

Agricultural Education.—In May last a scheme of agricultural education for the Auckland District was prepared by me and approved by the Board. The scheme provided for agricultural education to commence in the primary schools in the form of "nature-study," in which school gardens would play a prominent part, to continue in the secondary and agricultural schools, and to culminate in the Agricultural College. In order to initiate the scheme, I advised the Board to engage an agricultural expert, who would first train the teachers so as to enable them to carry out the preliminary work in their schools. It was estimated that in the beginning the cost would be £500 per annum. Of this the Board was willing to provide £300, if the various branches of the Farmers' Unions would contribute £100 a year, which, with the Government subsidy of £100, would make up the £500 required. Of the ninety-four branches of the Farmers' Union, to whom circulars were addressed, only fourteen condescended to reply, and of these only one was willing to make any monetary contribution. At a subsequent meeting of a committee representative of the Education Board and of the Auckland Agricultural Association it was decided to ask the Government to provide agricultural experts, as indicated above, for the four chief educational districts of the colony, and this is as far as the matter has advanced at the present time.

Technical Education in Country Districts.—During the year evening technical classes were held at Thames, the subjects taken up being chiefly commercial. A special report of the hon. superintendent, with my remarks thereon, has been previously submitted to the Board. It is to be hoped that the example set by Thames will be followed by other places. As far as possible the subjects chosen should be those immediately applicable to the district. The tendency seems to be to set too much value on commercial subjects, so as to enable the country youth to obtain positions in the town. New Zealand must of necessity be an agricultural country, and the attitude taken up in the matter of providing education should be rather in the direction of encouraging young people to follow country pursuits.

Technical Education and Manual Training Exhibition.—An exhibition was held at the Auckland Technical School from the 25th January to 11th February inclusive, embracing the following: (1) Work done by students attending the evening classes of the Technical School in carpentry and joinery, cabinetmaking, plumbing, &c.; (2) work done by teachers attending the special art classes; (3) woodwork done by pupils of primary schools attending the Newmarket, Newton, and Ponsonby Manual-training Schools; (4) handwork, including paper folding, cane weaving, plasticine modelling, brush drawing, &c., done by pupils in the primary schools. The exhibition created a great deal of interest, and was visited by several thousands of people, including many teachers from the country, who were granted free railway passes. It is hoped that similar exhibitions will be held each year.

Auckland Technical School.

At the beginning of the year considerable difficulty was experienced in commencing the session, owing to no reply being obtainable from the Department with reference to the Board's application for an additional building for carpentry and joinery, cabinetmaking, smithing, and turning and fitting. Eventually it was decided to utilise the woodwork-room of the Newton Manual-training School for the carpentry and joinery and cabinetmaking, and to abandon for the session the teaching of smithing and turning and fitting, &c. About the middle of the year a grant of £690 was made by the Department for the fitting up of a machine-shop and smithy, and later on £200 was granted for a temporary iron building for housing the equipment, as well as an additional sum of £262 for extra machinery. As a result, a building has been built and equipped at a cost of about £1,150, in which much useful work in smithing, farriery, turning and fitting, &c., should be done. Owing to lack of accommodation at Rutland Street, it was also found necessary to utilise the cookery-room at Newton for such subjects as dressmaking, drawing, &c. The total number of individual students enrolled, exclusive of teachers, was 312, and the number of class entries 796. Including those attending the teachers' classes, the number of individuals was 637, with a total number of class entries of 1,709.

In June last a large number of our students sat for the examinations of the City and Guilds of London Institute, with the following very gratifying results: Plain cookery, 33 passes; woodwork—final 1 pass, first year 35 passes; plumbers' work—ordinary grade 9 passes, preliminary grade 12 passes; mechanical engineering, 1 pass; carpentry and joinery—ordinary grade 1 pass, preliminary grade 1 pass: making a total of 93 passes.

Several students also sat for the examinations of the Board of Education, South Kensington, London, in June and July last, with the following results: Magnetism and electricity, 6 passes; building-construction, 5 passes; machine construction and drawing, 4 passes: total, 15 passes.

Commercial Department.—The subjects taken up in this department were commercial arithmetic, commercial geography, commercial correspondence and *précis*-writing, French, typewriting, book-keeping, and shorthand. In each of these subjects much more satisfactory work was done than in the previous session, and five students completed the first year's course for the Diploma of Commerce. It is very satisfactory to note that the Chamber of Commerce has agreed to recognise the certificates of the school by giving preference—other things being equal—to applicants for clerkships, &c., who hold such certificates. The Chamber also decided to award two silver medals each year—one for males and one for females—to those students who stand highest in the examinations for the Diploma of Commerce.

Domestic Department.—Plain cookery (theory and practice) and dressmaking were the only subjects dealt with in this department last session. An attempt was made to hold a class for laundry work, but the entries were so few that it had to be disbanded.

The number attending the cookery classes, too, was anything but satisfactory. This, I think, is to be deplored, as with the generally unsatisfactory state of domestic service, it would seem to be of advantage for mistresses to be able to impart special knowledge such as can be obtained from the technical school to their servants, even though they may not require to make use of it themselves.