

NORTH CANTERBURY.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE EDUCATION BOARD.

Inclusive of payments made through the Board to the Managers of associated classes, the total expenditure on manual and technical instruction during the year amounted to £13,543 5s. 7d. The number of pupils attending from the city and suburban schools has increased from 1,708 to 1,923, mainly in consequence of the larger representation by children in Standard V. Owing to the inadequate accommodation at the several centres, many of the Board's classes have necessarily been conducted at the Technical College. The Board has therefore decided to make application for a grant for a centre to be established in the eastern part of the city, where such provision would be of great convenience to the surrounding schools. The high standards reached in former years as regards conduct and attendance have been maintained. At Ashburton the local management have considerably enlarged the scope of the work. Many additional classes have been formed, resulting in a large increase in the number of pupils. The work done at Akaroa has been confined to cookery, dressmaking, and woodwork. It is hoped this year to form classes in dairy-work. The classes at Kaiapoi have been well maintained, the attendance at woodwork and cookery classes having been increased by the co-operation of several other primary schools in the neighbourhood. At the smaller centres the work has continued on previous lines, the favourite subjects still being cookery and woodwork. During the year dressmaking and millinery classes were formed at Dunsandel, where the local committee is hopeful of obtaining sufficient support to justify a continuance of the work. During the year classes in handwork were taken at 103 schools, while sixty-two classes were formed in swimming and life-saving. At Darfield, in addition to the work done by pupils taking the rural course, classes in woodwork and cookery for pupils attending the surrounding schools have been conducted.

In August Mr. T. G. Malcolm resigned his position as chief instructor in agriculture. Much valuable work has been done despite many difficulties, and at a meeting subsequent to his resignation being received the Board placed on record its appreciation of Mr. Malcolm's services. In view of the importance attached to the instruction of children in gardening and nature-study, the vacancy was widely advertised. From the list of candidates Mr. W. Martin, B.Sc., was selected for the position. Mr. Martin, who is highly qualified for the work entrusted to him, has entered upon his duties with much ability and enthusiasm, auguring well for the continued success of this department of the Board's activities. There has been a slight falling-off in the number of schools in which recognized classes have been carried on, the number being 121 as against 130 for the previous year. This the Board very much regrets, as it considers the teaching of agriculture as of very great importance. The rural course has been continued at Darfield, Lincoln, Kaikoura, and Oxford East District High Schools, and the Kaiapoi District High School has now decided to take up a similar programme, which, as the instructor rightly points out, is not necessarily an alternative to an examination course.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF MANUAL TRAINING.

The public school syllabus which came into operation at the beginning of the present year has caused greater attention to be paid by the schools to instruction in woodwork and domestic science. Of the schools taking these subjects in 1913 only one neglected to resume this year, while four additional schools have been added to the list. In addition, two schools have applied to be included during 1915. If the demand continues only slightly to increase there will be urgent need for additional accommodation. This year for the first time the Board's Inspectors have asked for marks to be given in the subjects of woodwork, cookery, and laundry-work, so that they may be taken into consideration in the awarding of proficiency certificates.

As a result of a conference held early in March of the Headmasters' Association, the Chief Inspector, and the Director of Manual Training, schemes of work for a two-year course in woodwork and domestic science were prepared at a meeting of the manual training instructors. These were submitted to the Chief Inspector and the headmasters for approval, and were adopted without alteration. The headmasters are thus able to keep in closer touch with their pupils at the manual training centres, and this can result only in better work being done. In this connection I may mention that I was greatly surprised during the year to hear from the headmaster of one of our schools that he was not aware that he had the privilege of attending with his pupils at the manual training classes. When informed that his presence would be welcomed he replied that he would gladly avail himself of the opportunity to attend. The greater the interest shown by teachers the more surely will the cause of manual training advance as it should. A perusal of the instructors' reports on the work, conduct, and attendance of the pupils goes to show that the high standards reached in former years have been maintained. One class made as much as 99 per cent. of the possible number of attendances. In most schools the remarks on conduct and work range from "good" to "excellent," any remark below "good" being quite the exception. I feel sure that it would be difficult to name any other school-subject in which almost every member of the class is so proficient and so interested. The reason must lie in the nature of the subject itself, producing as it does scope for self-activity, originality, and the development of the creative powers. Little wonder, therefore, is it that the pupils find joy in their work. It has been a great pleasure to me to visit the classes at work, and to see the enthusiasm of both instructors and pupils: the former, as anticipated, have all been worthy of the confidence placed in them, and the work has proceeded quietly yet vigorously, at the same time requiring only a minimum of supervision.