

SOUTHLAND.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE EDUCATION BOARD.

The manual and technical classes have been administered with considerable success by Mr. W. A. McCaw as Director from their small beginnings till they have grown to form one of the largest and most complex of the Board's departments. To the management and organization of these classes Mr. McCaw has devoted much thought and many years of hard work, and to him is due in a large measure the credit of establishing the school classes (particularly those in woodwork, cookery, and agriculture), the teachers' training classes, the numerous evening classes, and, lastly, the day Technical School. The substantial buildings in which many of these classes are conducted in Invercargill are a monument to Mr. McCaw's industry, skill, and enthusiasm. The Board felt, however, that it was too much to require one man to supervise the numerous branches of manual and technical teaching and at the same time to manage the building and architectural department, and it was therefore reluctantly decided to relieve Mr. McCaw of the directorship of technical instruction. The financial and clerical part, and much of the general supervision of the work, was handed over to the new Secretary and his staff, the Technical College was placed under Dr. Hansen as Principal, and the school and teachers' classes were placed more under the direct control of the Inspectors. The Board decided that in the interests of technical education it was advisable that the direct control of the day school and the evening classes should be taken over by a separate Board of Management, and to this end the local bodies, agricultural societies, Employers' Federation, and others were approached by representatives of this Board. The result has been encouraging, a majority of those approached having agreed to contribute to the funds of the Technical College, and a Board of Managers, thoroughly representative of the community, will shortly be appointed and assume control of the Technical College.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

In one form or other hand-and-eye work may be said to be universal throughout the schools of the district. The public, which cannot be expected to have more than a superficial knowledge of modern educational theory and practice, contents itself with a little good-humoured banter on such subjects as brushwork and plasticine. Woodwork and cookery, however, meet with more solid opposition since the teaching of these subjects means attendance at a manual centre. To allay feelings of doubt as to the efficacy of this training and its effect on the other branches of school-work, a timely pamphlet was issued during the year for the enlightenment of parents and others interested. Opportunities were also given on various afternoons during the term for inspection of the classes at work. In these ways an attempt was made to dissipate the clouds of suspicion and misapprehension through which many at present view manual training.

During the year evening continuation classes were held at one centre only out of Invercargill—Greenhills. This, it must be confessed, is a disappointing fact. There must be throughout the country districts many youths whose education in the ordinary elementary course has been, through various circumstances, incomplete or defective. In addition to these one would fain hope there must be many more whose ambition is not satisfied by a pass in the Sixth Standard, who aspire, by additional intellectual effort, to make preparation for rising above their fellow-men. Yet there is hardly any evidence of the existence of such a class. It may be that to many young people the advantages to be gained from pursuing their education to a further point have not been as yet clearly enough or insistently enough demonstrated. Doubtless, too, the disinclination of teachers to increase their already arduous tasks by assuming charge of evening classes accounts in some measure for the apathy that prevails. At any rate, the question is too important to be dropped without serious consideration. If only a tithe of the time which is devoted to outdoor sports could be spared for self-improvement our country, as a whole, would reap incalculable benefit. The best safeguard for democracy is education in its fullest interpretation.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSTRUCTOR IN AGRICULTURE.

Elementary agriculture is now taught at ninety-six schools, and visits have been paid to all except two. Twenty new schools were added this year, and at most of these time was spent giving instruction and assisting pupils with the initial work of preparing the garden. As nursery-work the propagation of fruit and ornamental trees by grafting, budding, and layering, &c., forms a special feature of our agricultural course, lessons on the subject having been given in every school. The subject is taught in a thoroughly practical manner: an outfit of tools—grafting and budding knives, pruners, &c.—sufficient to equip our largest classes is carried round; every pupil is taught to make a graft or insert a bud, and the actual work is carried out on stocks grown in the school-garden. Grafts of varieties suited to each particular district, also newer varieties to test from the Government experimental orchard at Arataki, have been posted out, and I am pleased to note that at nearly every school successful grafting has been accomplished. I am also particularly pleased to see this work successfully done by quite a number of our lady teachers. I regret to have to report that at several schools the trees have been destroyed by rabbits, mainly through the teachers neglecting to get the gates made rabbit-proof. At a number of our schools the turnip and potato variety test was very satisfactorily carried out, and valuable information has been gained. This year six varieties are being tested,