

on principles, and insufficient deference to the interest of the pupil or to his desires to create and construct. This applies particularly to carton-work, in which the lessons too frequently degenerate into a mechanical copying of detailed measurements supplied by the teacher.

One branch of handwork which has made a noted advance during the year is needlework. In Christchurch and in various centres, some as remote as Kaikoura and Fairlie, refresher courses were conducted by Miss Burns, till lately Supervisor for the district. Through her skill and inspiration a new spirit has been breathed into this hitherto drab subject, and teachers and pupils alike are enthusiastic over the improvements they have been able to make.

Wanganui District.

Drawing.—On the whole, the drawing in the schools is of good quality as far as the representation in line of the form of the object is concerned. Many an otherwise good drawing is marred by the crude attempts made at representing light and shade. Too often they consist of a mere scribbling with the pencil on the paper, followed by a rubbing with the finger.

Definite instruction in the manipulation of the pencil to produce a pleasing effect is necessary, and where this has been done the drawing in many cases is excellent.

The design-work in colour in many cases is very crude. Any good text-book on the subject will give hints for the application of the colour to produce an even tone. One defect noticeable in the teaching of drawing is the lack of continuity in the instruction in the subject. Objects for drawing appear to be selected at random, thus precluding a definite course of instruction in the subject.

Handwork.—The woodwork and cookery taken at the various centres by the special instructors maintains the high standard of efficiency that has been noted in previous reports.

It cannot be said that in most schools a high or even a satisfactory standard has been reached in the treatment of handwork. In many cases it is regarded entirely as an occupation, and the pupils acquire little manipulative skill or reproductive ability. Probably it is most successfully used for illustrative and correlative purposes, but even then the crudeness of much of the work shows a lack of hand-and-eye training. We wish to see teachers taking a keener interest in this subject, and by study and practice making themselves skilful in handling the material that is supplied to them.

NATURE-STUDY AND SCIENCE.

Wellington District.

Nature-study in classes Primer to Standard II is, on the whole, not very satisfactory. This is not to say that the subject is neglected, but it too often takes the form of the old-fashioned object-lesson without the object. The weakness here is due to want of interest and lack of knowledge on the part of the teachers. Ex-trainees in nearly all cases are helpless in this subject.

As the science is largely in the hands of special instructors, there is a growing tendency for it to become divorced from the remainder of the syllabus. There is no question of the earnestness of the instructors, who, indeed, have given considerable assistance to teachers in preparing suggestive schemes in science. Improvement is shown in the pupils' notes of their observations, but generally we consider that the science is not a strong feature of the work in our schools.

Wanganui District.

Agriculture.—Notwithstanding the enthusiasm and assistance of the instructors, some aspects of this subject have not been so satisfactory as could be wished. As pointed out last year, the work may be divided into three sections—(a) that dealing with environment; (b) gardening; (c) indoor experimental work. In many schools the unusually wet year interfered seriously with gardening operations, but in others more work might have been done. Perhaps the least satisfactory aspect of the subject was the indoor experimental work, which was too often limited in scope and indifferent in quality. It was felt by all that the courses of instruction in nature-study and agriculture should be revised and systematized.

Canterbury District.

Nature-study.—We have no reason to complain of the neglect of this important subject, but we have more than once had to take exception to the courses planned, and to the faulty conception and treatment. Programmes of work are frequently too wide, and consequently do not lend themselves to the cultivation of the power of minute observation for which the subject is designed. However, it is frequently excessive zeal, and not indifference, that is the cause of weakness.

Agriculture.—The outstanding feature in connection with the agricultural work of the district during the past year was the number of sole-charge teachers who applied for permission to take school-gardening as a class subject.

There was a noticeable increase also in the interest displayed by teachers, pupils, and School Committees in beautifying school-grounds; and now that forestry-work is being encouraged a marked improvement in the environment of many of our schools may be looked for in the near future.

Root-growing competitions and the identification of grasses also claimed the attention of schools in various parts of the district, and these received encouragement from agricultural and pastoral societies and other organizations.