schools earning a grant has slightly decreased, on the other hand the number of pupils shows a substantial increase, especially in handwork, chemistry, physical measurements, woodwork, cookery, and agriculture. The number of instructors in the last three has now increased to three, three, and two respectively. The Board observes with pleasure the report of the Inspectors as to the steadily growing recognition of the high educational value of the school garden, and as to the excellence of the agricultural work accomplished at a number of schools.

#### EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

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."

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 fertilizers. 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."

With a view to bringing about a more intimate relation than, generally speaking, at present obtains between the course of instruction in district high schools and rural pursuits, the Department has promised an additional grant where the programmes are based on approved rural and domestic schemes. We are pleased to note that these suggestions have been adopted by the Board for our country district high schools, and arrangements are now being made to establish the classes necessary for this purpose. There has been a gradual decrease in the number of scholars attending the district high schools in the country, but it is to be hoped that the adoption of a programme more in touch with the requirements of the district will make these classes more popular than they at present seem to be.

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, and he adds, "How far can we safely postpone the beginning of science proper, laboratory work, &c.?" Probably the answer would now be to this effect: "That from fourteen to sixteen there should be an increased amount of rudimentary science work, such as weighing and measuring, and of the all-important work of accurate description."