

A very forward movement has been introduced into the Training College course this year in the establishment of a class in school-gardening, in addition to the ordinary classes in examination agriculture. I personally conducted the course with the boys of Standard V in the presence of the students. This course extended from March to December, and students ought in future to feel more confidence in carrying out a similar course in the schools. I have also taken over the nature-study at the College with a view to having this and the school agriculture dovetailed into one another. Several excursions were made during the year and proved helpful. Sixteen students took agriculture for Class C. For the first time a whole day per week is now devoted to the Training College students, and ought to make for increased efficiency. The quarter-acre of ground provided for practical work proves to fill an important gap in the possibilities of agricultural instruction. The Saturday classes for teachers were conducted from April to December, and were regularly attended by forty teachers.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

The interest in classes for elementary handwork was greater last year than it has been in the history of the district. Eighty-five schools took up some form of handwork, and from the infant classes to Standard VII 5,331 pupils received instruction, principally in plasticine-modelling, paper-folding, brick-laying, stick-laying, paper-weaving, elementary design, raffa-work, cardboard-modelling, carton-work, brushwork, freearm drawing, &c. Mr. Greene's classes in drawing have been of great assistance to teachers taking plasticine-work. In advanced handwork 142 classes were recognized at sixty-five different schools, a considerable increase on the previous year's record. The subjects taken were agriculture, woodwork, cookery, swimming, advanced needlework, botany, chemistry, physiology. Classes in cookery, domestic economy, and hygiene were again conducted at the five different centres—Timaru, Temuka, Waimate, Pleasant Point, and Fairlie. In all seventeen classes were held, with an average attendance of 350 pupils.

Sixteen woodwork classes were again carried on in conjunction with the cookery classes, with an average attendance of about 340 pupils. Towards the end of the year the more advanced pupils in the woodwork classes devoted their time to making articles serviceable to the Red Cross Society. Wherever practicable pupils were conveyed by rail to attend woodwork and cookery classes, but there are many schools in the district that are not within measurable distance of a railway-line. The number of pupils in the district able to attend woodwork and cookery classes represents only about one-third of the pupils in Standards V and VI in the district. An attempt was made during the year to establish woodwork and cookery classes at Geraldine, but the Department would not undertake to erect the necessary buildings at the present time.

The Technical Inspector, Mr. E. C. Isaac, visited the district towards the end of September. He inspected the woodwork and cookery classes, and reported favourably on the work.

Agriculture as a "school subject" now occupies a very prominent position in this district. Out of eighty-five schools sixty-four are recognized as taking classes in agriculture, the average attendance of primary pupils last year being 1,046. Although climatic conditions during the past two years have been all against school-gardening, a great amount of activity was displayed by teachers and Committees in the matter of improving the plots. Stocks of fruit-trees and rose-trees for practical work in budding and grafting have been supplied to all schools in the district, and the next year should see considerable development in the horticultural line. To encourage experimental work the Board offered prizes for the best crops of potatoes produced in school-gardens, all the schools in the district to be divided into three classes according to average attendance. The results of this competition will not be made known till the end of April. The agricultural and horticultural societies in the district still continue to encourage the school-garden movement in every way by their sympathy and patronage, but unfortunately last season was so abnormally dry that the school exhibits at the different shows were somewhat disappointing. As evidence of the increased interest in school-gardens it may be mentioned that the sum of £50 was raised during the year as voluntary contributions to different school-gardens in the district.

Swimming and life-saving were again carried on at the only centres where baths are available—Timaru, Temuka, Waimate, Fairlie, and Geraldine. The weather-conditions during the year were favourable, and a good deal of solid work was put in. It is a rare thing now to find a boy or girl in the upper standards of these schools unable to swim. Advanced plain needlework was taught to girls at three schools, and physiology and ambulance work was also taken at three schools.

RITCHINGS GRANT,
Director of Technical Education.

OTAGO.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE EDUCATION BOARD.

Instruction in elementary handwork (paper-work, cardboard and plasticine modelling, &c.) was imparted in all the schools in the district. Cookery and woodwork instruction was given to the pupils of forty-four and thirty-nine schools respectively, the average attendance at the former being 1,112 girls and at the latter 1,059 boys. Special classes for adults in English, book-keeping, and painting were held at Milton.