

Practical work in elementary agriculture, dairy science, and general science, in the higher classes of primary schools, including district high schools, is therefore, for general purposes, recognized as manual training. The primary-school teachers have in these subjects the guidance and assistance of agricultural instructors serving under the respective Education Boards. In 1926 there were twenty-five of these specialists, in 1927 the number was reduced to twenty-three. They are distributed in the several education districts as follows: Auckland, 4; Taranaki, 3; Wanganui, 3; Hawke's Bay, 2; Wellington, 3; Nelson, 1; Canterbury, 3; Otago, 3; Southland, 1. The distribution is not so even as it should be, but in one or two cases the instructors in one district help those in the next, so as to even up the work as much as possible. Originally the instructors were appointed to take over to a very large extent the actual science-teaching in secondary departments of district high schools, which were all bound under the regulations to offer a rural course. The secondary assistants are now expected to do the science-teaching and conduct the practical work, and in 1927 the last of the specialist teachers was freed from direct responsibility for the science work of the district high schools of his area.

During the period of transition the work of supervision was gradually extended to the lower classes of as many primary schools as possible, and now the nature-study generally, as well as the less rudimentary branches of scientific training, receives the close attention of the supervising instructor. To such duties are added that of advising teachers and School Committees with regard to beautifying the grounds and the planning of larger works of development in this direction, and to these instructors must be given most of the credit for the way in which a vast number of bare school-yards have been transformed into places of beauty which cannot fail to have a beneficial effect on the æsthetic training of the young people of the country.

As another extension of the ordinary school-work the instructors in several districts, working in conjunction with those of the Agricultural Department and with local farmers' institutions, are devoting much self-sacrificing labour to the promotion of home-garden competitions, or of boys' and girls' clubs engaged in the rearing of calves, the growing of root crops, and so forth, and in this way, as in others, they are making their influence felt in improving general farm practice. In two or three districts forestry methods on a comparatively large scale are being demonstrated through the establishment of forest areas in or near the school grounds, and in Taranaki these plantations already aggregate more than 30 acres.

There is little change to report in connection with the various forms of handwork taken by classes which do not attend at manual-training centres. Material for this work is supplied by the Department to the Boards, which distribute to the individual schools. The cost for the year 1927, including distribution and all other charges, was about £10,380.

The supplies generally, with few exceptions, appear to be of suitable quality and sufficient quantity. Special provision has also been made in the last two or three years for the supply of material for use in the preparatory classes, partly for manual training and partly for the better application of modern methods of teaching infants. Some handwork material has also been supplied to the special classes for retarded children, for whom manual occupations are often the only possible means of stimulating connected thought.

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