

The special subjects of manual training are taught at over one hundred more or less well equipped centres, and while this system cannot be regarded as ideal, until conditions permit of the provision of a "handicraft-room" in every school wherein all suitable forms of handicraft can be practised, the present arrangement may be regarded as satisfactory. The special subject for boys is invariably woodwork, and if taught with intelligence and skill excellent results may be attained. Few boys, unfortunately, are in a position to continue the lessons in their spare time, the cost of tools, bench, and material preventing, and it is hoped that facilities for giving instruction in elementary metal-work will be largely increased in the near future. This subject appears to make greater mental demands on the pupils, the equipment of a centre costs less than for woodwork, and in the opinion of many competent authorities metal-work has higher educative value than woodwork. Further, a very limited kit of metal-work tools will prove an endless source of utility and interest to lads having mechanical aptitude, and will provide wide scope for the exercise of ingenuity and the application of varied constructive principles. The value of the instruction of girls in subjects relating to the home was abundantly proved during the epidemic; at many of the centres instructors and pupils undertook the preparation, cooking, and delivery of special meals, and in many ways displayed skill and resourcefulness. One of the lessons learned at that time was that in the interests of the home and of the State it was expedient to give more, rather than less, time to the education of girls in domestic subjects, and instead of the instruction being confined to plain cookery, needlework and laundry-work, elementary first aid, and the elements of home nursing, should, wherever possible, become part of the school course of every girl.

During the year additional centres were authorized or completed, and while the continued curtailment of the train service affected the attendances at some centres, the average attendance in all subjects shows an increase over that of 1917.

Instruction in woodwork and metal-work for boys is provided at 494 schools, and facilities for the instruction of girls in subjects relating to the home exist at 500 schools, there being indications that these numbers will be largely increased within the next year or two.

At 1,390 schools instruction more or less related to agriculture, and supervised by qualified itinerant instructors, was given throughout the year. Probably it is a misnomer to connect this instruction with agriculture as generally understood, as it has little relation to farm-work and the primary products, but is directed solely to the creation of the pupils' "interest in the soil and in the things of the soil," and the importation of very elementary knowledge through the garden and indoor experiments on such subjects as gardening and soil, plant-life, and very elementary chemistry and physics in relation thereto. If this instruction—as there is every reason to believe it does—broadens the child's outlook, quickens the interest, and imparts even the most elementary scientific knowledge of botany and biology, thus providing a foundation for and a stimulus to acquire future knowledge, then the instruction is of direct value both to the child and to the State.

The following table shows that the number of district high schools providing a course of instruction bearing on rural pursuits, has increased to forty-seven :—

District.					Number of Schools.	Number of Pupils.	Capitation earned.
					1918.	1918.	£
Auckland	..	..	..	..	11	381	2,629
Taranaki	..	..	..	..	1	68	479
Wanganui	..	..	..	..	6	146	860
Hawke's Bay	..	..	..	..	3	125	845
Wellington	..	..	..	..	6	226	1,335
Canterbury	..	..	..	..	13	282	1,841
Otago	..	..	..	..	7	185	1,183
Totals, 1918					47	1,413	£9,172
Totals, 1917					38	1,229	£7,984