

SOUTHLAND.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

A review of the year's operations indicates that satisfactory progress has been made in connection with technical education throughout the district. Speaking generally, it may be said that the standard of work attained in the past has been fully maintained. Indeed it would be safe to go a little further, and say that there has been moderate development and expansion along lines that have been tested and found to be adapted to local requirements.

School Classes.—Little need be said regarding the handwork classes in our schools. In the Southland District there are 168 schools in operation, and in every one of them, classes in such subjects as paper-folding, brick-laying, plasticine modelling, cardboard modelling, and brushwork are conducted as part of the regular school curriculum. Advanced needlework is taught in the same number of schools as last year (21); swimming and life-saving classes were conducted in 4 schools; instruction in elementary physiology and first aid was given to the scholars in 4 schools; while at Riverton and Winton the pupils were instructed in elementary botany. The classes in elementary physical measurements remain stationary (25); but classes in elementary agriculture show an increase. Last year there were 33 classes in operation; this year the number has risen to 38. Special attention has been given to these classes. The Inspectors, with considerable care and thought, prepared a series of notes for the guidance of teachers, and these notes were printed in pamphlet form and distributed to all interested. Special apparatus to enable indoor experiments to be conducted during the winter months was also procured and supplied to each school, and it is confidently anticipated that the work for the current year will prove of interest and benefit to those under instruction. School Committees have also shown greater interest, and in several instances have made donations of money or material to enable the school plots to be securely fenced. If, during the year, sufficient funds can be raised to erect a small tool-shed in each garden-plot, nothing further will be required by way of equipment. It is proposed, in order that teachers may become thoroughly conversant with the Inspectors' desires in regard to the efficient management of these classes, that a special course of training in laboratory practice on the lines indicated in their manual be given during the ensuing winter months. The classes in elementary physical measurements have also had special attention paid to them, and an extra equipment for experimental and individual practice has been obtained and distributed to the schools in which these classes are being conducted. A very excellent series of lessons was prepared by Mr. A. Inglis, M.A., M.Sc., for teachers who attended the Saturday Training Classes, and these were printed in pamphlet form and sold at a sum less than cost, in order that teachers might be possessed of a permanent record. Woodwork and cookery continue to be taught to the boys and girls connected with Invercargill town and suburban schools, Greenhills and Bluff. These classes are doing excellent work. An application was made to the Department early in the year to have woodwork and cookery classes established at Gore and Riverton centres, and it is hoped that this desirable extension may shortly be brought about. When this scheme is in full operation all the boys and girls in no less than 54 of the schools adjacent to the railway-line will receive instruction in these important subjects. The girls in 34 schools staffed by males only received instruction in standard needlework from competent instructresses. The raising by the Department of the capitation payable on account of any one school to a minimum of £6 has proved of great benefit to the pupils of backblock schools, as, with the former capitation payment of 10s. per pupil in average attendance, the remuneration was often so small that no one could be found willing to devote the necessary time to the work.

Training of Teachers.—A grant by the Department of £175 enabled the Board to continue the Saturday Training Classes on lines similar to those of last year. For certificated teachers, classes in elementary physical measurements, elementary agriculture, blackboard drawing, freehand and model drawing, and light and shade drawing were established; while for uncertificated teachers, and for those who wished to improve their status but who could not attend the Training College at Dunedin, classes were conducted in English (higher and lower), mathematics (higher and lower), school method, psychology, blackboard drawing, freehand and model drawing, and brush drawing. These classes proved exceedingly popular. The classes in elementary physical measurements, elementary agriculture, and blackboard drawing were so large that assistant instructors had to be appointed. Mr. Laurence Lennie, a thoroughly practical agriculturist and horticulturist, was appointed to the charge of the agriculture class, and did excellent work. He threw his extensive nursery at Waikiwi open to the members of the class, and on several occasions the practical part of the work was conducted within his grounds. Mr. Inglis, M.A., M.Sc., although labouring under serious disadvantage through lack of a properly equipped laboratory, managed to keep his class intensely interested. The advent of Mr. Dickson to the charge of the drawing classes gave an impetus to this branch of education, and his classes were always full of interested and earnest students. An intimation from the Department that the free passes issued to teachers would be discontinued within a fortnight of the receipt of the notice somewhat disorganized the work of the classes. The syllabus had been drawn up to cover a specified number of lessons, and these extended beyond the date fixed by the Department for the withdrawal of the concession. Instructors did their best to compress their matter into the given time, with results not of the best. A later intimation that the privilege would be continued was duly received, but by that time the classes had practically been brought to a close. The collegiate classes were financed by fees from the students, aided by a generous contribution from the Board—no part of the teachers' training grant being devoted to the payment of the instructors. The greatest care was exercised to see that the privileges of free railway passes and free tuition in the manual classes were not abused. All uncertificated teachers who travelled by train were required to attend for three hours, while certificated teachers were required to attend for not less than two hours. The rolls were strictly supervised, and whenever a teacher who had used the free railway pass happened to be absent from a class of which