

OTAGO.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE EDUCATION BOARD.

Shortly after the beginning of the year Mr. D. C. Hutton, who for nearly thirty-nine years filled the important position of Principal of the Dunedin School of Art, found it necessary to retire owing to impaired health. Mr. Hutton was engaged in Britain in 1870 by the Provincial Government of Otago to organize and conduct the Dunedin School of Art, which, it may here be noted, was the first public institution of its kind in the Dominion. Mr. Hutton came to Dunedin with very high credentials as an art master, and the success of the school under his management is signal proof that, considering the necessities of the community so far as art in relation to crafts is concerned, no more suitable appointment could have been made. The school has had an honourable and in some respects a distinguished history. Than Mr. Hutton, the Board has had no one who has served it with more enthusiasm, ability, and conscientiousness. The Board believes that under the new Director, Mr. R. Hawcridge, a man of acknowledged attainment, whose artistic gifts are well known in the Dominion, the school has entered upon a new career of usefulness.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

In all the branches of handwork taken in the schools there is steady improvement. Cookery is much appreciated by the girls, woodwork by the boys, and gardening by both. In the last-named, much very good work is done in the country schools. The gardens are useful and educative in four ways—(1) they provide useful and pleasurable occupation; (2) they provide material for nature-study; (3) they induce in the children love of the beautiful in nature; (4) where comparative work is done, they teach something of the methods of science. We should like to see more made of the last of these.

Hitherto the chief aim of the district high schools has been to prepare their pupils for the Civil Service, Matriculation, and Scholarship Examinations. It is now felt that the chief aim ought to be a thorough training in the principles underlying the crafts and industries of the districts in which the schools are placed. We hope soon to be able to place before the Board a scheme of work that will, without making preparation for the public examinations impracticable, enable the schools to realize this new aim, at any rate so far as agriculture, our leading industry, is concerned.

We return to a question discussed in our last general report—namely, the question of waste in education. The education system of New Zealand provides for three categories of pupils—(1) those who leave school at thirteen to fourteen; (2) those who leave at sixteen to seventeen; (3) those who remain at school to eighteen or nineteen. The third recruit the professional life of the Dominion; the second—a much larger number—recruit the *élite* of the commercial and industrial workers; and the first recruit the workers on a lower plane. The primary school provides for the first, and the secondary or the technical school for the second and third. Is this provision sufficient for purposes of civic and economic equipment? For the second and third, yes, if the schools are adequately staffed and equipped; for the first, no. It is certain that, however excellent its quality, an education that terminates at thirteen or fourteen does not provide this equipment, and it is also certain that much of the money spent on education that terminates at fourteen yields a very inadequate return in the shape of increased national efficiency. At the most critical period of life, at the time when their education is beginning to operate most efficiently and the continuance of mental, moral, and physical discipline is all-important to the life of the future citizen, thousands of boys and girls year by year pass from the discipline of school to a world where, when not at work, they loaf about, learning little that is good and much that is ruinous to character, and soon forget what they learnt at school except the mechanical parts of reading, writing, and arithmetic. How is this to be remedied? How is the Dominion to get an adequate return for the huge sums of money spent in elementary education? There is, we think, but one *certain* remedy—namely, the establishment of continuation classes at which attendance shall be compulsory to the age of seventeen or eighteen. This is what the most efficiently educated nations of Europe have done, what the School Boards of Scotland are now empowered to do, and what we must do if we would occupy a place in the front rank of educated nations. We quote the following from the Scottish Education Act of 1908: "It shall be the duty of a School Board to make suitable provision of continuation classes for the further instruction of young persons above the age of fourteen years with reference to the crafts and industries practised in the district, or to such crafts and industries as the School Board may select, and also for their instruction in English language and literature." And again: "It shall be lawful for a School Board from time to time to make by-laws requiring the attendance at continuation classes up to seventeen years (or such other age not exceeding seventeen years as may be specified by the by-laws) of young persons above the age of fourteen not otherwise receiving suitable instruction." The Act, it will be seen, makes the establishment of continuation classes compulsory, prescribes what shall be the course of instruction, and empowers School Boards to compel attendance. Obviously it would be cruel to compel children and adolescents to attend evening classes after working seven or eight hours at their daily employment. How can we reconcile compulsory attendance with daily employment? By limiting the hours of work for all under seventeen or eighteen, and making it compulsory upon employers to grant facilities for attendance at the classes. The method of compulsion, it will be said, is un-English (or un-British, if that is preferred), but in our opinion trade interest should not be allowed to weigh against the larger interest of adequate preparation of the rising generation for efficient citizenship. To the nation this is a question of vital importance, and what is good for the nation will in the end be good for the employers, with whose active sympathy and that of the trades-unions it would be easy to add enormously to the civic and industrial efficiency of the Dominion. It is obvious that the question of extended school life, like the question of protection, is bound up with our industrial system; and, just as we have made sacrifices to foster variety of employment and make the nation self-contained, so we ought to make sacrifices to lift every class of worker to a higher plane of civic and industrial efficiency.