

ledge of agriculture and orchard-work has been of special value, and the pupils are keenly interested in these branches of the work. Indeed, many of the boys have become quite experts in the operations of pruning, grafting, budding, &c. Under the supervision of Messrs. Ellis and Thomas a party of twenty-nine boys paid a visit of a week's duration to the Government farm at Moumahaki—a visit from which the boys derived much pleasure and benefit. The boys took part in the ordinary operations of the farm, and received several lessons from the farm experts. They also attended the agricultural show at Waverley. In dealing with the subject of agriculture we might mention that the headmaster of the school considers the teaching of the subject will never be quite satisfactory until some scheme is evolved by which boys can regularly visit farms working under modern conditions, and as part of their course of training take part in the ordinary farm-work. A scheme by which such instruction would become possible was recently proposed by Mr. R. Dingle, of Stratford, member of the Board of Agriculture. Briefly, the proposal was that in important centres the Government should acquire small farms—say, three in Taranaki—such farms to be worked for experimental purposes by the local farmers' society, which would guarantee interest on the cost. The benefit to schoolboys from taking part in the regular work of a farm established under such conditions would be undoubted, and the experience in actual farm-work under local conditions and with modern appliances and machinery would be a fitting supplement to the scientific training carried on in the school.

WANGANUI.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE ACTING SENIOR INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS.

The problem of providing secondary education in our district high schools presents considerable difficulty, particularly in the case of the smaller departments. An effort has been made to provide both literary and vocational courses of instruction. On the vocational side the district high schools have been very successful. In the southern part of the district the vocational farm-training is centralized at Marton School experimental farm, supplemented by short courses of instruction at stud farms and in shearing-camps. In the north, with Hawera as a centre, equally good farm courses are conducted, instruction camps similar to those in the southern districts are held, and the Moumahaki State Farm is visited at intervals. There is no doubt at all that the farmers in southern Taranaki have been won over to believe thoroughly in the value of the vocational training the district high schools provide.

During the last few years, however, the curriculum arranged for the vocational courses became unduly complex, and there was consequently great loss in efficiency. It became necessary, therefore, to reorganize the secondary instruction and more clearly to define both the curricula and the aims the teachers should keep in view. The instruction has been arranged in two courses—an examination course and a general course—the latter including mainly a domestic course and a special farm course. An endeavour has been made, particularly in the general course, to give greater prominence than formerly to the study of English. Latin is confined to the examination course, and only the practical side of mathematics is given prominence in the general course. Science and some form of handwork are taken by all pupils. In the general course two hours weekly are given to general science and two to agricultural science. For the girls there are provided courses in cookery, laundry-work, and dressmaking, while the boys have woodwork, elementary ironwork, and building-construction. The boys taking the special farm course have in addition instruction in horse-shoeing, fencing, concrete-work (posts, pig-troughs, &c.), dairy-work, construction of farm buildings, shearing, ploughing, and other tillage operations, care and repair of farm machinery, judging stock, &c. The general course, which is mainly cultural and partly vocational in aim, forms the backbone of the secondary work in the district high schools in this district. The few pupils who require to pass an examination before entering on their future calling receive consideration, but their needs do not, as was formerly the case, condition the curriculum for the whole secondary department.

I am glad to be able to lay emphasis here on the excellent progress made by the girls in housecraft and by the boys in knowledge of farm-work. The girls who complete the full domestic course are quite able to undertake the management of a home: in this connection it is worth mentioning that at one centre the girls arranged, cooked, and served a four-course dinner for the Inspector and the teaching staff. The boys who have taken the farm course are in great demand, and we have excellent reports from the farmers who employ them. Two of the lads are at present continuing their studies at Hawkesbury Agricultural College (N.S.W.), and the Principal has written to say he will always have room for students so well prepared. I have no hesitation in saying that our district high school secondary classes are playing an important part in the development of the district; the farm-course lads are quite competent to take care of themselves on a bush farm, for instruction in camp cookery is provided for, and at both the shearing-camp and the animal-husbandry camp the boys have to fend for themselves.

In all parts of the district, however, we find considerable difficulty in securing lads for the farm course. Unfortunately, the leaning of the lads themselves seems to be towards the smooth-handed work of the town, and our secondary assistant teachers do not always help us wholeheartedly to combat this tendency. Brought up themselves to pass examinations, they do not appear to be able to view the question broadly; they do not realize that at the present stage of development what our country needs most is the man of action, whose power of initiative has been developed, whose hand has attained skill in doing, and in whom muscle and brain readily co-operate. It is to the slavish adherence of some of our secondary teachers to the examination fetish that we attribute the slowness of parents to grasp the importance of the secondary educa-