

OTAGO.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE EDUCATION BOARD.

Elementary handwork (paper-work, brushwork, cardboard and plasticine modelling, &c.) now forms part of the ordinary school curriculum, and is regularly practised in all schools in the district, though in some of the schools the time devoted to it is not sufficient to earn capitation. School classes of cookery and woodwork on the Central School system have been carried on as in previous years at North Dunedin, South Dunedin, and Oamaru. Capitation for cookery was earned by 870 girls, and for woodwork by 585 boys, forty-three schools participating in the instruction. Elementary agricultural instruction was given in connexion with 143 schools, the pupils numbering 1,925.

The past year has seen the scheme of rural instruction at district high schools fairly launched. The teachers responsible for the work have entered into it with loyalty and enthusiasm, and the Board has every reason to feel satisfied with the results so far obtained. The full course has been carried on in connexion with the district high schools at Balclutha, Tokomairiro, Mosgiel, Lawrence, and Tapanui, and partial courses at Palmerston and Alexandra. As a grant for the necessary buildings at Palmerston have now been sanctioned, the full course will be taken there during the current year.

School dressmaking classes were carried on at Owaka. In order to give definiteness to and arouse increased interest in the work of elementary agriculture in the schools, a potato-growing competition has been arranged amongst the pupils of the schools in which that subject is taken. The Otago Agricultural and Pastoral Association has donated the sum of £5 for four prizes for the contest. The crop is to be harvested and weighed by the 18th April next, and the results, certified to by the head teacher and a member of the School Committee, are to be in the hands of the Board's Secretary by the 30th of that month. The area of the school-garden plots to be used for the purposes of the contest has been fixed at one square pole.

Special classes for adults were held as follows: Dressmaking—Owaka, Clinton, Tapanui, Waiwera, Warepa, and Lawrence; wool-classing—Alexandra, Otarehua, Ranfurly, Waipiata, Middlemarch, Clydevale, Waiwera, Clinton, Palmerston, Balclutha, Warepa, Hyde, Heriot, Tapanui, Lauder, Lawrence; woodwork, cookery, typewriting, and book-keeping at Tapanui, and woodwork at Lawrence.

The total number of students receiving instruction by means of the School of Art staff was 706, including 100 day students, 183 evening students, 100 Training College students, forty-six pupil-teachers and probationers from Dunedin and suburbs, thirty country pupil-teachers and probationers, seventy-six adult country teachers, forty-one teachers from Oamaru district, eight uncertificated teachers (special course), and 116 day students of the Dunedin Technical School.

The total expenditure on manual and technical instruction was £11,448 7s. 9d., as follows: Maintenance (salaries, material, &c.)—School classes, £3,520 14s. 3d.; special classes, £1,761 15s. 6d. Buildings (furniture, fittings, &c.)—School classes, £5,683 7s. 5d.; special classes, £206 0s. 7d. The increase in expenditure for the year has been £7,605 16s. 7d.

Besides the drawing and handwork classes held at the School of Art on two evenings per week and on Saturday forenoons, the following instruction classes for teachers have been carried on for varying periods during the year: At Dunedin—Cookery, dressmaking, vocal music, hygiene, elocution, physiology, and ambulance; Oamaru—agriculture and elocution; Alexandra and Ranfurly—agriculture. Special week-end classes for uncertificated and partially certificated teachers were held in physiology, English, mathematics, geography, arithmetic, methods of teaching, drawing, and practical agriculture. A summer school for uncertificated teachers was held in Dunedin for three weeks towards the end of the year, the number of teachers enrolled being twenty-three. The Board believes that the Government grant with which it was intrusted has been wisely and economically disbursed, and that the classes and instruction it was able to provide have contributed to the advance in scholarship of a large number of teachers who, through their remoteness from Dunedin, have had few facilities for improving their educational status. It is quite certain that the classes have been appreciated by the teachers concerned.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

During the year the curriculum of the rural course has been adopted in five of our district high schools; but owing to the difficulty regarding buildings the work has been carried on under considerable disadvantage. At four of the schools the buildings are now complete, and the necessary grants have been authorized in the case of the fifth. In the course of a few days we shall have the necessary equipment landing from Home. The course has proved popular with the pupils, the staffs of the schools have thrown themselves cordially into the work, and the visiting teachers have proved themselves capable, earnest, and enthusiastic workers. The harmonious relations existing among the teachers in this scheme justify us in predicting that the course will prove successful. In this connexion we have to express our indebtedness and gratitude to the Managers and the Director of the Dunedin Technical School for the consideration shown by them in granting us the free use of their chemical laboratory and appliances. Without such assistance it would have been almost impossible to carry on the work during the year. Our thanks are also due to Messrs. Speight and Co. for a supply of seed barley; to Messrs. Donald Reid and Co. for supplies of varieties of seed oats and wheat for the experimental plots at the various schools; and to the Agricultural Department for supplies of seed and for assistance in spraying the potato plots. In the same connexion we have also to express our appreciation of the generosity shown by the Otago Agricultural and Pastoral Association for donating four prizes for the potato-growing competition in the school-gardens.