

(Hamilton). Such books as these are necessary in the schools. The cost of providing them would be somewhat considerable, but a few thousand pounds expended in the proper equipment of the schools of this country would be an investment likely to bring in an abundant harvest of good things.

In quite a number of districts attention is being given to the study of atmospheric phenomena. The barometer, the maximum and minimum thermometer, rain-gauge, and mariner's compass are being diligently studied and records kept that will prove of much value in the years to come. Some arrangements might be made whereby schools in remote districts could be brought into touch with the meteorological authorities in Wellington. An explanatory circular on the taking of observations and keeping of records would be of value at the present time.

DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.—The four district high schools are showing signs of vitality, and judging by the results of the December examinations their future is assured. The establishment of district high schools and the employment of special instructors for secondary subjects has introduced difficulties into school management and control that will require the most careful consideration. The staffing of the primary schools include the headmaster, and the question is whether a headmaster should be allowed to do secondary work. The primary work is the essential work and cannot be subordinated to the success of the secondary classes, and as the master is counted in the primary school-staff, his services should be employed in making efficient the primary work of the school.

TECHNICAL CLASSES.—The school classes under the Manual and Technical Instruction Act are making but slow progress. Gisborne has now a Technical School, and both school and special classes have been established. Hastings has a room for woodwork, but Napier is yet without a properly equipped Technical School, and other places have been unable to proceed with classes in woodwork and cookery there being no rooms available.

The proposal to employ instructors in cookery and dressmaking for six months alternately in Gisborne and Napier as centres, is likely to be of much benefit to the places named, and should the plan prove successful, other classes will be started in the southern part of the district.

The Saturday Special Classes for teachers have been carried on at Dannevirke and Napier as centres. The Gisborne centre was discontinued owing to the heavy expense incurred, but the classes are being resumed at the Technical School—in cookery for the lady teachers and woodwork for the men. Other classes will be started when suitable instructors can be obtained.

In Napier seventy-one teachers attended special classes in design, stencil-cutting, and brushwork in plant-form, and eighteen men teachers joined the manual-training class in woodwork.

The efforts that were made some time ago by the Board to interest the local public bodies in helping to provide for the salary of a special instructor in botany and agricultural science, following upon the lectures delivered to farmers by the Inspector-General of Schools, show the lack of interest manifested by public bodies generally in the promotion of technical education. I still think, however, that grants-in-aid would be given if the aim that the Board has in view were better understood. Two hundred and fifty pounds a year from seven or eight public bodies represents but a small sum from a large and rich district like Hawke's Bay, especially when it is proposed to expend twice or thrice that sum in furthering the agricultural and pastoral interests of the district.

PUPIL-TEACHERS AND SCHOLARSHIPS.—The new schemes of examination by the Central Department for pupil-teachers, and for granting of scholarships, have had the effect of lessening my work in the preparation and examination of papers. The district high schools have, however, in a large measure counterbalanced this, but with the opening of small schools and the time taken in visiting them I am reaching the limit of work it is possible for one man to accomplish in so extensive a district. In addition to the eighty-eight public schools, I have examined as far as my time allowed the six Catholic schools that are established in this district. Nothing better shows the high ideals of the teachers in these schools than their strong desire to have their work examined in accordance with the Government requirements. As in the public schools, the work varies in quality, but much of it is creditably done and the teachers, like the Board's own teachers, are imbued with the desire to do honest and good work. Sometimes the requirements have not been reached, but the reason may be found in the operation of causes over which the teachers themselves have no control.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES.—The school library is beginning to receive more attention in certain schools. Teachers find that good books are among the best aids to high intelligence, nor do I think the task would be difficult for an experienced examiner to discover, even among the children, a great reader and lover of books. In too many cases, I fear, the "School Readers" are the only books that children possess. Wells, in his suggestive book, "Mankind in the Making," remarks that "A school without an easily accessible library of at least a thousand volumes is really scarcely a school at all—it is a dispensary without bottles, a kitchen without a pantry." Lovers of good books will appreciate the force of these remarks. Reference has been made already to certain needful books to assist teachers and pupils in "nature-studies," but it is difficult to make the country realise the great value of interesting books for children when essential books of reference are not even thought of as being necessary for the schools. And to illustrate the limited vocabulary of otherwise intelligent and well-trained children, the following examples are taken from the English paper of Standard VI. pupils in a recent examination. One of the questions to be answered was: Make sentences to show the proper meaning and use of the following words:—"Transgress": Sentence given—"Thy brother said he would *transgress* the river." Abdicare: Sentence given—"we sent an *abdicate* to the Minister." Degradare: Sentence given—"I *degrade* down the hill." Retrogradare: Sentence given—"I *retrograde* him." Automatic: Sentence given—"The *automatic* opinion of the young lady was very great." Aneroid: Sentence given—"The *aneroid* appearance of the stars on a moonlight night is very beautiful." Scores of similar examples might be given, but these suffice to show the superficial character of much of the school-work, when little more than class-books make up the full tale of reading for a pass in Standard VI.

Reading should be fostered in the schools much more than it is, and the school library, with books dealing with the wonders and beauties of our own country, ought to be provided, if the teachers are to