

tion our district high schools offer on the vocational side; but even as matters are our secondary classes receive a very fair measure of support. Our returns show that 63 per cent. of the pupils who gained certificates at the 1915 proficiency examination have entered upon secondary work—a very satisfactory proportion, surely, in view of the demands of a depleted labour-market and the consequent inducement there is for parents to send their children into employment. Last year we made a special effort to gain pupils by circularizing parents and pointing out the advantages our district high school secondary classes have to offer.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF THE INSTRUCTORS IN AGRICULTURE.

Northern District.—At Eltham, Hawera, and Patea District High Schools the work of the rural courses was this year reorganized so as to free the Supervisor, as far as possible, for the higher work with the classes for farmers. Mr. Jackson took agricultural chemistry and agricultural botany at Eltham and at Patea, and the ordinary staff became responsible for the instruction in general agriculture and in dairy science. In addition the lads were given instruction in short courses (a) at Hawera for a week at Easter, dealing with indoor and outdoor agriculture, (b) a week with orchard-work in June, and (c) for a fortnight in December. During the last-named short course the lads visited farms to study farm methods, pastures, crops, and stock, and also spent several days at the Hawera Dairy Factory, carrying on all branches of activity there. The Board's thanks are due to Mr. F. Mills, of Tokarora, for lectures and demonstration on Ayrshire cattle; to Mr. R. J. Linn, of Normanby, for lecture and demonstration on Jersey cattle; and to Mr. A. Hunter, of Hawera, for lecture and demonstration on Shorthorn cattle. These gentlemen granted the boys permission to visit their farms, and in addition treated them hospitably. Thanks are also due to Mr. J. Dunlop, general manager of the Hawera Dairy Factory, and his staff. The boys spent several profitable days at this factory, and the manager and staff were exceedingly attentive to them.

Central District.—The work in connection with the rural courses at the Marton School Farm was carried out during the year on lines described in previous reports. The roll number at the beginning of the term was forty-seven. With the present accommodation there was great difficulty in carrying out the work to our satisfaction. The numbers gradually decreased until the last term, when the number was just below thirty. During the year a series of lessons on camp cookery was arranged for the boys. These lessons were given under great disadvantages. The fireplace was very small, the chimney smoked, the only table was too small, and the wind was so strong that the outside oven constructed by the boys was useless. However, the boys entered into the work with great spirit, and managed to cook a very fair dinner each day. The boys gladly paid 6d. each for this dinner, and thus the expenses of the classes were almost entirely defrayed. The crops were, on the whole, very satisfactory. The wheat crop on 1½ acres realized almost £25. Thanks are due to Sir James Wilson for the use of his horses and farm implements. The camp at Almadale was begun in the second week of March, and lasted a fortnight. The work was conducted on exactly the same lines as previously. The boys were worked harder in this camp than any previous one. The practical examination arranged for by Mr. Short extended over a day and a half. Mr. Short generously donated a gold medal to the boy placed first in each of the three sections, and the Education Board presented the first and second boy in each section with a copy of Plumb's "Types and Breeds of Farm Animals."

Southern District.—Feilding District High School: Owing to the death of Mr. F. Y. Lethbridge we were obliged to seek a new area of ground for practical work. We are greatly indebted to Mr. J. Cobbe for helping us out of this difficulty. He is allowing us the use of about 8 acres, which is steadily being got into order. Our big difficulty is in obtaining the use of horses. This makes it impossible to work with any definite scheme.

The annual stock camp was held at Almadale in March. About fifty boys were in attendance. Several small orchards were pruned and sprayed during the winter months. A shearing-camp was held during November. Work was continued throughout the year at the Marton Farm. Arrangements were made which enabled the boys from Bull's District High School to visit Marton for practical instruction. Lessons were given on farm practice, live-stock, farm mechanics, &c.

WELLINGTON.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

The reports of the Inspector who examined the district-high-school classes show that with one or two exceptions the work was fair to satisfactory. Two of the district high schools entered candidates for the Senior National Scholarship (A programme) and Senior Free Place Examinations, five of whom qualified for free places. Five other district high schools entered candidates for the same examination on the B programme. Two of these candidates gained scholarships, and twelve were awarded senior free places. In 1914 sixteen Class B Board Scholarships were granted to pupils of the rural district high schools. This year only two such scholarships were gained in this district, and only three were awarded on the B programme throughout the Dominion. It would appear that the rural district high schools will suffer in respect of scholarships by being thrown into competition with the colleges in the cities. In our opinion this will not only have a detrimental effect on the attendance at the district high schools, but there will be a strong tendency (already apparent) for the pupils of those schools to work for the A scheme, in which it is considered easier to obtain marks than in the subjects peculiar to the rural course. We consider that the rural course is eminently suitable for the pupils in the country schools, and we regret the introduction of a scheme of scholarships which will have the effect of discouraging it.