

one of relative ease. And yet one finds on visiting these schools a good deal of disappointing effort, a want of thoroughness in the knowledge shown of the programmes presented, and a lack of appreciation of the possibilities of local conditions. It is true that the difficulty of obtaining efficient teachers is considerable, for, quite apart from the question of salary, which is still inadequate to attract the more desirable type of assistant, the position is regarded as a blind alley, offering but few prospects for promotion. With a full consciousness of these difficulties, however, I am still of opinion that the level of attainments reached and the work done in several of our district high schools falls considerably short of what is possible and what should obtain.

Most of the pupils live close, or relatively close, to the schools, but some come considerable distances and reach the school on horse-back, cycle, in vehicles, or by train. Only a few remain for a third year, the great majority leaving at the end of the first or second year. A considerable number are preparing for one or other of the public examinations, though but few remain sufficiently long at school to cover the work of the Matriculation Examination.

It is a matter of profound regret and no little anxiety that such a large number of children are satisfied with the meagre knowledge-equipment received at the primary schools, and that the enrolment in the secondary departments of our district high schools does not show greater and more rapid expansion. In this district, at least, experience goes to show that many parents do not realize the importance of education continued beyond the primary-school stage, and fail to take advantage of and support the efforts now being made by the state to extend facilities for further instruction; and yet it is between the ages of fourteen and eighteen years that young people so greatly need additional training. It is no exaggeration to say that on the use made of these years will very largely depend the degree to which the young people concerned will ultimately benefit the community.

All schools within reach of the necessary facilities take the full rural course, and those whose pupils are unable to attend cookery and woodwork classes include in their programmes as much of the rural course as circumstances will permit. Dairy science is rapidly becoming a popular subject, and provides a suitable experimental course in which an obvious link between the farm and class-room is forged and strengthened. The Board's instructors in agriculture attend most of the schools at regular intervals, and give much useful assistance; indeed, but for the help thus received it would have been impossible for some of the schools to undertake the work in agriculture, horticulture, and dairy science which now forms part of their curriculum.

The quality of the instruction varies with the school; in one or two it is highly creditable. In the majority it ranges from satisfactory to disappointing. English, as a rule, is well taught, though composition frequently shows but little advance on the work of Standard VI, and the knowledge of the special books selected for study is sometimes lacking in fullness and accuracy. But few pupils take a language, Latin or French; where this is taught the progress is satisfactory in view of the many and pressing claims of other work. The remaining subjects, apart from agriculture and science, are receiving careful attention. Some teachers hold the opinion that the same fullness and accuracy in oral answering as obtains in the lower classes cannot be secured in a secondary department, with the result that their pupils show much diffidence in dealing with oral questions. This contention cannot be maintained, for in those schools where this impression is not entertained and where no relaxation of effort is permitted the answering, as may be expected, is a distinct advance on anything attempted in the primary department. In most cases the work in elementary agriculture or horticulture, with the complementary courses in chemistry and physics, does not show to advantage—i.e., the amount of information acquired is but little in advance of that learnt in a good Standard VI class, and much of it is frequently inaccurate. Towards the close of the year all the secondary departments, with one exception, were inspected, and some time in each case was devoted to testing the work in these subjects and inquiring into methods of instruction. In all cases where results were disappointing the impression left was that the work of the agricultural instructor was not followed up and reinforced with sufficient insistence by the efforts of head and class teacher. The visiting instructor must, of course, be held responsible for the work he undertakes, but no amount of vigour and efficiency on his part can altogether compensate for laxity of assistance on the part of those who are brought in contact with the pupil from day to day, especially in cases where relatively long intervals occur between the visits. Another matter calling for attention is the need for creating opportunities for linking up the work of the school with that of the farm, the orchard, the factory, and local activities generally. Some schools, to their credit be it said, are fully alive to the importance of this matter, and arrange for visits to neighbouring farms and orchards, and for demonstrations where skilled operators bring home to pupils the need for experience and training; but this, unfortunately, is the exception rather than the rule, and in very few cases are these visits of such frequent occurrence as to be of practical and lasting benefit.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE SUPERVISOR OF MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

The full rural course was taken by the pupils of Pukekohe, Cambridge, Paeroa, Waihi, Tauranga, and Aratapu District High Schools. The four first-named were visited regularly throughout the year by instructors in agriculture, and both Aratapu and Tauranga were visited four or five times during the year by an instructor, who spent a full week at each visit giving instruction in agriculture and dairy science to the secondary pupils. The Department made grants of £170 each for the building of science-rooms at Paeroa and at Aratapu. The Te Kuiti District High School secondary pupils will take the rural course when their manual-training school is erected. The Education Board has decided that all district-high-school pupils must, as part of the rural course, receive regular instruction in agriculture, botany, physics and chemistry, and dairy science.