

To relieve the tension for the year 1920 it is proposed to fit up a temporary building alongside the Normal School, where the overflow from the cookery classes will be taught. Profiting from the experience of the epidemic, a short syllabus in home nursing was added to the syllabus for cookery. This part of the instruction was very popular with the girls, and no doubt the instruction received will be turned to good account later on. Swimming and life-saving classes at the different centres received due attention, but most of the instruction was given by outsiders. An attempt to form swimming and life-saving classes for teachers in Christchurch met with very little support.

Agriculture.—About 240 schools now take elementary agriculture as a school subject, and there is distinct evidence to show that some very fine experimental work has been done. The McFarlane Shield in the northern part of the district and the Hurdley Shield for the southern part were the means of producing a great deal of enthusiasm and healthy rivalry among the different schools taking agriculture. The Board also gave substantial prizes for potato-growing competitions, and a number of agricultural and horticultural societies in the district gave a good deal of encouragement to the work by including classes for competition in their schedules, and bringing the pupils into close touch with the beauties and bounties of nature. The periodical visits of Board members to different schools also did a great deal to stimulate pupils, teachers, and committeemen, and make them take more interest in their work. In spite of the great difficulties still laboured under, a marked improvement is apparent in the work on the Coast. This is largely due to the appointment of a permanent instructor at Greymouth. He has created a great deal of enthusiasm in connection with the work where very little existed before. Rural courses of instruction were taken at Waimate, Temuka, Pleasant Point, Geraldine, Hokitika, Greymouth, Darfield, Lincoln, Kaiapoi, Oxford, Kaikoura, Akaroa, and Southbridge, with an attendance of about 214 pupils. It is a significant fact that the number taking this course for examination purposes is on the increase. The restricted railway service did much to militate against the success of this part of the work during the greater part of the year, as it was found to be almost impossible to provide a means of conveying pupils and instructors to the different centres during the winter months.

SOUTHLAND.

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

Elementary Handwork.—The number of schools that received instruction in handwork throughout the year was 175, the subjects taken being principally plasticine-modelling, paper-folding, cardboard-work, pastel-work, and brushwork. Though less difficulty was experienced than in the previous year in obtaining the necessary materials, yet in some instances supplies were still unobtainable. Unfortunately, too, visions of a considerable reduction in the cost of supplies did not materialize, and any improvement in this direction seems farther off than ever. With the prospect of still larger quantities of material being now needed to meet the increased requirements of the new syllabus, the necessity for an alteration in the rates of capitation becomes still more imperative.

Needlework.—In thirteen schools having no female teacher on the staff instruction in needlework was given by special sewing mistresses, the average attendance of girls thus receiving instruction being 118. In forty-three schools recognized classes in advanced needlework were held, the average attendance being 794.

Woodwork and Cookery.—Instruction in these subjects was given during the year at Invercargill (two centres), Gore, and Riverton, children from all schools within a reasonable distance of the railway being brought into one or other of these centres. Altogether there were forty-five primary-school classes in woodwork, and forty-four in cookery, forty schools attending at the Invercargill centres, twenty-one at Gore, and thirteen at Riverton. In addition three classes in each subject attended the Gore centre from the local high school. The number of children eligible to attend showed an increase over the figures for the previous year, and in fact exceeded the number for which provision could be made. Children from Standard IV were therefore eliminated in the case of some country schools, and if the same rate of increase is maintained it is evident that in a short time there will be no room for any Standard IV children. The exclusion of such children, however, will undoubtedly result in the work being carried on with much greater efficiency, as experience has proved that, in the great majority of cases, children in this standard are too young to derive full advantage from such courses of instruction, except where conditions permit of Standard IV children being grouped by themselves under an instructor free to give them undivided attention. Towards the end of the year a commencement was made with the erection of an additional woodwork-room and a cookery-room at the rear of the new Manual-training School in Invercargill, the old residence in which a temporary cookery-room had been fitted up and had done duty for some time having to be pulled down to make room for the extensions. The completion of these rooms by the middle of this year will give a compact up-to-date double centre, and enable all work to be carried on under ideal conditions. During the period of the restricted train service the work of the classes was in some cases very much interfered with, the period available between the arrival and the departure of trains being very short—so much so, that in the case of certain schools work had to be discontinued altogether. The resumption of the normal service, therefore, towards the end of the year was very much appreciated.

Agriculture. Recognized classes in agriculture were conducted at 109 schools, the average attendance being 1,538. On the whole, the garden-work was not quite as satisfactory as in previous years, the long vacation due to the influenza epidemic being responsible for many gardens at the beginning of the year being in such a condition that the outdoor experimental work was valueless, and in many cases nothing could be done but to dig the plots over. In last year's report gratification